

Title:	Letter by D.A. McNair to Mr. Benjn. A. Kerly, December 4, [1838]		
Creator:	D.A. McNair		
Dates of Material:	December 4, [1838]	Record Group Number:	RG 853
Summary of Contents:	<p>A letter written by D.A. McNair describing the Battle of Windsor, dated Detroit opposite the Head Quarters of the Patriot Army, December 4, 12:00 p.m. The letter is addressed to Mr. Benjn. A Kerly, New York and is postmarked Detroit Dec. 7.</p> <p>A typewritten transcript of the letter is included. McNair writes that <i>“it would not be wholly uninteresting to you to hear a detail of the movements, doings and so on of the patriots...our woods for 20 or 30 miles around us have been filled with men.... Last Saturday the report was extensively circulated that the patriots went that night to cross the river. About two o’clock the patriots were formed at foot of Woodward Avenue ready to do battle, but upon inspection it was found that they lacked a most necessary item Sir. A Leader. A postponement until the next was moved and carried. The next night (Sunday) came. As we were proceeding to the evening services we were greeted by the shrill note of the bugle calling the Brady Guards to arms...the pats ... concluded that it was best to give up the expedition, deliver up their arms and disperse...the race of patriots was considered extinct. But far removed from this was the actual facts of the case. The fire within their hearts did glow with renewed vigor. This very night they placed securely upon the Canadian shore a large supply of arms and ammunition! The next day (Monday)...Patriots were seen strolling with the bundles upon a steak over their shoulder in all directions. By night excitement was gone, other themes than patriotism filled our minds. Thus we went to sleep. And picture to yourself our surprise as we rose the next morning (Tuesday) to witness Windsor in flames!!!</i></p> <p>McNair continues <i>“They left the wharf to the stream saw mill about 200 in number in the “L.B. Champlain” (owned by that stiff old Royalist Julius Eldred). The action commenced at ½ past 5 o’clock this morning. After a fire of about 30 minutes a party of her majesty’s troops consisting of militia & regulars who had ensconced themselves in a large yellow building...This building was fired and was burnt to the ground together with five others which were in the hands of the government. No private property was molested except one or two houses which from their proximity to the others could not be avoided. A steam boat lying at the wharf the “Thames” was burnt...The loss of the royalist in the mornings engagement--17 killed, 40 prisoners with arms, the wounded not known.... The killed and wounded are on our side. It is said that after the pats had entirely dispersed the royalists and taken possession of Sandwich they started for the London district.... They were proceeding as far as opposite Hog Island. They were overtaken by a large lot of regulars in wagons and a lot of horsemen. The pats stood there</i></p>		

	<p><i>fire but a few moments retreating to the woods...This engagement took place about noon...the royalists...returned and retook the towns of W & S. Col. John Prince is in command of the militia. This said that he was so much exasperated that he ordered six men out of his ranks to shoot down the 3 pat prisoners which was accomplished...Tuesday morning has come, nothing of importance occurred during the night. So much for patriotism..."</i></p>		
<p>Physical Description / Condition:</p>	<p>1 letter (4 pages)</p>		
<p>Administrative/ Biographical Sketch:</p>	<p>On December 4, 1838, the city of Windsor was taken over by a band of patriots who supported William Lyon Mackenzie's quest for responsible government in Canada. About 140 Americans and Canadians crossed from Detroit early in the morning and landed in Windsor. They proceeded to capture and burn a militia barracks and occupied Windsor. They were soon met by a militia force commanded by Colonel John Prince. Four of the patriots were taken prisoner and were executed by order of Col. Prince. This action was met with great controversy in both the United States and Canada. The other prisoners stood trial in London, Upper Canada. Six more were executed, 16 deported, and 18 sent to a penal colony in Tasmania.</p>		
<p>Location:</p>	<p>Brock University Archives</p>		
<p>Source Information:</p>	<p>Acquired from Hindman Auctions in 2023.</p>		
<p>Described by:</p>	<p>Chantal Cameron</p>	<p>Date:</p>	<p>September 2023</p>