

THE BRIGHTON AREA AND THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF MICHIGAN (Cont.)

In 1805, when Gen. Wm. Hull was appointed Michigan Territorial Governor, the area encompassed included part of Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin. How to govern a city still smoldering from the devastating fire shortly before his arrival was not Gov. Hull's only problem. He was confronted with French Canadian residents resisting the code of laws he initiated (they'd been living without organized law and order); they objected to the registration of land titles (most had received land as feudal grants from France's king some time earlier); and defied a uniformed militia. Also Indian resistance to treaty negotiations was very evident.

Somehow by November, 1807, Hull brought together some of the chiefs of several of the Indian Nations who held all the lands except for the towns of Sault Ste. Marie, Mackinac and Detroit. They were paid \$10,000 and future promises for a large portion of southeastern Michigan. However not all Indians agreed to the plan and agitated against the white man.

Americans charged Indians were receiving guns, ammunition and encouragement from British agents across the Detroit River. Altho' at war with France on the Continent, England interfered with American shipping which caused concern for industrious, established merchants everywhere. By June, 1812, the culmination of national and international events caused President Madison to declare war on England. Altho' the provocation was great, the young nation was unprepared to wage another war.

Gov. Hull, named commander of the Western Army, was unable to prevent the capture of Ft. Mackinac nor that of Detroit August 16. Ft. Dearborn (Chicago) was abandoned to the British the day prior. This left the upper great lakes entirely in the hands of the British again as they planned the next phase of the war against the Americans with the push into Ohio. Hull became the scapegoat for the nations' shortcomings and was relieved of his Governorship to be replaced by Wm. H. Harrison. A decisive defeat was inflicted on American forces at the River Raisin by the Indians who broke a pledge of protection after the British left the area, January, 1813.

The outstandingly deplorable conduct of the war in the west is incomprehensible. The Canadian Gen. Brock found it not difficult to press his course at his own discretion. The lack of military training of the American soldiers and insufficient supplies and provisions was constantly displayed in every battle. Not until Gen. Harrison held Ft. Stephenson in Lower Sandusky (Ohio) in 1813, was there any indication of a possibility that the British might not win the war. (The war was not going well in the east either where the nation's Capitol was burned.) (To be continued. Condensed and edited from: "A Scrapbook of Michigan Memorabilia" by Wm. Pless, "A Short History of Michigan" by John Kern and "War 1812" by George S. May.)

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Printd courtesy:
OLD KENT BANK
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