

<b>Title:</b>	Letter by G.H. Morton to Peter P. Dox, December 8, 1812		
<b>Creator:</b>	G.H. Morton		
<b>Dates of Material:</b>	December 8, 1812	<b>Record Group Number:</b>	RG 855
<b>Summary of Contents:</b>	<p>A letter written by G.H. Morton to Peter P. Dox, Albany, dated at Geneva, December 8, 1812. Morton is writing to Dox about the events related to Capt. Alexander Smyth's invasion of Canada from Black Rock in November 1812, and the condition of Dox's brother Captain Myndert M. Dox who was injured during the action. The letter includes a detailed description of General Smyth's actions and his attack from Black Rock. A typewritten transcript of the letter is included.</p> <p>Morton writes that <i>"Err this you will have heard of the strange and unaccountable manner in which General Smyth has closed the campaign of the army of the centre. The conduct of the commander has excited universal surprise and we are entirely unable to find what has been the nature of the negotiation between the British Officer which was kept up for several days. We have received a letter from Jacob in Buffalo dated 4<sup>th</sup> inst. giving an account of the movements of the army from Saturday morning until Tuesday when the expedition was declared to be at an end..."</i></p> <p>He describes the action, writing that <i>"The regulars were marched down to Black Rock on Friday evening and before day on Saturday morning. 150 regulars and 100 sailors were sent over to attack the batteries. They elected their landing without much opposition, took the batteries, spiked the cannon and made about 38 of the enemy prisoners with the loss of only 4 killed and 20 wounded.</i></p> <p>Morton addressed the condition of Dox's brother Myndert: <i>"Myndert, who had command of one detachment, received a wound immediately on landing and notwithstanding drew up his boats on shore and having formed his men, made a furious attack upon the enemy's artillery and took two pieces. He then dragged one piece down the bank to the water and on looking around found his boats afloat down the river. He immediately called to his men to come and assist in recovering the boats and rushed up to his arm pits into the water. His men ran down, leaped into the boats and put off to the opposite shore, in spite of Myndert's ordering them back. He was left entirely alone and on getting out of the water was taken prisoner by a party of the enemy. They took away his sword and proceeded with him towards one of the batteries. On their approach Myndert discovered it in possession of our men and gave the countersign <u>Wynder</u> and was instantly released and the British guard fired on....After this in consequence of his wound he set off alone to go about two miles to Colonel Parker's detachment and in his way thither was again taken prisoner by a British officer, whom he cunningly prevailed on to go to the place he wanted and just before he reached the place informed the officer, who immediately started and attempted to make his escape, but was</i></p>		

	<p><i>taken by some of Parker's men."</i></p> <p>A detailed description of the planned attack follows: <i>"The Genl. issued an order that they shd be ready to cross on Monday morning and the orders were promptly obeyed as on Saturday and by the appointed hour the whole force was ready to embark and after they got ready to cross a flag arrived, had an interview with the Genl. and all hands ordered ashore again. This was highly mortifying to troops who a moment before were elated with the expectation of quickly meeting the enemy on their own ground. The flag remained for several hours and Gen. Sheaffe's aide had a lengthy interview with Smyth, a part of the time being devoted to writing &amp; c. Nothing transpired during the remainder of the day and at night the Gen. declared he would cross in the morning and go himself in the first boat....the troops not dejected by former disappointment cheerfully obeyed his orders and by daylight the whole was embarked. At that moment a flag arrived and the Genl. told the men they might disembark, as the expedition was at an end. The regulars were ordered into winter quarters and the volunteers to repair to the arsenal and deposit their arms. Nothing could exceed the displeasure with which this last order was received. The Genl. without delay repaired to Buffalo and enquired for lodging but was absolutely refused and was obliged to betake himself to camp—and defend himself against the mob. As a specimen of the contempt which the volunteers had for their leader a company marched to a house where they supposed the Genl. had taken refuge and then opening on the right and left, the captain advanced with the Genl's proclamation in his hand, threw them on the ground and a volley was fired over it and they then stacked their arms and started for their homes. Myndert was then in snug quarters in Buffalo and received every attention. His wound is in the calf of his leg and will not confine him long..."</i></p>
<p><b>Physical Description / Condition:</b></p>	<p>1 letter (3 pages)</p>
<p><b>Administrative/ Biographical Sketch:</b></p>	<p>Myndert M. Dox (1790-1830) was born in Albany, N.Y. He served as a Captain in the Thirteenth Regiment of Infantry and was later appointed Collector of the Port of Buffalo.</p> <p>Alexander Smyth (1765-1830) was an American soldier and Congressman. In 1812 he was given command of a brigade of regulars stationed in Niagara with the intent to invade Canada. After Stephen Van Rensselaer's failed attack at Queenston in October 1812, Smyth took over command of his forces. Shortly after he issued a confident proclamation declaring that he</p>

	<p>would quickly conquer Canada. On November 25 he ordered troops at Black Rock, near Buffalo, to prepare to cross the river to Canada. However, he soon realized that only a fraction of the men available would be able to cross on the boats from the navy yard and decided to abandon the attack. A subsequent attempt also proved unsuccessful and Smyth realized that the untrained and ill- equipped army had little chance of success. He was harshly criticized for his failure after his confident proclamation. The U.S. government took him out of the army and he subsequently served in the House of Delegates representing Virginia as well as Congress.</p>		
<b>Location:</b>	Brock University Archives		
<b>Source Information:</b>	Acquired from Hindman Auctions in 2023.		
<b>Described by:</b>	Chantal Cameron	<b>Date:</b>	September 2023