

Northwest in this period is illuminated by his papers. He had few of the arts of the politician and seems never to have sought public office, yet he held over a long period of years several local appointments of public trust. While Detroit still remained under British rule as a part of the Province of Quebec, he served as a member of the Land Board and as local magistrate. In the winter of 1802 when Detroit was incorporated as a town, he was chosen by the legislature of the Northwest Territory, one of five trustees of the town, although it was perfectly well known that he was a British subject and had no desire to change his allegiance. For several years prior to the change of government at Detroit, he was captain of militia and he continued as an officer of Canadian militia during all the years from 1796 until his removal in 1802. He ultimately rose to the rank of colonel of the Essex County militia, a position which he held until advancing age and other considerations caused the government to confer the appointment upon another. Askin was greatly displeased over this demotion and strove vainly to influence the authorities to continue him in the command of the county militia. The government, however, having in view the strong likelihood of war with the United States, was undoubtedly wise in devolving this responsibility upon younger shoulders.

As it was, the War of 1812 brought upon Askin a heavy burden of sorrow and difficulty. Although since 1796 an international boundary had separated the dwellers on the north side of the Detroit from their neighbors on the opposite shore, yet they had a common origin and were still intimately bound together by ties of business interest as well as of blood relationship. In short, around Detroit the War of 1812 bore most of the aspects of a civil conflict. Although Askin's sympathies were wholly British he did not escape the common lot, for while most of his sons and other kinsmen were fighting in the British ranks, one daughter was a resident of Detroit, her husband, commander of the Michigan territorial militia. When on August 16, 1812, General Brock crossed his army from Sandwich to Spring Wells and marched eastward along the river road to assail the