

guished the Indian title to the land between the head of the lake and this, and have laid out a road, which will sure be made, as no lots will be given but to those who will make the road in front of their lots.

---

THE JOHN RICHARDSON LETTERS.\*

BY COL. E. CRUIKSHANK.

John Richardson, the author of the following letters, was born in Portsoy, in Banffshire, in 1755, and emigrated to Canada before he had attained his twentieth year. Soon after his arrival he became a clerk in the services of Ellice & Company, merchants and fur-traders, at Montreal. In 1778 he was engaged by John Porteous as supercargo of the privateer *Vengeance*, which had been equipped by an association of loyalists at New York. The successful cruises of that vessel have been described by Mr. Henry R. Howland, in the *American Historical Review* for January, 1902. When the City of New York was finally evacuated by its British garrison, Richardson returned to Montreal, and was received as a partner into the firm of Robert Ellice & Company. Upon the dissolution of that house a few years later he entered into partnership with Thomas and John Forsyth, fellow-countrymen from Aberdeen, in the firm of "Forsyth, Richardson & Co.," general merchants and fur-traders, which speedily secured a leading position in the commercial life of that city. Until his death, nearly fifty years later, Richardson was identified with almost every public movement of any importance, for the promotion of the welfare of its inhabitants. His name has been coupled with those of Peter McGill and George Moffat as the three most eminent citizens of that day. In provincial politics he soon became an active and influential member of the "English Party," and with Joseph Frobisher, was elected to represent the East Ward of Montreal in the first Parliament of Lower Canada. During the session of 1795-6 he secured the passage of a bill authorizing the construction of a canal connecting Montreal with Lachine, but this work was not actually begun until July 17th, 1821, when Richardson himself turned the first sod. He was elected President of the company, which then undertook and completed that much-needed enterprise. It has, however, been asserted that Richardson's singleness of

\*Read at the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Historical Society, Windsor, June 2nd, 1904.

mind and fear of being reproached with self-seeking actually proved detrimental to the best interests of the community. The canal ought to have been carried down to Hochelaga, through what is now Craig Street, but he opposed the project lest it should be said that he promoted it for the sake of enhancing the value of his own property, which lay in the Quebec suburbs. He was one of the commissioners appointed to oversee the removal of the old walls of the city in 1802, and was nominated as a member of the Legislative Council, by Sir James Craig, in 1808. He so far enjoyed the confidence of that officer that several of the famous letters of John Henry, which afterwards were enumerated among the causes for the declaration of war by the United States in 1812, were addressed to the Governor-General under cover to Richardson at Montreal from different towns in New England. It is pretty well established that he was the author of the well-known "Letters of Veritas," in which both the civil administration and military conduct of Sir George Prevost were ably and mercilessly assailed, and by which the views of many subsequent writers upon that period have

been strongly, and, perhaps, unduly influenced. He was one of the commissioners who superintended the construction of the monument to Lord Nelson. He was a director of the first Savings Bank established in Montreal, and Chairman of the Committee, which framed the articles of incorporation for the Bank of Montreal, in 1817. He served as a justice of the peace for the District of Montreal, and as a trustee for the improvement of the highway to Lachine, then a highly important link in the communication with western Canada. He was an active member of the committee which purchased the land upon which the General Hospital was afterwards built, and became Chairman of Committee appointed to oversee its construction. After its completion he was immediately elected President of the Board of Directors. Soon after his death the "Richardson wing" of the Hospital was built as the most fitting memorial of a long, active, and useful life. A tablet on its front bears the following inscription:

*This building was erected A.D. 1832 to commemorate the public and private virtues of the Honorable John Richardson, a distinguished merchant of this city, and member of the Executive and Legislative Councils of the Province. He was first President of the hospital, and a liberal contributor to its foundation and support. He was born at Portsoy, North Britain, and died on the 18th May, 1831, aged 76 years."*

The chief purpose of the journey described in these letters was to supervise the construction of a schooner to be employed by his firm on Lake Huron and Michigan. This vessel, named the *Nancy*, became the property of the North-West Fur Company, when Richardson's firm and other Montreal houses amalgamated their interests, or, as we say now, formed a "trust," under that name. During the War of 1812 she was hired as a transport by the British Government, and was ultimately destroyed by her crew on the 14th of August, 1814, in the mouth of the Nottawasaga River to prevent her from falling into the hands of the American squadron on Lake Huron. Immediately after its formation the firm of Forsyth, Richardson & Company seized the earliest opportunity to protest against the prospective evacuation of the British military post on the lakes, which they foresaw must lead to the loss of the greater part of the local fur-trade. In conjunction with McTavish, Frobisher & Co. and Todd, McGill & Co., of Montreal, they prepared a memorial to Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe, dated at Montreal on the 9th of December, 1791, urging that a new line of demarcation should be negotiated between Upper Canada and the United States, following the heights of land dividing the streams flowing into the lakes, and the St. Lawrence, from those falling into the Atlantic and the Mississippi, which would leave those posts in British territory and secure to Canadian merchants the North-West fur-trade, which they estimated to be then worth £200,000 sterling annually. This they followed up by a second memorial, dated on April 23rd, 1792, in which they suggested that if no alteration in the boundary could be hoped for, at least an agreement might be arranged for a "neutral reciprocity of trade with the Indians," which they argued "would be much in our favor, because there would then remain within our confines not one-tenth part of the trade (the North-West excepted) that would be on the other side."

From 1776 to 1779, John Porteous, to whom these letters were written, had resided in the City of New York, but his name appears, first, among the signers of "A memorial of merchants and traders from Montreal to the Great Carrying Place on Lake Superior, and the interior country, commonly called the North or North-West," addressed to Governor Haldimand, dated May 11th, 1780, and also signed by such men of weight as Simon McTavish, Benjamin Frobisher, Todd & McGill, and Adam Lymburner. About 1788 or 1789 he removed from Montreal to Little Falls. in the Mohawk Vallev. formerly known as

Ellice's Mills, where he built a flour-mill, and acted as agent for Alexander Ellice, who owned a large tract of land in the vicinity.

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

At Little Falls, N.Y.

OSWEGO, 31st May, 1789.

DEAR PORTEOUS, - I arrived here at half-past six this morning in 22 hours from Kingston, being all night upon the water, and by a shift of wind and getting embayed in an inaccessible shore beyond the 9-mile point from hence was in some danger. I was 6 days from Montreal to Kingston. The people in the new settlements are starving for provisions, and pouring in crowds to your quarter for a supply. I hope they may be allowed to obtain and bring them, although I much doubt it. A quantity of flour has, however, I find gone past to Niagara.

Parson Stuart will probably draw on you or J (oseph) E (llice) & Co. for what stands due him on our books, above £500, or, perhaps, for more. Please honor his drafts and place them to debit of J. E. & Co.

If you could procure 2 six or eight-gallon kegs of good pickled oysters, either now or at a more favorable season, and 2 kegs of Bogart's or Harris' small biscuits, 50 or 56-lb. each, it will oblige the gentlemen here and me much by sending them in some bateau coming this way. The half is for Capt. Partridge, 5th Regt., commanding here, and the other for Capt. Bunbury, same regt., at Kingston, to whom direct them, noting the cost, and they will reimburse us in Canada. They are very good fellows. I beg you'll occasionally send some newspapers to Capt. Partridge, who can forward them to the other when they are read. A few lemons would also be an acquisition with the biscuit and oysters.

I am in a Schenectady bateau raised a streak. (I have three Frenchmen, three Englishmen, or rather Irishmen, good tractable fellows, and the master carpenter.) I shall return this way again in September, when I shall again write you, and would be glad then, or at Niagara, to hear how you go on. I write Mr. Ellice by this conveyance, who, I suppose, is yet in your quarter. I beg my kindest respects to the ladies at the house, who, I suppose, found their jaunt everything they could wish. I shall find this a most fatiguing one, as I do not stop even to boil a tea-kettle, except at night, and sometimes not then; I see the impropriety of night expeditions. If ever an accident befalls me it will be by presuming with a fair wind, which creates an irresistible anxiety to be at the end of my journey.

Wishing you all happiness, believe me,

Yours most sincerely,

The same quantity of oysters, biscuits, and lemons, send for Joseph Forsyth also, who now resides at Kingston.

(Endorsed) " Letter, J. Richardson,  
Oswego, 31st May, 1789,  
Rec'd., 5th June, wrote  
him the 9th."

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

At Little Falls, N.Y.

FORT ERIE, 14th June, 1789.

DEAR SIR,—My last was from Oswego, of the 31st ulto. Wind prevented my departing thence till 11 that night, when it abating, I proceeded all night, and the weather continuing moderate, reached Niagara the afternoon of the 3rd, so that I was in time to communicate the information of the King's recovery previous to the solemnization of the anniversary of his birth. The news, you may believe, was pleasing, and it is a circumstance somewhat curious that I have been the bearer of the first advices of that happy event and the confirmation of it throughout a considerable part of this Province.

The distresses of this settlement for provisions have been great, and had it not been for the humane assistance of Col. Hunter, and the uncommon plenty of fish, half the people must literally have starved. Assistance has also been afforded by the arrival of many boats from Schenectady upon a pretence of going to the Genesee. Through that channel at least 200 bbls. have arrived. Mr. Stedman left this for England via Montreal about a month ago, having lost the use of one leg and thigh entirely by the rheumatism. He has left his affairs here in charge of his nephew, Philip Stedman, Junr. He will have occasion to buy a number of cattle that arrive from the States, and there being no hard money here the mode of payment, of course, becomes difficult He wished permission to draw on you, but knowing that you would have no means but by drawing on England, and that you would principally be up at the Falls (Little Falls, N.Y.), where you could not readily attend to the negotiation of bills, all I could assure him was that I would write you to take up his bills on Robt. Ellice & Co., that might be presented to you if it was suitable to your convenience. I, therefore, request you will do this either yourself or through the medium of J. Robinson & Co., as you can reimburse yourself by drawing on Messrs P(hyn) E(llice) and I(nglis), to be charged to R. E. & Co., advising each of the same.

I arrived here this afternoon after a detention longer at Niagara than I intended. It is, however, consolatory that our loss here will be less than we had reason to apprehend. I can form no judgment of

returns at Detroit yet. Phyn & Ellice's little vessel is here and ready loaded for departure. - If the wind comes fair in the morning I shall go in her, if not proceed round in my boat, which has now eight hands, so that in good nights I can keep watch and watch and be still going forward. Mr. Park, of Detroit, I understand is married to Therese Gouin. I enclose a letter for Mr. Ellice, thinking it is probable he is still in your quarter. George Forsyth has been much afflicted with the ague; he joins in compliments. I request my kind respects to the ladies, in which he also joins. He came up with me thus far for a little exercise. Believe me, with most sincere regard.

Dear Sir,  
Your very humble servant,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Mr. John Porteous.

(Endorsed) Letter from John Richardson,  
Fort Erie, 14th June, 1789. Rec'd.  
5th July.

---

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

DETROIT, 10th July, 1789.

DEAR PORTEOUS, -I was agreeably surprised the other day at receiving your letter of the 9th June in answer to mine from Oswego. The expeditious progress of your works is pleasing, but the scarcity of provisions seems universal and distressing. I am happy to hear of the safe return of Mr. Ellice and the ladies, who, before this reaches you, will, no doubt, be at Montreal. I thank you for your attention to the oysters, etc., which will be a regale to the gentlemen of the 5th.

The troops here have not 8 days' flour in store, and none can be had in the settlement. Some is expected from below. The wheat crop looks here admirably, and will be cut in a month. The corn is much injured by the grub worms and looks very ill. We go on slowly with the building of our schooner, being disappointed in some hands. The master carpenter turns out perfectly, to my mind, and is very ambitious to distinguish himself. He is very anxious to get a head for the vessel, and I wish it much also. On this subject I write our friend Constable, and I must request you to advise him whether it can probably be sent either to Niagara, or even as far as Oswego, this fall, as unless that can be effected it would not answer. I beg you will do everything in your power to forward it by the Mohawk River without delay, and I will write Capt. Partridge about it, which you will also do when sent.

I left Oswego at 11 p.m. of the day I wrote from thence on the afternoon of the third day after I reached Niagara. - My detention

was greater than I expected there; but my passage from Fort Erie being only six days to this place, made up for it. To-morrow I depart for Mackina, and I shall not rest much till I see it. Returns there are said to be good, especially from the Mississippi. Here they are short, indeed, but as the most of our customers wintered themselves, the few packs there are have been beneficially procured. I am sorry to inform you that Mr. Baby is dangerously ill, being far gone in a dropsy, which there is little hopes of radically curing at his time of life. Present my best respects to Mrs. Ellice, and believe me,

Yours most sincerely,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Direct the box containing the head to the address of Robert Hamilton, Esqr., Niagara.

Perhaps some boat going to the Genesee country would (if no better conveyance offers), for some consideration, go down to Oswego with it.

Mr. John Porteous.

(Endorsed) " Letter J. Richardson, Detroit,  
10th July, 1789. Rec'd. 17th  
Augt."

---

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

OSWEGO, 23rd September, 1789.

DEAR PORTEOUS,-I arrived here last evening in 30 hours from Niagara without having been ashore, except just before reaching this, to shift myself. My passages have been exceedingly fortunate, for from here to Niagara I was little more than two days and a half ; from Fort Erie to Detroit, 6 days ; Detroit to Michilima, 67 $\frac{1}{2}$  days ; from thence back to Detroit, 6 days, and from Detroit to Fort Erie, 3, being all in my boat. I wrote you from Detroit requesting the forwarding a head for our vessel now building, which I requested Mr. Constable to procure and send you ; but I am unhappy to learn from Capt. Partridge that such a letter never reached you, and it gives me reason to suppose the like fate befel that to Mr. Constable. Such being the case I have to request you will forward the enclosed to him without delay, and when the head arrives you will please send it to Niagara by first conveyance, or to this place, where I will leave directions concerning the same. David Ramsay is now on his way to your quarters, and returns this season. He will call on you about it, as I gave him a memo. on the subject. He depends upon procuring a boat to come up through some note, which Geo. Forsyth was to procure payment of at Mont-

real, and if so remit you the amount. But as that resource may probably fail him, I have to request you will advance him the means of getting a boat, provided he will remain till the head can be got from New York, and then take it along. He can repay the money to Geo. Forsyth,\* who will be up at Niagara, and in the meantime charge it to R. E. & Co. You will direct it in that case to the care of Robert Hamilton, advising him of the same, that he may send it on without delay. If it comes only this far, Capt. Partridge will see it taken care. I am very anxious on this subject, as the schooner will be a perfect masterpiece of workmanship and beauty. The expense to us will be great, but there will be the satisfaction of her being strong and very durable. Her floor timbers, keel, keelson, stem, and lower uttock are oak. The transom, stem, post, upper part of stem, upper uttocks, top timbers, stern timbers, beams, and knees are all red cedar. She will carry 350 barrels. I send the letter to Mr. Constable inclosed, as by that means there will be less chance of miscarriage, and I beg you'll send it down to Albany on purpose, and put it into the post-office. You'll please write me at Montreal on the subject.

The trade of Detroit has been bad indeed. The returns of last season are deficient beyond example. Not 1,900 packs are sent from there this year, but still there is the consolation (hitherto uncommon) that this pittance has, on the whole, been beneficially procured. Michilima has done well, and I happy to say that poor Meldrum has shared in it. I have made some arrangements there this year which will procure an extension of our business in that quarter, and I hope a safe one—at any rate if upper country business is at all eligible (of which there is much doubt), Micha is far preferable to Detroit, as being more out of the way of either military or commercial interference from the States.

Poor Baby died at Detroit about the first of August, universally regretted. He has not left such a Frenchman behind him. I am sorry to say that Mr. Macomb was indisposed when I left it (10th Sepr.) with an intermitting fever, not, however, any way dangerous, and I hope he is ere this restored to health and strength. The summer has been remarkably warm there and rather sickly. The crop is middling, and according to the quantity of straw very productive, but heavy rains in harvest have hurt much of it. The price this summer was 60 Y(or)k—at Mich(ilimackinac) and corn, 6. The prospect for corn is good if, from its lateness, the frost does not interfere.

I have heard of the safe arrival of Mr. Ellice and the ladies at Montreal. Their stay with you was shorter than I expected. A Doctor Jones, whom I saw last evening, informed me of your

\* George Forsyth lies buried in St. Mark's churchyard at Niagara, where there is a monument with the inscription : " In memory of Geo. Forsyth, who in his long residence as a merchant and magistrate in the town was beloved for his mild manners and great worth, died Sept. 15th. 1803. aged 52 years.

works going on rapidly. I sincerely wish they may prove beneficial, and equal your expectations as to the workmanship. I will be happy to hear from you on this subject. Capt. Partridge tells me you are constant correspondents. The military gentlemen at present in this country are so exceedingly polite and hospitable that it absolutely interferes with my journey. The wind is now fair; I am exceedingly anxious to avail myself of it, but an attempt for that purpose has failed. They insist on my staying a day, that you know at this season is very inconvenient, as all hands are wanted towards the 25th of October.

Major Murray, 2d Bat. 60th, commands at Detroit, and is much liked, particularly by the French. He is an honest, worthy fellow, but, like all Murrays, eccentric. Col. Hunter has left Niagara, and is succeeded by Col. Harris. Capt. Parr, 60th, commands at Michilima.

Present my best respects to Mrs. Ellice, and believe me, with unfeigned esteem and regard, dear John,

Your very humble servant,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Mr. Porteous.

(Endorsed) " Letter from John Richardson,  
Oswego, 23rd Sept., 1789. Rec'  
d. 6th Oct."

---

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

OSWEGO, 23rd September, 1789.

DEAR PORTEOUS,—I wrote you already of this date, to which be referred. Mr. Valentine, the Preventive Officer here, spoke to Major Fonda respecting a two-handed boat, which Mr. McBeath wants, and will be obliged to you to inquire if he has procured her; if not you will please do it, and send this length with Capt. Partridge's flour and potatoes, etc., which he wrote you about. He desires his compliments, and begs the flour may come, if possible, this fall, otherwise not to be sent in spring, as he will then move from hence. As much of your wheat is grown, I understand, you'll be careful that the flour is not made from such. The two-handed boat above mentioned is to replace the boat in which I have performed this summer's jaunt; she being borrowed from Mr. McBeath, and, of course, I feel an anxiety he may get a good one. Let her be 6 inches higher than the common ones. Mr. Valentine told Major Fonda 3, but if she is not already built, I am persuaded this addition will not be too much. The amount you'll charge to R. E. & Co., and advise them thereof. I hope Fonda and Mr. Adams have made, or will make, some payments of consequence to J. E. & Co.

The other letter principally respected a head for our vessel at Detroit, and as I have not time to write Mr. Constable a duplicate, you will please note to him by a conveyance dif(feren)t from that which my letter will go by, that the one wanted, if of a size inferior to that usually put upon a vessel of 60 tons burden, to be made by Skelling, the figure of a lady dressed in the present fashion, and with a hat and feather. As she will be launched this fall, it is of consequence to have it before then, as it can be easier fixed when on the stocks, but at all events I wish it sent on, if it should not even get beyond this.

The boat I have performed my journey in is a three-handed one, raised 6 inches, and fitted at Detroit with two sprit sails, a jib and lee-board. She is a most excellent *sea* boat, as I experienced in crossing Saginaw Bay, when a gale of wind overtook me. You'll be surprised to be informed that hitherto I have beat the vessels, which happened to sail at same time. I run from this side, Saginaw Traverse, to within 40 miles of Mich., in 29 hours, and from Detroit wharf to Fort Erie, was going exactly 65 hours, only being the rem(ainin)g 7 either ashore or stop at Long Point Portage.

The forts in the Upper Country are all undergoing a repair this year, so that there appears no idea of delivering them over to Jonathan, and to take them by force would not be an easy business for him were he so inclined. Detroit wharf is building, Charles Morison\* is seated at Mich.; I wish him success, but it is not now what he once experienced it. He was much affected with the death of his daughter, which happened at Montreal this summer.

Perhaps some Loyalists coming this way would bring McBeath's boat at little or no expense, for the use of her. Wishing you all happiness and success, I am,

Yours most faithfully,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

P.S.—Capt. Partridge says he has mislaid Mr. Ellice's letter, with the acct. of articles sent him. Please send him a copy of it, which, with what you may forward this fall, he will pay altogether by a draft on Montreal.

Mr. Porteous.

(Endorsed) " Letter John Richardson,  
Oswego, 23rd Sept., 1789.  
Rec'd. 6th Oct."

\* There is a tombstone to Charles Morison at Niagara inscribed, " To the memory of Charles Morison, a native of Scotland, who resided many years at Michilimackinac as a merchant and magistrate, and since the cession of that post to the United States became a British subject by election. For loyalty to his Sovereign and integrity in his dealings, however remarkable. He died here on his way to Montreal on the 6th day of Sept., 1802, aged 65 years.

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

MONTREAL, 20th Oct., 1789.

DEAR PORTEOUS, -I had the pleasure of writing you from Oswego. From that place I was 18 hours to Cataraqui, and from thence three days to this place. Our hurry at this season is extreme. In a few days it will abate, and we shall after the 25th enjoy a little relaxation. The Loyalists' compensations are mostly all received, and we are almost run down by them for money. It will, however, be a good business for us, as nearly £40,000 sterling is passed to our cr(edit) in London on that account. Part will be taken from us in goods, and we shall have some benefit of interest on the remainder. I need not say that it will at all times give me pleasure to hear of your welfare. I hope your affairs go on to your wish. We have no news here, but what, of course, you know respecting European matters. The Grand Monarque seems in a woeful plight. The Devil help him, say we all here. I sent Mrs. Ellice a keg of pecans from Oswego, which I hope she received. Make offer of my best respects to her. Mr. Ellice, the ladies, and Mr. Forsyth are well.

Believe me,

Dear John,

Yours most sincerely,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Remember me to Chas. Miller.

(Endorsed) " Letter from John Richardson,  
Montreal, 20th Oct., 1789.

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

MONTREAL, 23rd April, 1790.

DEAR Sin,—Having been frequently disappointed in an opportunity to send over your chest of papers, the old adage occurred to me that the farthest way about is sometimes the nearest way home. Under this idea I now send it to Oswego in charge of Mr. Valentine, the Preventive Officer there, who will forward it by some conveyance from thence.

Our new schooner, the *Nancy*, was launched at Detroit the 24th of November last, and is a most beautiful and substantial vessel. You'll please advise of any expenses incurred in forwarding the head, and also what account you have against Capt. Partridge, as he will, no doubt, direct the payment of it here. The boat I ordered last summer, I believe I mentioned before, is now not necessary, as the matter is otherwise arranged.

Our advices from Detroit by winter express are unfavorable to prospects for returns the ensuing summer. The mildness of the season and the alarms of the Indians, on account of the Americans, have injured the deer hunt. Raccoons and bears will be numerous. We know nothing of the Michilima District. Too many goods are going up, and from advices from last packet we have to dread an inundation of them from England.

The co-partnership of Robt. Ellice & Co. ceased the 1st instant, and the business in future will be conducted under the firm of Forsyth, Richardson & Co. ; John Forsyth being admitted as a partner.

I am happy to learn that your mill machinery is so complete, and hope your expectations may be answered to the fullest extent. If an opportunity presents I should be glad to hear from you, directed to the care of Mr. Forsyth, Niagara, as I go up about the 20th prox. My journey will extend to Michilima, but not in an open boat as last year. I am tired of that way of travelling, it being both uncomfortable and dangerous if one does not creep along shore like the Frenchmen.

We shall in June next be deprived of the pleasure of Mrs. Ellice's and Miss Pollard's residence with us, as they embark then for England in the May run. They will be a most sensible loss to the society of this place. Present my respects to Mr. Ellice, and believe me.

Your sincere friend and humble servant,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Addressed

With a  
chest  
directed.

'Mr. John Porteous,  
at the Little Falls,  
Mohawk River;  
or,  
Schenectady.

(Endorsed) "Letter John Richardson,  
Mont'l., 23rd Apr., 1790.  
Rec'd. 16th May."

---

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

NIAGARA, 19th June, 1790.

DEAR PORTEOUS, — Finding a conveyance direct from Schenectady I cannot deny myself the pleasure of scribbling a few lines to you. I wrote Mr. Pollard from Kingston, by one Kennedy Farrel, which I hope he will receive. I sailed from Kingston the 15th, and arrived here in three days; a fortunate passage, because the wind shifted almost instantly on my arrival. The vessels having gone by the same wind from Fort Erie. I will not get from thence before the

*Nancy* sailed upwards with a full cargo, and may visit Micha. ere she returns. She is spoken of here in such a high strain of encomium as to beauty, stowage, and sailing, that she almost exceeds my expectations.

I dread to hear about this year's returns. From the number of packs that have as yet reached this, they will prove deficient beyond measure. I shall be here again in September, and hope to hear from you and Mr. Pollard. A report has prevailed of an intention on the part of the States to attach the posts. It is not credited, but should such an attempt ever be made they will meet with a reception not very comfortable, as everything is in complete order.

Present my respects to Mr. Ellice and Mr. Pollard.\*

The enclosed note was supposed to be given by Mr. H'r (Herchimer) at Kingston, but it proves to be a nephew of his, who resides at Fort Herchimer. Will you endeavor to recover it? Believe me, with every wish for your happiness and prosperity,

Most truly yours,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Addressed: Mr. John Porteous, Merchant,  
Little Falls, Mohawk River.

---

MONTREAL, 15th Feb., 1790.

DEAR STE,—I had the pleasure of writing you by Mr. Pollard, to which refer. This goes by Mr. Ellice, who will deliver you amount cur(ren)t with Robert Ellice & Co., on which there is a very considerable balance due you that he will arrange, provided money cannot be mustered to send you from hence; that will, however, I fear, be impossible from its present scarcity. I at this time write Robt. Adams most pressingly on the subject of his debt to J. E. & Co., which I am really astonished at his not even attempting to discharge. It must now be insisted on, as indulgence only renders such people more remiss. You will **see** Cr. in your amount, the proceeds of sundries sold by Mr. Lilly. The remaining papers, etc., are packed in a chest, which I shall take the opportunity of some sleigh to send over.

You will also see a small sum to be paid to Mr. Roseboom. I mentioned in my last that Casety's draft on his son was somehow mislaid at Detroit, and if it does not arrive by the winter express, I shall procure a certificate from the adm(inistrato)r to that estate of its not being paid. A small dividend was recd. on it this year, which is Cr. to J. F. & Co., and must by them be placed to that of Col. Frey.

Mr. Ellice will do what he can in the affairs of that firm, but I fear they will train on long. You'll please advise me of the amount that

\* Edward Pollard, for many years a trader at Fort Niagara.

Capt. Partridge owes you, and also send a note of the expenses incurred in forwarding the vessel's head. The boat intended for Mr. McBeath will not now be wanted, as I have settled with him for same. Major Fonda must, therefore, keep her himself, if Mr. Valentine at Oswego has not ordered one of that kind for his own use.

The copartnership of Robert Ellice & Co. will be dissolved on the 31st proximo. Such is the magnitude of the sums yet at stake, and so unfortunate have they been under the extension of their business that all I promise myself is their doing to their engagements. It is to be hoped that the dear bought experience of the past will guide us in future. John Forsyth comes into the house, and the firm will be Forsyth, Richardson & Co.

I tremble for the fur sales, such a general commotion in Europe must be ruinous to them.

We have nothing new to communicate, if there were Mr. Ellice would give you the information.

Believe me,

Dear Porteous,

Yours most sincerely,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

(Endorsed) Letter J. Richardson,  
Montreal, 15th Feb.,  
1790. Recd. 27th.

---

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

LONDON, 1st March, 1791.

DEAR PORTEOUS, -I was in Scotland when your agreeable favor arrived here. I cannot describe the happiness I felt during my stay in that country, and there, above all others, I could wish to spend the evening of my days.

I found two sisters grown up that I had never seen before, and one married since I left the country, who has six children alive and two dead. I could hardly believe my eyes on witnessing such alterations.

I had the pleasure of calling on your brother when passing Perth on my return, but my time was so short I made no stay. He was well. That place appears most delightful, even in winter. I saw at Aberdeen your friend, George Taylor,\* who enquired most cordially after you, and drank your health in a bumper. He is married and has four children. Poor Skinner died in the Bahamas. The improvements in Scotland are very great, although at this season seen to disadvantage.

\* Formerly a member of the trading firm of Taylor & Duffin, at Fort Niagara.

New Edinburgh and the improvements in the Old by the South Bridge are incredible. I see nothing equally magnificent even here.

I see some differences in the accounts here regarding sums that we supposed you would take Cr. for on ace. of the house in Montreal. If you have not lately, I wish you would transmit to Canada a state. of your acct. stating precisely what you have ordered, or are entitled to Cr. herefor. The deerskins turned out tolerably—the gross average of the whole importation 4s. 6d. stg.

The 2nd and 3rd is the fur sale, and we hope for tolerable prices in general. Muskrats and bears are rather unpromising, but experience alone can show.

Mr. and Mrs. Ellice are here. Their children are at Pittencrief. Capt. and Mrs. Phyn and Miss Ellice were well there. Mr. and Mrs. Phyn, their two sons and daughters, are all well. You would hardly believe that John and (illegible) are as tall as me. This is a most pleasant place, but still I should not like it as a permanent residence.

Our new plan of Government for Canada is to be brought forward in the House of Commons to-morrow. There are to be two Governments, and of the upper one Col. Simcoe is appointed Governor. Present my best compliments to Mrs. Ellice, and believe me, with great regard,

Dear Porteous,  
Your very humble servant,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

Addressed: Mr. John Porteous, Merchant  
in Schenectady,  
State of New York.

---

JOHN RICHARDSON TO JOHN PORTEOUS.

NIAGARA, 25th June, 1791.

DEAR PORTEOUS,—My last was from the other side of the Atlantic, since which none of your favors have reached me. I left London, the 6th of April, and embarked in the Downs, on the 8th, abroad the *Everetta*, Capt. Wm. Beatson. We had ten passengers, in which number were: Mr. Shepherd, of Detroit; Messrs. Fraser and Morrogh, of Quebec; John McGill, S. McTavish, and S. Berichon, Junr., of Montreal. The weather was disagreeable, and the passage tedious to the Banks, which we struck only on the 13th May. Favorable winds thereafter landed us at Quebec the evening of the 24th. Next morning at 9 a.m. Messrs. McGill, Shepherd, Berichon, and I, sat out for Montreal. All

of us enjoyed there high spirits by contrasting green fields with the tempestuous ocean; but short lived is human happiness, little did we suspect being on the brink of an event that would soon place some in their graves and leave others in a state scarce more enviable. We reached Jacques Cartier on the 25th May at 4 p.m., and found that river much swollen and very rapid. The canoe appeared small, but people passing daily no apprehensions were entertained. The baggage was put in, and Mr. McGill accidentally went over with it. When the canoe returned the rest of us embarked, and when about 2-3rds over, touching a sunken stone or rock, and being side to the current, she instantly overset. We all got hold of her, and I called out to keep fast, but unhappily she turned over, and during that time poor Shepherd and Berichon lost their hold and never could recover it. One of the ferrymen got ashore by swimming, the other sticking to the canoe with me we were soon hurried by the very rapid stream past the point, and then lost sight of my ill-fated companions, who soon perished. I had no hopes of escape, but fortunately preserving my refiexion was able to reason on the only possible means of safety that might present. After drifting down about 400 yds. towards the main river, I felt myself touch bottom, but could not stand, such was the rapidity of the current. I, therefore, persevered in sticking to the canoe till passing near a stone, on which was about a foot and a half of water, by an exertion I reached it, and standing with my back against it and face up stream supported myself until recovered by a canoe, which came from a distance. The ferryman seeing my situation, got hold of a pole, which had kept by the canoe, quitted her about 20 yds. farther down, and placing it against his back was able to stand till also relieved. I was an hour in the water, and was so exhausted with the weight of a great coat and boots water-soaked, and £450 Hx. in specie in my pocket, that half an hour more would have done my business Getting to bed after being dried, soon recovered my warmth. Poor Shepherd's body was found in 2 hours, and Berichon's not till a week after. Every remedy we could think of was tried to recover the former, but ineffectually ; I, therefore, determined as a tribute due to the memory of a lamented and intimate friend and companion to carry his body to Montreal if possible for interment, which, notwithstanding the heat of the weather at the time, was effected at midnight, on the 27th. Next noon he was buried decently close to one worthy friend, Jas. Ellice. The recital is too melancholy to dwell upon. The journey was awful, and the event impressive. I have great reason for gratitude to the Almighty for so providential a deliverance. Poor Shepherd must be lamented by all who knew him. None deserved to enjoy longer life, and few promised it more from appearance.

Mr. Macomb passed here a day or two before I reached this place, I go on to-morrow for Fort Erie. I find he left the deeds for Mr.

Burch,\* with an open letter at Mr. Hamilton's, a most extraordinary step; Geo. Forsyth was the proper person or Mr. Burch himself. Putting a person not connected with us in possession of the whole business was very imprudent and vexes me much.

You write Mr. Burch about some debt claimed by him, but say not by whom. He owes none, but a Mr. Desbrosses, of New York, about £30 Yk., which he is willing to pay with interest from time of its being demanded (viz., year before last), which is as much *as* can be reasonably demanded, as pay(men)t was offered at the beginning of the war in paper money, and they did not choose to take it. But what right has Mr. Cockburn to interfere in the matter ? He has no right to assume pay(men)t for Mr. Burch, and he must not do it. If this is the debt above alluded to, you may draw on Forsyth, R (ichardson) & Co. for it, if they choose to take it the way mentioned, otherwise they must apply to himself here. You wrote to Mr. E(llice) about some demand made on Mr. B (urch). Was this the one ?

I see Cr. with P(hyn), E(llice) and I(nglis) for about £20 rec'd from New Providence. Have you rec'd. a similar one, or is it all passed to mine ? I shall be happy to hear from you if a conveyance presents, directed to Geo. Forsyth's care here.

Present my best respects to Mrs. Ellice and Mr. Pollard, and believe me, with most sincere regard.

Yours most truly,

JOHN RICHARDSON.

\* **John Burch, who built the first grist and saw-mill at Niagara Falls, known for several years as Burch's Mills, and afterwards as Street's Mills. By birth an Englishman, he emigrated to Canada during the American Revolution. He died on Match 7th, 1797, and is buried at Drummond Hill graveyard.**