

"Down the Crooked Road of Anarchy"

(Lantern Tours 1809/2009)

Scenario I: "A Road for All Seasons"

Location: Exit Bridge to Right, Area by the River

Scene: Road Surveying

Props: Shovels, Pitch Forks, Sledge Hammers, Wood, Wedge

Characters: Road Surveying Crew

Historical Background:

APPOINTMENT OF MANAGERS FOR A LOTTERY

Territory of Michigan

To James May, John Anderson and John Whipple Esq.

Gentlemen,

You are hereby appointed managers, of the Lottery established by an Act entitled "an act for laying out and opening a road from the City of Detroit to the foot of the Miami which enters into lake Erie"; And you are hereby authorized to execute the same according to law, and entitled to all the emoluments, and privileges appertaining to the same.

Detroit the 17th January 1809(1)

William Hull

Governor of Michigan

ACTION OF THE GRAND JURY RELATIVE TO GOVERNOR HULL

TERRITORY OF MICHIGAN

Supreme Court, September Term, 1809

We, the Grand Jurors, on our oaths, further present so much of the Act adopted by the Legislature of this Territory, the 24th of February, 1809; entitled "An act making appropriations

for the years 1808 and 1809, as appropriates for James Witherell, John Whipple, and William M. D. Scott, as commissioners for 17 day services each, in exploring and superintending the survey of a public road from the foot of the rapids of the river Miami of Lake Erie to Detroit, at four dollars per day, each - 204 dollars; for James McCloskey, surveying said road at 3 dollars per mile -199 1/2 dollars, for the hire of two horses and two men 17 days at 4 dollars per day, 68 dollars; and for 11 days for the service of one man on the same business, at 1 dollar per day - 11 dollars; as unnecessarily and illegally burdening the people of this Territory with taxes, to enumerate the said commissioners for service which agreeably to the Act, entitled "An Act for laying out and opening a road from the city of Detroit to the foot of the rapids of the Miami, which enters into Lake Erie," when performed, and under which the said commissioners acted, were to be compensated for, only, out of the proceeds of a lottery authorized by the last mentioned Act.

And we the Grand Jury aforesaid, also, unanimously express it as our opinion that the said James Witherell, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of this Territory, acted unbecoming the character of a faithful and impartial Judge, when he introduced to the Legislative Board and voted for the law making the aforementioned appropriation.

MEMORIAL TO THE PRESIDENT FOR THE REMOVAL OF GOVERNOR HULL

To His Excellency James Madison, President of the United States of America:

...The taxes on our people are very heavy; and the public money, when entrusted to the discretion of Mr. Hull, is wantonly wasted. He authorizes a number of commissioners to explore a road to the Miami in the dead of Winter; when the country was but one sheet of ice and snow and which it would be impossible for the same, or any other person to find again in the summer time and expended four hundred and eighty-two dollars, raised by taxes on a spare and poor population. On this useless and injudicious project, money which might be productive of some good, if the dictates of common sense had been complied with and a proper season of the year selected for the purpose....(2)

1. "Woodbridge Papers," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Vol. 37, Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co., 1909, p.108.

2. "Action of the Grand Jury Relative to Governor Hull," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co., State Printers, 1907, Vol. VIII, p.587-92.

Script:

The guide will explain to the group as they cross the bridge, that they are now traveling back through time to an autumn evening in 1809 Frenchtown. They are on their way to a soirée in honor of Territorial Governor William Hull being thrown by his close friend Judge James Witherell.

The group will veer to the right and stay on the riverside. They will come across a working crew surveying for a road. As soon as the surveyors see them they will rejoice saying, "*Finally we have been sent some help!*" They will start passing out various implements, all the while noting that the people in the group are not particularly dressed for this kind of work.

Nonetheless, they pick out strong looking individuals to carry wood over, and joke about what tasks they could give the woman and children to do. The guide will look surprised and after awhile exclaim they were not sent to help. The surveyors will ignore the guide and keep directing what needs to be done. The guide will continue explaining that they were on their way to a soiree being thrown by Judge Witherell for Governor William Hull. At that the crew will get very belligerent and talk about how the road was Hull's idea and how it's supposed to connect the City of Detroit with the foot of the Miami. But they are getting nothing done because they have so few supplies, and virtually no workers, etc... Furthermore, they will continue that Hull doesn't give any regard to what season it is and even had them surveying for the road in the middle of the winter in the ice and snow. After they go on awhile about how upset they are with Hull they will turn their focus to Witherell, saying that "*They don't even want to hear the name Witherell. He's just as bad as Hull and is Hull's favorite.*" They will explain how Hull appointed Witherell to the commission to oversee the road surveying. And how the commissioners are getting paid a lot of money for doing nothing, while they are the ones doing all the work and are getting a mere pittance.

After a while, the guide will cohearse the members of the group to stop working, all the while still explaining to the road crew that they must be on their way or they will be late to the party. They understand the situation and feel bad for them, but there's really nothing they can do about it. The crew will interrupt saying, "*Oh, yes, there is! When you see Hull, tell him how hard we are working and that we need more help and more supplies. Will you do that?*" (The crew will try to get people in the group to promise to talk to Hull). The group will continue on their journey heading in the direction of the Native American village.

Scenario II: "The Road that Divides"

Location: Native American Village

Scene: Wigwams, fires, etc...

Props: Nothing specific

Characters: Adam Brown, Walk-in-the-Water, Natives

Historical Background:

Treaty of Brownstown Nov. 1808

....The several nations of Indians aforesaid, in order to promote the object mentioned in the preceding article, and in consideration of the friendship they bear towards the United States, for the liberal and benevolent policy, which has been practiced towards them by the government thereof, do hereby give, grant, and cede, unto the said United States, a tract of land for a road, of one hundred and twenty feet in width, from the foot of the rapids of the river Miami of Lake Erie, to the western line of the Connecticut reserve, and all the land within one mile of the said road, on each side thereof, for the purpose of establishing settlements along the same; also a tract of land, for a road only, of one hundred and twenty feet in width, to run southwardly from what is called Lower

Sandusky, to the boundary line established by the treaty of Greenville, with the privilege of taking at all times, such timber and other materials, from the adjacent lands as may be necessary for making and keeping in repair the said road, with the bridges that may be required along the same.

...It is agreed that the said Indian nations shall retain the privilege of hunting and fishing on the lands given and ceded as above, so long as the same shall remain the property of the United States.

...Done at Brownstown, in the territory of Michigan, this 25th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eight, and of the independence of the United States of America the thirty-third. (1)

William Hull, commissioner, [L. S.]

.....**Wyandots:**

Miere, or Walk in the Water, his x mark, [L. S.]

Iyonayotaha, or Joe, his x mark, [L. S.]

Skahomet, or Black Chief, his x mark, [L. S.]

Adam Brown, [L. S.]...

**The speech of the Principle Chiefs and Warriors of the Wyandots delivered on the 30th day of September, 1809
To his Excellency Governor Hull**

Father listen to your children the Wyandots, delivered by their Chiefs and Warriors, in which they let you know these sentiments....for we speak to you to let you know the sentiments of our minds. We thought the land we resided upon was our own, formerly, our Old Chiefs, who are now dead and gone, make a great promise to the Great Spirit above, that they never would move from the land, we their children now live upon and occupy. Father listen, you informed us that the land we occupy belongs to you; at the Treaty of Greenville, made with our father General Wayne, he promised to us, the land on which live; and for that reason, we never will consent to give up talking upon this subject....

Father listen, when you arrived at this place among your children, you always give your children good advice to cultivate the land. Your children of the Wyandot tribe of Indians, have followed your advise, to their benefit and satisfaction, Father we were astonished when you told us there was a small tract of land at Brownstown and Maguawgo, for our use for fifty years - and a vacancy in the middle between the two villages...this small tract of land is entirely too small for us, what will become of our children that are growing up...you have cut off from us the best part of our land...Father you know there is a bed of land between the two Villages, the Chiefs of the Wyandots & sensible young men of our nation, wish you to let them have that bed of land, which lies between the two villages. Father, the reason why your children like this bed of land so well, they have made valuable improvements thereon, which have cost them both labor and expenses. And what is still more sensible to our feelings we love the land that covers the bones of our fathers.

Father listen, those lands are our sole dependence for cultivation and hunting, and we are only to enjoy it for fifty years. Your children are very uneasy at this information, they say let us enjoy and have our land forever....Father listen to the request of all your Wyandot children....(2)

Script:

As the group approaches the Indian village, they will hear a loud discussion going on. They very hesitantly enter the village and Adam Brown asks them if they are part of the road survey crew come to tear down more trees and ravage their land for that ridiculous road that's going to go right through their village? The guide explains that they are not part of the road crew, but were just passing through on their way to a harvest soiree for Gov. Hull being thrown by Judge Witherell. At that the Indian becomes very indignant. *"A party for Hull, HA! That's the last thing Hull and Witherell should be doing is celebrating. This whole road thing was Hull's idea. All he does is keep taking away more & more of our ancestors land. Two years ago he promised we could keep a narrow strip of land that we have always had, Brownstown, and another strip called Monguagon. But both are way too small. Then he comes back a year later and asks for us to give up more of our land for a road. Now we find out that he only gave us the land for 50 years, and didn't even give us the part that connects our two villages. This land has always belonged to the Wyandot nation and now he says it belongs to the United States."*

Chief Walk in the Water interrupts saying, *"We Wyandots only want peace. We have always done what Hull has asked, then we find out he has betrayed us. We depend on this land for our survival by cultivating and hunting on it. This is the land of our ancestors and our father's bones are buried here. We took in Adam here from the white people when he was just a young child, and raised him as our own. We have had a good relationship with the whites, but now Hull has broken our trust and deceived us. How can you be friends of his?"*

The guide nervously answers that they were just invited to the soiree, that's all, and are not really personal friends of Hulls. Both Indian chief's ask the group if they understand their situation and would be willing to talk to Hull for them and tell him that they need more land and need it for more than 50 yrs-they need it forever! (The chiefs should try to press the people to promise they will talk to Hull etc...)

1. digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties/chi0099.htm

2. "Speech of Indian Chiefs to Governor Hull," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Vol. 40, Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1929, p.304-07.

Biographies:

Adam Brown was white and born in 1742 and adopted by the Brownstown Wyandots when he was very young. He ended up marrying the daughter of Half-King, and eventually became a leader of the tribe. On January 22, 1813, during the Battle of the River Raisin, he was shot but survived and died in 1817.

Walk-in-the-Water was a leader of the Brownstown Wyandots. The Brownstown tribe offered to fight on the US side at the start of the War of 1812. But Gov. Hull told them to stay neutral or face the consequences. The tribe ended up fighting for the British and fought in the Battle of the River Raisin. Walk-in-the-Water survived the war and died in 1817.

Scenario III: "A Harvest Soiree for Bon Ami"

- Location:** Barn
- Scene:** Witherall's Harvest party, Band in Barn, Cooks Outside by fire
- Props:** Tables, chairs, cups, bottles
- Characters:** Governor William Hull, Judge Witherell & Family, Band, Militia, Drunk, Soldier at end, Hysterical Woman

Historical Background:

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN 1809.

The first summer that Judge Witherell was in Michigan he was living at Springwells. On the morning of the 4th of July he said to his family, at the breakfast table, "I propose that we have a celebration." All looked up with surprise....At the same time they looked at one another in rather a suspicious way. At times the judge was very fond of a real good practical joke. After a consultation, one of the sons was sent after an old Frenchman, who soon appeared with his shot gun. The family, consisting of the mother and six children, three sons and three daughters, were then called together, who, with the judge, walking two and two, started for a sand hill about three-quarters of a mile distant, the old Frenchman bringing up the rear. The sand hill was quite near the river....After selecting a small log, and standing it on end for a desk, and arranging seats made from branches, for the mother and daughters, they commenced the celebration. The Judge read the Declaration of Independence. The old Frenchman fired his gun. Then the eldest son (I. Columbus Witherell) sang a patriotic ode, all joining in the chorus. Another gun fired. Then a speech by Benj. Franklin Witherell. Another gun. Another song by James Bonaparte Witherell, all joining in chorus. Another gun. Then they marched home on the beach in Indian file, singing as they marched.

For dinner they had pea soup, white-fish from the river, a small pig roasted whole, roast mutton, vegetables, etc. For dessert, pies, apples, hickory nuts, and coffee.

At dinner the judge recounted his experience at the battle of White Plains (where he was severely wounded), Long Island, Stillwater, Bemis Heights, and the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, his sufferings at Valley Forge and the next summer at Moniouth; also about the bowl of punch which cost eighty dollars. He also told them that it was his duty once to call off the number or name of the different companies as Washington rode down the lines....The party then dispersed as well as *one family* could.(1)

**LETTER FROM GOVERNOR HULL TO JUDGE WITHERELL.
DETROIT, 25 Feb. 1809.**

JUDGE WITHERELL—My highly esteemed friend:—Your letter of this day has excited sensation which I more strongly feel than I can express....A great part of my life has been devoted to the service of my country, and the idea of shrinking from any duty to which I am called, is incompatible with my feelings. Your appointment as one of my associates in the Government, I have considered a most fortunate event, and it certainly is one of the strongest circumstances that would induce me to continue....That you may continue here and proceed as you have commenced is the sincere wish of my heart. You may be assured that if I should have any influence in the arrangements of the Territory, I am decidedly of the opinion, that I could not exert it more beneficially for the Country, than by pointing you out as a leading character. It is only necessary to know what you have done, during the short time you have been here, to determine what you are capable of doing....

Sincerely your Friend,

W. HULL. HON'BLE JUDGE WITHERELL. (2)

1. "Sketch of Life of James Witherell," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Lansing: W.S. George & Co. Printers and Binders, 1883. Vol. IV, p.111-12.

2. "Action of the Grand Jury Relative to Governor Hull," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co., State Printers, 1907, Vol. VIII, p.566-67.

Script:

The group will finally approach the barn at which they hear a party going on. Judge Witherell will run up to meet them and say he is glad they made it and introduce them to Gov. Hull. Witherell will go on about how great his friend Hull is and how kind Hull was in appointing him to the commission to oversee the road. Hull will then say what an honor it is that his friend Witherell is throwing this party for him and he will continue to gush about the judge and how happy he is to have him on his staff. Plus he would like the judge to be the leading man in any future endeavors he is involved in, etc...

The guide will ask the members of the group if they have anything they want to say to Governor Hull (hopefully a few people will comment on what the road surveyors said and what the Indian chiefs said, if not the guide might have to encourage them). After hearing the complaints, Hull will try to evade the matter with some political rhetoric, such as the road is beneficial to everyone, without really answering the complaints. Eventually Witherell will direct the group to go inside and get some drinks and join the party with his family. The band will be playing and the children will be dancing. They will encourage people in the group to join in on the dance. (If anyone is brave enough, it would be great to have some singing going on as well). After a little while the militia will nosily join in on the festivities. They will make toasts and shoot their guns.

An argument will ensue between one of the partygoers and a young militiaman. The partygoer will have had a little too much to drink and get very belligerent

towards the soldier about who is the best shot, etc... After a bit, they agree to take the fight outside and see just who is the best. One of the women will get very upset and start yelling that someone is going to get hurt, etc... Many of the partygoers will step out to watch, including the guide & group. The soldier will go first, picking a far off object in the dark as a target. He will shoot and boast that he knows he hit the target right on, but he will go check and make sure. He tells the drunk to wait until he gets back before he takes his turn shooting. But the drunk is going on & on to the group about how good a shot he is and doesn't even hear the soldier. He will suddenly lift up his gun in the direction of the target and just shoot wildy. The soldier will run back towards the group screaming that he was shot and fall to the ground. The hysterical woman will faint. The rest of the militia will run up to the injured soldier and hurriedly grab him up and lead him away. There will be a lot of chaos and the guide will ask where they are taking him. Witherell will reply that they are taking him to LaCroix's militia tent next door. Hull will say that this is indeed a bad omen. The guide will tell the group they need to go check on the poor soldier and lead them away.

** The injured soldier will only be towards the end of Sc III, and continue on to be in all of Sc IV

***The militia will take part in the last half of Sc III and only be at the very beginning of Sc IV thereby allowing enough time for them to return for Sc III again

Biographies:

William Hull was born in 1753 and during the Revolutionary War, rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1805 he was appointed Governor of the Michigan Territory by President Jefferson. In the War of 1812, he was a brigadier general and in charge of the whole Northwest Army. He had a road built (Hull's Road) through the Black Swamp to Detroit to transport his army and supplies. From Detroit, he attacked Canada, but couldn't capture Fort Malden. He fell back to Detroit but was cut off again. Numerous attempts to reopen the road lead to the Battles of Brownstown and Monguagon. On August 16, 1812, he surrendered Detroit and all the rest of the Michigan Territory. He became a prisoner of war and was court-martialed and sentenced to death, but later was released. He died in 1825.

James Witherell was born in 1759 and fought in the Revolutionary War. After serving on the legislature in Vermont as a judge and a member of congress, he eventually became United States judge for the territory of Michigan in 1808 and served until 1828. In 1828 he was appointed Secretary of the Territory by President John Quincy Adams. He was active in the affairs of Detroit until his death in 1838.

Scenario IV: "A Desperate Plea"

Location: Tent in front of Kitchen

Scene: Tent outside, fire, LaCroix's Militia tent

Props: First Aid supplies, cot

Characters: Injured Soldier, Col. John Anderson, Surgeon Peter Austin, Nurse, Spy only at end, Militia only at beg.

Historical Background:

JOHN ANDERSON TO WILLIAM HULL

River Raisin 9th October 1809

His Excellency William Hull

Dear Sir,

The 2nd Regiment has no Surgeon for these two years past, and as there is no hope of Baldwin's returning, I wish you would appoint Peter Jeremy Austin, a young man who has been here for about ten months past, he is from Vermont, and I think a good Doctor, please Send out his Commission by next Mail.

I am Sir with esteem your Col. John Anderson

1. "Woodbridge Papers," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Vol. 37, Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co., 1909, p.122.

Script:

The guide will lead the group to the LaCroix's Company tent in front of the kitchen. The soldier will be laid on a cot, all the while moaning and groaning. Colonel John Anderson will be yelling for someone to please find Dr. Peter Austin. The militia will depart and go look for Austin. Col. Anderson addresses the group and asks them if they have seen the doctor? When the guide responds that they do not know of him, Anderson loudly mumbles how this is all Hull's fault, if only he would've appointed them a surgeon when he should have they wouldn't be having this problem! He will continue sarcastically how they have only been without one for over 2 years now and Hull just can't seem to get around to appointing one. He has decided to ask Hull to just make Peter Austin the militia's official surgeon. After all, Austin has been kind enough to fill in for all this time.

Col. Anderson asks if anyone in the group is a surgeon? During this time, the soldier is still in agony and a nurse is trying to calm him down and give him some wine to drink. Finally Dr. Austin comes running up. He proceeds to tie off the arm and explains that the first thing to be done is stop the bleeding. He examines the wound and talks about how its good in that at least they won't have to amputate, that if it was located..... He will go on explaining what he is doing and why. After examining the wound for a bit and prepping the soldier, Dr. Austin, will explain that he has to do surgery and how he will do it. He will talk about instruments, ether, etc... (The goal is to give the group a good idea of what first aid was like then). The doctor will ask for the area to be cleared and for the soldier to be moved into the kitchen and prepared for surgery.

A man dressed very darkly (the spy) will suddenly appear and grab the arm of the guide and say to the group, I have been watching you all night! You must now come with me; you are going to be witnesses at a hearing next door. The guide will act frightened and surprised. The spy will lead the guide and the group into the back door of the Trading Post.

Biographies:

John Anderson moved to the River Raisin in 1802 and bought the Trading Post from Hutreau Navarre. In 1803 Gov. Harrison appointed him Captain of the Militia. In 1805 he was made Col. of the 2nd Regiment-LaCroix's Company. He wasn't here during the battle, being forced to flee the area before the conflict. He died in Monroe in 1841.

Scenario V: "The Harvest is Ripe for the Coup d' e'tat"

Location: Trading Post

Scene: Hearing

Props: Benches, Chairs, Paper, Pencil or Quill Pen

Characters: Jean Baptiste Couture, George McDougall,
Francois Lasselle, Peter Denison, Spy

Historical Background:

ACTION OF THE GRAND JURY RELATIVE TO GOVERNOR HULL

TERRITORY OF MICHIGAN: Supreme Court, September Term, 1809
History, the record of facts, shows, that under every form of government, man, when invested with authority, from the weakness and imbecility of his nature, has a strong propensity to assume powers with which he is not legally clothed. Fully persuaded of this truth from reflection and observation, We, the Grand Jurors for the Body of the Territory of Michigan, **after having heard witnesses, and a free and dispassionate discussion**, and mature consideration of their testimony, on our Oaths do present:

...We, the Grand Jurors, on our oaths, further present so much of the Act adopted by the Legislature of this Territory, the 24th of February, 1809; entitled "An act making appropriations for the years 1808 and 1809, as appropriates for James Witherell, John Whipple, and William M. D. Scott, as commissioners for 17 day services each, in exploring and superintending the survey of a public road from the foot of the rapids of the river Miami of Lake Erie to Detroit at four dollars per day, each - 204 dollars; for James McCloskey, surveying said road at 3 dollars per mile -199 1/2 dollars, for the hire of two horses and two men 17 days at 4 dollars per day, 68 dollars; and for 11

days for the service of one man on the same business, at 1 dollar per day - 11 dollars; as unnecessarily and illegally burdening the people of this Territory with taxes, to enumerate the said commissioners for service which agreeably to the Act, entitled "An Act for laying out and opening a road from the city of Detroit to the foot of the rapids of the Miami, which enters into Lake Erie," when performed, and under which the said commissioners acted, were to be compensated for, only, out of the proceeds of a lottery authorized by the last mentioned Act.

And we the Grand Jury aforesaid, also, unanimously express it as our opinion that the said James Witherell, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of this Territory, acted unbecoming the character of a faithful and impartial Judge, when he introduced to the Legislative Board and voted for the law making the aforementioned appropriation....

....And the Grand Jurors also recommend to the Governor and Judges of this Territory, the repeal of so much of the Militia Law, as subjects any but free, male, white Citizens of the United States, between the age of Eighteen and forty-five, to serve in the Militia. The egregious impolicy of forcing Aliens, and renegade Negroes into our service, is too notorious to require any comment....

Geo. Hoffman, Foreman

Sept. 26th, 1809
Grand Jury Room

NOTES

The Grand Jury was composed of the following named persons (those in bold are local residents)
Geo. Hoffman, Richard Smyth, David Hull, Jacob Visgar, Christian Clemons, **Joseph Jobin**, Robert Abbott, Jean Marie Beaubien, **Jean Baptiste Couture**, **George M'Dougall**, George Cotterall, Antoine DeQuindre, James Henry, **Francois Lasselle**, Hugh R. Martin, James May, **Francios Lafontain**

MEMORIAL TO THE PRESIDENT FOR THE REMOVAL OF GOVERNOR HULL

To His Excellency James Madison, President of the United States of America:

...Persuaded that a high sense of duty, uninfluenced by personal consequences either to yourself or others, will always govern your Excellency's public conduct; the undersigned present to you a respectful request, that a change may be made of the Executive Magistrate of this Government.

For, fully convinced of the necessity of assigning substantial grounds for a solicitation of this nature, to expect a gratification of it, on any other condition ; the undersigned proceed to the unwelcome but necessary talk stating the public infelicities which have attended the Administration of General William Hull in this Government, and the causes which have rendered this country dissatisfied with the longer continuance of this Gentleman as their Governor.

This territory is situated on the Frontier of a foreign Government, the Province of Upper Canada belonging to his Britannic Majesty: notwithstanding the difference of government, the French population which forms the principal part of both are one and the same people. In Upper Canada, African slavery has always existed; and the labor of their slaves, is a principal reliance of many families, on both sides, for subsistence. Mr. Hull has much countenanced the run-aways in that Province, by embodying them into a military company, and supplying them with arms from the public stores. He has signed a

written instrument, appointing a black man to the command of this company. This transaction is extremely dishonorable to the Government on this side of the river; violates the feelings of the opposite side; essentially injures their interests; and eventually injures our own people, by exciting the others to retaliate in the same way....

It has been our lot to be harassed with incessant alarms of an attack from the savages. These alarms are entirely false and unfounded, and nothing but the incapacity and want of judgment of the executive officer keeps them alive. The United States have been unnecessarily put to an immense and useless expense on this account, and the inhabitants of the country have been subjected to great vexation and oppression.

He has so incorrect an idea of the nature of militia, that he issues a general order for a particular company to cut so many pickets, transport them from the woods, dig so many feet of trench, and plant so many feet of pickets, as if they were regular troops and subject to his command as their officer. The intention of the militia, is in the first place, for the purpose of discipline; and in the second place, for actual service, when called into it, and put under actual pay. The manner in which Mr. Hull has acted on this head, and which his constant and ridiculously ostentatious General Orders do fully show, is a greater stretch upon lawful authority than has ever been attempted before in the United States....

The taxes on our people are very heavy; and the public money, when entrusted to the discretion of Mr. Hull, is wantonly wasted. He authorizes a number of commissioners to explore a road to the Miami in the dead of Winter; when the country was but one sheet of ice and snow and which it would be impossible for the same, or any other person to find again in the summer time and expended four hundred and eighty-two dollars, raised by taxes on a spare and poor population. On this useless and injudicious project, money which might be productive of some good, if the dictates of common sense had been complied with and a proper season of the year selected for the purpose....

...Public officers are made an engine of intrigue; a man goes in, and goes out; not according to the manner in which he serves the public; but according to his supporting or disapproving Mr. Hull's errors and inconsistencies; his improper conduct in this respect is obvious to every man of independence and virtue in the Territory, and loudly calls for a person of a more elevated and correct mind.

His system of favoritism has in one instance excited the indignation of the whole country and met with pointed animadversion of the Grand Jury of the Territory, in short, he may be said to have assumed all the powers of the government with his own hands, the legislative, the executive and the judicial....

These, and a variety of other matters, with which we at present forbear to fatigue your ear, render it the opinion of the undersigned, and an opinion by no means hastily taken up, that the public good of this country requires a change in our executive magistrate....

“Action of the Grand Jury Relative to Governor Hull,” Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co., State Printers, 1907, Vol. VIII, p.587-92.

Script:

The group is escorted into the back door of the Trading Post and guided to the hearing room. The spy addresses the men assembled there saying, he has done what they asked and brought them plenty of witnesses. And not just any witnesses but people who have talked to the road surveyors, the Native Americans and even attended the soiree for Hull thrown by Witherell. Thus, they could even be hostile witnesses. Francois Lasselle

stands up and asks the group, “*So, just what is your affiliation with Mr. Hull?*” The guide responds that they were just invited to the party and really don’t know Hull personally and are very confused about what’s going on. Lasselle continues to harass the group a little, trying to figure out their relationship with Hull. He then asks the spy if Hull is still occupied at the party. The spy affirms that he is. Lasselle explains to the group that this is an informal hearing to hear witness testimony concerning the actions of Governor Hull.

Jean Baptiste Couture suddenly interjects that they need to get a move on, who knows how long Hull will be occupied, after all that’s why they decided to do this this evening, while both Hull and Witherell were busy patting each other on the back. Little do they know that its pay back time.

Couture then says they need to address the first issue-that of the road. The spy remarks that the group can be good witnesses about that, because they talked to the road surveyors themselves. Couture asks the group if they seen the crew and how they are coming along etc.... (Hopefully the group will speak up, the guide might have to encourage them). Couture will then ask them, “*Did you know that you are paying for this?*” The guide will say no, looking very surprised. Reading from a paper he will continue saying, “*Hull brought Witherell’s friendship for \$204 by making him commissioner of the road, and paid him \$4 a day for 17 days to supervise it, not to mention all the other costs involved. And all of you are paying for it by paying high burdensome taxes. Hull said the money would come from a lottery, but it wasn’t enough to pay off friends so he is using tax money without the taxpayers knowing it!*” He will try to elicit a response from the witnesses on how they feel about this. He will then continue by asking them if they knew who was responsible for passing the Act to approve the road survey in the first place? Angrily he will point towards the barn and say, “*Mr. Witherell, that’s who! And who do you think established a commission to oversee it?*” (The guide or hopefully the group will answer Witherell). Couture will yell, “*So much for an impartial Supreme Court judge! Witherell and Hull should be indicted and thrown out!*”

Lasalle will then address the group saying, “*And that’s not all, we still need to address issue two--Hull and the Indians. In the 1807 Treaty of Detroit, the Brownstown Wyandots were promised certain areas of land, while signing over the rest. Then last year Hull asked them for permission to take some of the land back to build the infamous road through. Now the Wyandots find out they were only promised the land for 50 years, and that they weren’t even given the strip that connects their two villages Brownstown & Monguagon. Now they are all up in arms and the inhabitants are scared of an Indian attack.*” The spy will interject that the witnesses actually talked to the Indians. Lasalle will ask them what the Indians said.

After a little bit, George McDougall will stand up and say, “*Even more important than that is the third issue, the Black Militia. We could have the whole Canadian Government against us because of this militia!*” He will ask the group if they have heard of it? The guide will say that the militia has a very good reputation. McDougall will pound his fist saying “*Is that so...and what does the rest of your group think? I bet you didn’t know that these men are actually runaway Canadian slaves did you?*” He will continue sarcastically, “*That’s right, we take renegades and make them into a respectable militia over here. And if that wasn’t bad enough, Hull even made one of the slaves, Peter Denison, the commander. We should call for a repeal of the militia law!*”

A loud pounding is suddenly heard at the door and Peter Denison comes storming into the room. *"I heard you are having a hearing about me and my men, just what are you implying?"* McDougall responds, that they feel *"only free male, white citizens of the US, should be allowed in the militia."* Couture and Lasalle say that they agree. *"How dare you!"* Peter responds. *"My men are as good as any of your white men and besides we are citizens of your United States, decreed by Governor Hull himself. My men take their job seriously and have gotten many accolades for their service. They consider it an honor to serve their country."* Peter looks to the group and asks them, *"Don't you agree?"* (Hopefully the group will give some opinions). The guide will say that the militia has done a great job. Peter will motion to the group to follow him out exclaiming that they don't have to be witnesses concerning he and his men anymore and he will storm out of the Trading Post with the guide and the group following.

He will escort them to the bridge saying, *"Ok, maybe Hull has done a lot of questionable things, but my militia isn't one of them!"* The guide thanks him for escorting them out and says to the group, *"And we thought we were just going to a soiree, instead we end up witnesses in a hearing ultimately calling for the impeachment of the territorial governor!"*

Biographies:

Peter Denison, a former slave, was the commander of the first all African-American militia company raised in Detroit in 1806. Peter was commissioned by Governor Hull, although unofficially, and charged with guarding the public against the local Native Americans. The company was made up of 36 men, many of whom were runaway Canadian slaves. Peter and his men considered it an honor to defend their country as free men. The first "Black Militia" gained a reputation for their discipline and hard work.

Jean Baptiste Couture was a local homeowner in Frenchtown, who became captain of the 2nd Michigan Militia. Officers used his home as a headquarters during the Battle of the River Raisin. The stable and storehouse were used by the quartermaster to store supplies. Couture fought in the battle, but unfortunately on the 22nd he was captured in the retreat and scalped.

George McDougall was a local merchant who sold and traded on both sides of the border. He was very friendly with the Canadians. He owned a house & stable in Frenchtown, but was not here during the battle. When he returned home, however, he found his house and all his outbuildings burned to the ground.

Francois Lassalle was a local homeowner who was here during the battle and happened to be married to a Native American. Yet, the Indians warned him that if they caught anyone hiding in his house, they would kill them and him and burn everything down. Francois assured the Indians only women and children were inside. Unbeknownst to the Indians however, he was actually hiding the wife and son of James Knaggs-an Indian fighter with a hefty ransom on his head. Luckily Lassalle's secret was never discovered.

****** Much of the information for the biographies in this program was obtained from *Invaded on all Sides*, by Ralph Naveaux, and www.riverraisinbattlefield.org**