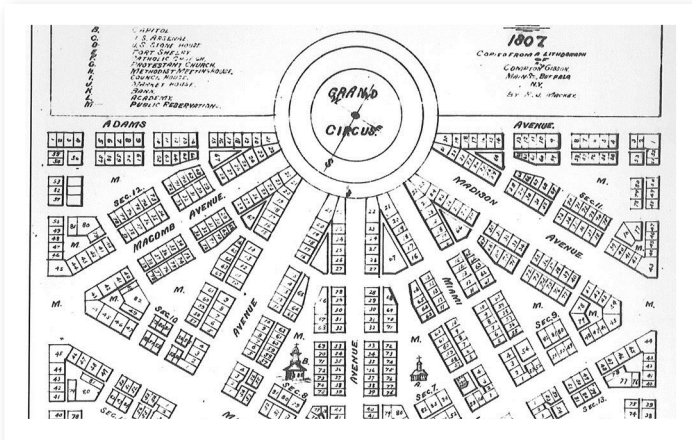


Where  
the past  
is present

# DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## TEACHER RESOURCE LESSON PLAN

### YOU BE THE JUDGE: THE SURRENDER OF DETROIT



#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson helps third grade students understand the life and culture in Detroit after the Americans took control of the settlement in 1796, through its involvement in the War of 1812. The lesson includes a comprehensive background essay, a list of additional resources, and copies of worksheets and primary sources.

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Was American General William Hull, who surrendered Detroit to the British during the War of 1812, guilty or innocent of treason and cowardice?

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn about the War of 1812 and the circumstances surrounding the surrender of Detroit.
- Read several argumentative essays and identify key points of view.
- Consider multiple perspectives and points of view when making a decision.

#### MI GLCES – GRADE THREE SOCIAL STUDIES

##### H3 – History of Michigan Through Statehood

- 3-H3.0.1 – Identify questions historians ask in examining the past in Michigan.
- 3-H3.0.7 - Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to construct a historical narrative about daily life in the early settlements of Michigan.
- 3-H3.0.8 – Use case studies or stories to describe how the ideas or actions of individuals affected the history of Michigan.

#### COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS - ELA

##### Reading

- 1 - Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- 9 - Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

##### Speaking and Listening

- 1 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- 2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

# LESSON PLAN: YOU BE THE JUDGE: THE SURRENDER OF DETROIT

## BACKGROUND ESSAY

### The War of 1812

In the midst of Detroit's rebirth, conflict was brewing between the United States and England. The British were fighting the French in the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, and the tensions affected the new United States of America. There were several reasons why America declared war on England in 1812. A few of the more important reasons included:

The British were stopping American ships from trading with their enemy, France, by passing trade restrictions. The Americans said the restrictions were illegal under international law, but the British continued to stop trade.

The British were boarding American merchant vessels, kidnapping crew members and forcing them to fight for the British in the war. Britain claimed that the crew members they grabbed were not American citizens because they had been born in England. However, several Americans had been pressed into service for Britain.

The British were helping the Native Americans in the Northwest Territory, who wanted to push the Americans out of the land they considered theirs.

The United States government knew that their forts and settlements in the Northwest Territory, including Detroit, were threatened by the British, who were supporting Native American raids. The governor of Michigan Territory at the time was William Hull, who had few soldiers to defend against a British invasion or attacks by Native American tribes. President James Madison ordered an army to be sent to protect Fort Detroit.

Madison also appointed William Hull to the rank of brigadier general, and set him in charge of moving the new army from Ohio to Detroit. He took command of three regiments of Ohio militia led by Colonels Lewis Cass, Duncan McArthur, and James Findlay. As they moved north to Detroit, they were

joined by Lieutenant Colonel James Miller's 4th US Infantry.

While Hull and the troops were moving north to Detroit, war was officially declared. Unfortunately, Hull did not receive word of the declaration, and he sent a ship ahead of him filled with his dispatches, personal correspondence, medical supplies and sick soldiers. However, the British in Canada knew that war had been declared and they captured the ship off Fort Malden as it attempted to enter the Detroit River.

When he reached Detroit on July 5, 1812, Hull's troops gained an additional 140 Michigan militia

members, which brought his force to around 2,200 men. Though short on food and supplies, Hull was commanded to cross the river and strike against Fort Malden and Amherstburg in Canada. However, when they went to move on July 12, several of Hull's soldiers refused to serve outside of the United States. As a result, he stopped his advance, even though his smaller force would



have outnumbered the British, which had only 300 soldiers and 400 Native Americans.

Hull heard that a group of British and Native Americans were attacking forts north of Detroit. He feared that a large number of Native American warriors would attack Detroit from the north. He decided to attack Fort Malden on August 6, but he changed his mind and ordered American soldiers back to Detroit on August 8. He also was concerned about running out of necessary food and supplies, since the supply lines to the south were under attack by British and Native American forces.

Hull spent early August trying to re-open his supply lines, but was not successful. Meanwhile, more British troops were arriving at Fort Malden. Major General Isaac Brock, the commander for Upper Canada, moved troops across Lake Erie from Niagara. He arrived at Amherstburg on August

# LESSON PLAN: YOU BE THE JUDGE: THE SURRENDER OF DETROIT

13 and met with Shawnee leader Tecumseh. They instantly became allies against the Americans. With a combined force of 730 soldiers and 600 warriors, the British army was still smaller than the American troops in Detroit.

Brock read through the documents and dispatches that had been captured from Hull's ship. He then knew the details about the size and condition of Hull's army. Brock also learned that Hull was deeply afraid of an attack by Native Americans. Playing on this fear, he wrote a letter to other British commanders that asked them to stop sending Native Americans to Amherstburg because they already had 5,000. This letter, which was a lie, was allowed to fall into American hands.

Shortly thereafter, Brock sent Hull a letter demanding his surrender. Part of the letter stated: "The force at my disposal authorizes me to require of you the immediate surrender of Fort Detroit. It is far from my intention to join in a war of extermination, but you must be aware, that the numerous body of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops, will be beyond control the moment the contest commences..."

Brock continued to deceive Hull by ordering the militia to put on the extra uniforms that belonged to the British army. In addition, Brock had soldiers light individual campfires and conducted several marches to make British force appear larger. These efforts undermined Hull's weakening confidence.

On August 15, Brock attacked Fort Detroit using canons on the east bank of the river. The next day, Brock and Tecumseh crossed the river with the intention of blocking the American supply lines and laying siege to the fort. Brock was forced to change these plans when he learned that Hull had dispatched Colonels MacArthur and Cass with 400 men to re-open communications to the south.

Rather than be caught between this force and the fort, Brock moved to assault Fort Detroit from the west. As his men moved, Tecumseh repeatedly marched his warriors through a gap in the forest as they emitted loud war cries. This movement led the Americans to believe that the number of warriors present was much larger than there actually was. As the British approached, a ball from one of the canons hit the officer's mess in Fort Detroit, killing four

people. Fearing a massacre, Hull began negotiating a surrender of the fort and town.

During the siege and surrender of Detroit, seven Americans were killed and 2,493 were captured by the British. The local Michigan militia was permitted to return home, but the American army soldiers were taken to Quebec as prisoners.

The loss of Detroit was an embarrassing defeat for the Americans. As a result, the war's situation in the Northwest deteriorated. Americans could no longer anticipate a triumphant march into Canada. Fort Detroit remained in British hands for over a year until being re-taken by Major General William Henry Harrison in the fall of 1813.

# LESSON PLAN: YOU BE THE JUDGE: THE SURRENDER OF DETROIT

## MATERIALS USED:

### Data Elements

- *Chart: Four Reasons for the War of 1812*
- *Essay: The Surrender of Detroit*
- *Account: General William Hull*
- *Account: Colonel Lewis Cass*
- *Account: Secretary of War William Eustis*
- *Account: Major-General Isaac Brock*
- *Account: Detroit Villager Henri Dubois*

### Worksheet

- *What's the Big Idea?*

### Pencils and paper

## LESSON SEQUENCE:

1. Explain to the students that America had a second war with the British, not long after the American Revolution. This war is called the War of 1812, but it lasted for about two years - from 1812 to 1814.
2. Use *Chart: Four Reasons for the War of 1812* to help the students understand why the war was fought.
3. Explain that Detroit was an important place during the War of 1812. It was in America's control, but the British wanted to capture it very badly. Explain that the fort at Detroit was controlled by an American General named William Hull. During the war, General Hull surrendered Detroit to the British. He was later put on trial by the Army for treason (betraying the government) and cowardice. Explain that they will spend time today learning about the surrender of Detroit by reading about the trial. Then, as a class, they will have to decide whether or not they think General Hull was guilty.
4. Break the class into five groups. Give each group *Essay: The Surrender of Detroit*. Review together as a class so that each group is familiar with what happened during the surrender.
5. Next, give each group one of the account Data Elements and the *What's the Big Idea?* worksheet. Explain that each document represents the point of view of an important American during Hull's trial. Some people clearly thought he was guilty. Other people thought he was innocent.
6. Have each group read their document together. Using the worksheet, they should summarize their person's point of view. They will use the worksheet to create a brief presentation that summarizes the main reasons for the person's point of view.
7. Once all the groups have completed their worksheet and prepared their statements, have each group present their person's point of view to the class.
8. Once everyone has presented, lead a class discussion:
  - Who do you think had the strongest point of view?
  - What were some of the key reasons that people felt Hull was guilty?
  - What are some of the key reasons that people felt Hull was innocent?
9. As a class, take a vote: Was Hull guilty or innocent?
10. Explain to the class that the original trial found Hull guilty. He was sentenced to death. Fortunately, President James Monroe pardoned him and he was not killed.
11. Conclude the lesson by explaining that they just participated in an activity similar to a trial in a court. In a trial, the judge and jury listen to several people's points of view, and use that information to make decisions about a defendant's guilt or innocence.



# LESSON PLAN: YOU BE THE JUDGE: THE SURRENDER OF DETROIT

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Bald, F. Clever. *Detroit's First American Decade: 1796 to 1805*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983.
- Berton, Pierre, and Scott Cameron. *The Capture of Detroit*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991.
- Brill, Marlene Targ. *Michigan*. New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2007.
- Burton, Clarence Monroe, William Stocking, and Gordon K. Miller. *The City of Detroit Michigan 1701-1922. Volume 1*. Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010.
- Gavrilovich, Peter, and Bill McGraw. *The Detroit Almanac: 300 Years of Life in the Motor City*. Detroit, Mich: Detroit Free Press, 2000.
- Gilpin, Alec R. *The Territory of Michigan, 1805-1837*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1970.
- Grimm, Joe. *Michigan Voices: Our State's History in the Words of the People Who Lived It*. Detroit, Mich: Detroit Free Press, 1987.
- Henrickson, Wilma Wood. *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991.
- Hull, William. *Memoirs of the Campaign of the North Western Army of the United States, A.D. 1812, in a Series of Letters Addressed to the Citizens of the United States, with an Appendix Containing a Brief Sketch of the Revolutionary Services of the Author*. Boston: True & Greene, 1824.
- Ketenbaum, Justin L., ed. *The Making of Michigan, 1820 – 1860: A Pioneer Anthology*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.
- Woodford, Arthur M. *This Is Detroit, 1701-2001*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001.

## LINKS

- History Detroit, 1701-2001. 22 November 2011. <http://www.historydetroit.com/>
- Michigan History: *The Detroit News*. 22 November 2011. <http://detnews.com/history/>
- Michigan DNR, War of 1812 Commission. [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10369\\_59572---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10369_59572---,00.html) 11 November 2013.
- Michigan DNR, War of 1812 Educators Page. <http://miwar1812.weebly.com/> 11 November 2013.



For more information about the **Detroit Historical Society**, or to schedule a field trip to the **Detroit Historical Museum** or **Dossin Great Lakes Museum**, visit [detroithistorical.org](http://detroithistorical.org)

## WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Use your personal account of the surrender of Detroit and work as a group to answer the questions below. Include as much information as possible. Use complete sentences.



Name of Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Person's Title: \_\_\_\_\_

What was this person's job during the War of 1812?

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Did this person feel that Hull was guilty or innocent? \_\_\_\_\_

What are three reasons this person has for their feelings about Hull's guilt or innocence?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree with this person's feelings about Hull? Why or why not?

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## CHART: FOUR REASONS FOR THE WAR OF 1812

### TRADE WITH FRANCE

Britain was at war with France, and they decided to stop the French and Americans from trading with one another. They passed laws that said they would do whatever they could to stop trade. The United States felt this was unfair, and illegal. They felt that Britain had no right to interfere with trade.

### UNITED STATES EXPANSIONISM

After the Revolutionary War, the United States gained all the land in the Northwest Territory, which made up present day Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin.

Under the British, this land was set aside mainly for use by the Native Americans. When the Americans began moving into the Northwest Territory in the early 1800s, the Native Americans tried to stop them by staging attacks on new settlements. The United States knew that the British were helping the Native Americans by giving them supplies and encouraging them to attack Americans.

The United States was angry and demanded that the British stop interfering.

### IMPRESSMENT

The United States was a new country in the early 1800s. They accepted people who were born in other countries as citizens. Many new Americans were born in England, and the British felt that they were still British citizens.

When the war with the French started, the British would board American ships in the Atlantic Ocean, kidnap crew members and force them to fight for the British. Many of the crew members had become American citizens, and the United States felt that the British action – which they called “impressment” – was illegal and unfair.

### UNITED STATES POLITICAL CONFLICT

During the early 1800s, the United States had two political parties that had very different ideas on how to run the country.

The Federalist Party wanted a strong federal government and close ties to Britain.

The Democratic-Republican Party wanted a weak federal government, to preserve slavery, to expand into Indian land, and to distance the U.S. from Britain.

In 1812, the Democratic-Republicans had more power in the government, and they were eager to stand up to Britain’s bullying. In other words, they were more willing to go to war with Britain than the weaker Federalist Party.

## ESSAY: THE SURRENDER OF DETROIT

During the War of 1812, the leader of the American Army at Fort Detroit was Brigadier General William Hull. Hull was a veteran of the Revolutionary War and he had served as the governor of the Michigan Territory. Hull's job was to organize American soldiers and cross the Detroit River to attack British forts. The goal was to take the forts over and force the British to leave.

However, Hull also knew that the British had become war partners (called "allies") with several Native American tribes. He heard that a group of British and Native Americans were attacking forts north of Detroit, such as Fort Mackinaw. He feared that a large number of Native American warriors would attack Detroit from the north. Also, Hull was worried because the British were capturing all the supply boats sailing up from Ohio. Fort Detroit was quickly running out of food and supplies.

Hull was supposed to send troops to Canada in August to attack and take over Fort Malden, but he didn't. Instead, he spent early August trying to re-open his supply lines, but was not successful.

Meanwhile, more British troops were arriving at Fort Malden. Major General Isaac Brock, the commander for Upper Canada, moved his troops across Lake Erie from Niagara. He arrived at Amherstburg on August 13 and met with the Shawnee leader Tecumseh. They instantly became allies against the Americans. With a combined force of 730 soldiers and 600 warriors, the British army was still smaller than the American troops in Detroit.

Brock was a smart General. He had a bunch of Hull's documents and dispatches that were stolen by the British from one of the American ships. He read through them all and knew the details about the size and condition of Hull's army. Brock also learned that Hull was deeply afraid of an attack by Native Americans. Playing on this fear, he wrote a letter to the British commanders asking them to stop sending Native Americans to Amherstburg

because they already had 5,000. This was not true, but he knew that Hull would believe it. He made sure the letter fell into American hands.

Shortly after, Brock sent Hull a letter demanding his surrender. Part of the letter stated: "The force at my disposal authorizes me to require of you the immediate surrender of Fort Detroit. It is far from my intention to join in a war of extermination, but you must be aware, that the numerous body of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops, will be beyond control the moment the contest commences..."

Brock continued to deceive Hull by ordering the militia to put on the extra uniforms that belonged to the British army. In addition, Brock had soldiers light individual campfires and conducted several marches to make British force

appear larger. These efforts weakened Hull's confidence.

On August 15, Brock began small attacks on Fort Detroit. Brock decided the best way to attack was from the west. As his men moved, Tecumseh repeatedly marched his warriors through a gap in the forest as they emitted loud war cries. This movement made the

Americans think that they had more warriors than they actually did. As the British approached, a ball from one of the canons hit the officer's mess in Fort Detroit, killing four people. Fearing a massacre, Hull began planning to surrender the fort and town.

During the siege and surrender of Detroit, seven Americans were killed and 2,493 were captured by the British. The local Michigan militia was allowed to return home, but the American army soldiers were taken to Quebec as prisoners.

The loss of Detroit was an embarrassing defeat for the Americans. As a result, the war's situation in the Northwest got much worse. Fort Detroit remained in British hands for over a year until being re-taken by Major General William Henry Harrison in the fall of 1813.





## ACCOUNT: GENERAL WILLIAM HULL

When it became clear that a battle was going to take place between us, the Americans, and the British across the Detroit River in Canada, I had to make a decision. We had only 800 soldiers in the fort, and many of them were injured or ill! I had only about 600 healthy soldiers at most, and many of them were new and didn't know yet how to be good fighters. I knew that my Army was weak.

Also, the fort and surrounding village and countryside was filled with women, children and the elderly. Starting a battle with the British would mean they would all die! Or worse, they would be kidnapped and tortured by Native American "savages!"

I also want to mention that we did not have enough supplies. Our gunpowder and ammunition was almost all gone, and our food supply was dangerously low.

When I realized that I was facing a British Army of 1,800 soldiers who had many weapons, I knew that we could not win the battle. In fact, everyone in Detroit would most likely be killed if we even tried.

I made the decision to surrender the city to the British. I didn't ask for advice from my officers. The decision was mine alone. I regret that I had to make the decision, but the safety of the town and its people is very important to me.



## ACCOUNT: COLONEL LEWIS CASS



I was one of General Hull's colonels during the surrender of Detroit. I am very angry and ashamed by his decision to surrender the fort and town. He made his decision based only on his emotions. He didn't even ask for advice from his officers! We didn't know he surrendered until we saw the white flag flying on top of the fort!

All of the people in Detroit - the soldiers, the workmen, the women and the children - are so ashamed! We were ready to fight! We felt the hope of victory and couldn't wait to meet the British on the field. We knew that we would win and send those British troops back over to their side of the river. Instead, our soldiers feel ashamed and hopeless. Several have shed a few tears because they weren't allowed to serve their country during its time of great need.

How are we to face the rest of America, knowing that we didn't do anything to protect the country from our sworn enemy, the British? I can hardly stand the shame.

General Hull told me this morning, after the surrender, that he surrendered because the British had nearly 1,800 soldiers and he knew we were outnumbered. He says he surrendered in order to save the lives of everyone in Detroit. That's ridiculous! There were never 1,800 British soldiers! There were maybe 400 at most. We could have won the battle!

It is not my place to decide whether or not surrendering the town to save lives is acceptable. That is for the Army and government officials to decide. However, I know if I had been in charge there would have been no surrender.

## ACCOUNT: SECRETARY OF WAR WILLIAM EUSTIS

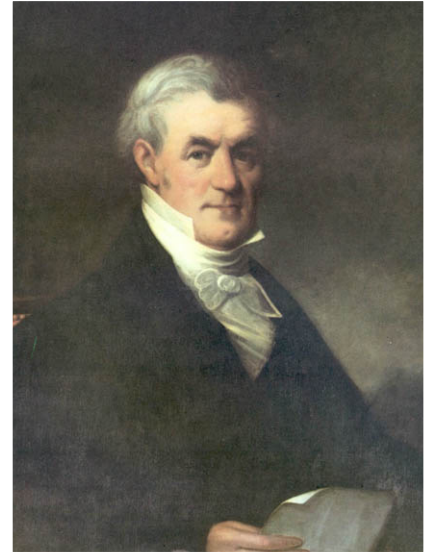
I served as Secretary of War under President James Madison. Before the war, I was a military surgeon, and I admit I knew very little of the art of war. I struggled, and I know some people felt I was bad at the job.

I feel terribly about the loss of Detroit in the War of 1812. As Secretary of War, I was responsible for sending General William Hull his orders. I shared his progress and problems with the President, and helped direct his actions.

Mail service was slow and unreliable during the time, especially when sending letters to the frontier of the Northwest Territory! Hull did not get my letter that told him war had been declared. If he had received it, he never would have sent that ship with his dispatches up to Detroit before him. His letters never would have fallen into Major-General Brock's hands.

I suppose I am partly to blame for his action in surrendering Detroit. I did not advise him to surrender, mind you! But I could have been clearer in my orders. On June 24, 1812, I told him to attack the British in Canada. However, I ended the letter with this statement: "Should the force of your command be equal to the enterprise, consistent with the safety of your own posts, you will take possession of [Fort] Malden, and extend your conquests as situations may justify." Well, even though I gave him a direct order, he thought I was leaving the decision up to him! He thought that I trusted his judgment to act only if he had enough soldiers and could guarantee the safety of Detroit.

I wasn't the best Secretary of War, but I tried! Our new country wasn't prepared for war. General Hull is not to blame completely for the surrender. His decision may not have been perfect, but I don't think he should be put on trial or sent to death!



## ACCOUNT: MAJOR-GENERAL ISAAC BROCK



My name is Isaac Brock, and I am a Major-General in the British Army. Yes, I am the same Major-General that convinced General William Hull to surrender Fort Detroit.

You may have heard that I used trickery to make Hull think my forces were bigger and more powerful than they really were. Well, I most certainly did. I had to take action against the Americans before they invaded Upper Canada!

It is true that I dressed up volunteers in British military uniforms to make Hull think I had many trained soldiers. I also had my ally Tecumseh march his forces through the woods over and over again to make seem that there were thousands Indian warriors. Ha!

You wonder how I knew that Hull was scared of being attacked by Indians? Well, I had his letters that he sent to the Secretary of War. The silly man sent a ship up the river without any protection. We captured the ship and its cargo, and I was delighted to find the letters aboard.

You may think that my actions were unfair, and that I should be ashamed of tricking the old General Hull. But I ask you, what would you have done if your country was in danger? I bet you would have done the same as me. So don't hate me, dear Americans. Take a hard look at your General Hull. He was careless and afraid of battle. Are those the qualities you want in a military leader? I think not.

## ACCOUNT: DETROIT VILLAGER HENRI DUBOIS

Bonjour! My name is Henri Dubois, and my family has been in Detroit since 1750 when my grandfather came to farm the French *Seigneur's* land. We Detroiters have suffered many tragedies in the past few years. First, our village burned to the ground in a great fire in 1805. Then, the war with the British brought the possibility of more destruction!

The thought of British invasion was terrifying for my wife and young children. We never knew if we would be attacked by raiding parties of Indians, or if the British would shoot a canon across the Detroit River and damage property. I was glad that the American military was defending the fort, but what about families like me that lived outside of the stockade? We had no protection.

Some say that General Hull was a coward for surrendering the village and fort to the British. They say he committed an act of treason, which means he betrayed our fine country. Nay! I think he's a hero. It makes no difference to me who owns this land. Since my family arrived, we've been under French, British and American rule. As long as my family and I are safe, and we have the opportunity to farm our land and hunt for food and furs, we are happy.

General Hull kept my family safe! He knew that the British and Indians would take no prisoners if fighting broke out. He knew that my family would be murdered – or worse, tortured! – and that the new village we've worked so hard to build would be destroyed. I, for one, think his was the noblest act. He valued human life over an unnecessary battle that would have torn our town apart once more. Stop the silly court martial! Instead, let's remember his selfless act as one of bravery and courage!