

William²⁸ is learning very well, he has already got thro' compound multiplication, writes tolerably, & is making good progress in Latin: as for John,²⁸ I understand he also advances, but the particular stage of his progress I am not informed of. I hope your new government will make you a happy people. I am sure it ought. With best wishes for your family & compliments to all friends, I am, Dear Sir, sincerely,

Yours very humble servant
William Robertson

J. Askin, Esq^r

LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY OF DAVID W. SMITH

Niagara. 8 August 1792

My dear Sir: Since I wrote to you last I have received a Letter from M^r McNiff²⁹ giving me but faint hopes of Success, when at the same time I receive other Letters from my fri[en]ds, giving me hopes.

Every thing now must be left to fate, & Providence will

now concerted a plan for a new campaign from Canada and in 1777 was again sent out, this time to have command of the expedition. It ended in complete failure and the surrender of the entire army at Saratoga on Oct. 17, 1777. A long dispute over the responsibility for the failure followed, as a consequence of which Burgoyne was retired from the army. His later years were devoted to politics and literature, and in the latter field, especially, he achieved considerable success. He died June 4, 1792, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

²⁸ These two youths were Askin's grandsons and Robertson's nephews, William and John Robertson, sons of Catherine Askin Hamilton by her first husband, Capt. Samuel Robertson. By Robert Hamilton, their stepfather, they had been sent to England to be educated.

²⁹ Patrick McNiff was prominently identified with the affairs of Detroit and vicinity during the later British and early American régimes. He was a man of positive temperament, which caused him to be involved in numerous disputes. He served as surveyor in the British period, and in the American held several offices, including those of sheriff and justice of the Court of Common Pleas. In 1802 his associates on the bench refused longer to serve with him because of his "odious" character. He died soon after this, for in May, 1803, the local Masonic lodge voted relief for his widow, doing so in terms which indicated that he had been expelled from the order. He was twice married, and had several children. A son, Robert, was owner of the only house in Detroit which escaped the conflagration of 1805. A daughter, Margaret, married Lieut. Porter Hanks, who surrendered Mackinac to the British in 1812. Coming to Detroit, he was undergoing court martial for this affair when on Aug. 15 a cannon ball, fired from the British battery on the south side of the river, penetrated the room and killed him. See *Proc. of the Land Board of Detroit*, 177-78; *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, *passim*; *Ashlar*, II, 132; and Sibley Papers (mss.) in Burton Hist. Coll., *passim*.