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Land Use and Settlement Patterns in Michigan, 1763-1837

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LAND USE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN MICHIGAN, 1763-1837

by

Ray De Bruler, Jr.

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
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LAND USE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN MICHIGAN, 1763-1837

Ray De Bruler, Jr., Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2007

This dissertation examines various types of land use practices and settlement patterns from the end of the French era through statehood at Detroit, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph River Valley. In addition, this work describes a series of land ordinances, treaties, land office practices and acts and demonstrates how they shaped, or tried to shape, the ways people viewed the land and what they did with it. Michigan is an excellent case study for analyzing land use because it was the point of interaction among three distinct cultural and political groups, French, British and American, and each of those groups viewed land and land use differently. The French tended to settle the land lightly, focusing on trace, Indian alliances and missionary activity. The British constructed and expanded fortifications in an attempt to hold onto the land and the Americans focused on migration and agriculture. This dissertation’s conclusion is that at each site local conditions, while influenced by French, British and American land laws, played roles in determining how residents would shape the landscape.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My interest in Michigan history dates back to childhood. My family vacationed at the Straits of Mackinac too many times to count and each trip had to include a visit to Fort Michilimackinac where I watched archaeological digs and enjoyed the cannon and musket firings. Fort Mackinac, across the Straits, was a special treat that generally included a healthy dose of fudge. Even as an adult, I cannot seem to visit the forts often enough. This dissertation is a result of those vacations.

The writing process can be a solitary endeavor, but a dissertation is not written in a vacuum and there are many people who helped me along the way. I want to thank my PhD comprehensive examination committee from Western Michigan University, Dr. José Brandão, Dr. Linda Borish, Dr. Nora Faires and Dr. Laura Junker, formerly of the WMU Anthropology Department, and now at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Their thorough examination served as a vigorous intellectual warm-up for writing this dissertation. My dissertation committee consisted of Dr. José Brandão, Dr. Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, Dr. Lynne Heasley in the History Department and Dr. Michael Nassaney in the Anthropology Department. Dr. Brandão served as chair of both committees and has always been a reliable source of advice, sympathy and criticism. This dissertation could not have been completed without him. Dr. Nassaney gave me tours of the Fort St. Joseph archaeological site and met
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Ray De Bruler, Jr.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines land use and settlement patterns in Michigan from 1763 to 1837 in the Detroit region, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph River valley and explores the various levels of continuity in land use among the French and the British in places that became American. Those dates mark the end of the French occupation and the beginning of statehood and the years in between witnessed numerous changes in land use. The definition of "land use" includes, but is not limited to, a variety of activities in rural and urban locales; agricultural practices such as types of crops planted and crop rotations; the built environment, including military and religious installations; and economic activities such as trade and land purchases.

At times, discussions of major national and international events such as the American Revolution and the War of 1812 will be included in order to put Michigan land use and settlement in their proper historical contexts. Michigan was an important location for the interaction of French, British and American settlement and those three groups settled each of the areas chosen for discussion here.

This study compares the three sites and will analyze the political and social forces that shaped the locations discussed here by exploring how the French, British and American governments tried to alter the land they claimed for their own needs and how the people at Detroit, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph River valley responded within the context of the varying influences of international, national and local events. This dissertation's conclusion is that at each site local conditions,
influenced by such things as the *Coutume de Paris* during the French occupation, concepts of British land ownership and U.S. Federal land offices played roles in determining how residents would shape the landscape.

Land use at the three locations reflected various levels of cultural continuity among the French, British and the Americans. French land use traits lasted the longest at Detroit, for less time in the Mackinac region, where British influence lingered, and both were essentially nonexistent in the St. Joseph River valley even before the start of extensive American settlement. While it is possible to find other examples of French, British and American settlement patterns across the United States, Michigan can serve as a model for how those three groups interacted with and changed each other. Because American settlement in Michigan lagged in comparison to other places west of the Appalachian Mountains, French and British land use had more time to coalesce than other places like Illinois or Ohio, both of which had French and British populations that mixed with that of the Americans.

The first part of this dissertation offers a general review of the literature of Michigan histories, paying particular attention to works on the French, British and American occupation of the state. Included are those relevant books, articles and papers that have in some manner discussed land use, settlement patterns, migration and cultural issues both in Michigan and, when applicable, the American Midwest. The literature review has been divided into several categories. The first deals with general works on Michigan and the Great Lakes region. The second category includes relevant histories of the French era. Included in this category are some Canadian histories because Michigan, as a part of New France, is often included in
discussions of New France by Canadian historians, both Francophone and Anglophone. This section is followed by histories of the British era. The American era literature receives the most attention because it includes not just Michigan, but the Northwest Territory including important land ordinances as well.

A history of Michigan, especially one that begins at the close of the colonial era, is incomplete without some explanation and understanding of land laws and treaties, just as histories of Michigan are incomplete without understanding the relationships among the various urban spaces, such as forts, trading posts and towns, and the rural landscapes surrounding them. As such, Chapter III explains the concepts of French and British land ownership as exemplified in legislation regarding land use and provides a discussion of a number of important ordinances and land acts proposed and implemented by the French, British and Americans, as well as a review of relevant treaties that the United States signed with Great Britain and a number of Indian nations. It will establish a political framework from which the three sites can be compared. While the impact of the 1783 Treaty of Paris and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 have been the subjects of much debate, equally important documents such as the Québec Act, the Treaty of Detroit and the Treaty of Chicago have generated less commentary in Michigan histories.

Each ordinance, land act and treaty is important to the understanding of land use in Michigan because they each affected the three sites in different ways. Detroit and the Straits of Mackinac were more affected by treaties in the colonial and early republic eras. The St. Joseph River valley was not affected until well into the American era, when, during the antebellum years, the land offices divided and sold
large tracts of land to individuals who farmed it as well as to speculators. These various laws, acts and ordinances are referenced throughout the dissertation.

The fourth chapter tracks settlement, changes in land use, and resistance to changes in land use, in the Detroit region. The French land tenure system reflected the continuation of habitant culture well into the American era, and the brief and uncertain British occupation of Detroit resulted in the transfer of that community to the other side of the river. Detroit started as a commercial center under the French, changed into an important military site during the British era and became the site of a significant land office during the American era. Both banks of the river are considered and include not only the settlement at Detroit, but also Amherstburg, Sandwich and segments of Michigan's Monroe County. Migration eventually wiped away most examples of French land use and culture in the Detroit area, although some examples still exist in place names and in the few modern vestiges of habitant ribbon farms in Monroe County.

Chapter V traces the changes at the Straits of Mackinac from the region’s initial development as an important meeting and trading place for the Indian nations and the French, through the British and American occupations and its increasing importance as a military post and, later, a civilian trading settlement. In contrast to the French and the Americans, the British made the most significant changes in the built environment, helping to some degree, to preserve the British presence in the area. The expansion of Fort Michilimackinac in the 1760s, and the eventual move to Mackinac Island, are sharp departures from the French occupation. The Americans, through land offices established in the early nineteenth century, often simultaneously
reinforced British and habitant land use practices and eroded them by selling land to American citizens who, by 1837, were more numerous. As at Detroit, the Treaty of Ghent and the Rush-Bagot Agreement resulted in a gradual decrease in military importance, and by the 1830s Fort Mackinac was garrisoned intermittently.

Chapter VI first touches on the French and British occupations of the St. Joseph River valley and explores in greater detail American land use and settlement patterns in Berrien County, particularly at the modern-day cities of Niles and St. Joseph. French and British influence, and their associated cultural and physical stamps on the landscape were all but gone by the start of the American era in 1781. This stands in significant contrast to the situations at Detroit and the Straits of Mackinac. The French had used the St. Joseph site primarily as a mission and trading post, although a few habitant farmers lived there as well. The British occupation was brief and half-hearted, lasting from 1760 to 1781. The Indian Uprising in 1763 effectively ended British military occupation of the region and from that point on, the primary British concern was the loyalty of the Indians and the small population of habitants. American traders started moving into the valley even before the end of the American Revolution. But it was not until after the War of 1812 when the American influences that would bring change appeared in Michigan, such as missionary activity, extensive land sales and increased migration.

The appendices at the end of the dissertation offer lists of important names and dates of the civilian and military leadership in Michigan from the end of the French era through statehood. They are intended to provide readers with a helpful
reference source and chronology of the leadership of during the French, British and American occupations of Michigan.

Euroamerican settlements at Detroit, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph River valley existed throughout the three major imperial eras. These sites were the primary population centers of Michigan from 1763 through 1837 and witnessed the influx of French, British, and finally, American settlers. As such, they provide the best case studies for examining land use in pre-statehood Michigan and understanding the reasons for the variations in changes in Michigan’s pre-statehood landscape.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Michigan History: Past and Present

Michigan history books, scholarly and otherwise, generally begin with an overview of the Great Lakes region, often starting in prehistoric times. The earliest works, dating from the nineteenth century, centered on the "big men" and "big events" of Michigan history. Those writers focused upon stories of the French explorers and leaders such as Robert Cavalier, the Sieur de LaSalle and Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, while statehood was seen through the eyes of governors Lewis Cass and Stevens T. Mason. By the mid-twentieth century, historians extolled the virtues of the automobile and Henry Ford, often at the expense of pre-statehood events. These early works failed to provide a comprehensive picture of Michigan because they largely ignored subjects such as land use and settlement patterns, especially how they might have been affected by local conditions, prior to statehood. Despite that shortcoming, a review of these works is useful for understanding how historians have considered (or not considered) land use in state history. In recent years, historians, anthropologists and archaeologists have labored successfully to revise and update the history of Michigan. That is particularly true in such diverse topics as the Indian Wars of the 1760s, often referred to as "Pontiac’s Rebellion;" the history of recently discovered Fort St. Joseph, where archaeologists and historians have started interpreting artifacts.
collected at the site; and agricultural and settlement history in the southern part of the Lower Peninsula.

This chapter provides an overview of general Michigan history works as well as the French, British and American occupations, and notes if and how those works discuss land use practices. Chapter II will also place this dissertation in its proper context by showing how it contributes to Michigan history.

General Works

Most general histories of Michigan stress significant developments from the “top down” and, as such, emphasize the significance of political and industrial leaders at the expense of the laws, ordinary people and of land use and what shaped it. A chronological overview of some general works illuminates the problem.

Statehood inspired several books including James Henry Lanman's History of Michigan, Civil and Topographical, in a Compendious form; with a View of the Surrounding Lakes from 1839 and History of Michigan: From its Earliest Colonization to the Present Time in 1845. In typical nineteenth-century fashion, Lanman described an Anglo-Protestant place, superior in every way to the previous Indian and French eras, in particular because Anglo settlers used the land for large-scale agriculture. That Lanman considered Anglo land use to be more “productive” shows the bias in his writing. French land use was “productive” as well, but not in the same manner as the British and the Americans.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the publication of three important Michigan history books. The first, Silas Farmer’s History of Detroit
and Wayne County and Early Michigan: A Chronological Cyclopedia of the Past and Present contains numerous maps indicating changes in the political landscape of Michigan and the built landscape of Detroit. Farmer, a well-known nineteenth-century Detroit historian and publisher, provides a copious amount of information on the political leaders of early Michigan as well as some basic information on the Detroit Land Office. Memorial of a Half-Century in Michigan and the Lake Region by Bela Hubbard, former state geologist, is a first-person account of life in nineteenth century Michigan. Hubbard’s views of the habitants and their settlement patterns is ethnocentric, but if read critically can provide valuable insights into Michigan history. He, like Lanman, considered the habitant way of life to be inferior to that of English settlers, often implying that the Yankees who migrated to Detroit during the American era were more energetic than their French predecessors and that the French made ill use of the land. Hubbard’s remarks say more about how the Americans thought of the French than how the French actually lived. The Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan: A Study of the Settlement of the Lower Peninsula During the Territorial Period, 1805-1837 by George Fuller is a well-documented general history of Michigan’s settlement patterns. He argued that road construction had a significant impact on settlement and that the Tiffin Report only initially had any negative impact on migration to Michigan. It is an improvement over Farmer and Hubbard because their works are more subjective.

Another wave of publications arrived in the decades surrounding the Michigan centennial in 1937. Lawton Hemans’ 1930 The Life and Times of Stevens T. Mason: The Boy Governor of Michigan, and Kent Sagendorph’s 1939 publication Stevens
Thomson Mason: Misunderstood Patriot, are both flattering portrayals of Michigan's first state governor and mention briefly his role in bringing settlers to the state.

George Fuller's 1939 monograph Michigan, A Centennial History of the State and its People, is an unapologetic celebration of Michigan statehood. The First Michigan Frontier, published in 1940, by Calvin Goodrich is a fine early example of a general history that attempts to explain the cultural differences of early Michigan residents. He broke no new ground with his conclusions that habitant farms were a “huddle of sheds and barns” with an orchard out back, but his description of the dismal conditions in which the British garrison had to operate at Detroit and Michilimackinac are important because his detailed description of the built environment of Detroit is unprecedented in the mid-century literature, and as such is helpful to modern historians.

The post-war era produced some of the better-known popular histories of Michigan, especially those by Willis Dunbar and Bruce Catton. Dunbar was probably the more influential of the two. He was a professor of history at Western Michigan University and in 1955 he published a four-volume state history, Michigan Through the Centuries, which included, for its time, a comprehensive bibliography. Still, it possesses the hallmarks of a text written in the “from the top down” fashion. For example, Volume III of the series, Family and Personal History, contains biographies of governors and business and military leaders. His best-known monograph is Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State. This weighty tome covers Michigan’s past from the prehistoric era through the early 1990s. Dunbar died in 1970 and George May of Eastern Michigan University updated the text regularly through 1995.
Since May's death no revision has been published, although the book is sorely in need of one, in order to cover the past ten years, as well as to add to the story of Fort St. Joseph and to incorporate new interpretations of the Indian Wars of the 1760s. The discussion of settlement patterns and land use is limited in *Michigan* and not really the point of the book, but Dunbar does note that much of the land sold in Michigan during the 1830s was by speculators who had no intention of settling the region. Still, Dunbar's work has served as an introduction for many students of Michigan history, especially at the college and university level, and as such, retains some value. Bruce Catton's *Michigan: A History*, published in 1976 in time for the U.S. bicentennial celebrations is a celebratory account of Michigan from the French era to the late nineteenth century. Catton discusses the "big men" and "big events" of Michigan history. The leading figures in the years up through the American Revolution include Etienne Brulé, Louis Jolliet, Robert Cavalier, Jacques Marquette, George Rogers Clark and Pontiac, while the big events include statehood and the building of the Soo Canal. Little is said of settlement, land use or the built environment, but like Dunbar's *Michigan*, that really is not the point of the book. And like Dunbar, Catton provides a general introduction to Michigan history.

The French Era to 1763

Michigan's history has not solely been the concern of American state historians. Others, including Canadian scholars, have also written about the area that came to be Michigan. Scholars of New France produced much of the literature dealing with the early French presence in the region. W.J. Eccles, in *The Canadian*
Frontier, 1534-1760, France in America and Essays on New France argued that the fur trade served military and political purposes as well as economic ones. Eccles noted that the Great Lakes served as a sort of highway for French traders, explorers and missionaries. The forts placed along the important water routes protected French interests, creating a “river empire.” Richard Harris’ The Seigneurial System in Early Canada is an excellent model for the study of the longlot settlement patterns in New France, and by extension, Michigan. The ribbon-style farms that were found along the St. Lawrence were also in place at Detroit from its inception, although that was not the case along the St. Joseph River or the Straits of Mackinac until after the American occupation. While Harris concludes that the longlot system, developed along the St. Lawrence River, was distinctly Canadian, the settlement patterns at St. Joseph and Mackinac more closely resemble the nucleated village system found in the Illinois County as described by Carl Ekberg in French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times. According to Ekberg, the origin of the Illinois land tenure system is in northern France, not in Canada, which stands in contrast to Harris’ findings at the St. Lawrence River valley. Alan Greer’s People of New France is a portrayal of the “ordinary people” of New France, rather than a history of colonial and religious leaders. It is a useful study for understanding habitant culture of the St. Lawrence River Valley because he describes how the habitants acquired land, what they did with it and how it was divided among heirs, widows and widowers, in the context of the Coutume de Paris, the legal system of New France. Even better is his Peasant, Lord and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840, which details the economic development and
change in the seigneuries. Although it did not happen in Michigan specifically, Greer states that the purpose of the French Canadian land tenure system was to support “an aristocracy by appropriating to it the surplus of peasant-suppliers.”

J.M. Bliss edited an important collection of primary documents in *Canadian History in Documents, 1763-1966*. It includes text from Michigan-related documents such as the Proclamation of 1763, the Québec Act and a number of letters regarding the politics of the late eighteenth century, which taken together show the attempts by Great Britain to regulate land law. Hilda Neatby’s *Quebec: The Revolutionary Age, 1760-1791* and *Quebec Act: Protest and Policy* contain the text of the Québec Act as well as discussions of British policies in the Great Lakes region. She argues that the Québec Act prevented the Canadians from “turning the province over to the Americans in 1775.” In addition, she notes that the Act was the “first parliamentary statute to recognize the complexity of the relations between the” French and the British.

Gilles Havard explained the importance of the relative location of Indian villages to French settlements in “Postes française et villages indiens: Un aspect de l’organisation de l’espace colonial française dans le Pays d’en Haut (1660-1715).”

The most recent addition to the scholarship of the fall of New France is Colin Calloway’s *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*. The purpose of the book is to survey “the enormous changes generated by the Peace of Paris and assess their impact on many societies and countless lives in North America.” The 1763 Treaty of Paris led to the American Revolution, which led to the American possession of the west and allowed an “empire of slavery as well as an empire of liberty to expand.” Calloway places some institutions, such as slavery, in
their national and international contexts, much in the way this dissertation seeks to place local events in their proper contexts.

Some of the literature of the New France period that is specific to Michigan includes the edited and translated "Detroit in 1757" in *A Michigan Reader: 11,000 B.C. to A.D. 1865*, a first person account by Louis Antoine de Bougainville describing the manners and customs, such as footraces against the Indians, of Detroit residents during that pivotal decade. He described rich lands that were easy to cultivate and noted that the *habitants* worked their ribbon farms collectively. Translations of the *Cadillac Papers*, with Cadillac’s descriptions of Detroit and references to land use can be found in the *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*. While they must be read carefully, those descriptions can help historians to understand land use in early Detroit, which was the foundation upon which the British constructed their version of the settlement. The Jesuit priest/explorer Pierre de Charlevoix’s journals are an excellent source of information for all three locations discussed in this dissertation. His observations, made in 1721, are matter-of-fact and accurate, and are particularly useful for their perspectives on Detroit and Fort St. Joseph. Lina Gouger’s "Montréal et le Peuplement de Detroit, 1701-1765" examines the Canadian origin of many Detroit area settlers, arguing that much of their culture, and by extension land use, comes from North American traditions rather than France. Brief accounts of the French in Michigan before 1815 can be found in Kenneth Lewis's *West to Far Michigan: Settling the Lower Peninsula, 1815-1860*, a discussion mostly about agricultural settlement. He has little to say about *habitant* land tenure. The focus of the book is American agriculture and its relationship to urban centers. He
concludes that farms and cities worked together to create a “new economy” that launched “Michigan’s modern commercial growth.” Eric Kadler’s “The French in Detroit, 1701-1880” traces the gradual assimilation of French-speakers into Detroit’s Anglo population. He argues that the French presence could be felt well into the nineteenth century, implying that the habitant cultural continuity could be found well into the American era. However, he ignores the physical impact of the French in Detroit and focuses on cultural issues, such as language. George Paré, in The Catholic Church in Detroit, 1701-1888, claims that the Catholic Church was the “greatest single force that brought about the peopling of New France.” The church also helped to preserve habitant culture in Michigan, especially in Detroit.

Archaeologists have also contributed to the understanding of the French era in Michigan with numerous field reports and articles that lend some insight into land use and settlement patterns. A number of books and articles chronicle the archaeological work at the Straits of Mackinac and Fort St. Joseph. Archaeological work in Detroit is limited. Charles Cleland in particular has contributed to the Mackinac canon. His influence is documented in An Upper Great Lakes Archaeological Odyssey: Essays in Honor of Charles E. Cleland, edited by William Lovis. Lovis asked former students and colleagues to submit essays about Great Lakes archaeology and the result was a summary of the work that has been completed, or ongoing, through the early twenty-first century. While all of the essays have proven valuable to this dissertation, one in particular stands out, James Brown’s “Michilimackinac Archaeology and the Organization of Trade at a Distance.” Brown claimed that Michilimackinac became a distribution center only after “the imperial powers were able effectively to launch a
larger and more complex trade network.” However, the population at Michilimackinac remained small and any trade had to take place with the cooperation of the Indians because of the weakness of the Europeans. This theory complements Richard White’s thesis in *Middle Ground*, that there was a “common, mutually comprehensible world” where Indians and Europeans “created a new system of meaning and exchange” where trade could take place.

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission has published numerous archaeological reports and they often include discussions of French, British, and less often, American era artifacts. The earliest field reports are from the 1959 and 1960 seasons, led by Moreau Maxwell and Lewis Binford. They concluded that their team of archaeologists had definitively found most of the fort’s walls and established a classification system for artifacts.

As archaeologists began making headway, the State Park Commission started publishing rapidly in the 1970s. The first of the completed archaeological reports was Donald Heldman’s *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1976: The Southeast and South Southeast Row Houses*. Heldman’s *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1977: House One of the South Southeast Row House* followed the next year, indicating the intensity of the work being done at the site. Heldman teamed with Roger Grange for the third book in the series, *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac: 1989-1978, The Rue de la Babillarde*, the first report not about the row houses. Work on the area adjacent to the fort is featured in J. Mark Williams and Gary Shapiro’s *A Search for the Eighteenth Century Village at Michilimackinac: A Soil Resistivity Survey*. They concluded that several houses had been built just to the east of the fort.
during the British occupation. That conclusion indicates a kind of pseudo-urban setting not found during the French era. Judith Ann Hauser's *Jesuit Rings from Fort Michilimackinac and Other European Contact Sites* puts the spotlight on trade items found at the Straits, indicating the extensive trade networks associated with the post. Donald Heldman's work moved three miles south of the fort for the sixth title, *Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake in Northern Michigan, 1981-1982: A British Colonial Farm Site*. This report discusses the type of agriculture; mostly produce for local consumption, practiced by the British during the American Revolution. David Frurip and Russell Malewicki joined Heldman for an analysis of nails at the fort with *Colonial Nails from Michilimackinac: Differentiation by Chemical and Statistical Analysis*. They note the different sources for nails at the fort, indicating that the importation of raw materials was important to the garrison. Archaeological work moved to Mackinac Island in 1982 when Earl Prahl and Mark Branstner led the dig that resulted in *Archaeological Investigations on Mackinac Island, 1983: The Watermain and Sewer Project*. They discovered a previously unknown American-era garbage dump outside the north wall of Fort Mackinac. Elizabeth Scott examined French foodways in *French Subsistence at Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781: The Clergy and the Traders*, concluding that they relied heavily on local food sources. The tenth report is Patrick Edward Martin's *The Mill Creek Site and Pattern Recognition in Historical Archaeology*, an investigation of the British mill a few miles to the east of the fort. The mill site is evidence of British industry in the Straits region. Jill Halchin's *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1983-1985: House C of the Southeast Row House, the Solomon-Levy-Parant House*
represents a return to the row houses in the fort. She determined the identity of the house's residents by examining the kinds of artifacts and animal remains left behind. She concluded that faunal remains of local animals meant that habitants lived in the houses. In other cases the discovery of uniform buttons indicated the presence of British soldiers. Roger Grange’s second contribution, *Excavations at Fort Mackinac, 1980-1982: The Provision Storehouse* is a welcome return to Mackinac Island. The U.S. military used the storehouse in the 1820s until the site became a hospital. T.M. Hamilton and K.O. Emery examined and compared French and British ordnance in *18th Century Gunflints from Fort Michilimackinac and Other Colonial Sites.* Diane Adams follows with an analysis and explanation of French-era lead seals in *Lead Seals from Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1761.* In *Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781,* Lynn Morand (later Evans) examines the various crafts produced at the post, with emphasis on the British occupation, determining that the residents, both French and British, emphasized the reuse and repair of materials. The most recent report is Evans’ *House D of the Southeast Row House: Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1989-1997.* This latest row house to be excavated thus far is an excellent example of the poteaux-en-terre construction that typified French architecture at Michilimackinac. Lyle Stone’s *Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781: An Archaeological Perspective on the Revolutionary Frontier,* while not part of the report series, is a summary of the archaeological work from the first season in 1959 to the early 1970s.42

Each archaeological report examines, in some fashion, land use at the Straits, even the ones that seem, on the surface, to have little to do with land use and
settlement patterns. For example, Stone, Heldman and Scott speculate on land use both inside and outside of the fort’s walls, concluding that the Michilimackinac communities utilized their surroundings in a variety of ways. They gardened, fished and engaged in extensive trade. Halchin and Evans’ works are of particular interest. They examine land use for specific houses, concluding that the area had multiple occupations and uses in the French and British eras. Archaeological work on the row houses continues and further archaeological reports will shed even more light on the everyday lives of the occupants of Fort Michilimackinac.

Because of the massive urban sprawl that is now Detroit, archaeological evidence of Indian, French, or even British and early American Detroit is scant. What little that has been done is usually a product of accident. As Detroiters constructed new buildings and houses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they discovered Indian burials, Euro-American cemeteries and even the partial remains of Fort Lernoult.43 Some waste disposal sites have been excavated, but there is little data from the pre-1820 era.44 An extensive archaeological dig occurred from 1973-1974 during the construction of the Renaissance Center, close to the Detroit River. The dig yielded sixteen privy vaults from French households dating from 1825-1850.45 The dig confirmed the longevity of French culture in Detroit, but offered only a small window into that world.

Two other approaches to understanding the French era in Michigan include cartographic studies and archaeobotany and focus on the Straits region. Richard Sambrook’s “Thematic Innovation on the Colonial Frontier: Four Historic Maps of Fort Michilimackinac” laments the lack of cartographic training among historians
who study pre-American Revolution era maps. Sambrook states, “scholars without formal training in cartography tend to overlook the importance of both the innovative thematic techniques and the sociocultural information contained in the historic maps of Fort Michilimackinac.” He concludes that much is to be learned about land use from the maps of the fort. For example, they show the locations of houses, and list their owners, and indicate the presence of stables and gardens. Two essays by Leonard Blake, “Corn for the Voyageurs” and “Corn from Fort Michilimackinac” from Plants from the Past are his attempt to reconstruct agricultural life at the Straits of Mackinac. In “Corn for the Voyageurs,” Blake explores the process by which the colonists dried and processed corn. In the first article, Blake notes that corn was regularly grown in the 1750s but by the start of the British era, however, corn “was often in short supply at Michilimackinac,” and he concludes that the residents of the fort imported much of the corn they consumed.

One important general work on the archaeology of French Michigan is Retrieving Michigan’s Buried Past edited by John Halsey, which contains chapters written by well-known Michigan archaeologists such as William Cremin, Charles Cleland and Donald Heldman. “Euro-American Archaeology in Michigan: The French Period” by Heldman describes some of the archaeological work being done in Michigan and includes some discussion of maps, cultural change and burial techniques. He found that the habitants resisted British and American cultures and such resistance can be seen in the archaeological and historical record.

Interest in the French post on the St. Joseph River, at present-day Niles, has inspired an impressive amount of literature. Dissertations, books both popular and
academic, articles and archaeological reports have provided insight into the location of the post, as well as possible land use and settlement patterns.

One of the earliest monographs on the post is Frank Emery's 1931 The Passing of the Mission and Fort St. Joseph, 1686-1781: The only Place in Michigan where the Spanish Flag Floated over a Fortification. It examines the controversy surrounding the attack on Fort St. Joseph by the Spanish during the American Revolution. An early dissertation on Fort St. Joseph is Dunning Idle’s The Post of the St. Joseph River During the French Regime. Although from 1946 (and reprinted in 2003), the text has held up well. Idle concentrated mostly on the early years of the post and created a history of the people and events at the fort. Gerard Malchelosse’s articles “La Salle et le fort Saint-Joseph des Miamis” and “Le Poste de la Riviere Saint-Joseph (Mich.) (1691-1781)” discuss the importance and uses of two French forts on the St. Joseph River. The first article is a chronological look at the exploration of southwest Michigan and the early attempts by the French to establish trade relations with the Indians. The latter article quotes liberally from British sources and establishes the importance of Fort St. Joseph as a trade and communication center. A brief St. Joseph narrative is Joseph Peyser’s Fort St. Joseph, 1691-1781: The Story of Berrien County’s Colonial Past. For the most part it is a non-academic work and Peyser mainly employs secondary sources. His other work, Letters from New France: the Upper Country, 1686-1783 is a compilation of essays and translated documents regarding the St. Joseph River Valley. He noted that the French and British presence in southwest Michigan was brief and traced the slow development of the region during the French and British eras. The book also
includes a letter describing the brief Spanish raid and occupation of Fort St. Joseph in 1781. While the episode often serves as an interesting historical footnote, Peyser gave the event some gravitas by noting that the victory allowed "Spain to argue—unsuccessfully—for possession of the Great Lakes Basin during the 1782 negotiations that led to the Treaty of Paris of 1783."^55

Recent work in Niles by Michael Nassaney and José Brandão has updated the literature on Fort St. Joseph. Nassaney’s *An Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey to Locate Remains of Fort St. Joseph (20BE23) in Niles, Michigan*, speculates on the location of the fort and sets the stage for future archaeological and historical work.^56 Nassaney’s "Land of Four Flags: An Archaeological Dig in Southwestern Michigan Uncovers a Multinational Past" from the *Michigan Academician* and "Fort St. Joseph Found" from *Michigan History* chronicle the discovery and documentation of artifacts from Fort St. Joseph. As Nassaney notes, the site "served as a trading post, mission and garrison for scores of people."^57 In other words, much work needs to be done to understand land use and settlement patterns at the Fort St. Joseph site. Brandão and Nassaney’s "A Capsule Social and Material History of Fort St. Joseph (1691-1763) and its Inhabitants" provides a discussion of the built environment, including descriptions of construction techniques.^58

The British Era: 1760-1796

Because the French did not simply pack up and move after the 1763 Treaty of Paris, the mixture of French and British migration, settlement patterns and economic
systems did not melt away. As a result, many of the books and articles that describe land use during the British era include some discussion of the French as well.

Several important works stand out in the history of Michigan during the British era. "Settlement Along the Detroit Frontier, 1760-1796" by David Farrell is a rare example of a historian writing about something other than the often contentious transfer of power from the French to the English eras. He concludes that, "English policy discouraged western migration," citing poor Indian relations and the Proclamation of 1763 as evidence. A general history of the British in Michigan is Nelson Vance Russell's 1939 monograph The British Régime in Michigan and the Old Northwest. His purpose was "to describe the transition from the French regime to the British, and from the British to the American" in the Old Northwest. Russell concluded that American fur traders were displeased with the move toward American rule and statehood and would have preferred Michigan to become "a neutral Indian State" to protect their economic interests. In Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815, Colin Calloway indicates the importance of the Michigan region during the British era. He notes that the trade networks developed by the French and continued by the British still centered on the Great Lakes region. According to Calloway, Fort Michilimackinac was "the key to the whole western country." Victor Lytwyn and Dean Jacobs sought to understand "the relationship among First Nations, non-Native settlers, governments, and the land" in "For Good Will and Affection': The Detroit Indian Deeds and British Land Policy, 1760-1827." Lytwyn and Jacobs trace an important change in British land policy at Detroit. When the British first occupied the site, authorities forbade private land
transactions and "were careful to assure the First Nations that they did not claim or seek to take their lands." But soon settlers and even British officers acquired land through Indian deeds, complicating the relationship between the Indian nations and the British. When the Americans took control of Detroit in 1796, they did not officially recognize Indian deeds, but recognized the claims of those settlers who occupied the land before 1796.

The Indian Wars of the 1760s in particular have also generated a remarkable amount of literature that can be divided into three categories. The first is from the nineteenth century; the second, the mid-twentieth century; and the third, around the turn of the twenty-first century featuring a quick succession of histories rewriting the interpretations of the first two. The British occupation of the Great Lakes region prompted a quick military response from the various Indian nations living in the region. Unfortunately, Francis Parkman's *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* is the starting point for many students of Michigan history. His book dominated the literature until the 1940s when Howard Peckham's *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* was published. Peckham's book is little more than a distillation of Parkman's work. Several themes are evident in the historiography of Pontiac and his war. Early historians such as Parkman and Peckham placed Pontiac at the center of story of the war, as the chief military leader of the Indians. He does not act on his own, however. The French goaded Pontiac into action. Pontiac is not the protagonist in later histories, especially those written after the 1970s. He has moved to the periphery of the debate and other issues have moved to the center. Jeffery Amherst, British
imperial policy, smallpox, and religion have become, though controversial, focal points in the discussion of Pontiac and the war.

Following Peckham’s 1961 reissue of *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising*, another wave of historians considered Pontiac’s legacy. The 1980s and 1990s especially are rich with articles and books that reexamine Pontiac and the events of 1763. Ian Steele’s *Warpaths* details the struggle between the British and French and their interactions with the Indians.70 He argued that the Indians fought the Europeans “for reputation, French gifts, and English booty, and to expel English colonial settlers.” In addition, the “Amerindians were largely fighting a parallel war of their own, which would resume without French support in 1763.”71 Kerry Trask, in "In the Name of the Father: Paternalism and the 1763 Indian Uprising at Michilimackinac” concluded that the Indians felt betrayed by the French at the end of the Uprising and were concerned about their relationship with the British.72 The works of Gregory Evans Dowd including "Thinking and Believing: Nativism and Unity in the Ages of Pontiac and Tecumseh," "The French King Wakes up in Detroit: 'Pontiac's War' in Rumor and History" and *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* give the Indians agency, rewriting the history of the British land grab in the Great Lake region. In Dowd’s works, the Indians are defending not just a way of life, but their lands as well.73 Each of these works indicates that interest in Pontiac and the events of the early 1760s are still relevant to the discussion of land use by the military in Michigan.

Cartographic studies have made an impact on the understanding of the British occupation of the Great Lakes region. Keith Widder’s "The 1767 Maps of Robert
Rogers and Jonathan Carver: A Proposal for the Establishment of the Colony of Michilimackinac portrays Robert Rogers, commandant of Fort Michilimackinac from 1767-1769, as an ambitious imperialist aiming to expand Britain’s influence (as well as his own) and holdings in the western Great Lakes region. His goal was to convince the British government to create a new colony...and make him governor.74 Carver’s map depicts his travels through the western Great Lakes.75 Jonathan Carver, an English explorer, produced a map of the region from the Straits of Mackinac to the Green Bay area. On his map he referred to the Indian nations as “republics” and “kingdoms” implying that the Indians “not the British or the French, were sovereign over their lands and people.”76 The Carver map was completed in 1767, when the British “could not afford to offend people living in the western Great Lakes by refusing their sovereignty.”77 The 1778 edition of the map changed the word kingdom to “land” and republic to “country,” perhaps implying increased British strength and confidence.78

The American Era: 1796-1837

The American era officially started in 1783 but, in reality, the British maintained an economic and military presence in Michigan until 1796 when they surrendered their posts at Detroit and the Straits of Mackinac. Phil Porter’s “Stars and Stripes over Michigan: The American Occupation of Detroit and Mackinac Island in 1796” is a balanced look at the transition from British to American rule in Michigan. He explains in detail the political and military consequences of the
transition and describes the land use system in Detroit in detail, noting that “many Detroit residents lived on ribbon farms.”

Other books regarding Detroit include Floyd Dain’s *Every House a Frontier: Detroit’s Economic Progress, 1815-1825* which chronicles the restoration of the Detroit economy in the years leading up to the opening of the Erie Canal. Dain believes that the War of 1812 damaged Detroit’s economy and it never fully recovered until the influx of settlers began once the all-water route from the East opened. Reginald Horsman discusses change in Detroit from the start of the British era to the start of the War of 1812 in *Frontier Detroit, 1760-1812*, concluding that British officials tried to befriend the *habitants* with mixed results. Alec Gilpin’s *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* is a good general history of the war. His conclusion, that the war opened up the west to American settlement, is generally accepted by historians. Allan Douglas, in *Uppermost Canada: The Western District and the Detroit Frontier, 1800-1850*, sees the Detroit River as a unifying symbol between the American and Canadian economies. The settlers from the east brought wealth and prosperity not only to Detroit, but to Windsor as well. Douglas states “the international boundary running invisibly through the Detroit River community is invoked by the residents of the two shores when it is convenient to do so- but otherwise is only a line in the water.” F. Clever Bald’s *Detroit’s First American Decade* has little on the built environment. And, oddly, he had little to say about the 1805 fire, which was a defining moment in Detroit’s first American decade. Instead he focused on a variety of political issues arguing, for example, that the *habitants* favored American rule over British rule. Brian Leigh Dunnigan’s *Frontier*
Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838 stands out as an important work. It contains numerous maps, many published for the first time, of the settlement from the French era to statehood, but the emphasis is on the American era. Because of the abundance of maps and accompanied by Dunnigan’s descriptions, it serves as an excellent way to understand land use and settlement patterns along the Detroit River. The maps reveal the differing emphases in land use by the French, British and Americans over time. The contrast between the earliest French settlement and the American era is significant. Cadillac’s settlement is small and fortified. After the Great Lakes were demilitarized, the Americans removed the fort altogether and the new landscape would emphasize Detroit’s economic and political importance.

The body of literature regarding the Northwest Territory, created by act of Congress in 1784, is useful for understanding the political issues important to the United States government in the early years of the republic and how those issues shaped the settlement of the west. In addition, this literature places Michigan in a national context. Following the creation of the Northwest Territory, Congress passed several land ordinances that provided for an orderly settlement of the Great Lakes region and eventual admission to the Union for Michigan.

The first of these land ordinances was the Ordinance of 1784. Its passage “coincided with and was a result of Virginia’s cession” of lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. As a result, the Continental Congress could begin the task of settling the western territories. Historians have disagreed about whether or not the 1784 Ordinance was even an “ordinance” in the proper sense. Richard McCormick argued, based on the form, if not the content of the document, that it was not in fact
an "ordinance." In his opinion, it served more as an example of how the Continental Congress exerted its will. Robert Berkhofer, Jr. noted that the Ordinance represented a "trend to greater" control of the western lands by the Continental Congress.

The Ordinance of 1785 soon followed. Three important essays on the ordinance include George Geib’s "The Land Ordinance of 1785: A Bicentennial View"; Ronald Smith’s "Freedom of Religion and the Land Ordinance of 1785." And Vernon Carstensen’s "Patterns on the American Land." Geib notes that the Ordinance "may not have merited great attention in its own time" but it had a profound effect on land use in the Old Northwest by calling for the orderly settlement of the region. Instead of focusing on land issues, Smith devotes his article to the issue of religious freedom. In his view, the Ordinance is mostly remembered for what it did do and little attention is given to what it almost did, which was to provide public support for religion. He quotes a long-forgotten edited passage from the Ordinance, “There shall be reserv’d the Central section of every township for the maintenance of public schools and the section immediately adjoining the same to the northward for the support of religion.” He claims "the defeat of the religious provision in the Land Ordinance of 1785 was an important step toward achieving freedom of religion in America." The removal of state-supported religion in the Old Northwest likely allowed habitant culture in Michigan to persist for a longer time than it might have otherwise. If the Continental Congress had allowed for publicly funded religion, it most probably would have been in the form of Yankee culture, and therefore, Protestant. Carstensen’s approach differs from the other two. He
concludes that the relatively peaceful manner in which the western lands were settled shaped their culture and society by allowing settlers to focus on urban and agricultural development instead of fighting amongst themselves for land.94

Finally, on July 13, 1787, the Continental Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance; an act intended “to be the blueprint for the expansion of the American Republic.”95 The latter of the three land ordinances had the greatest impact in general in Michigan, and, for the purposes of this dissertation, in Berrien County in particular. The American government was weak at the time and therefore in no position to enforce any land law. In fact, at the close of the colonial era in North America, the newly formed United States government feared that the “opening of the West would release energies that might subvert social order and destroy the union.”96 Republicans were fearful of expansion97 but land speculators saw opportunity.98 The tension between the Jeffersonian and Federalist attitudes in relation to land settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains is explained by Malcolm Rohrbough in "A Freehold Estate Therein: The Ordinance of 1787," Robert Hill’s "Federalism, Republicanism, and the Northwest Ordinance" and Robert Remini’s "The Northwest Ordinance of 1787: Bulwark of the Republic." In the latter, Remini argued that republicanism was the primary force in the settlement of the Northwest. Indian policy is the subject of Reginald Horsman's "American Indian Policy in the Old Northwest, 1783-1812." He suggests that land acquisition and peace were wholly incompatible. The process by which state boundaries were drawn and a discussion of land disputes are the topics of "Carving the Northwest Territory into States" by Louis Cain.99 Lisa Philips Valentine and Allan K. McDougall examine how the British and
Americans acquired the land in the first place in “The Discourse of British and US Treaties in the Old Northwest, 1790-1843.” They found “fundamental differences” in British and American treaties, noting that, “British treaties were essentially land deeds as opposed to, especially, the earlier ones, in the US, which had the form of agreements between groups.”

Historians of the Northwest Territory have not ignored land use, yet no study has focused solely on land use and settlement patterns in Michigan. Richard Farrell’s "Promoting Agriculture among the Indian Tribes of the Old Northwest, 1789-1820" assesses the federal government's attempt to force semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers into becoming sedentary farmers in the Northwest Territory. He concludes that the policy was a failure. David Wheeler, in "The Beef Cattle Industry in the Old Northwest" considers the relationship between business and farmers and includes a discussion of a variety of economic factors, including feed prices, surplus produce and animal husbandry. For an intimate look at the settlers on their land, see James Patterson's edited "Letters from North Carolina Emigrants in the Old Northwest, 1830-1834." Settlers discuss soils, transportation and government and Patterson concludes that Carolina migrants moved to the Old Northwest for the better soils and “transportation facilities” that would make farming easier. An excellent overview of frontier culture in the Old Northwest can be found in Malcolm Rohrbough’s The Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850. Rohrbough argues that the frontier west of the Appalachian Mountains “gave rise to a number of societies” and “a universal interest in the soil joined almost all of them.”
After the American Revolution, the former colonists were eager to explore legally the previously forbidden lands in the Great Lakes region, and in the Ohio and Illinois Valleys. As they moved west, they put their mark on the land, politically, religiously, and physically. The Northwest Ordinance, however, led to more than neatly placed grids and townships across the American Midwest; it is a document that shaped a way of life. As Reginald Horsman notes, "the Northwest Ordinance has most often been examined in terms of the specific governmental system it created." In other words, little has been done to study the social implications of the Ordinance. One exception to that is Hildegard Binder Johnson's *Order Upon the Land*. Johnson discusses difference between private property and land held in common, an issue that the British faced after their occupation of Detroit. The notion of private property came from the British desire to eliminate "waste" lands, and communal property, at least in colonial North America, derived from opportunity, rather than a formal plan.

Of the monographs dedicated to the American Era in pre-statehood Michigan history, few discuss land use in any detail. Alec Gilpin's *The Territory of Michigan (1805-1837)* provides a brief account of the redevelopment of Detroit after the disastrous fire of 1805. Gilpin was primarily interested in the political aspects of the building of Detroit, based on Charles L'Enfant's plan of Washington, D.C. To his credit, Gilpin notes that most of the farms in the Detroit area were "based on old Indian grants, many of them never officially confirmed by French or British officials." That problem would continue to haunt Michigan settlers and Indians for years to come.
Susan Gray's *The Yankee West* is indicative of the direction in which histories of Michigan should go because she looks at Michigan through the lens of settlement patterns and land use. Granted, the focus of Gray's *Annales*-style work is the farm family in southwest Michigan, especially Kalamazoo County, and therefore quite specialized, but her work speaks to larger issues. She states, "through their migration, Yankees were imposing New England values and institutions as the template of all American culture." Yankee migration would have a tremendous impact on Michigan's cultural frontiers. During the Antebellum era, Yankees quickly dominated the St. Joseph River valley, and made significant strides in Detroit and the Straits of Mackinac.

Two important essays on the development and sale of the land in Michigan just prior to statehood are Roger Rosentreters's "The Quest for Statehood" and John Cummings' "Michigan for Sale." Rosentreter's article is primarily a reprint of a December 1835 *Detroit Democratic Free Press* article describing Michigan's stormy entrance into the Union. "Michigan for Sale" is a discussion of migration to Michigan after the American take over in 1796. Cummings argued that while certainly many Americans moved to the Detroit area immediately after the transfer of power, "their concern was essentially for trade, not settlement," meaning that Americans did not yet think of Detroit in the same way the British did.

Just as geographers and historical geographers have added to the understanding of the French and British occupations of Michigan, so too have they studied the American era. Two articles in particular have increased the awareness of the importance of cartography in Michigan history. The first, "The Search for the
Canadian-American Boundary along the Michigan Frontier, 1819-1827: The Boundary Commission under Articles Six and Seven of the Treaty of Ghent,” by Francis Carroll examines the difficulties in establishing the U.S.-Canadian boundary as set down by the 1783 Treaty of Paris. Carroll noted that maps “have a commanding presence. They shape our perception of both topography and the political landscape.” Carroll’s article is less about the boundary controversies than it is about the cultural and psychological importance of maps and in that manner informs the discussion of land use. French, British and American mapmakers did not always see the place they drew. They used accounts from explorers and directives from politicians to draw their psychological and cultural boundaries. The Detroit River serves as an example of this trend. The river was a highway, not a border, until the end of the eighteenth century. The settlements on each bank shared cultural traits that politics could not erase. The second article, “Mapping Antebellum Euro-American Settlement Spread in Southern Lower Michigan,” by Kenneth Lewis describes the settlement patterns across the southern portion of the Lower Peninsula during the first half of the nineteenth century. He argues that the nature of British colonization reflected “a desire to resettle segments of its population.” Lewis’s understanding of American settlement is equally perceptive. He claims that Americans participated in two types of pioneer settlement. He called the first “communities of accretion,” that is “individuals or small groups” without “established social institutions, ties of kinship, religion, or common origin.” A second type, “covenanted communities,” “organized around a common set of rules or expectations that formed a basis for central institutions.” Lewis noted, “migration to Michigan
included several large, formally organized communities of foreign immigrants bound by ties of ethnicity, language, and religion.\textsuperscript{113} Lewis's claim that immigrants were bound by culture is certainly true in the era between 1763-1837. Yankees in the St. Joseph River valley shared a common culture, as did the \textit{habitants} in the Detroit region and the Straits of Mackinac.

As this chapter has sought to make clear, there has been only a little detailed work on the settlement history of Michigan before statehood. The Straits of Mackinac, the St. Joseph River valley and the Detroit region have each garnered some attention but a comparative study does not exist. The following chapters will examine those sites and make clear their similarities and differences in land use. Of the works discussed here, \textit{West to Far Michigan: Settling the Lower Peninsula, 1815-1860}, by Kenneth Lewis comes closest to the thesis of this dissertation. But the bulk of the book explores agricultural settlements and urban centers such as Ann Arbor, Jackson and Kalamazoo, in the southernmost part of the Lower Peninsula, and as such, does not include the Straits area. This dissertation will cover not only a different time frame, but will expand the definition of "land use" to include rural, urban and a variety of economic applications. In addition, the comparative approach will help shed some light on the differences in land use and the role local conditions, such as existing land laws and customs, played in shaping different parts of Michigan. As William Cronon wrote, "Americans have long tended to see city and country as separate places, more isolated from one each other than connected. We carefully partition our national landscape into urban places, rural places, and wilderness."\textsuperscript{114} The "urban" and rural
places in Michigan were intricately connected in the decades between 1763 and 1837, yet local issues remained important in determining land use. What also gets "partitioned" from Michigan history is the influence the many treaties, land ordinances and congressional acts from the mid-eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth century had on settlement and settler cultural, political and economic activities.
Endnotes


5 The term *habitant* refers to French-speaking settlers in North America. It is common usage among historians of French North America.


8 Lawton Hermans, *Life and Times of Stevens Thomason Mason: The Boy Governor of Michigan* (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1930). Hermans is so enamored of his subject that a good portion of the first chapter is dedicated to listing Mason’s famous ancestors, starting with those involved in the English Civil War in 1651 and continuing through the American Revolution.


tourism, he also edited *Michigan Historical Markers* (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1967).


17 Eccles, *France in America*, 156.


The term “ribbon-style” derives from the shape of *habitant* farms in North America: long, narrow plots of land. Sometimes this ribbon-style shape is referred to as a “longlot.” The terms will be used interchangeably in this dissertation. For a non-academic look at ribbon farms along the Detroit River see Sheryl James, “Roads, Roots and Ribbon Farms,” *Michigan History Magazine* 84 (November/December 2000): 28-33.


29 Bougainville, “Detroit in 1757,” 88-89, 94.

30 See *MPHC, XXXIII, XXXIV*. Clarence Burton edited the Cadillac papers.


35 Lewis, *West to Far Michigan*, 312.


39 Brown, “Michilimackinac Archaeology,” 152.


42 The archaeological reports are important for understanding land use and settlement patterns in Michigan. Every form of economic activity is covered as well, indicating a variety of land uses at the Straits region. As such, it is worth noting the full bibliographic citations for the archaeological reports. The are as follows: Donald P. Heldman, *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1976: The Southeast and South Southeast Row Houses* (Mackinac Island: Archaeological Completion Report Series Number One, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1977); Donald P. Heldman, *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1977: House One of the South Southeast Row House* (Mackinac Island: Archaeological Completion Report Series, Number 2, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1978); Donald P. Heldman and Roger T. Grange, Jr. *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac: 1978-1979, The Rue de la Babillarde* (Mackinac Island: Archaeological Completion Report Series, Number 3, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1981); J. Mark Williams and Gary Shapiro, *A Search for the Eighteenth Century Village at Michilimackinac: A Soil Resistivity Revelation of the Past* (Mackinac Island: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1982)


This event will be discussed in some length in Chapter V: The St. Joseph River Valley. Included in the notes of that chapter is the text of a Madrid newspaper article that gave the rationale for the attack.


Farrell, “Settlement along the Detroit Frontier,” 89.

65 Victor Lytwyn and Dean Jacobs, “‘For Good Will and Affection’: The Detroit Indian Deeds and British Land Policy, 1760-1827,” *Ontario History* 92 (Spring 2000), 9.
66 Victor Lytwyn and Dean Jacobs, “‘For Good Will and Affection’: The Detroit Indian Deeds and British Land Policy, 1760-1827,” 27.
67 Victor Lytwyn and Dean Jacobs, “‘For Good Will and Affection,” 27. See also *American State Papers, passim*, especially Volumes I, III and V.
69 Howard Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1961 [rev.]).
72 Kerry Trask, “In the Name of the Father: Paternalism and the 1763 Indian Uprising at Michilimackinac,” *Old Northwest* 9 (Spring 1983), 16-17.
73 Gregory Evans Dowd, “Thinking and Believing: Nativism and Unity in the Ages of Pontiac and Tecumseh,” *American Indian Quarterly* 16 (Summer 1992): 309-335; “The French King Wakes up in Detroit: ‘Pontiac’s War’ in Rumor and History,” *Ethnohistory* 37 (Summer 1990): 254-278; *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). In the latter, Dowd writes, “The search for a single origin to the war is useless,” 105. Land was not the only issue, nor Amherst’s policies. But the bottom line remains that the British claimed to hold title to lands ceded to them by the French, who did not have the right to do so. That point is made in W. J. Eccles, “Sovereignty Association, 1500-1783,” in *Essays on New France*, 156-181.
The federal laws that mandated the rectangular survey system, so different from the French and British styles, have been implemented all over the United States. Marion Gray Donaldson, in “The Initial Point: Arizona’s First Rectangular Land Survey,” *Journal of Arizona History* 29 (1988): 245-256, described the difficult terrain and climate that surveyors had to endure in order to map the Salt River Valley. Donaldson argued that the efforts of the surveyor William Pierce and his team “provided an orderly and lasting basis for growth and development of the valley and the entire state.” Ronald N. Tagney’s “Essex County Looks West: The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the Settlement of the Ohio Territory,” *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 124 (1988): 86-101 examines the origins of the westward movement from New England to the Ohio River Valley, arguing that local opinion on the value of the western lands spurred Essex County (Mass.) leaders to promote settlement in Ohio. For an example of how U.S. land law affected state law, see Marcia Bewer Smith, "‘To Embrace the Value of the Land:’ Land Survey Legislation in the Jackson Purchase, 1820," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 91 (Autumn 1993): 386-402. Brewer claimed that the Kentucky State Legislature was inspired by the Ordinance of 1785 when it established a frame of government from the 1818 purchase of lands by Kentucky from Chickasaw Indians. Previously, Kentucky land law had been complicated by overlapping land claims because in much of the state, land grants were given before any surveys were complete. The new law was the first time that state land was surveyed before it was sold.


94 Carstensen, “Patterns on the American Land,” 39.
97 Onuf, Statehood and Union, 1.

Kenneth Lewis, “Mapping Antebellum Euro-American Settlement Spread in Southern Lower Michigan,” *Michigan Historical Review* 30 (Fall 2004), 107. Lewis uses religious dissenters as an example of the type of groups the British government wanted out of the country. Interestingly, this aspect of British colonial policy was in contrast to French policy. The French government preferred to keep dissenters, the Huguenots in particular, close to home, and prevented them from migrating to New France. See Eccles, *France in America*, 28.


CHAPTER III

LAND POLICIES

Treaties, Ordinances and the Politics of Land

It is hereby declared, That His Majesty's Subjects professing the Religion of the Church of Rome, of, and in the said province of Quebec, may have, hold, and enjoy, the free Exercise of the Religion of the Church of Rome, subject to the King's Supremacy.
- The Québec Act, 1774

There shall be a firm, inviolable and universal peace, and a true and sincere friendship between his Britannic Majesty, his heirs and successors, and the United States of America; and between their respective countries, territories, cities, towns and people of every degree, without exception of persons or places.
- The Jay Treaty, 1794

The Ottawas were entirely opposed to selling the Lands on the other side of the Miami—In conformity to your instructions I did not press the subject.
- William Hull to Henry Dearborn, 25 November 1807

The history of the United States is the history of the real estate business; and Michigan has a chapter of its own in that book.
- John Cumming, 1986

Michigan land history before 1837 is best understood in international, national and local contexts. The treaties that the British, French, Indians and the Americans signed with one another controlled how, and when, settlers entered the Great Lakes region. Legislative acts by Congress helped to determine, and in some cases change, the options of those looking to settle in the west. And locally, land offices sorted out land disputes and either granted legitimacy to, or rejected, settlers’ private claims. For that reason, a discussion of the acts, treaties and land ordinances, and how some of the negotiations happened, is necessary in order to understand Michigan in local, national and international land use contexts. This chapter will establish a point of reference for the comparison and contrasts in settlement and land use in the following chapters.
The various treaties and land laws reflected the goals of the French, British and Americans, but local conditions determined in what way, if any, those goals would be met.

Because French land use was so ingrained in Detroit, British and American law often had to accommodate the *habitant* population. The basic French land division, the *arpent*, is used in much of the Detroit land records dating from the early American period. And it is at Detroit that the basic shape of the *habitant* farms, long narrow strips, sometimes called a ribbon farm, was most obvious. The Straits region was also affected by French land use, acts of Parliament and the American government, as well as by land offices, although less directly because of the smaller population, and as a result, there was less accommodation of previous settlers. The St. Joseph River valley, too, was shaped by the goings-on in Whitehall and Washington, and witnessed the most abrupt cultural changes of the three sites discussed in this dissertation because after the British abandoned the site in 1781, it was over 30 years before permanent American settlement occurred in the region.

**The Treaty of Paris, 1763**

The 1763 Treaty of Paris, signed on 10 February of that year, was the first international treaty that concerns Michigan in the period under review here. This treaty ended the Seven Years’ War (most often called the French and Indian War in American history textbooks) between Great Britain and its allies and France and its allies and would profoundly influence land use and settlement in Michigan. Tremendous amounts of land changed hands and the treaty gave Britain control over
the settlement of the Great Lakes region. Spain gained Louisiana as compensation for the loss of Florida to Great Britain. In addition to Spanish Florida and the Caribbean sugar islands, Great Britain won all of New France with the exception of two small islands off the Newfoundland coast that the French could use for fishing. Article Four of the treaty read that the French king would give up Canada and all of its dependencies.

The treaty also guaranteed property rights for the *habitants*, which would help to preserve French land use practices in Michigan. That preservation of rights would become a source of legal problems between the *habitants* and the British. For example, at Detroit the *habitants* filed complaints with British authorities protesting British settlement on what they believed was their land. And at Michilimackinac, the British commandant was surprised to find the powder magazine to be privately owned, rather than by the French military. Under British law, all land belonged to the crown and any land holding system that did not conform to that resulted in conflict, particularly at Detroit and Michilimackinac. The *Coutume de Paris* allowed individuals to own land and as a result, *habitants* were more secure in their basic land rights than their British contemporaries. In the basic land tenure system under French law, the king granted land to *seigneurs*. The *seigneurs* in return declared themselves to be vassals of the king and had to settle a specified number of *habitants*, who then became *censitaires*, on the land. The *seigneurs* collected rent from the *censitaires*. However, the rents were low, so *seigneurs* could not necessarily expect to get wealthy from granting land. In addition, the *seigneurs* were required to "build a mill to grind the *habitants' grain." And because land was so abundant, it
was easy to obtain.\textsuperscript{15} The \textit{Coutume de Paris} reinforced this long and narrow settlement pattern that ran counter to British and American ideas on land use, both physically and culturally.\textsuperscript{16} For example, inheritance laws under the \textit{Coutume de Paris} dictated that the land be divided equally among all children creating narrower and narrower strips of land.\textsuperscript{17} In addition, under the \textit{Coutume} widows could own property. That was not the case under British law.\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{Coutume}, in practice, was the law of the land in French North America even after the British conquest of New France and it reinforced areas of French law “most dear” to Canadians including property ownership.\textsuperscript{19}

The preservation of \textit{habitant} property rights became important in Michigan during the American era. The \textit{habitants} filed many land claims with United States Land Offices with the expectation that they would be able to retain their property. Their claims met with mixed success. These guarantees stipulated in the text of the Treaty of Paris applied to the Straits of Mackinac, the Detroit area and the St. Joseph River valley, although there were varying degrees of preservation of \textit{habitant} land use in the Great Lakes region.\textsuperscript{20} The 1763 Treaty of Paris was negotiated in that context and this legal framework survived the British Conquest of New France.\textsuperscript{21}

Still, if the final terms of the Treaty of Paris were clear enough, arriving at them was not.\textsuperscript{22} Diplomats on all sides of the negotiation table struggled with the terms of the treaty. The treaty covered more than just North America because the Seven Years’ War was a global conflict and the final version of the treaty had France, Spain and Great Britain exchanging land in India, South America, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and the Mediterranean. As Max Savelle has noted, “more territory
changed hands by the Treaty of Paris and its collateral Treaty of Fontainebleau than by any treaty dealing with the American hemisphere before or since."\(^{23}\)

The British government was deeply divided as to what to do. The goals of France and Britain, and the disagreements in the latter, made negotiations complex. In Britain, one faction wished to continue the war and gobble up as much territory as possible, while another sought peace. The Lord Mayor of London, for example, opposed the treaty and he had the support of the "commercial element of the city."\(^{24}\) The British cabinet, on the other hand, desired an end to the hostilities "before the feared collapse of England’s strained finances ensued."\(^{25}\) The cabinet got its way, but not without a controversial dispute as to which colonies to hold on to and which to return to France, with a result that would have serious consequences for the Great Lakes region.\(^{26}\) Unlike the British, the French government was unified in its desire to conclude a peace. French foreign policy at that point was "straightforward: to rebuild her navy, restore her overseas trade, keep England isolated, avoid continental entanglements, and above all to avoid war until French strength was fully restored."\(^{27}\) Thus, the French reasoned that Canada was not worth holding onto, that the Caribbean islands had more value and that Canada would soon become a burden for Great Britain. Indeed, the Duc de Choiseul, saw a peace with Britain as a way for Versailles to push the English colonies into rebellion.\(^{28}\) As it turns out, the French were proved correct and ten years after the treaty, the English colonies were ripe for rebellion.\(^{29}\) For the French, the treaty served as a respite between wars.

Even before the treaty had been negotiated, the surrender of French forces at Montréal in 1760 prompted the French to abandon their forts. One by one, the French
commandants in North America surrendered their posts to the British. In November 1760, Robert Rogers took command of Detroit, and St. Joseph soon followed suit. In 1761, so did Fort Michilimackinac. Fort Chartres in the Illinois Country was the last French post to fall to the British. The Sieur de Bellerive handed the post to Captain Sir Thomas Stirling on October 10, 1765. Versailles intended to avenge its loss in due time.

The Royal Proclamation, 1763

The 1763 Treaty of Paris was quickly followed by the Royal Proclamation in the same year. The latter has been called “an honest but vain attempt” to end Anglo-American abuses west of the Appalachian Mountains. The Proclamation forbade white settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, a natural mountain border. Parliament reserved those western lands for the Indians. The colonists saw it as an attempt by Whitehall to control their lives and to centralize British authority. The Proclamation did not prevent incursions into the west because the British were not able to stop the Americans, who increasingly resented renewed British attempts to assert control over their older American colonies. From the British point of view, the Proclamation made perfect sense. It served to placate the Indians, who felt abandoned by the French and angered by new British policies, most notably, the order to cease giving the Indians “gifts.”

The policies had in fact angered the Indians and that, coupled with an uneasiness about Anglo settlement, caused them to rise up in a general revolt during the summer of 1763 and captured a number of British posts in the west. The
exceptions were Forts Detroit, Pitt and Niagara.\textsuperscript{36} The irony is that the Proclamation was meant to prevent such an occurrence. Parliament first considered the Proclamation in June of that year, only days after Ojibwa Indians defeated, after a brief struggle, the British garrison at Fort Michilimackinac.\textsuperscript{37} The Proclamation was announced in October 1763, much too late to do anything for the British garrisons that had been defeated by the Indians.\textsuperscript{38}

The Québec Act, 1774

The same impetus to manage the west and the Thirteen Colonies also led the British to pay renewed attention to the newly won settled lands along the St. Lawrence River. Despite the fact that the 1763 Treaty of Paris had, in addition to the provisions for the surrender of Montréal in 1760, guaranteed the French their property and religion, it had failed to provide the habitants with an "effective law" to protect it under British rule.\textsuperscript{39} The Québec Act allowed the habitants to continue to own their land and to follow the Coutume de Paris. The Act expanded the Province of Québec to encompass all of the Old Northwest, including Michigan, and placed it under the control of the governor of Québec.\textsuperscript{40} The British recognized French civil law and provided courts for the habitants to redress their grievances, which aided in preserving habitant culture in parts of North America. And despite the fact that under British land law only the Crown could grant land, the Act ensured that the habitants' land claims were valid and allowed them to sell or bequeath their property. The latter was especially important, as it had also been a component of the Coutume de Paris.\textsuperscript{41}
As Britain’s American colonies inched toward rebellion, Parliament needed to secure the allegiance of French-speaking North America. The Québec Act achieved that objective. In the long run, the Québec Act had little effect on the United States in general because one year after its passage, the colonies were in open revolt and all of Parliament’s laws were invalidated. The Act’s impact on Michigan, however, would prove significant, since it allowed for the continuation of French land practices and as a result, the British and American governments would be forced to deal with the habitant population when their settlement of the region began.

The Treaty of Paris, 1783 and Its Aftermath

The United States won formal recognition of its independence with the 1783 Treaty of Paris, signed on 3 September of that year. Great Britain lost its thirteen American colonies and its claim to all of the land from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River, but held on to Canada, again with the exception of the French islands off the coast of Newfoundland. As a result of the treaty, the Americans were to control, however nominally, approximately 830,000 square miles of land west of the Appalachian Mountains, which eventually would be divided into privately held tracts, in contrast to the French and British styles of land tenure. Access to this land was important because the American government badly needed money, so the sale of the land acquired via the treaty was to pay off the national debt. Still, while the Old Northwest became part of the United States, Great Britain knew that the American government did not have the power to take what it had been promised in Paris and did not immediately cede the territory to the United States.
The members of the Continental Congress knew as well as the British that the new American government had limited powers. Congress worried about the threat of Indian attacks and recognized that the Indians were reluctant to give up land. Thus, in October of 1783, when the ink of the Treaty of Paris was barely dry, Congress formed a committee to report on Indian affairs. The committee noted “that it is represented, and the committee believe with truth, that although the hostile tribes of Indians in the northern and middle departments, are seriously disposed to a pacification, yet they are not in a temper to relinquish their territorial claims, without further struggles.” The Americans faced not only a stubborn British army, but hostile Indian nations as well. They concluded that it is just and necessary that the lines of property should be ascertained and established between the United States and them [the Indians], which will be convenient to the respective tribes, and commensurate to the public wants, because the faith of the United States stands pledged to grant portions of the uncultivated lands as a bounty to their army, and in reward of their courage and fidelity, and the public finances do not admit of any considerable expenditure to extinguish the Indian claims of such lands.

The American government needed to establish boundaries between what was considered to be “American” and what still “belonged” to the Indian nations. On one side of the boundary would be Indian land, the rest would go to veterans as compensation for their military service. The Continental Congress could not easily solve its land issues, though. For Congress, land meant money, and money was in constant short supply. Before it could divide the western lands, it had to persuade the thirteen original states to give up western land claims to the federal government. Eventually, each state did, but each in its own way.
Meanwhile, the British acted to hold on to the western posts. They needed an excuse to stay, and in 1784, Lord Sydney, the British secretary of state for home affairs advised Governor-General Frederick Haldimand at Québec to delay the evacuation of the military “at least until we are enabled to secure the fur traders in the Interior Country and withdraw their property.” American failure to compensate Loyalists for property lost during the Revolution would become the British excuse to maintain the Great Lakes posts. Article Four of the 1783 Treaty of Paris stated that “it is agreed that the creditors on either side shall meet with no lawful impediment to the recovery of the full value in sterling money, of all bona fide debts heretofore contracted.” Article Five was even more explicit:

> It is agreed that the Congress shall earnestly recommend it to the legislatures of the respective States, to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights, and properties which have been confiscated, belonging to real British subjects, and also of the estates, rights and properties of persons resident in districts in the possession of His Majesty’s arms, and who have not borne arms against the said United States.

American frustration at the delay was echoed in a number of committee reports from the Continental Congress and on 16 February 1784, the Congress appointed a committee to discuss the eventual American possession of the “Frontier Posts,” as the Great Lakes settlements were called. James Monroe put forth a motion regarding the “northwestern posts” of the U.S, arguing that the British should quit their Great Lakes posts “with all convenient speed,” while assuring the British government that it was the “desire of the U.S. to live in amity” with them.

As a result of the British delays, from 1783 until 1796, Michigan, from the American perspective, sat in a legal and diplomatic limbo. For the British, Michigan
continued to be a part of the empire. And the man in Canada who would work the hardest to keep Michigan in the British fold was John Simcoe, a British officer, Member of Parliament and eventual lieutenant governor of Upper Canada. Simcoe wanted to create a new home for displaced Loyalists after the war. British and French settlers, traders and families, as well as the Indians, faced an uncertain future, he felt. The British military still held sway over the Great Lakes, as Simcoe had intended, and troops could keep the Indians at bay, as well as provide for a variety of civil services to the general population. In this manner, Simcoe could maintain a hold on the Great Lakes region.

From the end of the Revolution until the summer of 1796, the British maintained their economic and military presence at two of the three main population centers in Michigan. The post at St. Joseph had been abandoned by the military after the 1763 Indian Uprising and was temporarily re-garrisoned from time to time, but for the most part it became the province of some habitant families and Indians that still lived and farmed there, untouched by the American government. The Straits of Mackinac and Detroit still served as important posts for the fur trade. Fur traders on Mackinac Island, which by this time had become the center of the Indian trade, were uneasy but continued to ply their trade. The war had ruined some of the British entrepreneurs on the lakes and the Great Lakes economy faced a serious crisis during the post-war years. This uncertainty did not necessarily make Michigan a sought after destination for settlers looking for new lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. The problem for Michigan was that settlers instead headed for the Ohio River Valley.
Still, American settlers had moved across the mountains during the war, the migration rate increased as the 1770s progressed, and Congress had to exert authority in the area. By the time of the peace treaty, “it was no longer possible to confine the settlements to the east of the mountains.” As the settlers arrived, it became clear to the Continental Congress that the sale and distribution of the land would have to be orderly. Hence, after 1784, Congress enacted a series of ordinances that would provide for the sale and settlement of land west of the Appalachian Mountains.

American Land Ordinances

Even though settlers avoided Michigan, and Congress lacked military control over the whole of the Northwest, that fact did not deter the Americans from making grand plans for its eventual settlement. Even before the states ratified the U.S. Constitution, Congress, operating under the authority of the Articles of Confederation, passed the Land Ordinance of 1784. Congress wanted to provide for orderly admission to the Union when certain territories reached a specified level of white male population. Thomas Jefferson, who composed most of the 1784 Land Ordinance, proposed the creation of up to sixteen states and that a territory could be admitted when it reached the population of the least populous state of the Union at that time. More significant, is the fact that the Ordinance forced the states to abandon their claims to lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. Virginia, the largest state with the largest land claims, was among the first to grant its lands to Congress, which it did on 1 March 1784. Jefferson’s optimism and intentions for the west are clear in the opening lines of the Ordinance: “That so much of the territory ceded or to be

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ceded by individual states to the United States, as is already purchased or shall be purchased of the Indian inhabitants, and offered for sale by Congress, shall be divided into distinct states.\textsuperscript{61}

A year later, the Land Ordinance of 1785 established the well-known grid pattern across the American Midwest known as the Township and Range system.\textsuperscript{62}

The Ordinance read:

The Surveyors, as they are respectively qualified, shall proceed to divide the said territory into townships of six miles square, by lines running due north and south, and other crossing at these at right angles, as near as may be, unless where the boundaries of the late Indian purchases may render the same impracticable. The plats of the townships respectively, shall be marked by subdivisions into lots of one mile square, or 640 acres.\textsuperscript{63}

Deliberations in Congress lasted for over a year before passage of the Ordinance. Eventually, surveyors set out for the Northwest Territory and, acre by acre, marked off the land in the Township and Range System. Each township was 36 square miles and contained 36 sections of 640 acres each. Several lots out of each township would be reserved for the Federal government and section 16 was for the “maintenance of public schools, within the said township.\textsuperscript{64}

The Ordinance favored speculators who “took up large holdings in the British fashion” in order to guarantee a quick return.\textsuperscript{65} Since colonial times, British individuals acquired large tracts of land that would be sold for profit and “British fashion” meant speculation. The cash-strapped Congress needed money and income from land auctions would be a welcome source of revenue. The land sales also provided income for the establishment of schools. In addition, Congress hoped that
the land auctions would attract industrious citizens willing to carve out new states in the western wilderness, the presence of squatters, Indians, British traders and *habitants* notwithstanding.66

The Township and Range system had to be placed on top, and along side of, the French land tenure system, creating disputes over land ownership that eventually had to be sorted out by Land Offices. After 1805, when Michigan became a territory, a land office was set up in Detroit and, later, elsewhere in the territory to settle French claims, most of which conformed to the ribbon-farm system consisting of plats about “three arpents of river frontage and thirty arpents in depth.” W. J. Eccles referred to this pattern as more “a land settlement than a land-tenure system.” By this he meant that the French system served more as a way to distribute people on the land “on an equitable basis” than it did to protect landlord rights.67 That system had long been in use in French North America, although in various forms.68 Many of the private claims filed by the *habitants* were not only in French, but also employed the French method of measuring space, which was an indication of their continued cultural influence during the start of the American era. Such claims are filed as *arpents* instead of acres, or, less often, as “French Acres.”69

In the summer of 1787, Congress, still operating under the auspices of the Articles of Confederation and only weeks before the end of the Constitutional Convention being held in Philadelphia, passed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which provided the political blueprint for the creation of territories and states, including Michigan. Considered “revolutionary in design and scope” the Ordinance of 1787 helped to encourage the development of American culture in the Old

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Northwest. Under the terms of the Ordinance, the territory would be divided into three to five states and slavery was prohibited. Statehood could be achieved in stages and an area could join the Union once the population reached 60,000. In addition, it invalidated the other land laws that Congress passed, and forced the residents of the Old Northwest to conform, legally at any rate, to U.S. law. Some historians have argued on the side of caution when discussing the importance of the Ordinance. Robert Remini stated that “there is always the danger of indulging in hyperbole when speaking of the consequences of the Ordinance.” Phillip Shriver’s claim that the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 deserved to be called a “fundamental” document in American history, one he ranked next to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution in importance is an example of hyperbole. Still, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 marked a significant change in the way Americans viewed land and land use. With the Township and Range surveying system, the nation had a roadmap for logical and orderly westward expansion, which Americans had seen as a pressing need since before the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The authors of the Ordinance inserted some distinctly Jeffersonian language, such as references to “property, rights, and liberty.”

The three ordinances from 1784 to 1787 were ways for Congress to maintain a legally-binding hold on the land and, once the British left, prepare for westward migration. In addition, Congress needed to promote orderly settlement to keep out the undesirables. A too permissive land law would encourage the kinds of settlers that Congress least wanted to see in the west. In 1787 the country was hardly a superpower and the British still occupied the Great Lakes region. In no certain terms
could the Americans enforce the Ordinance anywhere in the Union, least of all the Great Lakes region, and considering the external threats the country faced, it would be better to have a strong land law sooner rather than later. Although by 1787 settlers and surveyors were infiltrating lands north of the Ohio, Congress feared that until the U.S. could demonstrate its power in that area, it would not be able to sell much land to anyone.77

The United States never had the chance to make a show of power in the Old Northwest. International events intervened and through a controversial treaty, the Americans were finally able to occupy the Great Lakes region. The Jay Treaty, certainly not universally accepted by American politicians, demonstrated not the military might of the new nation, but rather its diplomatic skills.

The Jay Treaty and Its Aftermath

It was one thing to layout rules for land settlement, and it was another to make the plan a reality. A large obstacle to realization of the orderly settlement of Michigan, and the Northwest in general, was the large number of Indian nations and the vast tracts of land they claimed as theirs. To get at that land, Congress undertook a series of treaties with local groups. The first significant move in getting at Indian land in Michigan came with the Jay Treaty, signed in 1794, which finally gave the United States control over the Northwest. As noted earlier, while the 1783 Treaty of Paris had guaranteed American occupation of the Upper Great Lakes, the British had refused to vacate because the United States refused to compensate Loyalists for lost property. In reality, the British were probably just looking for an excuse to stay close...
to the Indians in the west in order to maintain their fur trade ties. It took another two years to ratify the Jay Treaty, but the pact did provide "a limited rapprochement between Britain and the United States." In it Great Britain agreed to quit its Great Lakes posts by 1796. Article II read, in part, "His Majesty will withdraw all his troops and garrisons from all posts and places within the boundary lines assigned by the treaty of peace to the United States." In addition, the two countries agreed on a joint survey project to determine the boundary between the United States and Canada and to determine the source of the Mississippi River. Once the source was found, then Britain and the U.S. would agree on a boundary line. The Americans would finally have title to lands promised them in the 1783 Treaty of Paris.

The British military did indeed leave Detroit and the Straits of Mackinac, but British fur traders and settlers stayed behind and continued to do business and, from the American perspective, instigate trouble with the Indians. Ironically, all along the Americans may have been able to gain by force what had been promised in the Treaty of Paris. The British military was not nearly as powerful as perceived by the Americans. Britain had "only nine gunboats" on the Great Lakes and their fortifications at the Straits and Detroit were in poor repair and undermanned. Regardless of the condition of Britain's military forces at the Great Lakes, by the end of 1796, American troops were garrisoned at Detroit and at the Straits of Mackinac. The St. Joseph valley, as usual, was ignored.
The Treaty of Detroit, 1807

After the Jay Treaty, the continued, if slow, movement of settlers to Michigan led government officials to try to remove the potential obstacle of Indian land claims. These efforts resulted in the Treaty of Detroit between the Potawatomis, Odawas, Ojibwas, Wyandots and the Americans. The treaty, signed in 1807, gave the United States title to a most of the Lower Peninsula. The Indians ceded a large portion of southeastern Michigan, "west as far as the principal meridian and north as far as a line running from a point on the western boundary of the present Shiawassee County northeasterly to Which Rock on Lake Huron." In all, the Indians gave up five to six million acres.

The treaty settlement had not come easily. The Ojibwa and Odawa nations had opposed the Treaty of Detroit. As the commandant of Fort Mackinac, Captain Dunham, explained to Governor Hull in June of 1807, the Indians "decided instantly and unanimously not to attend the Council nor to have anything to do with alienating their Lands." Captain Dunham believed the Indians to have been "tampered with" and suspected "unauthorized individuals of a neighboring Nation [Canada] are endeavoring to throw obstacles in the way of the intended Treaty." Clearly Dunham believed that the British were still trying to influence events in Michigan.

Still, by November of 1807, Territorial Governor William Hull had concluded treaty negotiations. President Jefferson had sent a message for Hull to deliver to the Indians noting that while the Americans preferred to live in peace, "if ever we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down till that tribe is exterminated, or driven beyond the Mississippi." Hull seemed optimistic about
the treaty in a letter to War Secretary Henry Dearborn. Hull expressed his approval of the quality of the land acquired and claimed, disingenuously, that the Indians had not been pressured into signing the treaty.\textsuperscript{90} By December of that year, Hull had convinced himself that “a Treaty was never made on fairer principles—Everything relating to it has been fully explained; they were not even urged to the measure; full time was given for them to deliberate.”\textsuperscript{91} Under the terms of the treaty, the Odawas received “1000 dollars in Rifles—300 dollars in Brass Kettles, and 300 dollars in Calicoes. The residue with the 800 dollars annuity which will become due the first of September next, may be paid in Silver Dollars.” The Ojibwa tribe received “$400 in Rifles, $400 in Brass Kettles $400 in fine blue Cloth for the Chiefs, $2000 in Silver dollars, and the residue in such goods as are usually sent.” The Potawatomis received the same as the Ojibwas.\textsuperscript{92} In addition, the Indians were to receive “an Annuity forever of two thousand four hundred dollars” as well as two blacksmiths for ten years.\textsuperscript{93}

The War of 1812 and the Treaty of Ghent

The Treaty of Detroit did not ease the tensions between the Indian nations and the Americans. Scattered attacks on white settlements by Indians occurred throughout the Old Northwest.\textsuperscript{94} That, coupled with additional problems between Great Britain and the United States generated in the early 1800s, soon became an excuse for war. The British impressment of American sailors on the high seas and rearmament of the Indians in the west caused much worry in Washington.\textsuperscript{95} The rearmament of the Indians turned out to be the least of the Americans’ worries.
Indian resentment grew steadily in the early nineteenth century and Great Lakes tribes found an important voice in the Prophet, a Delaware Indian who preached the evils of white society. The Prophet's brother, Tecumseh united a number of tribes under his banner, and in the spirit of Pontiac, attempted to force out the Americans from the Old Northwest. In 1811, William Henry Harrison led an army against Tecumseh at Tippecanoe in Indiana, defeated him and destroyed the town. It would be just a matter of time before the U.S. and Britain faced each other on the battlefield, with many Indians taking the side of the British.

In June of 1812, President James Madison, at the urging of western "War Hawks" in Congress, requested a declaration of war against Great Britain. In addition to ending impressments, the Americans had hoped to break Indian resistance in the West. Finally, the Federal government would rid the Great Lakes region of both the Indians and the British. American traders would ply their ware across the Great Lakes without British interference. At least that was the plan. Much of the war took place in the Great Lakes region. In fact, the first battle was on Mackinac Island. The British landed on the north side of the island unnoticed, possibly with the aid of American and British fur traders, and occupied the high ground behind the fort. The Americans surrendered Fort Mackinac without firing a shot. The commanding officer, Lt. Porter Hanks was later court-martialed for his inaction. The same fate awaited the governor of the Territory and commandant of Fort Detroit, William Hull, for surrendering Detroit without a fight. General Hull surrendered Detroit in 1813 and the British occupation of Michigan lasted for the duration of the war and migration to the west all but ended. The Michigan Territory suffered greatly during
the occupation. British and American armies lived off the land and contributed to a "physical devastation" that brought many in Michigan to the brink of starvation.

In December 1814, the British and the Americans signed the Treaty of Ghent and ended the conflict. However, none of the issues that started the war, impressment of American sailors and British agitation of the western tribes, were addressed. Basically, all borders were returned to their pre-war status, and other conflicts, such as border disputes and the militarization of the Great Lakes, were to be remedied at a future date.

The latter of the issues was resolved with the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1818. It ended a brief arms race that commenced between the two countries after the war and "provided that neither country would maintain armed vessels on the lakes, except for a token force for the regulation of commerce." Thus ended the potential for any further serious military action in Michigan.

Figure 3.1: Land Offices and Districts, 1823.
Post-War Michigan and the Quest for Land

Once the war ended, settlers made their way west, some of them veterans who had visited the Great Lakes region during the war and wanted to lay claim to parcels of land (See Figures 3.1 and 3.2). However, the Tiffin Report stifled some of that settlement. Edward Tiffin was the U.S. Surveyor General, and as such, his job was to oversee the surveying of U.S. lands. His assessment of Michigan was that it was nearly uninhabitable, and certainly not fit for cultivation. This view did not endear the Territory to easterners looking for cheap and abundant land. In a letter to Josiah Meigs, the Commissioner of the Government Land Office in Washington, D.C, Tiffin observed that he felt it was his "duty" to give Meigs the surveyors' information believing that the soldiers who wanted land should know about the conditions in Michigan. Tiffin concluded his report with a phrase found often in histories of Michigan, that "there would not be more than once acre out of a hundred, if there would be one out of a thousand that would in any case admit of cultivation."
Tiffin recommended that Washington grant land elsewhere, such as in Illinois and Missouri to settlers and soldiers who were promised land grants for their service during the war.¹¹¹ As a result, settlement developed rapidly south of Michigan. Indiana was granted statehood in 1816 and Illinois two years later. Settlement and development in Michigan lagged. Michigan leaders tried desperately to counter the damage done by the Tiffin Report. Lewis Cass, who had become Territorial Governor after the War of 1812, challenged Tiffin’s conclusions.¹¹² After the report came out, Cass declared, “the quality of land in this Territory...has been grossly misrepresented.”¹¹³ In addition, Cass authorized the publication of a new newspaper,
the *Detroit Gazette*, to promote the virtues of the Michigan Territory. Some technological developments also aided Cass in his attempt to portray Michigan as a place to settle. Steamboat service on the Great Lakes started in 1818 with the *Walk on the Water*. Regular runs between Buffalo and Detroit made the trip to Michigan easier and cheaper than Ohio or Indiana. Road construction began in earnest in the 1820 and 30s. The Territorial Road and the Chicago Road linked Detroit with markets in the Michigan interior and Chicago.

Indian-American Treaties, 1821-1833 and Their Consequences

As more and more settlers steamed toward Michigan, the need for more Indian land became clear. The 1821 Treaty of Chicago, signed by the U.S. government and the Potawatomi nation in August of that year, gave the Americans title to land in southwest Michigan and other parts of the Midwest, further opening tracts of land for settlement and development. As a result of this treaty, the Indians ceded nearly all of their lands left south of the Grand River. The Indians gave up most of what is now Berrien County, all of Van Buren County, and an additional “nine entire counties, and parts of five other counties, all in the southwest part of Michigan.” The U.S. government agreed to pay the Potawatomis five thousand dollars a year for twenty years and for fifteen years and to finance a teacher and a blacksmith for the tribe.

Even though the Potawatomi nation signed away much of its land in 1821, some small tracts remained in Michigan near present-day Niles. Those were deeded to the U.S. government in 1827 and 1828. The Carey Mission Treaties secured more
of southwestern Michigan for the Americans. The first of the two treaties was signed on 19 September 1827. The U.S. government needed the treaty “in order to consolidate some of the dispersed bands of the Potawatomi Tribe in the Territory of Michigan at a point removed from the road leading from Detroit to Chicago, and as far as practicable from the settlements of the Whites.” The text of the treaty does not specify where the proposed Potawatomi reservation would go.

The second treaty, signed on 20 September 1828, forced the Potawatomis to cede land “beginning at the mouth of the St. Joseph, of Lake Michigan, and thence running up said river to a point on the same river, half-way between Lavache-qui-pisse and Macousin village; thence in a direct line of the State of Indiana; thence with the same west to Lake Michigan; and thence with the shore of the said lake to the place of the beginning.” In return, the Potawatomis received $7500 to use in “clearing and fencing land, erecting houses, purchasing domestic animals and farming utensils, and in the support of labourers to work for them.” They also received an annual quantity of iron, steel and tobacco and a blacksmith supplied by the government to the Potawatomis for four months a year for ten years. The assumption by the U.S. government was that the Indians wanted to work the land like the newly arriving white settlers and on top of that, nearly all of southwestern Michigan was now in American hands.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 and a second Treaty of Chicago would place all of the Lower Peninsula in the hands of the U.S. government by the mid 1830s (See Figure 3.3). President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act into law in 1830. The Act forced Indian tribes to move to reservations west of the Mississippi.
Governor Cass supported the Act in part because he, like Jackson, was a Democrat.\textsuperscript{125} In 1833, a second Treaty of Chicago was signed between the U.S. government and representatives of the Potawatomi nation in southwestern Michigan.\textsuperscript{126} George Porter, governor of the Michigan Territory, negotiated the treaty.\textsuperscript{127} Because of the massive amounts of corruption and graft that accompanied the treaty signing, it has been referred to as “part tragedy, part comedy, part solemn ceremony, part angry burlesque.”\textsuperscript{128} An example of this tragedy was witnessed by Charles Latrobe, an “itinerant Huguenot,” who was present at the 1833 Treaty of Chicago proceedings. He noted that a friend of his, “Snipe,” from Niles wanted to file a claim to the Treaty commissioners. Snipe had lost half of his hog herd to wolves. He hoped to convince the commissioners that the Potawatomi had “eaten his much-prized swine and would compensate him for his loss.”\textsuperscript{129} In practice, the Treaty’s articles had been put in effect even before Senate approval as thousands of Indians were forced across the Mississippi. The ratification was merely a formality, the result the “passing of the Indian frontier.”\textsuperscript{130}

The treaty extinguished the last of the Potawatomi, Ojibwa and Odawa lands in the Old Northwest and forced their removal west of the Mississippi River.\textsuperscript{131} The Indians “sold” five million acres of land to American speculators.\textsuperscript{132} Many Michigan Potawatomis in the Niles area had resisted selling their remaining lands. In 1833, a company of U.S. soldiers arrived in Niles and forced the Potawatomi on their trek to the Mississippi in compliance with the Indian Removal Act of 1830.\textsuperscript{133} Some of them moved north to L’Arbre Croche to live with the Odawas.\textsuperscript{134} The Senate initially balked at ratifying the treaty because of cost overruns and suspicious dealings.\textsuperscript{135}
Such problems were common when the United States signed treaties with the Indian nations. Finally in early 1835, the Senate bowed to Jackson's wishes and the 1833 Treaty of Chicago became law.

The treaties between the Indian nations and the United States, the Indian Removal Act and the opening of the Erie Canal cleared the way for large-scale white settlement. The land boom of the 1830s brought wave after wave of Yankee migrants to southern Michigan. Most of the migrants to Michigan were born in New England (Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine) or upstate New York and were less likely to have come from southern New England. Migrants in the 1830s settled the southern peninsula first, especially along the stretch of land between Detroit and Niles. The northern reaches of the Lower Peninsula were not well suited for agriculture and the southern lands had been surveyed and were ready for sale and settlement.

Thus did a series of treaties, acts and land ordinances create new frameworks, both physical and cultural, for settlement in Michigan. Contemporaries noted the consequences of these treaties. For example, Yale lawyer Jeremiah Evarts wrote in 1830, in the wake of the Indian Removal Act that "on the subject of the rights of the American aborigines, there has been much loose reasoning, and some quite as loose morality." Edward Everett, future Secretary of State under Millard Fillmore, stated in 1823 that, "the extension of our states and territories westward is daily giving greater political consequence to questions, relative to the condition of the yet existing nations of aboriginal peoples." Everett's statement captures the moment in American
history when some public leaders begin to feel some doubts about American land policy; the moment when “America discovered very early in her history that the lot of a colonizer with a conscience is not a happy one.”

A substantial amount of land in Michigan was sold in the 1830s as a result of the treaties and subsequent Indian removal (See Figure 3.4). The boom became a bust in 1837 only months after Michigan entered the Union as the 26th state. The Panic of 1837, a major nation-wide economic depression, put a temporary end to the land boom in the Great Lakes region. What becomes clear when observing Michigan history in local, national and international contexts, from the end of the French era until statehood is that each power to occupy the region tried to leave its imprint, which the next group then in turn tried to modify. The success of the British and the Americans in placing their imprint on the land depended on the size of the population
of each site as well as to the degree that each treaty, land law or act was implemented to the degree possible in reaction to local acceptance or resistance. The following chapters will investigate the various ways in which peoples made their imprints on the land and maintained their land use practices in the Detroit region, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph River valley.
Endnotes

1 DAH, 75.
2 DAH, 165.
5 An arpent is approximately one acre, or one third of a hectare. See Allan Greer, People of New France, 28. According to Eccles, “the arpent equaled approximately one and a half acres.” Canada under Louis XIV (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Limited, 1968), 49.
6 It is important to remember that most of the land that changed hands was “claimed” by various European and, later, American, powers without any government having title to said lands. Throughout most of the decision-making, the Indian nations were rarely, if ever, consulted.

Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne renonce à toutes les pretentions qu'elle a formées autrefois, ou pu former, à la Nouvelle Ecosse ou l'Acadie, en toutes se parties, et le garantit toute entiere et avec toutes ses dependences ou Roit de la Grande Bretagne; de plus sa Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne cede et garantit à sa dite Majeste Britannique, en toute propriete, le Canada avec toutes ses dependences

8 Davenport and Paullin, European Treaties, 93. The passage reads as follows:

De son cote sa Majesté Britannique convient d'accorder aux habitans du Canada la liberte de la religion Catholique; en consequence elle donnera les ordres les plus precis et les plus effectifs pour que ses nouveaux sujets Catholiques Romains puissant professer le culte de leur religion selon le rit de l'Eglise Romaine, en tant que le permettent les loix de la Grande Bretagne.

9 These problems were nonexistent in the St. Joseph River area because the French and British made minimum impact on the landscape and their settlers were long gone by the time permanent American settlement began.
10 Eccles, Canada under Louis XIV, 33; Greer, Peasant, Lord, and Merchant, 95.
11 Eccles, Canada under Louis XIV, 49. Additional duties of the seigneuries included providing the king a list of habitants living on the land, how much land had been cleared and the number of livestock on the seigneury.

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14 Eccles, Canada under Louis XIV, 49.
16 The ribbon farms were not in evidence throughout all of French North America, however. The habitants of the Illinois Country established a village system. See Ekberg, French Roots in the Illinois Country, passim.
17 Eccles, France in America, 37. In 1745 the crown altered this provision of the Coutume de Paris, preventing anyone from building on a plot smaller than 100 meters X 2 kilometers.
19 Moogk, La Nouvelle France, 272-3.
20 These issues will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.
21 Moogk, La Nouvelle France, 65.
22 The British did not allow the lengthy treaty negotiations to delay their arrival to the Great Lakes region. The first British troops in the Great Lakes region arrived in 1760, three years before France and Great Britain ratified the Treaty of Paris.
27 Eccles, “The Role of the American Colonies,” 149.
29 For more irony, this time on the part of the British, see PDBP, I: 412, Lords Proceedings, 9 December 1762. The passage reads,
That, seeing the great Object of the War so fully answered, all proper Attention shewn to His Majesty’s Allies, a vast Extent of Empire added to the British Crown, new Sources opened for our Trade and Manufactures, and Stability and Duration ensured, under the Blessings of Providence, to those great and National Advantages, we think it our indispensable Duty to lay before His Majesty this early Testimony of our warmest Gratitude.
The irony is that the Treaty did not add to the Imperial stability and duration, but rather hastened the start of the American Revolution, as the French had predicted.
George Washington said of the Proclamation, "I can never look upon [it] in any other light... than as a temporary expedient to quiet the Minds of the Indians and must fall of course in a few years especially when those Indians are consenting to our Occupying the Lands." Quoted in Eugene Del Papa, "The Royal Proclamation of 1763: Its Effect upon Virginia Land Companies," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 83 (October 1975), 406.


The Act stated,

Provided always, and be it enacted, That nothing in this Act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to make void, or to vary or alter any Right, Title, or Possession, derived under any Grant, Conveyance, or otherwise howsoever, of or to any Lands within the said Province, or the Provinces thereto adjoining; but that the same shall remain and be in Force, and have Effect, as if this Act had never been made.

And,

Provided also, That it shall and may be lawful to and for every Person that is Owner of any Lands, Goods, or Credits, in the said Province, and that has a Right to alienate the said Lands, Goods, or Credits, in his or her Life-time, by Deed of Sale, Gift, or otherwise, to devise or bequeath the same at his or her Death, by his or her last Will and Testament; any Law, Usage, or Custom, heretofore or now prevailing in the Province, to the Contrary hereof in any-wise notwithstanding; such Will being executed, either according to the Laws of Canada, or according to the Forms prescribed by the Laws of England.

See Neatby, *Quebec Act*, 49, 52.


the 1783 Treaty of Paris as one of the most important documents in American history.
In his brief and misnamed 1984 article, John H. Bruce wrote, "I am not an expert on
the ranking of this treaty in Canadian history, but many say that this treaty is the third
most important document in the history of the United States, taking its place
alongside the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution." "The Impact of the

44 *DAH*, 12.

45 The "Old Northwest" comprised what is now Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana,
Wisconsin and a small portion of Minnesota.

46 The First Continental Congress was formed in 1774 in response to the Coercive
Acts (known as the Intolerable Acts in North America) and the Quebec Act. The
Second Continental Congress formed the following year and served as the governing
body of the United States until the Constitution of 1787. It operated under the
authority of the Articles of Confederation.

47 The Committee consisting of Mr. Duane, Mr. Peters, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Hawkins,
and Mr. Lee, to whom were referred a Report on Indian affairs, read in Congress on
the 21st of April last., September 1- December 31, 1783, *JCC, XXV*: 681-82. The
committee consisted of James Duane, Richard Peters, Daniel Carroll, Benjamin
Hawkins and Arthur Lee.

48 See John Cumming's "Michigan for Sale," referenced above, for a brief discussion
of land sale policies in Connecticut and Massachusetts, 12-13.

49 Sydney to Haldimand, quoted in Richard B. Morris, "The Durable Significance
of the Treaty of 1783," in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Peace and the
Peacemakers: The Treaty of 1783* (Charlottesville: Published for the United States
Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1986), 239.

50 *DAH*, 118.

51 *DAH*, 118-19.

52 Congress had high hopes for the western posts. The committee concluded that "the
number of Troops requisite to Garrison them [the western posts] must in a great
measure be regulated by the number and force of such other Posts." They also
recognized the economic importance of the Great Lakes region, "Tho extending of
Garrisons to the Northward or to the Westward of Detroit can only be necessary at
this period to protect the peltry and fur trade, to keep watch upon our Neighbours and
to prevent their encroaching on our Territory unobserved." The committed resolved to
order "the Commanding Officer of the Troops now in service of the United States, be
and he is hereby directed to open a correspondence with the Commander in Chief of
his Britannic Majesty's forces in Canada, in order to ascertain the precise time when
each of the Posts within the Territories of the United States, now occupied by British
Troops shall be delivered up." The committee suggested that at Detroit one colonel,
two captains, two lieutenants, two ensigns, eight sergeants, four drummer and fifers
and 100 rank and file would suffice. At Fort Michilimackinac, they recommended
one major, two captains, two lieutenants, eight sergeants, four drummer and fifers and
100 rank and file. It would be several years before the Americans garrisoned either
post. See Report of Committee appointed to consider of the measures proper to be

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adopted to take possession of the Frontier Posts, January 1- May 10, 1784, *JCC XXXVI*: 201-04.

53 The Committee to whom was referred the motion of Mr. Monroe respecting the northwestern posts of the U.S. May 11- December 24, 1784, *JCC, XXVII*: 660-61. The committee consisted of James Monroe, David Howell, Hugh Williamson, Egbert Benson and William Houstoun. Monroe's letter read, in full:

Whereas it was stipulated in the 7th article of the treaty between his B. Majesty and the U.S. of A. that the Troops of his B. Majesty should be withdrawn from the posts and fortifications within the U.S. "with all convenient speed"; and whereas Michilimackinack, Detroit and other posts within the U.S are still held by British garrisons, therefore *Resolved* that ________ be instructed to represent his Britanick Majesty the dissatisfaction of the U.S at the delay of the Court of G.B. in complying with said article, and to require that his troops be withdrawn from every post and place within the territory of the U.S. and to assure His B. Majesty that it is the desire of the U.S. to live in amity with him and that they will do everything necessary on their part to cultivate the most friendly intercourse between the citizens and Subjects of either power.

57 David A. Armour and Keith R. Widder, *At the Crossroads: Michilimackinac during the American Revolution* (Mackinac Island: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1978), 188.
60 McCormick, "The 'Ordinance' of 1784?", 115.
62 And, as mentioned in Chapter I: Michigan History: Past and Present, the system eventually spread across most of the country.
64 Onuf, *Statehood and Union*, 24. This section of the Ordinance reads, there shall be reserved for the United States out of every township, the four lots, being numbered 8, 11, 26, 29, and out of every fractional part of a township, so many lots of the same numbers shall be found thereon, for future sale. There shall be the lot No. 16, of every township, for the maintenance of public schools, within the said township.

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In Statehood and Union, Peter Onuf claimed that the land business was set up to recruit “market-oriented purchasers,” 37.

Eccles, Canada Under Louis XIV, 49.


ASP, I: passim.


See Boller and Story, A More Perfect Union, 86.

There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: Provided always, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original states, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed, and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid.

This section led to some debate over the issue of slavery. Did the prohibition of slavery mean that no new slaves could enter the territory? Or did it mean that slavery could not exist at all? In the end, Article VI was interpreted to mean that slavery could not exist in the territory. See Afua Cooper, “The Fluid Frontier: Blacks and the Detroit River Region. A Focus on Henry Bibb,” Canadian Review of American Studies/Revue canadienne d'études américaines 30 (2000): 127-149; David Brion Davis, “The Significance of Excluding Slavery from the Old Northwest in 1787, Indiana Magazine of History 4 (March 1988): 75-89; and Paul Finkleman, “Slavery and the Northwest Ordinance: A Study in Ambiguity,” Journal of the Early Republic 6 (Winter 1986): 343-370 for a discussion of slavery in Michigan and Ontario.


Donaldson, The Public Domain, 155. Article III contains some of the most altruistic language seen in an American document since the Declaration of Independence:

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, rights, and liberty, they never shall be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized
by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity shall, from time to time, be made, for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.

The Ordinance of 1787 took on mythical proportions in the nineteenth century until the "ascendancy of the Constitution in the popular imagination diminished the Ordinance's luster." After the admission of Ohio into the Union in 1803, this American "Magna Charta" became a blueprint for an American way of thinking. An orator in 1850 declared that the Ordinance was

[A]n American production; the offspring of American wisdom and experience. Like the declaration of independence, like the constitution that binds these states together, its language is simple and unostentatious. But how comprehensive is its spirit! How potent are its truths! The west tells its present effect, and the future shadows forth yet mightier results. Its impress is upon our character, and upon our legislation. There it must remain as long as the Saxon race inherits the soil.


Craig, *Upper Canada*, 23.


*DAH*, 165.


*DAH*, 166.


Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan*, 58.

Governor William Hull to Secretary Henry Dearborn, 18 November 1807; Governor William Hull to Secretary Henry Dearborn, 23 December 1807, *Documents Relating to Detroit and Vicinity, 1805-1813, MPHC, XL*: 219, 236. Hereafter, *Documents, MPHC*.

Capt. J. Dunham to William Hull, 18 June 1807 *Documents, MPHC, XL*: 142. Emphasis in the original.


Hull to Dearborn, 18 November 1807, Documents, MPH, XL: 219.


Hull to Dearborn, 18 November 1807, Documents, MPH, XL: 221.

Hull to Dearborn, 4 November 1807, Documents, MPH, XL: 213.


Gilpin, The War of 1812, 44.

Gilpin, The War of 1812, 6-19.

Gilpin, The War of 1812, 47.

Gilpin, The War of 1812, 44.


The war will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III: The Detroit River and Chapter IV: The Straits of Mackinac as it relates to those areas.

Rohrbough, The Trans-Appalachian Frontier, 223.

Dunbar and May, Michigan, 137.

Dunbar and May, Michigan, 138.

As the potential for war on the Great Lakes decreased, so too did the military importance of Fort Mackinac. The post was briefly abandoned in the 1830s and finally became a state park in 1895. See Keith Widder, Reveille till Taps: Soldier Life at Fort Mackinac, 1780-1895 (Mackinac Island: Mackinac State Historic Parks, 1994).

Map found in Lewis, West to Far Michigan, 96.

Gilpin, The War of 1812, 262.


Tiffin’s motives have been the subject of speculation among Michigan historians. His report may have come from haste rather than malice and may have in fact sped up Michigan settlement by stopping the military grants and opening up land for survey and speculation. See Madison Kuhn, “Tiffin, Morse, and the Reluctant Pioneer,” Michigan History Magazine 50 (June 1966), 117-18.

Correspondence Concerning Surveys, MPH, X: 61-2. The text of the Tiffin Report reads, in part:

I think it my duty to give you the information, believing it is the wish of the government that the soldiers should have (as the act of congress expresses) lands fit for
cultivation, and that the whole of the two millions of acres appropriated in the territory of Michigan will not contain anything like one hundredth part of the quantity, or is worth the expenses of surveying it.

On approaching the eastern part of the military lands towards the private claims on the strait and lake the country does not contain so many swamps and lakes, but the extreme sterility and barrenness of the soils continues the same—taking the country altogether so far as has been explored and to all appearances together with the information received concerning the balance, is as bad—there would not be more than once acre out of a hundred, if there would be one out of a thousand that would in any case admit of cultivation.

109 Map found in Lewis, *West to Far Michigan*, 96.
110 Map found in Lewis, *West to Far Michigan*, 84.
111 Brown, "Mr. Tiffin's Surveyors Come to Michigan," 32.
113 Brown, "Mr. Tiffin's Surveyors Come to Michigan," 36.
118 Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 36.
120 Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 37.
128 James Clifton, "Chicago, September 14, 1833: The Last Great Indian Treaty in the Old Northwest, *Chicago History* 9 (Summer 1980), 86. According to Clifton, Billy Caldwell was the primary reason why the Americans wrested so much land from the Indians. Caldwell worked for land speculators. As the child of a Potawatomi woman and an Englishman, he could slip into both Indian and white worlds. As such, Caldwell's employers promoted him as an Indian "chief" and Caldwell gladly went along with the scheme.
129 Clifton, "Chicago, September 14, 1833," 88.
130 Clifton, "Chicago, September 14, 1833," 95.
134 Clifton, “Chicago, September 14, 1833,” 93.
136 The importance of the Erie Canal is debatable. On the one hand, it did open an all-water route from the East Coast to the Great Lakes. In West to Far Michigan, Kenneth Lewis argued that Michigan’s population increased before the opening of the canal. He states, “the Michigan Sentinel attributed the territory’s ‘present increase in population, and general advancement in wealth,’ to the anticipated opening of long-distance water transportation,” 220.
140 Horsman, "American Indian Policy in the Old Northwest, 1783-1812," 53.
141 Map found in Lewis, West to Far Michigan, 99.
I believe we shall have 60 arpents of land sown this next spring, hence I count on having a large quantity of corn; and I will have a mill built on the spot, so as to be absolutely independent of Canada for provisions. I have also a fine garden in which I have put some vines, and some ungrafted fruit trees.

-Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, 1702

The number of Settlers whites, is about 1500. They build on the borders of the Straight, and occupy about 13 miles in length on the North, and 8 on the South side—the houses are all of Log or frame Work, shingled, the most have their orchard adjoining, the appearance of the Settlement is very smiling.

-Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton, 29 August 1776

The conflagration at Detroit, has placed the officers of the Government, and the Citizens generally in a very unpleasant situation.

-Governor William Hull to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, 22 September 1805.

Detroit sits along a strait connecting the upper and lower Great Lakes, at a place the Hurons called Ka-ron-ta-en, or “the Coast of the Strait.” Detroit was midway between the two larger French settlements on the St. Lawrence and Mississippi Rivers and that strategic location was not lost on Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, the settlement’s founder (See Figure 4.1). The French and the English both coveted the region and the latter had their designs on the Detroit River area as early as 1700, when Robert Livingstone reported to the Earl of Bellomont that the English needed a post “at Wawyachtenok cald by the French De Troett” where there was “arable land for thousands of people.” Under Cadillac, though, Detroit’s raison d’être was not large-scale settlement, but commerce. From its founding in 1701 until 1765, over 3,000 engagés signed contracts to work at Detroit. Like the posts on the St. Joseph River and at the Straits of Mackinac, Detroit also served as a military outpost.
The Detroit area was the most "French looking" of the three locations examined in this dissertation and maintained its Francophone land use for the longest duration. The built environment, the settlement patterns, the language, religion and culture all reflected a distinctly Franco-American way of life, even during the first
decades of the American era. British influence, which was primarily in the form of the expansion of fortifications in the 1760s, did not make a lasting impression on Detroit because of the relatively short occupation. In addition, British settlers generally had difficulty acquiring land under British law. An important exception dates from the American Revolution when Loyalists were granted land near the fort, but even then, the land grants were temporary. British cultural influence was most felt on the opposite side of the river, which became Canadian. Detroit changed the most during the American era when its military importance declined, especially after the Treaty of Ghent and the Rush-Bagot Agreement, and its commercial significance increased. Some of the changes were by design, such as the dismantling of the fort, others were a result of accident, such as the aftermath of the 1805 fire. At any rate, by the early 1820s, the fort was gone and Detroit served as a commercial center and land office on the American frontier.

Detroit never went gracefully from one power to the next, which accounts for, in part, the impressive continuity of habitant land use there. Habitants lingered after the fall of New France, either unwilling or unable to migrate to France, a country most had never known. The British were slow to abandon the post after the American Revolution, as they were required to do under the provisions of the 1783 Treaty of Paris, understanding that the control of Detroit meant, in large part, the control of the western fur trade (as well as Indian loyalties). The Americans and the British sparred over Detroit during the War of 1812, both sides gaining victories at one point or another during the conflict. The Treaty of Ghent, however, ensured that Detroit
would remain American, and the Rush-Bagot Agreement defused Anglo-American tensions allowing Detroit to evolve into a political and commercial center.

The French Era: 1701-1763

The French first visited the Detroit region when the Sulpician priest René François Bréhat de Galinee arrived from France in 1670, indicating what the French considered to be the most important feature of the area at the time, a place to convert of the Indians.11 Cadillac founded Detroit, primarily as a trading post, in 1701, hoping to lure Indians from other parts of the west to his new post.12 Previously he had been the commander of Fort de Buade, the tiny post on the southern tip of the Upper Peninsula, near East Moran Bay.13 His new community served as an important economic center and military presence. He famously quarreled with the Jesuits and other French officials and spent the last part of his time in North America as the governor of the Louisiana Colony. Detroiers, though, enjoyed some early agricultural success under his tenure, if not with his help. The Jesuits, Cadillac’s long-time enemies, often loaned seed to habitants to help them get started.14

As the colony grew, the French began to create maps of Detroit, indicating a gradual expansion of the colony, and, as settlement and agriculture became more important, depicting the increases in the number of houses and fields. Cadillac’s September 1702 report on Fort Pontchartrain, the name of the post at Detroit, portrays the fort and Odawa and Huron villages.15 A map from 1711 contains little more detail than Cadillac’s map.16 (See Figure 4.2) A 1731 map depicts a series of ribbon farms as well as the fort indicating that land claims were becoming as map-worthy as
military instillations. A 1749 map contains even more detail. It lists the major components of the community including the commandant's house, the church, gardens, barracks and the powder magazine, all of which indicate the military nature of land use at the time. The first Detroit census dates from 1710 and is valuable for two reasons. First, the categories into which the residents are divided give some insight as to the social make-up of the settlement and second, it includes a brief description of the fort and houses. The residents are categorized as farmers with wives, soldiers who have houses, Canadians who have wives at Detroit and married Frenchmen whose wives did not come with them to Detroit, which totals approximately 34 settlers. The census does not define these categories in any meaningful way, but indicates that the habitants did not have the best living conditions. The census mentions the presence of houses built with upright stakes, two log cabins, a chapel, a warehouse and a barn and stable. Each item indicates a different kind of land use such as homesteads, trade and agriculture. This description of the built environment is significant because of the reference to the upright stakes, a style known as poteaux-en-terre, a common French-style construction method also found at Fort Michilimackinac, although not yet at Fort St. Joseph.

The increase in population and agriculture garnered the attention of Father Pierre de Charlevoix, a Jesuit priest, who visited Detroit in 1721. He commented on the built environment and habitant agricultural practices. On the physical conditions of Detroit he wrote,

It is a long time since the importance of the place, still more than the beauty of the country about the Narrows
has given ground to wish that some considerable settlement were made in this place; this has been tolerably well begun some fifteen years since, but certain causes of which I am not informed, have reduced it to almost nothing.\textsuperscript{22}

On the \textit{habitant} farmers and their apparent lack of knowledge of crop rotation or fertilization methods. He wrote,

the lands, however, are not all equally proper for every sort of grain, but most are of a wonderful fertility, and I have known some produce good wheat for eighteen years running without any manure, and besides all of them are proper for some particular use. The islands seem placed on the purpose for the pleasure of the prospect; the river and lake abound with fish, the air is pure, and the climate temperate and extremely wholesome.\textsuperscript{23}

Much in the Detroit area changed in the decades following Charlevoix’s visit. Small farming communities developed along the Detroit River and several other local rivers by the middle of the eighteenth century and, as a result, Detroit increasingly took on the trappings of a fortified agricultural settlement, complete with ribbon farms that reflect \textit{habitant} agricultural practices, and, by 1743, a population of 413 settlers.\textsuperscript{24} (See Figure 3.3). Each side of the river contained a number of ribbon farms.\textsuperscript{25} The river did not serve to separate two countries, as it does now. The Detroit River, like the Mississippi and St. Lawrence rivers, became a highway, connecting communities.
Figure 4.2. Detail from “Carte Du Canada Tirée Sur Un Tres Grande Nombre De Memoires Des Plus Recents Augmentée Et Corigée Sur Toutes Celles Qui Ont Été Faites Avant,” by De Couagne, depicting French settlement and fortifications along the Detroit River in 1711. Wayne State University Press.
Figure 4.3: La Rivière du Detroit, 1749. Detroit appears as a fortified village. Courtesy of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

But, still, the settlement grew slowly during the French era. By 1763, when the French government officially ceded most of North America to the British, Detroit was "less a fort than a tiny fortified town surrounded by a wooden palisade some fifteen feet high, within which the various military buildings, and also shops and
private houses, were ranged along four little streets running parallel to the river.\textsuperscript{27} (See Figure 4.3) Despite the evidence of agricultural activity, Detroit’s economy relied on the success of trade, which is one reason that the settlement sat so close to the river and access to trade wealth served to reproduce and preserve socio-economic differences. For example, late in the British occupation, Major Arent Schulyer De Peyster collected a small fortune in trade, apparently using his connections and power as leader of the community.\textsuperscript{28}

The ribbon farms served as an example of a shared perspective on the purpose and potential of the land. By 1757, commentators noted \textit{habitant} successes in agriculture and animal husbandry. Louis Antoine de Bougainville, an aid to the Marquis de Montcalm, wrote, “there are two hundred habitations abundantly provided with cattle, grains, and flour.”\textsuperscript{29} He held a rather high opinion of the \textit{habitants} and their abilities. But Bougainville also believed, “it would be well for the authorities to encourage the inhabitants of Detroit in the cultivation of their land and afford them facilities for their produce.”\textsuperscript{30} Bela Hubbard, too, claimed that French authorities did little to promote agriculture at Detroit.\textsuperscript{31} It should be noted, though, that in the mid-eighteenth century Versailles offered French immigrants a cow, a pig, farming implements and a small land grant to settle in Detroit.\textsuperscript{32}

\textit{Habitant} land use practices dictated that a portion of lands surrounding the fort would be reserved as a commons area. Military authorities discouraged the \textit{habitants} from building houses too close to the fort. That did not stop some intrepid souls from trying, though. When an errant \textit{habitant} built a house too close to the fort, it was always torn down.\textsuperscript{33} Other commons areas included some of the islands in the
Detroit River. Hog Island (modern-day Belle Isle), for example had been used as a common from the time of Cadillac until a legal dispute in the late 1760s put the island in the hands of a private owner.34

That the habitants at Detroit found modest success in growing grain is well known, but they found greater success with their orchards. Cadillac noted the potential for orchards a year after founding Detroit. He wrote, “all of the fruit trees in general are loaded with their fruit; there is reason to believe that if these trees were grafted, pruned and well cultivated, their fruit would be much better, and that it might be made good fruit.”35 Pear and apple orchards in particular garnered high praise. Bela Hubbard and Silas Farmer noted this phenomenon often in their writings. Hubbard referred to the apple orchards as a “distinguishing feature in the river landscape.”36 Most farmers had pear trees on their property as well.37 Pear trees were considered to be “the crowning glory” of the habitant farm.38 The earliest pear trees apparently originated from seeds brought by Jesuits from Normandy.39

The habitants at Detroit had close ties to the land and their population was larger than at the Straits and the St. Joseph valley. Their language and religion, coupled with their concept of ribbon farms helped to establish their long-standing continuity in the Detroit region even as treaty negotiators in Paris were preparing to sign over the entire region to the British after the Seven Years’ War. Whatever the negotiators’ intentions, British leadership in the Great Lakes region would have to contend with a population that would resist and challenge British authority, especially over land ownership issues.
By 1760, French possessions in North America were falling to the British, Detroit included. British control of Detroit began officially on November 29, 1760, although the treaty that made this control official was not signed until 1763. Major Robert Rogers, who later commanded Fort Michilimackinac, accepted the surrender of the French garrison by Francois Picote, Sieur de Bellestre, the last French commandant. The fort’s name was changed to Fort Detroit. Rogers’ tenure there was short and he departed in December and Captain Donald Campbell took command.

The British occupation of Michigan lasted for a mere thirty-six years, which was not nearly enough time for the French and English speaking populations to melt into one indistinguishable group. In addition, the French-speaking community had no reason to assimilate into the English-speaking community. The British were newcomers, their numbers relatively low, and their land policy made it difficult to acquire property, allowing the habitants to exert cultural, if not political, influence on Detroit. British officials held a generally negative view of the French in Detroit and considered French culture an impediment to successful economic growth. Such a view was bound to keep the lines between the communities sharp. Catholicism and language kept the habitants together, especially after Parliament passed the Québec Act, which helped to preserve French language and land use, eliminating any need for them to interact with the British.
Despite their generally negative view of the French, the British leadership made attempts from time to time to bring the *habitants* into the British fold, in official and non-official manners, even if British law sometimes ran contrary to the *Coutume de Paris*. For example, in 1766, General Gage reminded the authorities at Detroit of their obligations to uphold British land law. He wrote, “the King’s rights to rents, Quit rents, and Fine of Alienation, or sales & exchanges are to be supported, and the Inhabitants of the Town agreeable to the conditions of their Grants, obliged to keep the Pickets in repair.” There is a clear distinction here between the French and British systems, since under the *Coutume de Paris*, the rents would have gone not to the crown, but to the *seigneur*, who represented the crown in North America. Indian Agent Sir William Johnson visited Detroit in 1761 and made every effort to mingle with the French. French girls “became acquainted with the young soldiers in the garrison.” And in an initial burst of optimism, Captain Campbell noted, “the inhabitants seem well disposed to support me.” That support was qualified. The French remained neutral during the 1763 Indian Uprising as well as the American Revolution. Of course, some of the *habitants* held out hope that British rule would be cut short and France would regain its North American empire. Napoleon’s accession of Louisiana in 1800 seemed to support such notions, but the hopes were short-lived. By establishing military and civilian rule in Detroit, the British gave notice that they intended to remain there for the long haul and the *habitants* would have to accept that fact. While the establishment of rule in Detroit might seem to contradict the British attempt to protect property rights, as found in the Québec Act, the British needed to establish control over their newly won territories.
The British were impressed with the fortifications at Detroit, implying a more positive view of the French military than of the habitants. The post had been enlarged several times in the previous decade and measured around 200 yards in circumference.\textsuperscript{49} George Croghan referred to the post as “y. best Stokoade” he had ever seen.\textsuperscript{50} In 1765, Croghan left a more detailed description of the fort. He wrote that it had “a large stockade, inclosing about eighty houses, it stands close on the north side of the river on a high bank, commands a very pleasant prospect for nine miles above, and nine miles below.”\textsuperscript{51} The houses inside the palisade were placed close together and the streets were narrow and unpaved.\textsuperscript{52} After the 1763 Indian War in which the Odawa Chief Pontiac led a siege against the fort, Detroit residents had to rebuild the settlement. By 1764 the settlement included a number of stone buildings.\textsuperscript{53} The British added a new section to the west side of the fort called the Citadel.\textsuperscript{54} Thirty-three habitant families lived inside the palisade at the time.\textsuperscript{55}

Initially some confusion reigned at Detroit in regard to official land policy and British authorities constantly had to clarify the government’s position. The Proclamation of 1763, which had forbade settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, also stipulated that any land transaction first needed the king’s approval. At Detroit, the Proclamation was ignored to the point that in 1774, Frederick Haldimand sent a copy to Detroit as a not-so-subtle reminder of British land policy.\textsuperscript{56} That implies that at Detroit, authorities were granting land without going through the proper channels. Until 1766, as the fort was being expanded, it was not clear who was to pay for internal improvements at the fort or how the commandants were to distribute land to settlers. Under British policy, all land belonged to the crown, and
only the king had the right to grant it. General Thomas Gage found himself having to explain English policy in detail to the officers at Detroit. In October of 1766, Gage informed Captain Turnbull that “I repeat that it is not in my power to remit any one article of the King’s Rights of which I shall write more fully hereafter. The People may not at once be able to replace all the stockades wanting round the Town, but they must do it by degrees and as soon as they can. I don’t mean Picketing ordered lately round the Fort, that must be done by the King as ordered.”

A month later, Gage’s frustration with conditions at Detroit is evident. He wrote, “I am verry sorry to find the Works of Detroit have gone on so very slowly, and are yet so very far from being finished, notwithstanding the great expense they have put the Government to.”

Despite Gage’s efforts, by 1771 the land policies were either still unclear or misunderstood by the officers at Detroit. Gage, in an unaddressed letter explained how the policies would work. He wrote, “from hence you will know the power of granting Lands at Detroit remains solely in the King, & that no purchase can be made of the Indians but with the King’s permission & authority.” Furthermore, he invalidated previous land claims made by British commandants at the fort, stating that all grants made by “Lieut: Colonel Gladwin, Major Bruce or any other British Commander are null & void & of no value.”

By the end of the 1760s, the habitants demonstrated that they could challenge British land policy. The habitants had long used common lands for their farming practices. Although common lands were not necessarily French in origin, but likely derived from opportunity and the desire for cultural solidarity, it was nonetheless an important part of habitant land use, and was contrary to British concepts of land in
The habitants had claimed Hog Island as an area of common land use and the British did not see it that way. Lt. George McDougall’s story illustrates that point, and provides an example of the local conditions that would shape land use in Detroit. Lt. McDougall was stationed at Detroit with his wife. He is probably best known as one of the two officers sent to make peace with Chief Pontiac during the 1763 Indian War, but in 1769 he was in the middle of a major land dispute. In May of that year, a group of “Sundry Inhabitants of Detroit” petitioned Governor Carleton to defend their common land practice. The petitioners were distressed to discover that McDougall claimed the land and intended to “possess, cultivate and enjoy Hog Island” at their expense. The petitioners implored Carleton to “support & make good [their] rights and prerogatives preserved to [them] by [their] former Sovereigns, in order that they be continued to [them] under the present Government.”

Captain George Turnbull noted that the habitants had no “Writing to shew” to prove their claim to the island, but recognized that they had grazed cattle there for “fifty or sixty years past.” Lt. McDougall received a deed for Hog Island from a group of Indians in May of 1769, explaining that had he known of the habitants’ claim to the island “he never would have apply’d for it.” Despite that, when McDougall inhabited the island, he brought an English family to live with him there and made “very great improvements in clearing ground and Building.” A Mr. Boyd surveyed the island in 1771, finding it to be 704 acres. By then around 30 acres had been cultivated. George McDougall died in 1780 and the distribution of his property was important enough of an event to gain the attention of Governor Haldimand. Soon after McDougall’s death, Haldimand stated his “Intention to reclaim [Hog Island] for
the use of the Crown and Garrison of Detroit." There was some concern for McDougall's widow, although that would not have been necessary under the Coutume de Paris, which allowed widows to inherit land. Haldimand wrote to Major De Peyster, the commanding officer, that Mrs. McDougall "need not be alarmed," and that her "rights" would be protected. He also informed De Peyster that he "wish[ed] to make Mrs. McDougal a reasonable Compensation for what Houses &ca. may be found upon the Island, you will please to appoint Persons to apprise them and transmit to me their Report." Haldimand's letter indicates that McDougall had made substantial changes to Hog Island, in the form of cultivated fields and houses, in the decade or so of his residence there. The Governor, and perhaps De Peyster, saw the potential of Hog Island for use by Loyalists at Detroit. Haldimand in particular wanted the newly abandoned island for use by the Loyalists for farming purposes. He wrote, "I am the more desirous to employ Loyalists, as well as because it is a present relief for them, as that they are in general expert Farmers." The whole affair illustrates the problems encountered by the British as they tried to set up residence on a built environment already shaped by the French and the Indians.

The British began a program of expansion at Detroit during the 1760s, perhaps reflecting in part their concerns about the Indians and the loyalty of the habitants. In 1766 over 100 homes existed within the palisade. By 1769 the palisade enclosed around 120 buildings, some of them a story and a half high. On the eve of American occupation, some 300 houses existed at the settlement, but not all of them were enclosed by the fort. And by 1805 200 homes existed inside the palisade.
The British kept careful records of Detroit, which included several censuses. (See Table 4.1) The censuses contained not only population figures, but often information on the number of barrels of flour, numbers of horses, cattle, sheep, other livestock owned by the settlers and numbers of acres under cultivation, including separate returns on oats, wheat and corn, all of which give some insight into land use. This information reveals a steady increase in the agricultural output, especially wheat and oats, as well as offering clues into the cultural changes taking place. For example, the number of acres under cultivation steadily increased from 1762 to 1782 and the 1762 census is in French, evidence that British authorities had to acknowledge the habitants. Despite the fact that most of the habitants were illiterate, and could not even read the census, the French presence apparently could not be ignored. Detroit’s population that year was around 900 to 950 people, including 65 slaves. The British counted 318 men, 229 boys, 187 girls and 71 hired men. The numbers cannot be trusted fully, because some settlers had farms outside the fort and lots inside, meaning that approximately 85 farmers may have been counted twice.

The British had trouble with the 1765 census in particular. The census taker found himself the subject of suspicion in the habitant community. He wrote, “the inhabitants being apprehensive that I had some design upon them when I questioned them with respect to the quantity of wheat they expected this year mentioned a less quantity than they had reason to hope for.” Perhaps the habitants had some reason for their attitude, because the census taker had an unflattering opinion of them. He wrote,

The Indian corn would have been in greater abundance had proper care been taken of it; the most part has been
devoured by the birds. There are several farms at present uncultivated, the proprietors being partly absent and partly employed in building themselves houses.\textsuperscript{79}

At any rate, when this comprehensive census was completed, it presented a new picture of Detroit. There were 243 men, 164 women, 294 children, 60 slaves. The residents had 484 acres under cultivation, and owned 281 horses, 136 colts, 196 bullocks, 235 cows, and 224 calves.\textsuperscript{80} In addition, there were a number of French families in the fort including 33 men able to bear arms, which indicates that the British expected the \textit{habitants} to serve in the militia and contribute to the defense of the settlement.\textsuperscript{81}

Starting in 1768 the censuses begin to indicate subtle changes in the land. The census takers in 1768, for example, add categories for logging and note increased wheat production. That year the British recorded numerous livestock, in the sum of 903 cows and hogs and the settlement had 9,789 minots\textsuperscript{82} of wheat and 344.5 cords of wood in storage on hand, the first time both items appear in the census, although wood storage is not in every census. It is worth noting that by 1768, 514.5 acres were under cultivation, a mere thirty additional acres three years after the previous census.\textsuperscript{83} The number of animals, especially hogs (which reproduce quickly), and the amount of wheat and wood show that British officials considered such items to be of importance.

By 1773, the census takers noted Detroit's military importance, although the garrison was not counted in the total population. The census taker wrote, “the Troops and the Naval Department, with their Cattle, etc., are not included in the above. The men servants are generally more numerous, several being now hunting and at the
Indian villages. The 1773 census is the only one to include the total number of houses and barns at Detroit, 280 and 157 respectively. The houses were divided into two categories, inside and outside the fort. There were 212 houses outside the fort’s walls, which means that not everyone who lived on that side engaged in farming. The census notes 2,602.5 acres under cultivation, a substantial jump from the 514 acres from 1768, the previous census.

Agriculture and population grew steadily during the British era. In 1765, 484 acres of land were under cultivation and by 1782 the number reached 13,770. The population was 973 in 1762 and 2,191 in 1782, the last British census year. The year 1779 witnessed the largest population of the British era at 2,653 people. That year was also the high tide for slavery in Detroit, with 138 slaves counted in the census, most of them, like at the Straits region, household slaves. Although the total number of acres under cultivation is curiously missing for that year, other census evidence points to a decrease in wheat production and an increase in corn production with 5,273 bushels of wheat and 3,177 bushels of corn sown in 1779. Those numbers jumped considerably the following year, with 13,306 bushels of wheat and 5,380 bushels of corn sown. The 1780 census also includes three new agricultural categories: oats, peas and cider. Increased agricultural production is visible in another way as well. In 1780, British Detroit boasted its second largest and most diverse amount of livestock, totaling 3,695 animals. Although peas do not figure in the 1782 census, 3,000 bushels of potatoes were harvested that year. The 828 barrels of cider in 1780 jumped to 1,000 in 1782, which might indicate a new increased commercial use for the habitant orchards in the Detroit area. The number and

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diversity of livestock in 1782 is impressive as well, totaling 4601 animals, the bulk of them horses and hogs.

### Table 4.1: Detroit Census Information, 1762-1782

**POPULATION FIGURES**

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#### 1773

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<th>Boys from 1-10</th>
<th>Young Women, 10-20</th>
<th>Girls from 1-10</th>
<th>Servants</th>
<th>Slaves (M)</th>
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<td>137</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fort</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4.1—Continued

On Hog Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Young Men, 10-20</th>
<th>Boys from 1-10</th>
<th>Young Women 10-20</th>
<th>Girls from 1-10</th>
<th>Servants</th>
<th>Slaves (M)</th>
<th>Slaves (F)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Population, 1773: 1,360

1778

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Young Men and Boys</th>
<th>Young Women and Girls</th>
<th>Servants (M)</th>
<th>Servants (F)</th>
<th>Slaves</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>564</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1779

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Lodgers (F)</th>
<th>Lodgers (M)</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Slaves (M)</th>
<th>Slaves (F)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2,653</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1780

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heads of Families</th>
<th>Married/ Young Women</th>
<th>Young/ Married Men</th>
<th>Absent/ Indian Country</th>
<th>Boys from 10-15 years</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Slaves (M)</th>
<th>Slaves (F)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>394</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1782

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heads of Families</th>
<th>Married Women</th>
<th>Widows and Married Women</th>
<th>Young and Hired Men</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Slaves (M)</th>
<th>Slaves (F)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>321</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AGRICULTURAL FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Colts</th>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Bullocks</th>
<th>Calves</th>
<th>Acres Under Cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Hogs</th>
<th>Minots of Wheat</th>
<th>Cords of Wood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>9,789</td>
<td>344.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

105
### Table 4.1—Continued

#### 1773

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South Side of Fort</th>
<th></th>
<th>North Side of Fort</th>
<th></th>
<th>The Fort</th>
<th></th>
<th>On Hog Island</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total Acres Under Cultivation: 2,599.59¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1778

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heifers/Steers</th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Oxen</th>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Hogs</th>
<th>Acres Under Cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>650</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>1,312</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1779

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Oxen</th>
<th>Bushels of Wheat Sown</th>
<th>Bushels of Indian Corn</th>
<th>Acres Under Cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>664</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>5,273</td>
<td>3,177</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Steers</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Hogs</th>
<th>Pounds of Flour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>779</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>141,517</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Oxen</th>
<th>Bushels of Wheat Sown</th>
<th>Bushels of Wheat, 1780</th>
<th>Acres Under Cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>772</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>2,028</td>
<td>13,306</td>
<td>12,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Steers</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Hogs</th>
<th>Pounds of Flour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>793</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>3,580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bushels of Indian Corn</th>
<th>Bushels of Oats</th>
<th>Bushels of Peas</th>
<th>Barrels of Cider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,380</td>
<td>6,253</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Oxen</th>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Steers and Heifers</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Hogs</th>
<th>Acres Under Wheat, 1781</th>
<th>Bushels of Wheat Sown, 1781</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrels of Cider to be Made, 1782</th>
<th>Pounds of Flour</th>
<th>Acres of Wheat Sown</th>
<th>Acres Under Oats</th>
<th>Bushels of Potatoes in the Ground</th>
<th>Acres Under Indian Corn</th>
<th>Acres Under Cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>94,250</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>1,849</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>13,770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conditions at Detroit changed rapidly during the American Revolution in response to events in the main theater of the war on the east coast, and those closer to home, in the Illinois Country. In 1776, Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton could boast that Fort Detroit was “in a tolerable state of defence” assuming any potential enemy did not arrive with cannon. The British took three censuses at Detroit during the war and strengthened the already impressive fortifications. By 1778, the population stood at 2,144. The settlement grew somewhat and in 1780, the British counted 2,089 inhabitants, plus one hundred or so “missing” in “Indian country.”
During the course of the war, the Americans pressured the British in the west, with George Rogers Clark making his way up the Illinois Country. In a confidential letter written in December of 1778 to Lt. Governor Hamilton, Frederick Haldimand noted the “uncertainty of the state of Detroit and Michilimackinac as long as the Rebels remain masters of the country they have lately infested.” Haldimand was concerned enough about the “state of Detroit” that in April of 1779 he sent Captain Brehm, his aide-de-camp, on an investigative mission and instructed Captain Lernoult, the commandant after Hamilton’s capture by the Americans, to “confide, upon all matters which concern the King’s service in those Parts.” Captain Lernoult worried that an American attacked might be close at hand and ordered the construction of a new fort in 1779 outside of town that could withstand any advancing army. The new post was named Fort Lernoult. Captain Brehm reported to General Haldimand on the construction and completion of the fort. He wrote, “the New Fort is really very much advanced except the Lodging Stores etc which is now Building the plan of it has already been sent to your Excellency.” The storehouses apparently took longer to build and authorities had sent the plans to Haldimand for approval.

Land conflicts and other problems, such as the lack of a surveyor for the settlement continued during the war, further indicating that local conditions and events would continue to force British officials to disregard official policy. In January of 1778, British officials suspended land grants at Detroit. Lt. Governor Hamilton complained to Governor Carleton that the suspension had dire consequences for the settlement. Hamilton wrote,

As there has been a restraint laid upon the granting land to the settlers of this place whose farms are small &
families numerous, the consequence has been, young men growing to age engage as Canoe men, go off to distant settlements & in general numbers become vagabonds, so that the settlement does not increase in number as may be seen by comparing the recensment of 1776 with that of 1766.108

The lack of a surveyor or other official who could oversee land transactions made life difficult for Hamilton. In September 1778, the sloop The Gage arrived at Detroit with officials. Mr. Bellefeuille and Mr. La Mothe were passengers.101 The latter was a “Master builder” sent by Haldimand to work on the new fort. Hamilton noted the problems in a letter to Governor Haldimand, in which he made reference to British land law. He wrote,

as there is not any person appointed here as surveyor of the roads & bridges, of which there are a great number, perhaps it might appear to your Excellency a proper appointment, I shall wait your orders on that head, in the interim I shall be happy to shew Mr. Bellefeuille every civillity in my power.

I am to observe to your Excellency, I have never taken upon me to grant lands at this place, on the contrary, I convened the principal Inhabitants & chiefs of the neighboring nations, read to them the Proclamation relative to purchases from the Indians and told them that no deeds should be considered valid till passed by the authority of the Chief Governor, registered at Quebec and enter’d at the office in this place, further that they should be drawn out fair on Parchment & publickly witnessed by the Chiefs of the respective nations.102

Because Detroit suffered economic hardship during the war, officials allowed some residents to cultivate land on an emergency basis, in violation of standard land policy. The understanding was that at the end of the war, all lands belonging to the Crown would be returned to the Crown. In other words, permission to cultivate did
not equal property rights. Lt. Governor Hamilton informed his superiors of his plan in a letter. He wrote,

'Tis true I have allowed necessitous persons with large families to till land for present subsistence but with this caution that they must not look on that Tempory indulgence as grant, & that any fences or buildings they should raise would be destroyed or removed or whatever thought necessary.103

Conditions at Detroit deteriorated as the war continued and in 1781, Arent De Peyster, the new commandant, wrote: "I am in hopes that in a month the Fort will be in a State of Resistance against any force they can possibly bring, notwithstanding that our other Works accumulate fast. On the 23rd Instant, our Powder Magazine in the Citadel fell in."104 Soon after the British occupied Detroit, General Thomas Gage had recommended that some 70 troops would be sufficient to garrison the fort.105 The American Revolution demonstrated that it would take many more troops plus a newer, stronger fort to protect the King’s interests along the Detroit River.

Because the Detroit River was not a border, but rather a highway, settlement occurred on both the east and west banks of the river. The settlement of Sandwich (modern-day Windsor) and, just to the south, Amherstberg filled in the hole left by the British loss of Detroit to the Americans. By 1795, the British had begun making plans to fortify the east bank of the Detroit River, as well as other places around the Great Lakes region. South of Detroit they constructed two blockhouses, a storehouse of around three thousand feet, an ordnance storehouse, a powder magazine and a naval yard.106 Such effort indicates that the British intended to keep a close eye on the Americans on the other side of the river. That river now became a border (See Figure 4.4).
Sandwich, established in 1797, bore a striking resemblance to Detroit. It also gave the British an opportunity to develop a settlement without the interference of habitants and the Coutume de Paris. Its residents had recently fled the American side of the river and they constructed a settlement that mirrored Detroit. The towns had a similar V-shape to them, and those residents who had been neighbors in Detroit became neighbors in Sandwich.\textsuperscript{107} In addition, Sandwich, like Detroit served as an administrative center.\textsuperscript{108} John Askin, who previously held land at the Straits of Mackinac, purchased lots in Sandwich. He became concerned about British land policy and expressed his worry that his land claims may not be recognized by the British. In early 1797, he wrote, “I should hope the Government would not deprive me of Lands which in my possession will in all probability be sooner settled than if in those to whom the Certificates are given.”\textsuperscript{109}
Askin’s desire for land and for the expansion of British settlements on the east bank of the Detroit River is clear, but he had mixed feelings about British land policies. He felt that some land grants had been given “for no other reason than it may discourage a Settlement that is advancing rapidly.” His view was that the land grants should be given to those who could be trusted to improve the land.
The government of Upper Canada, however, had good reason to settle the east bank of the river quickly since their hold on the west bank had crumbled. Twenty-four acre lots were set aside in Sandwich to “those settlers who build the first Houses in the Town.” John McCregor, Richard Pattison and Robert Innis completed the first houses by early 1798, and the British presence was established.

Meanwhile, the British also developed lots that became Amherstberg, which was comprised of both civilian and military elements. The site had a harbor and was the base of a British military garrison. Two “small Block houses for the protection of the Stores” had been constructed by 1797. Gother Mann, an engineer for the British army had recommended that the blockhouses, as well as any storehouses be built with stone foundations in order to survive the winters. The garrison continued to be important to the British in the years leading up to the War of 1812. In 1807, for example, Governor William Hull wrote that, “the British are very active, in fortifying Amherstburg, and they continue to invite, and retain there, all the Indians they can engage.” The hinterlands of the Amherstberg-Sandwich region were settled slowly because of their “extreme western location” and “extensive swamps.” By 1799, however, Amherstburg seems to have become a successful settlement. Three main streets had been laid out. First Street had 21 lots, Second Street had 27 and Third Street contained 31 lots. The three main streets were 50 feet wide, cross streets were 30 feet wide and each lot measured 60 feet by 120 feet.

Some individuals and families served as important cultural and economic links to the east and west banks of the Detroit River. An example of such an individual was James Dougall, an early settler of Windsor, and according to tradition,
the person who named the town.\textsuperscript{120} Dougall started a business on the east shore, on an “undeveloped” site up river from Sandwich, placing him “directly on the main trade route” between Canada and the United States.\textsuperscript{121} He later married Susanne Baby, the daughter of an important \textit{habitant} family.\textsuperscript{122} The Baby family, longtime residents of the west shore moved to the east side after the Americans took control of Detroit. They apparently did not want to live under American rule. They moved most of the family and their possessions, as well as their slaves and “plantation-style” farm to Sandwich.\textsuperscript{123}

Because the Ordinance of 1787 forbade slavery in the Northwest Territory, for a time Canadian slaves made their way across the river to the United States in search of freedom. Not until the 1830s is the reverse true, after the British outlawed slavery across their Empire. The result of this migration was another community forming at Detroit, that of free blacks, which gradually increased (See Table 4.2). Loyalist whites and \textit{habitants} made up the bulk of the population on the east bank.\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
1820, Wayne County & 1820, City of Detroit & 1830, Wayne County & 1830, City of Detroit & 1840, Wayne County & 1840, City of Detroit \\
\hline
66 & 67 & 41 & 126 & 285 & 193 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Free Black Population, 1820-1840}
\end{table}

Another pioneer of the Windsor side of the river was Moses David, who, like Ezekiel Solomon at the Straits of Mackinac, became the first Jew at the settlement.\textsuperscript{125} He did business at Detroit as early as 1790, but when it came time to decide which side of the river to settle on, he chose Windsor and he lived there by 1800.\textsuperscript{126} Despite

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his Loyalist leanings, David maintained good relations with most businessmen in Detroit. He and James May, a “prominent...resident of Detroit” often wrote one another.\textsuperscript{127} James Henry, “prominent in military and public affairs” also befriended David.\textsuperscript{128} One exception to these friendly dealings was John Askin, who apparently had trouble collecting on a debt owed to him by David.\textsuperscript{129} It is clear that, for the most part, Americans and Canadians got along well in the aftermath of Jay’s Treaty. Relations between the two soured during the War of 1812, and Moses David spent the duration of the war as a lieutenant in the British Army, and recommended that a “regular force be stationed at Amherstburg and Detroit in order to secure these posts against the Americans.”\textsuperscript{130}

Although Great Britain surrendered the Great Lakes region to the United States at the conclusion of the American Revolution, they maintained important military and commercial ties in the Detroit area that would be a source of trouble between the two countries until the ratification of the Jay Treaty. Even then, some unresolved issues would lead to war in 1812. The British presence on the American side was minimal, however, and \textit{habitant} land use continued to persist. The American side would still witness significant change due to the twin effects of a land office that would attempt to reshape the landscape and land ownership and a devastating fire that would present the Americans with a perceived fresh start in Detroit.
The American Era: 1796-1837

The American era in Detroit began in 1796, when the United States took control of the west bank of the Detroit River, under the stipulations of the Jay Treaty. Fort Lernoult was renamed Fort Shelby. The British may have been reluctant to give up Detroit, but the habitants accepted American rule with little fuss, mostly because of the efforts of French-speaking religious leaders. One French leader in particular, Father Gabriel Richard, became one of the most important voices in Detroit’s first two American decades. The Americans were friendlier toward the habitants than the British had been, and some of the prominent American political leaders publicly expressed their views. Judge Augustus B. Woodward, judge of the Territory and would-be designer of post-fire Detroit, saw the habitants as “pious, honest beyond comparison; generous, hospitable and often refined.” Lewis Cass, governor of the Michigan Territory after the War of 1812 expressed his pride in Detroit’s French heritage. In 1825 he urged the Marquis de Lafayette to “locate his township of land to Michigan,” referring to Detroit as the “ancient seat of French enterprize.” Cass could reverse himself with aplomb, however. In 1816, he wrote of the habitants, “until therefore a radical change shall have taken place in the manners & customs of the people of this Territory, or until a migration into it shall have changed the character of its population and added to its moral strength and physical resources, we shall have a number of indigent helpless people.”

But some differences between the Americans and the habitants caused problems and as a result, Detroit continued its fractured existence well into the American era. In 1806, a grand jury noted the gambling, disorder and scandal
associated with the French population. Americans complained of French animal races down the city streets, a rather unusual example of land use, and of British insults from across the river.\textsuperscript{137} An example of the new cultural norms and land use appeared in the form of a courthouse and a new jail at the cost of $20,000.\textsuperscript{138} Under the \textit{Coutume de Paris}, prisons were not used as a place to serve out a sentence, but rather as a place to wait for a sentence to be carried out.\textsuperscript{139} At times, the Americans seemed determined to force the community to conform to their ways of life.

Detroit eventually prospered under American rule, but it was slow going. The Territorial Legislature incorporated it as a town in 1802; Detroit was incorporated as a city in 1815.\textsuperscript{140} Initially, Detroit grew slowly, but that was more because of the War of 1812, lack of transportation and a flurry of bad press in the 1810s. As mentioned in \textit{Chapter III}, the Tiffin Report might have kept some settlers out of Michigan, but in the long run, it had little effect on Michigan settlement.

As Detroit took on the trappings of a town, rather than a fortified village, the built environment was altered and its population grew (See Table 4.3). The U.S. military abandoned Fort Shelby in 1825.\textsuperscript{141} A capitol building was completed in 1828, further demonstrating Detroit’s shift from military center to civilian settlement. Soon after, migrants arrived \textit{en masse} and Detroit experienced a housing boom starting around 1828, possibly due to the impact of the Erie Canal and the increasing number of migrants heading west.\textsuperscript{142}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1796</th>
<th>1810</th>
<th>1812</th>
<th>1817</th>
<th>1819</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,110</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1828</th>
<th>1830\textsuperscript{144}</th>
<th>1834</th>
<th>1840</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>1,517</td>
<td>2,222</td>
<td>4,968</td>
<td>9,192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Housing during the American era differed dramatically from that constructed during the previous eras. The French occupation was notable for its poteaux-en-terre style architecture, and the British constructed rough-hewn log houses, when they were not renting habitant homes. The Americans produced their own distinct style as well. American roofs were steep and covered with cedar shingles. The houses often had dormers and were painted, in contrast to habitant and British constructions. It was during the American era, especially after 1800, when “cabins” became “houses,” implying a permanent occupation and a long-term commitment to Detroit as a community. A visitor to Detroit would know instantly if a particular dwelling were a “cabin” or a “house” because the former generally had an exterior chimney. This steady urban development did not bode well for the Indians or the habitants who would eventually be outnumbered by English-speakers. In either case, because of the arrival of migrants in the 1830s, American culture, especially linguistic, would slowly take over the region.

Along with the fire of 1805, land tenure became one of the defining issues of early American Detroit. Habitant and British claims competed with each other and with American claims. The Territorial government, in the form of the Detroit Land Office, eventually stepped in to sort out the problems. The DLO first opened in 1804 and its members labored for decades to straighten out competing land claims, recognizing six types of land grants as legitimate (See Table 4.4). An examination of the Land Office records indicates that, with only a few exceptions, the vast majority of the claims were titles from the U.S. government. Hundreds of habitants and
American speculators descended upon the Land Office to file private claims. The
*habitants* had to file claims for land they already owned but were not initially
recognized by the American government. Of the first few claimants, the DLO
verified the grants of six applicants, all but one French.\(^{147}\) President Jefferson signed
an act into law confirming the status of these claims.\(^ {148}\) The six farms conformed to
the French-style ribbon shape. Four of the six claims were plots of four *arpents* by
forty, two were two by twenty and one was three by forty. Nearly all of the private
claims the DLO heard conformed to the four by forty style and nearly all of the
claimants were French.\(^ {149}\) Many of the claims involved the Mackinac region, but the
majority centered on the Detroit River and its environs, such as the River Raisin.\(^ {150}\)
The claims were written in both French and English and many of the *habitants* signed
with a mark rather than a signature indicating a high degree of illiteracy among the
French population.\(^ {151}\) All of them seem to have been prepared with the help of
lawyers, which always signed their names to the documents. The *habitants* were
willing to play by the rules set down by the Americans. The DLO was their only
hope in retaining their lands.

Table 4.4: Land Grants Recognized by the Detroit Land Office\(^ {152}\)

| Grants by the government of New France and confirmed by the King |
| Grants by the government of New France and not confirmed by the King |
| Occupancies permitted by French commandants but without proper authority |
| Squatters |
| Titles Granted by the British Crown |
| Titles from the U.S. Government |

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The habitants may have been predisposed to allowing common land to exist near the settlement, but such an arrangement was foreign to Americans in the Detroit region and perhaps elsewhere as well. Soon after the DLO opened, several French tracts were auctioned to American bidders. Forty-one lots were sold in March of 1809 to nine investors. Each investor bought at least one lot, but most bought two or more. Solomon Sibley, a prominent Detroit lawyer, purchased thirteen lots, the bulk of the sale. He spent $335.75 on his real estate. Sibley was typical of some of the early Detroit land investors. He had been a territorial delegate to Congress, practiced law, and eventually would serve as a territorial judge. The habitants did not stand a chance against such a man.

The habitants protested this Anglo land-grab to no avail. One commented, it has come to pass that the lands on the common, that our ancestors and ourselves owned more than one hundred years before the Congress of the United States or the Governor and Judges of Michigan owned one foot of land on the face of the earth, are now exhibited for sale at public auction, to the original proprietors, on the humiliating conditions that we pay twenty prices for it. Such resentment was common among the French-speakers and contributed to the fractured relationship of Detroit’s English and French populations.

The transfers of power that occurred in 1760 and 1796 marked change in Detroit but the event that fostered the most change on the people and the built environment was the fire of 1805. The fire occurred at the same time as the creation of the Michigan Territory. The story of the fire is well known and repeated in all histories of Detroit. On June 11, 1805, sparks from baker John Harvey’s pipe lit up a pile of hay in his cart. The pony attached to the cart panicked and as it fled, spread
flames all over the town. The story is most likely apocryphal, but a good story indeed, much like Mrs. O’Leary’s cow in Chicago at the other end of the century. The story that gets told less often is the effect the redesign of the city had on the people.

Detroit had retained its French flavor, even in the wake of the British and initial American occupancy, but the 1805 fire presented the U.S. government with an opportunity to alter the physical environment and model the settlement after Washington, D.C. American officials did not completely succeed because the Detroit Land Office recognized as legitimate hundreds of habitant land claims, thereby preserving, if only temporarily, the ribbon farm landscape. As such, officials in Detroit met with mixed success. When General William Hull, appointed governor of the Michigan Territory in 1805, first arrived at Detroit he found the town “in ashes & the people in distress—I was sincere in my declarations, that I would do all in my power, for their relief.” From that early date, the territorial and federal governments would play an active role in the recreation of Detroit. The city was too valuable, too strategic to let down. Governor Hull noted that his promises of government aid to the people resulted in a “tranquil first summer.” Unfortunately for Hull, a clash of personalities and conflicting city plans would prevent Detroit from reaching its potential and the looming crisis with Great Britain further restrained development in Detroit.

The rebuilding of Detroit was a result of competing national and local plans. On the national level, one person who contributed indirectly to Hull’s plans for Detroit was Pierre L’Enfant. L’Enfant designed Washington, D.C. in 1796. His design represented a shift toward logical city design at the close of the eighteenth century.
century. His Washington, D.C. was a series of wide avenues and large “circuses,” or intersections that radiated out from a common center. The city had to be “beautiful, healthy, commodious...full of sentiment, of associations, of ideas.”

L’Enfant’s design included two street types, a “grid of straight streets with right-angle intersections. Superimposed on this system was another, consisting of diagonal avenues directly connecting the principal points of the new city.”

L’Enfant’s design heavily influenced the panel charged with rebuilding Detroit. Detroit officials, including the Territorial governor and judges, had no single plan for reconstruction. Judge Augustus Woodward’s adapted portions of L’Enfant’s plan appeared in map form in 1805, 1806 and 1807. The first map is lost, but the other two still survive. The layouts are clearly L’Enfant-inspired. Judge Woodward insisted on including parks and trees in the final layout. Such small parks must have added an aesthetic beauty to Detroit. And what is also clear is that the Territorial government had big plans for the city. If Detroit were to expand and thrive, it would do so under the auspices of the panel’s plan.

Michigan officials used Woodward’s plan initially, but by 1817, territorial leaders started to alter it, in part because of conflicting land issues. Woodward’s dream of a Detroit with 200 foot-wide avenues and 1,000 foot-diameter intersections was not to be. Some of the streets and intersections cut into important landowners’ properties, Lewis Cass, in particular, who happened to be governor at the time. Cass authorized a new street plan for Detroit in which some streets were measured out at 66 feet across and others altered to prevent them from cutting into his farms.
long run, local politics played a larger role in Detroit’s post-fire rebuilding, but without doubt, Pierre L’Enfant indirectly shaped Detroit’s physical appearance.

Competing local authorities slowed Detroit’s reconstruction. Not only did L’Enfant and Woodward have plans for Detroit, so did Governor Hull. In a letter to General Henry Dearborn from September of 1805, Hull explained his plans for the new physical layout for Detroit: “We have indeavored to improve the arrangement of the Town, as to the width of the Streets, and have selected Sites for public buildings, which we supposed most suitable.”

The settlement at the time of the fire contained around 20 acres. Cost overruns complicated the reconstruction, and some officials feared that the military aspect of Detroit was being ignored. Stanley Griswold informed General Dearborn in late 1806, a year after the reconstruction began that “so much money has been expended on Judge Woodward’s visionary plan for the city of Detroit, as well as other objects, that cash cannot be raised to fulfil the Governor’s contract, and the legislative Board, I belive refuse to appropriate for it.” He continued, “defensive works of the kind now erected are certainly necessary on these frontiers. Without them, our families are quite at the mercy of the savages.”

Governor Hull felt concerned enough in 1807 to ask for more aid from General Dearborn: “under the present appearance of things, I do believe that a very considerable addition to the force here is absolutely necessary for the public safety.” Woodward apparently did not share Hull’s concern for the public safety, nor for the threat of Indian attack. Hull, clearly angry with Woodward, wrote to Dearborn in December of 1807, “Judge Woodward...condemns the fortification of
the Town of Detroit, as a useless, expensive, and prejudicial measure.” The bad blood between the two did not help to speed the reconstruction of Detroit.

In September of 1806 the Territorial governor and judges convened as a Land Board to sort out competing claims that rose from the ashes. By October of that year the Land Board had divided Detroit’s citizens into three groups. 1) those who owned lots in the town at the time 2) those who owned or occupied houses and 3) those who lived in the town but did not own or occupy a lot or house. Despite the promptness of this first land board, the first genuinely public land auction in Detroit did not take place until 1818. Initially, land could be purchased on credit but in 1826 a law went into effect requiring purchasers to pay in full. Land receipts in Detroit in 1820 reached $2,860.32 and reached a peak of $92,332.55 in 1825.

Because of Detroit’s importance during the American era, it is well mapped. Unlike maps of the Mackinac region, Detroit maps abound, especially after the fire. Another map dating from 1816 shows the city as it was in 1796, the year the British abandoned the post. The 1805 and 1806 plans for the city are shown on an 1825 map. The 1816 map is important because it overlays contemporary features over 1796 features. For example, Fort Lernoult/Fort Shelby was contemporary to 1816, but the old Fort Detroit is shown in outline close to the river. The street plan from the French era still existed in 1816. Four streets running parallel to the river that had been designed in Cadillac’s time were still in use at the start of the American era. These streets were St. Joseph, St. James, St. Anne and St. Louis. And a chemin du ronde ran close to the river. A map produced in 1825 by J. O. Lewis of Detroit is “probably” a “fair representation” of the 1805 and 1806 plans for reconstruction.
The street plan is straight and logical. Seven major avenues cut through neatly ordered lots. Only in two places does the logic of the design fall short, at Fort Shelby and along the riverfront. A map from 1830 by John Mullett perhaps depicts Detroit as he wanted it to look, not as it was. The land claims overlap the river, indicating that the form of the cityscape, on paper at any rate, was more important than a usable plan. While the maps may give some indication of how the landscape looked, the best way to understand methods of land use and settlement patterns in Detroit during the American era is to examine a selection of the Private Claims filed with the DLO from 1807 through the 1820s.

The DLO heard the bulk of the Detroit claims starting in the summer of 1807 and continued until the War of 1812. After the Treaty of Ghent, the DLO heard hundreds more claims. The claimants had to pay for the survey. Each claimant had to have possession of the land before July 1, 1796, the year the Jay Treaty took effect, although some claimants could reach back much further than that. For example, the owner of Private Claim 24, Alexis Labadi, claimed family ownership dating back to 1704. It was not unusual for habitants to be able to prove land ownership dating before 1796.

Other claimants were well-known in other parts of Michigan. John Askin, who owned property at the Straits of Mackinac and on the Canadian side of the Detroit River also owned PC 1 in Detroit which he sold to Elijah Brush for six thousand dollars in “lawful money of the United States.” Askin, an English farmer and businessman, purchased hundreds of acres of land from the DLO. While it is true that he was a farmer, it is not entirely clear if he farmed all of the land he owned, or
engaged in speculation. Certainly, he owned a substantial amount of land. Two of his largest purchases, the first from 20 April 1811 and the second from 5 August of the same year, total 822.18 acres.\(^{182}\)

Joseph Campeau filed PC 319 on 12 September 1808. He claimed a tract five arpents in front, but neglected to give the full dimensions of the lot.\(^{183}\) Louis Maure signed a mark as witness and indicated that all of the property rights were legal on Campeau’s “plantation.”\(^{184}\)

Louis Griffard filed PC 321, a rather unusual claim on 17 September 1808.\(^{185}\) The claim stands out because it is one of the few that discuss hereditary issues. It contained the common dimensions of “two hundred forty arpents, it being six arpents in front by forty in depth” and “it was formerly divided in two tracts, now united in one farm.”\(^{186}\) George McDougall, the notary public for the DLO at the time, called Louis Griffard, père and his wife Marguerite to sign their marks as witnesses, evidence of continued *habitant* illiteracy.\(^{187}\)

Most of the important names in early Detroit history show up in both the British-era censuses and in the Land Office records. Such families, which span the French and British eras, have deep roots in Detroit history and have played important roles in the region’s economic and cultural development. Typical of this “upper class” in Detroit was Joseph Beaubien. The Beaubien family held many parcels of land in Detroit. Jean Marie Beaubien filed the first claim at the DLO in January of 1807. The claim encompassed a two by twenty parcel along the north shore of the Detroit River.\(^{188}\) Joseph Beaubien and his wife appear in the 1779 Detroit census. In 1779, Beaubien had three lodgers, two men and a woman, a female slave and a son. He had
23 bushels of wheat, 15 bushels of oats, two oxen, four cows, five steers, five hogs and three horses. The presence of cows and steers indicate mixed-use livestock farming. And the presence of a slave may indicate a need for either domestic or agricultural help. Lodgers might mean there was a lack of affordable housing in Detroit at the time. Or the lodgers could have been traders seeking temporary housing. In 1807, Beaubien was forced to take stock of his farm and prove to the DLO that he had indeed held the land prior to 1796. Beaubien’s witness testified that Beaubien had purchased the farm in 1797, and it had been owned and improved by Francis Navarre for “many years prior to the 1st of July 1796.”

The claimant to PC 19, Charles Gouin also appears in the 1779 census. He lived with his mother at the time and his household contained six lodgers, two boys and nine slaves, six male, three female. His livestock holdings included four oxen, seven cows, six steers, seven hogs and five horses. In July of 1807, Gouin went before the DLO and filed a claim for his farm, measuring one and three quarters of an arpent wide by sixty deep.

One of the most detailed land claims filed after the War of 1812 belonged to Lewis Cass. The DLO carefully considered his application for PC 55, filed on 18 November 1818, which encompassed two tracts. Despite the amount of detail, most of it legal terminology, in the American State Papers, the claim contains no description of improvements. Most of the claim is a thorough description of the survey and the exact borders of the tract. Private Claim 55 contained “three hundred and nine and one-tenth acres, situate[ed] on the border” of the Detroit River. The DLO did not rubber stamp Cass’s request. After some deliberation, they agreed to his
second tract as long as it did not "interfere with the Detroit commons, nor with the lines of any tract heretofore, by this or any other board, confirmed to any other person; and especially so as not to interfere with the lines of any lot or tract of land heretofore given, granted, sold, caused to be surveyed, or otherwise disposed of by the governor and judges of this Territory, under the color of an act of Congress entitled 'An act to provide for the adjustment of titles of land in the town of Detroit and Territory of Michigan, and for other purposes,'" passed April 21, 1806. In 1826, Cass purchased an additional 80 acres through the DLO. Apparently social standing and political power did not sway the members of the land office. An habitant and a governor had nearly the same chance of grant approval from the Detroit Land Office.

As the 1810s and 20s progressed, the property descriptions resembled PC 55 more and more. Gone were the barns, houses and fences of earlier land claims, and in their place were more detailed surveyor descriptions. The Americans seemed more concerned with exact boundaries than with what already existed on the lots. Perhaps this is because they had new plans for the land and what had come before was not important. George McDougall, a prominent Detroit land attorney seems to have been the lawyer for a disproportionate number of the habitant claimants. That demonstrates an important difference in Detroit during the American era when compared to the French era. New France had a ban on lawyers.

The private claims that McDougall signed in 1817 and 1818 are quite detailed. McDougall served as attorney for Joseph Campeau's PC 51 to reconfirm an earlier claim of Jean Baptiste Campau; and for Peter Van Avery's PCs 52 and 53, for Jaques
Marsac’s PC 59, Robert Marsac’s PC 60, the heirs of Nicholas Campau’s PC 62, James W. Little’s PC 68 and Jean Baptiste Allaire’s PC 7. One thing they all have in common is an exact size of the lots and references to posts that mark the boundaries of the properties.\footnote{The increasing detail of the land descriptions may indicate the increasingly scarcity of available land, and as such, points to the importance of exact definitions for land boundaries. That kind of detail was absent in the French and British land granting system. Significantly, Detroit in 1818 was a much more crowded place than it had been when the DLO approved its first land claims over ten years earlier.}

The DLO heard many claims from the landowners in the River Raisin area, south of Detroit proper in what is now Monroe County, from both English and French speakers. Some of the landowners seem to have received quite a bit of property, and the claims conformed to the typically French ribbon shape. In December of 1808, \textit{J and F Lasselle}\footnote{filed three claims, PCs 491, 492 and 493. The transaction is recorded in English, but the witness testimony is in French. PC 491 was two by 120 \textit{arpents} with \textit{forty arpents} cultivated. The claim also had a house and barn.\footnote{PC 492 was three by 120 \textit{arpents}, with seventy-five \textit{arpents} cultivated. That site also contained a house and a barn, as well as a “bearing orchard.”\footnote{The last claim contained three by 120 \textit{arpents}, with seventy \textit{arpents} cultivated and had a house but no barn.\footnote{English-speakers were not immune to the influence of the \textit{habitant} landscape. John Askin, a businessman and farmer owned land all over the Great Lakes region. His claims, though, tended to be small, yet were still ribbon-shaped. In December}}}} filed three claims, PCs 491, 492 and 493. The transaction is recorded in English, but the witness testimony is in French. PC 491 was two by 120 \textit{arpents} with \textit{forty arpents} cultivated. The claim also had a house and barn.\footnote{PC 492 was three by 120 \textit{arpents}, with seventy-five \textit{arpents} cultivated. That site also contained a house and a barn, as well as a “bearing orchard.”\footnote{The last claim contained three by 120 \textit{arpents}, with seventy \textit{arpents} cultivated and had a house but no barn.\footnote{English-speakers were not immune to the influence of the \textit{habitant} landscape. John Askin, a businessman and farmer owned land all over the Great Lakes region. His claims, though, tended to be small, yet were still ribbon-shaped. In December}}}

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1808, the DLO confirmed a number of claims, PCs 488, 508, 511, 522 and 535. John Askin filed PC 488, a lot of three arpents by seventy-six on the south side of the river. The site originally had a mill and a house but according to Askin, both burned around 1799.

Several other French claims in the River Raisin area shed some light on the various dimensions of the habitant claims and demonstrate a typical component of the French, the orchards. Private Claim 508, filed by Amable Bellair, was a six by one hundred arpent lot, located on the north side of the river, and contained a house, a barn and twenty cultivated arpents. Antoine Robert's PC 511 was remarkably narrow, perhaps a result of constant dividing according to Coutume de Paris. His claim was two by one hundred arpents. It contained a house and out-houses, and in typical habitant form, six arpents [were] cultivated, with a bearing orchard. Jean Baptiste Robidou filed PC 522, containing three by sixty arpents with “forty or fifty” arpents cultivated, and contained a “house, out-houses, barn, stables, fences and improvements.” Jean Baptiste Robidou filed PC 522, containing three by sixty arpents with “forty or fifty” arpents cultivated, and contained a “house, out-houses, barn, stables, fences and improvements.” Private Claim 535, filed by Isaac Ruland was a five by one hundred twenty arpent tract on the south side of the river. Witnesses noted that “a house is erected thereon; fifteen to twenty arpents are cultivated; there is an orchard.”

The Erie Canal opened in 1825, in the midst of the DLO’s work, heralding a new chapter in Detroit’s history. A faster, all-water route now connected the East with the Great Lakes. As the principal city of the Michigan Territory, Detroit stood prepared to reap the economic benefits. In the spring of 1826 a visitor wrote,

The shores of the British side are bolder than those on the American, but they look as they must have half a
century ago. There appears to be nothing going on in the way of improvement, either in lands or buildings; but a new face is put on things on the American side, save where, here and there, and old French family lingers, and wherever that is, the picture of inactivity and barrenness is visible, just as if reflected from the Canada Shores.²⁰⁶

Anti-habitant feelings could be found among the newly arrived Yankees. They had permeated the city and French ways of thinking and behaving were foreign to them. As the 1830s pressed on the French influence gradually diminished. Yankee culture forged a new community, based in part on the ideals found in the Ordinance of 1787 that had an American flavor and look. The city looked different. Gone were the military installations and the old French roads and in their place were wide avenues and multi-storey buildings, as well as a perception that there was much to appreciate in the city’s American character. In 1831, a newspaper correspondent wrote, “the society of Detroit is kind, hospitable, and excellent...one of the most agreeable and best established traits of hospitality at Detroit that decent strangers are always invited to the weddings which takes place in the city.”²⁰⁷

In January 1837, when Michigan entered the Union, Detroit became the first state capital. By 1837, British influence was all but gone from Detroit. They had moved to the opposite side of the river after 1796, establishing settlements, both civilian and military, on the east bank of the Detroit River. After 1818, when the Great Lakes were demilitarized, the military component became less important. The same thing happened on the American side of the river. From the start of American rule in Detroit, the habitants continued to work their ribbon farms in places, and still spoke
French, but overall the built environment looked American, especially primarily because of the reconstruction after the 1805 fire. That catastrophe allowed the Americans to reshape the city in their own way, with wide avenues befitting a city envisioned as a commercial center rather than a military post. And during the first thirty years or so of U.S. rule, Detroit did indeed make the change from a fortified village to an important commercial and political center. Although the habitants and their descendants would continue to speak French through the latter part of the nineteenth century, their culture would eventually fade. With the exception of some areas in Monroe County, where modern-day vestiges of the ribbon farms can still be detected, the Detroit region, on both banks retains its commercial land use.
Endnotes

1 Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, Description of Detroit; Advantages found there, *Cadillac Papers, MPH C, XXXIII*: 137. All of the Cadillac documents must be read carefully. Jean Delanglez, in particular, has been critical not only of Cadillac himself, but of historians who take at face value anything that Cadillac wrote. Delanglez mentioned Clarence Burton, editor of the Cadillac papers in the *MPHC*, in a list of historians he thought guilty of glorifying Detroit's founder. For a particularly scathing indictment of Cadillac, see Jean Delanglez, "Cadillac's Early Years in America," *Mid-America: An Historical Review* 26 (January 1944), 17.


3 Governor William Hull to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, 22 September 1805 *Documents, MPH C, XL*: 72.


5 For more on how Cadillac spelled his name, and its possible origins, see Delanglez, "Cadillac's Early Years in America," 4-6; 14-16.

6 Quoted in Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 15.


8 Carte du Détroit, in Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 23.

9 See Kadler "The French in Detroit," for a discussion of the longevity of the French language at Detroit. French could be heard on the street and in the homes of Detroit as late as the 1890s, although it probably was not common. According to Dolorita Mast, in *Always the Priest, The Life of Gabriel Richard, S.S.* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1965), 88, in 1896, a traveler wrote of seeking shelter in a house during a thunderstorm in Detroit two years earlier:

> The occupants were brother and sister, both nonagenarians, neither of whom spoke English to any extent...a grandnephew and grandniece, both unmarried, were housekeepers...although the family language was exclusively French, the younger members were educated and spoke the English language correctly, but the nonagenarians had preferred to retain the use of their mother-tongue.

10 As will be seen in the "British" section in this chapter.

11 Lytwyn and Jacobs, "'For Good Will and Affection': The Detroit Indian Deeds and British Land Policy, 1760-1827," 9.

12 Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 18-19. Jean Delanglez wrote, "Cadillac was never short of ideas, and had no scruples about appropriating other people's ideas without acknowledgement, modifying them slightly and palming them off as his own, whenever he saw in them any chance of pecuniary profit for himself." Delanglez, "Cadillac’s Early Years in America," 38.


> The aforesaid Nicolas Campeau, otherwise called Niagra, shall at the end of his lease return the seed which Father de la Richardie and he have agreed upon, consisting of 15 minots of wheat, 6 of oats, and 5 of peas, less a quarter of a livre.

Carte du Détroit, in Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 23.


Plan des terreins appartenant aux français autour de Fort de Pontchartrain in Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 29.

La Rivière du Detroit, 1764, First Printed Map of Detroit, Map Collection, Burton Historical Library. Although printed in 1764, the map depicts Detroit as it was in 1749. It is also in Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 39-41.


> They are all lodged in houses built of stakes set upright, and earth, all thatched with grass; the commandant’s is like the others, since the King and Company have given up bearing the cost. There are only two built of logs, one upon another; the chapel, where the missionary lives, and the warehouse of the Company. Outside the fort, at a distance of half a gunshot, there is a miserable barn and a house which serves as a stable. The mill has been struck by lightning three times this summer, which has damaged it severely, bad as it was before; it is a good gunshot from the fort, between the fort of Detroit and that of the Hurons. It is absolutely necessary to rebuild the fort entirely, from one end to another.


Charlevoix also visited Fort St. Joseph that year.


25 See Carte de la Riviere du detroit depuis le Lac Erie jus’ques au lac Ste Claire in Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 45. The map depicts Detroit from 1749-1755.


27 Neatby, *Quebec: The Revolutionary Age*, 11-12.


29 As quoted in Farmer, *History of Detroit*, 12. Bougainville also wrote, There are two hundred habitations abundantly provided with cattle, grains, and flour. The farmers can raise as many cattle as they want, as there is abundant pasture. They gather, in ordinary years, two thousand five hundred measures of wheat and much oats and corn. They formerly sowed some fall wheat, but very often that seed produced only rye. A farmer of that place assured me that he sowed two measures of very good wheat, but the product was only rye. They sow during the months of February and March, and gather in the month of July; the product in wheat is usually twenty measures for one.

30 As quoted in Farmer, *History of Detroit*, 12.

31 Hubbard, *Memorials of a Half-Century*, 119. Much of his information is based on interviews with what he referred to as “old timers” in the Detroit area.


34 This event will be discussed in the “British Era” section.

35 Cadillac, Description of Detroit; Advantages found there, *Cadillac Papers, MPHC XXXIII*: 134.


42 Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 65. On British land policy, see Chapter III.

43 Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan*, 112.


I am very sorry to find the Works of Detroit have gone on so very slowly, and are yet so very far from being finished, notwithstanding the great expense they have put the Government to... In regard to Taxes you will find by a letter, which I wrote to you lately, that no kind of Tax is to be levied upon any account whatsoever, But that the King’s rights to rents, Quit rents, and Fine of Alienation, or sales & exchanges are to be supported, and the Inhabitants of the Town agreeable to the conditions of their Grants, obliged to keep the Pickets in repair. I have wrote to His Majesty’s Secretary of State representing the poverty & distress which the Inhabitants of Detroit have suffered, through the burden of quartering his Troops, and doubt not they will have been exempted, from paying the Arrears due to the King on the above account, but the Inhabitants must expect to pay the King’s dues for the time to come.

His letter is rather enlightening. Gage’s tone changes considerably when discussing the French and the Indians. With the French, he seems angry or frustrated but with the Indians, paternalistic.

Sir, Your letters of the 14th and 18th December are very full on the subject of Grants, & Lands at the Detroit. I am to explain to you that the King has not invested in any Person whatever with the power of granting Lands in America, except to his Governors, within the limits of their respective Provinces, & under certain forms and restrictions, and where any Purchase is made of the Indians tho’ within the limits of the Provinces they are not valid, unless permission is given.
so to do, & the Purchase made in presence of the Governor & His Majesty’s Superintendent of Indian Affairs. From hence you will know the power of granting Lands at Detroit remains solely in the King, & that no purchase can be made of the Indians but with the King’s permission & authority.

It may be needess after the above explanation to inform you that all grants made by Lieut: Colonel Gladwin, Major Bruce or any other British Commander are null & void & of no value.

As for the French Grants in general unless approved of by the Governor General of Canada & registered accordingly they were not valid but as for Monsieur Belestre’s grants in the year 1760, they cannot be deemed any other than fraudelent, and are by no means to be looked upon as valid.

And as for the Indian purchases they were not allowed by the French, nor are they allowed by the English Government but under the Restrictions I have already mentioned.

Monsr Navarre’s Declaration or Certificate may be in part true, but it is not the whole truth. The first settlers with Mr. Salvrevrés, were not perhaps enjoined to the conditions imposed afterwards, respecting their titles—The Govt was glad to get any people to begin at the settlement. But Monsr Navarre’s conclusion is vague & ill founded. I am well informed in those matters, was Three Years in possession of the Books wherein the Titles were registered & received information upon them—The very time in which Mr. Bélestre’s Grants were made sufficiently points out their being invalid & that they would not be registered when the whole Govt of Canada was on the point of surrendering to the King & the Captial possessed by his troops so early as September 1759. Monsr Béléstré was not ignorant of those circumstances and his grants are fraudelent.

61 Johnson, *Order Upon the Land*, 38.
62 Petition of Sundry Inhabitants of Detroit, To His Excellency Mr. Carleton, Governor of the Providence of Quebec and Dependencies &c., 16 May 1769, *The Halidmand Papers Pertaining to the Year 1769, MPHC, X: 237* [hereafter *The Halidmand Papers*].

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69 Frederick Haldimand to Arent de Peyster, 8th May 1780, *The Haldimand Papers*, MPHC, IX: 635.
70 Farmer, *History of Detroit*, 78.
77 This census does not indicate who owned slaves. Future ones do, however, and they show that both *habitants* and the British owned slaves.
82 According to Russell, a minot equals five pecks.
85 The census numbers are compiled from information in Russell, *Michigan Censuses*, 35; Survey of the Settlement of Detroit Taken 31st March 1779, MPHC, X: 311-327; State of the Settlement of Detroit, Taken the 1st of November 1780, MPHC, X: 446; A Survey of the Settlement of Detroit Made by Order of Major De Peyster the 16 Day of July 1782, MPHC X: 601-613. The 1830 census, conducted by the U.S. government was the last one to enumerate slaves, counting 32 that year. By 1840, the next U.S. census, all slaves had been freed or died. Farmer, *History of Detroit*, 345.
87 All census information from Farmer, 334; Russell, 19-56; MPHC, IX; MPHC, X; *MPHC IV From the Detroit Free Press August 29, 1880* 465-66.
88 Estimated.
89 Census lists only heads of households and children.
90 The census does not explain the difference between “married women” and “widows and married women.”
91 P. Dejean, the census taker noted, “altho’ all the farms are calculated at 40 acres depth—eight of them runs 80 & one 60.” *The Haldimand Papers*, MPHC, IX: 649.


General Frederick Haldimand to Captain Richard Lernoult, 8 April 1779, *The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, IX:* 407.

Dunbar and May, *Michigan,* 82.

Lt. Governor Patrick Sinclair was of the same mind further north at Fort Michilimackinac and likewise constructed a new fort, built to withstand the anticipated American assault. The sturdy forts never saw action as the Americans never attacked.

Captain D. Brehm to General Frederick Haldimand, *The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, IX:* 411. The letter reads,

The New Fort is really very much advanced except the Lodging Stores etc which is now Building the plan of it has already been sent to your Excellency...if this Fort is finished without or before it is attacked it will be very tenable and deserves attention paid to the demand made for its defence; as the Rebells view may be to possess this Post in hopes to maintain a garrison in it from the supplys of this settlement.

Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton to General Guy Carleton, 4 March 1778, *The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, IX:* 433.

No first names are given.

Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton to General Frederick Haldimand, 9 September 1778 *The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, IX:* 473-4.

Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton to General Frederick Haldimand, 9 September 1778 *The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, IX:* 474.

Major Arent S. De Peyster to General Frederick Haldimand, 27 May 1781, *The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, X:* 482.


Memorandum by Lieut. Colonel Gother Mann, 4 November 1795, *SP, IV:* 123.


Letters and Papers, 1797-1798, *JAP, II:* 100. His entry reads in part, I should hope Government would not deprive me of Lands which in my possession will in all probability be sooner settled than if in those to whom the Certificates are given. Had it pleased His Excellency Governor Simcoe to be as liberal to my Family as he was to many others I wouldnt have been necessitated [to] lay out
mony that I could badly Spare in order to Secure to
them some fixed property after I was gone.

110 Map of the Surveyed Part of the Territory of Michigan, in Dunnigan, Frontier
Metropolis, 175.


112 Peter Russell to D.W. Smith, 19 August 1797, Directions Respecting Reserves and
Surveys in the Town of Sandwich, WBR, 194.

113 Certificate of First Houses in the Town of Sandwich and Assignment of Park Lots,
26 February 1798, WBR: 195.


115 McLean to Green, 18 August 1797 WBR, 217.

116 Memorandum by Lieut. Colonel Gother Mann, 4 November 1795, SP, IV: 123.

117 Hull to Dearborn, 13 November 1807 Documents, MPHC, XL: 219.


120 Armstrong, “James Dougall,” 54. The Town of Windsor was platted in 1835 and
until Dougall’s suggestion, was to be called South Detroit.


125 Irving I. Katz, “Moses David of Windsor and His Family,” Michigan History
Magazine 47 (June 1963), 156.


132 Bald. Detroit’s First American Decade, 248.

133 Paré, The Catholic Church in Detroit, 280-1. Richard founded a university, a
newspaper and served Michigan in Washington, D.C. as a representative.

134 Fuller, Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan, 112.

135 Message of the Governor, 18 January 1825 Journal of Legislative Council Early
State Records on Microfilm, Michigan, 13.

136 Cass to Calhoun, 31 May 1816 Territorial Papers of the United States, 10: 643.

Clarence Carter and John Porter Bloom, eds. (Washington, D.C: 1934).

137 Dunbar and May, Michigan, 116.

138 Dunbar and May, Michigan, 116.

139 Eccles, Canada under Louis XIV, 33.

140 Dunbar and May, Michigan, 177.

141 Dunbar and May, Michigan, 178.

142 Farmer, History of Detroit, 374. Kenneth Lewis, author of West to Far Michigan,
on the impact of the Erie Canal on Michigan migration, writes, “I argued that,
because it did not open Michigan’s interior, the canal did not really allow immigrant

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farmers there to enter the export market immediately. Although the canal encouraged immigration by affording more efficient travel and provided the promise of future market access, by itself it did not provide it. Because it had little impact on the nature of frontier farming in the interior, I felt that its impact on the kinds of interior settlements, as well as on their size and form, was not immediate. By not allowing an expansion of production, the canal did not alter settlement patterning.” Personal correspondence, 6 June 2006.

144 The 1830 Census is the last one to enumerate slaves. There were 32 slaves in Detroit that year. Farmer, History of Detroit, 345.
145 Farmer, History of Detroit, 373.
147 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, Communicated to Congress, January 2, 1807, ASP, III: 305.
148 Gilpin, The Territory of Michigan, 36.
149 See American State Papers, III and V, passim.
150 Other claims involve the Green Bay region as well, which had a substantial habitant population at the turn of the century. See Russell, Michigan Censuses, 101. She wrote that there was a “large settlement of French Canadians also in Wisconsin at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien.”
151 A cursory glance at the American State Papers shows the land claims in both languages and the lawyers representing the claimants noted whether or not claimants signed the document or made their marks.
152 Farmer, History of Detroit, 21.
153 Farmer, History of Detroit, 40.
154 Farmer, History of Detroit, 40.
155 Dunbar and May, Michigan, 185.
156 Farmer, History of Detroit, 25.
157 Dunbar and May, Michigan, 113. This story is repeated in many Michigan history books. Dunbar and May’s account is the most detailed yet poorly cited.
158 Governor William Hull to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, 4 March 1807 Documents, MPHC, XL: 103.
159 Governor William Hull to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, 4 March 1807 Documents, MPHC, XL: 103.
160 L’Enfant played another role in American history. He served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, prompting George Washington to write, “Your zeal and active services are such as reflect the highest honor on yourself and are extremely pleasing to me, and I have no doubt they will have their due weight with Congress in any future promotion in your corps.” L’Enfant was wounded at Savannah in 1779 and captured by the British. After the war, he made his way back to France eventually returning to serve the United States Congress. See Elizabeth S. Kite, ed., L’Enfant and Washington, 1791-1792: Published and Unpublished
Judge Woodward condemns the fortification of the Town of Detroit, as a useless, expensive, and prejudicial measure. It was my own opinion, to have built the Stockade on a much smaller scale. Those Inhabitants, that would have been left out complained, promised all the aid in their power, and I found it was the general wish to include the whole of the Town- The fortifications, however, are on too small a scale, for the expanded Ideas of the learned Judge. Had an attempt been made to have built a solid wall around the Territory, or indeed from the Earth to the Sun it would have met his cordial approbation. He considers the Man destitute of talents, who will tread in paths, which have before been trod. He despises every thing tinged with the rust of antiquity, and is enamoured with modern improvements and speculations, whether on the Earth or in the Sun. Unfortunate it is indeed, that a Man of his fine talents, cannot level them to useful and practical purposes.
182 Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records Accession Nos. MI3140.012 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N and MI3160.163 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.
184 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, *ASP, III*: 402. The French text reads in full:

> Au moyen de quoy, le did vendeur a de ce moment transporté, et par ces presentes transporte au dit acquereur, ses hoirs, et ayant cause à l’avenir tous et tel droits de propriété, noms, raisons, actions,, et tous autres droits qu’il a et a pu avoir sur la ditte terre ou plantation, voulant et entendant qu’il en soit mis en bonne possession et seizine, par qui et ainsy qu’il appartiendra, en vertu des présentes.

187 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, *ASP, III*: 404. The French text reads in full:

> Par devant George McDougall, Notaire Public du dit territoire et district, resident dans la cite du Detroit, et témoins soussignés, furent presents le Sieur Louis Griffard, père, et Margueritte sa femme, lesquels considérant leurs infirmities corporals, quoique sain d’esprit, mémoire, et entendement, et en considération de l’amité et de l’amour naturel qu’ils on pour leur fils, Louis Griffard, on de leur bon gré, et sans aucunes contraintes, fait donation entre vifs en la meilleure forme, que faire se peut et irrevocable, au dit Louis Griffard, fils, à ce present et acceptant donataire, pour lui, ses hoires, et ayant cause à l’avenir, de tous leur biens, meubles et immeubles, consistant les dits biens en trois arpents de terre, qui se tiennent, de front sur quarante de profondeur, preant par devant au nord et sur le bord du lac St. Clair, et par derriere aux terres non concedes, borné d’un coté, au sud-ouest, à la terre de Pierre Griffard, et de l’autre coté, au nord-est, à celle du dit donataire, avec une maison et autres bâiments susconstruits et autres ameliorations, que le dit donataire dit bien connoitre, ainsi que tous les animaux qui leur appartienent à present, meubles de ménage, et ustenciles d’agriculture, &c. le tous aux dits donateurs appartenant, suivant présente donation, pour les avoirs
tous vu et visité, d’ont il est content et satisfait,
declarant les dits donateur et donatrice n’en rien
excepter ny retenir.

This claim is unique in that it mentions the health of the grantees and their love for
their son.

188 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, ASP, III: 305.
190 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, ASP, III: 308.
191 Public Lands, Claims in Michigan, ASP, V: 114.
192 Public Lands, Claims in Michigan, ASP, V: 114-5. Many of the claims from this
era mention the Congressional Act of 1806 as well as another one passed on 3 March
1817 called “An Act Allowing Further Time for Entering Donation Rights to Lands
in the District of Detroit.”
193 BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI0040_.165 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.
194 Not to be confused with Lt. George McDougall whose property issues are
described earlier in this chapter. The names “McDougall,” “Dougall” and
“McDouall” appear to have been rather common in Detroit and Windsor at the end of
the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Historians have noted the
problems with multiple spellings of French names, often compounded by the high
illiteracy rate of the habitants, but similar difficulties exist, in lesser form, for
English, Irish and Scottish names as well.
195 George McDougall also served as a judge in the Territorial Government.
France, 139.
198 Their first names are not given. However, it is likely that they were husband and
wife. Most claims were filed by men or widows, but a few married couples filed
together.
199 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, ASP, III: 460.
201 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, ASP, III: 461.
204 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, ASP, III: 470-1.
205 Land Claims in the Michigan Territory, ASP, III: 475.
206 Dain, Every House a Frontier, 154-55.
207 Quoted in Farmer, History of Detroit, 339. The article reads,
The society of Detroit is kind, hospitable, and excellent.
A strong sense of equality and independence prevails in
it. A citizen whose conduct is respectable and decorous
is respected by all and associates with all. Very little
etiquette is practiced here. Genuine friendliness and
cordiality are the agreeable substitutes. Afternoon
visits even to strangers are as orthodox, and even as
frequent, as morning visits. Recently domiciled here,
we can speak feelingly upon this subject. A frank, cordial, and general civility, at once peculiarly gratifying, and indicative of the character of the Michiginians, has been extended to us. One of the most agreeable and best established traits of hospitality at Detroit that decent strangers are always invited to the weddings which take place in the city.
CHAPTER V

THE STRAITS OF MACKINAC

Communities, Economics and Land Claims

With respect to Michillimakinak, it has long been the most considerable Mart of Indian Trade.
- General Thomas Gage, 4 March, 1769

I have began to harrow my Ground at the farm.
- John Askin, Post Commissary, 20 April, 1774

The Island and country about it is remarkably healthy and very fertile for so high a northern latitude.
- Uriah Tracy, on an inspection tour of Mackinac Island for the War Department, 20 December, 1800

Unlike Detroit, which was a relatively compact settlement, the Straits of Mackinac, which connect Lakes Michigan and Huron, included a number of far-flung settlements that reflected the ambitions of the three imperial powers that claimed title to the area. To the west, along Lake Michigan, was L’Arbre Croche (present-day Cross Village), variously an Odawa village, Jesuit Mission, possible site of a British farm and frequent source of corn for Straits inhabitants. Fort Michilimackinac, built around 1715, occupied the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula. In the 1760s, British and French settlers built a village immediately to the east of Michilimackinac. To the south of the fort, another British farm supplied agricultural products to the British garrison. First constructed in the 1770s, Dousman’s Mill (present-day Mill Creek State Park), a few miles to the east of the village, produced lumber and flour.

Mackinac Island and Bois Blanc Island, in the eastern part of the Straits, were home to traders, villagers and, after the 1780s, soldiers. St. Ignace, on the north side of the
Straits, had been home to a mission and a fort during the seventeenth century, but they were abandoned by 1712. Permanent Euroamerican settlers arrived in St. Ignace only at the turn of the nineteenth century. L’Arbre Croche, St. Ignace and Bois Blanc Island will receive separate treatment at the end of this chapter. Each of those sites witnessed unique changes in the landscape that can be dealt with apart from the general discussion of the settlements at Forts Michilimackinac and Mackinac.6

As at Detroit, each group to migrate to and settle at the Straits of Mackinac brought its own cultural norms. The French arrived with their specific religious, linguistic and settlement and land use ideas. For example, they formed small trading communities, rather than large agricultural settlements. The British had their own cultural norms as well, but much like at Detroit, had to modify them because of the French presence. For example, they expected to occupy the houses inside Fort Michilimackinac, but ended up renting them, at least for a time, from their habitant owners. They also expressed surprise and frustration upon discovering that the fort’s powder magazine was privately owned instead of “crown” property, as it would have been under the British system of land tenure. And the Americans were compelled to adjust their ways of thinking when they took control of the vestiges of French and British culture. They had to sort through competing land claims for decades before ownership issues were settled at the Detroit Land Office. The three groups had profound effects on one another. This chapter will trace the development of the Straits region from the end of the French era though the 1830s and will analyze the ways in which the French, British and Americans interacted with and altered each others’ methods of settlement and land use while demonstrating that local issues and
The French Era to 1761

A brief explanation of the French occupation will show how the Straits area compared to Detroit as well as explaining what the British encountered when they took possession of the region in 1761, near the conclusion of the Seven Years’ War. As noted in Chapter III, the 1763 Treaty of Paris gave the British official title to the land, at least as far as the Europeans were concerned.

French exploration of the Straits of Mackinac began in the 1650s, but they first settled the region in the late seventeenth century. The Jesuits established a mission in present-day St. Ignace in 1671 and by the late 1690s, nearby Fort de Buade housed a small garrison of French troops.7 By 1716, the French had moved the post to the south side of the Straits. It was constructed from upright logs set in a trench, a style known as poteaux-en-terre.8 In 1716, as many as six hundred traders met at the fort to trade with the Indians, reestablishing the Straits as an important economic center.9 Possibly (archaeologists are uncertain) the post had two guardhouses and a forty-foot long rowhouse.10 Each house would have had multiple uses such as “personal residence; rental property; [and] business.”11 There is no indication that anyone lived outside the post walls. A British report from 1721 notes that Michilimackinac had “a garrison of about 30 french, and a vast concourse of traders, sometimes not less than 1,000,” indicating the importance of the post to the French.12 Trade clearly was an important activity at Michilimackinac. Trade wealth led to the
expansion and rebuilding of the post as a reflection of “French prosperity.” An additional report from 1721, this one French, emphasizes the religious, as well as the economic, importance of the post. Father Pierre de Charlevoix, who visited the fort, noted that it was “still kept up as well as the house of the missionaries,” and that “the situation of Michilimackinac is most advantageous for traffic.”

That “situation” led eventually to reconstruction work at the post. Fort Michilimackinac underwent its first major expansion during the 1730s and 1740s, further underscoring the economic importance of the area. By the 1730s, the site had become something more than a temporary trading post. The enlargement of the post was “dictated by the needs of a much expanded trade network reaching to the Rockies.” The newest version of Michilimackinac would be more defensible and could properly be called a fort. Even so, by the 1760s, the post was more of a “general warehouse for the Straits region.”

As trade grew, so did the post, especially, as mentioned earlier, in the 1730s and 1740s. By then, the post enclosed “about forty houses, a church, priest’s house, and other structures.” Seven rowhouses were divided into forty separate homes. Each house had its own garden. The most detailed map from this expansion is the 1749 Lotbinière plan and description, produced for the governor of New France. The map contains not only the locations of the houses and other buildings, but the names of the habitants as well. It also shows the locations of the place D’armes, or parade ground, the two fours (ovens, both located outside the fort walls), the glace, or ice house, the forge and the church. It also depicts an upright post called a Poteau de la méridienne, which may have been a sundial, but its purpose is not completely

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understood. Each item represents land use at the time. It is interesting that the ovens were located outside the fort walls. That could have been for safety reasons since the post was made of wood. Lotbinière noted that the forty houses were “very badly built…most of the houses are built of upright posts caulked inside and outside with clay. Many are still covered with bark. The others as well as the Church are built of squared timbers and are covered with boards.” Lotbinière offered a critical commentary on the fort:

to give an exact [last two words deleted] some idea of my work I will say that this [one word completely obliterated] fort / is / very badly built; it is square or just about, with four bastions, that is to say, what / they / call bastions. The sides measure from forty-seven toises [282 French feet] up to fifty-three [318 Fr. Ft.], outside dimensions. The bastions have faces of eighteen and twenty feet and flanks of eight. The lines of defence in some places are / fichantes /; one or two / take their covering fire / from the shoulder of the neighboring bastion. The fort is built of Cedar posts 12 feet high above ground. It has two doors; one facing landward / is a double door; / the other facing the water is a / smaller/ single door; / both are made of Oak wood/; there is a third one giving entrance to the missionary’s yard /of triangular shape/ [last insertion deleted]; the key for this door is at his disposal in daytime, it is handed over to the Commandant in the evening.

He also presented a mixed commentary on the surrounding physical environment. He noted the presence of poor soil but through the landscape in general to be quite nice. He wrote,

The hills at the back are very pleasant for walks/but of pure sand/; This is where the Indians used to grow their corn a few years ago, but the soil is so [one word obscured by ink blot] that 4 or 5 years of production impoverishes it completely, and once it has reached this state it cannot recondition itself. I did see, however,
some fairly nice wild hay that comes up naturally but it is sparse.\textsuperscript{24}

If he was critical of the “badly built” fort, Lotbinière, likewise was critical of the \textit{habitants} themselves. He believed that, while not much could be done with the land, the \textit{habitants} should have at least tried to better their lives. He commented,

there are ten French families in the fort...although this piece of land is quite barren, they could nevertheless give themselves some of the comforts of life if they were more laborious...to put it briefly, they are content as long as they have their corn and grease to live on all year round, which makes me think that for as long as there will be one single pelt to be had in these countries they will never engage in any other business.\textsuperscript{25}

The casual way in which the \textit{habitants} lived their lives clearly irritated Lotbinière. He also claimed “they only take the trouble of going to the edge of the lake, as if going to the market, to get their supplies of corn and fish when the Indians bring some. They prefer living on corn, fish, and deer or moose grease rather than take the least pain to better their life.”\textsuperscript{26} The \textit{habitants} simply did not exploit the land on any large scale. Lotbinière’s map and associated “relation” is a rare example of an official French description of Fort Michilimackinac. Lotbinière understood and did not approve of the ways of the \textit{habitants}, and in that, his writings are in contrast to Charlevoix’ descriptions at Detroit, which were more matter of fact.

However, the \textit{habitants} were perhaps more industrious than Lotbinière was willing to admit. A number of locally produced items located along the southeast row house indicate that traders, and perhaps their families, or others, engaged in small-scale manufacturing during the French occupation. For example, bullets were often salvaged and recast due to the necessity of having shot in order to hunt for small
game. A huge quantity of pipes has been uncovered as well. Similar evidence is found on Mackinac Island. Other locally produced items included wire, hinges, colanders, brass harpoons, candlesticks, sinkers, and pencils. These items generally were French. With the notable exception of Mill Creek late in the British occupation, no large-scale manufacturing took place in the Straits region. Craft industries were “either a sideline or under institutional sponsorship.” The emphasis at Michilimackinac was on “reuse and repair.”

The physical arrangement of Fort Michilimackinac is a good starting point in the discussion of the French imprint left for the British to fill. It is clear from the Lotbinière map that the priests, military personnel and the habitants lived separate from one another, reflecting class divisions within the fort. The row houses inside the eighteenth century entrepot palisade were the poteaux-en-terre style. When the British took over, they expanded the fort throughout the 1760s and added a “British” powder magazine in place of the old, privately owned, French one located in the southeast corner of the fort. However, the row houses adjacent were rebuilt exactly as the French had them prior to the British occupation, in an “old fashion style.”

The arrangement of the buildings and land use inside the palisade reflected the culture of the inhabitants. Perhaps the most obvious physical aspect of one important aspect of French culture, Catholicism, was the church. The Church of Ste. Anne de Michilimackinac, dating from the 1740s, was most likely a horizontal log building, although the original building was poteaux-en-terre.

The Jesuits operated the church, the priest’s house and a garden outside the west wall (the church was moved inside the fort during the 1730s expansion). Each
row house had a private garden. The Jesuit priest’s house and garden were next to the church, further evidence of the French imprint on the fort.35

One of the few documents of the fort from the 1750s that describes habitant land use practices comes from a French soldier, known as J.C.B., who served during the Seven Years’ War. His journal contains a number of inaccuracies and odd omissions, but he noted the armament at the fort, and hinted at some of the rules and regulations for the French soldiers. He wrote,

The fort is surrounded by a stockade, mounted with six cannon, and has thirty men in garrison who are changed every three years, if they wish. Their only renumeration is powder and lead bullets. This is enough because they cultivate maize or Indian corn, and go hunting and fishing, thus supplying their needs. Anyone who is contented there, and asks not to be transferred, is permitted to remain. I saw two men there who had stayed on, one for twenty years, and another, a Parisian, for thirty years. The latter was sixty years old. The soldiers of the garrison usually trade with the neighboring savages.36

J.C.B.’s description of the post implies that the French soldiers engaged in some agricultural work. He did not mention the numerous gardens that the French maintained, however. Conditions at the post during the late French occupation were apparently comfortable enough to encourage individuals to remain, even if they had opportunities to leave.

The British Era: 1760-1796

Not long after J.C.B.’s visit to the Straits, the British occupied the region, and, as at Detroit, brought with them their own cultural norms, including, like the French, dividing the fort into sections based on class, although the distinctions seem sharper.37
The lower classes occupied the southeast quadrant of the fort and British junior officers and wealthy traders occupied the northeast quadrant. The presence of the potentially dangerous and deadly powder magazine and high winds made the southeast quadrant the least desirable place to live.\textsuperscript{38}

The British abandoned the site briefly from 1763 to 1764 when Indians participating in Pontiac’s Rebellion captured Fort Michilimackinac.\textsuperscript{39} After they returned in 1764, the British started an ambitious reconstruction program that did not alter the size or the shape of the fort radically, but did make some changes along the northern curtain of the palisade.\textsuperscript{40} The powder magazine was rebuilt and the southeast quadrant row houses were razed and rebuilt in the same architectural style and on the same location.\textsuperscript{41} The Rue de la Babillarde, between the row houses and the powder magazine was widened. In 1765, the commandant, Captain Howard, wrote, “I made some old Houses tolerable warm for the Men was obliged to pull down three Houses to repair them; a Barrack is absolutely necessary here, all the houses are very old and not worth repairing.”\textsuperscript{42}

The use of the row houses changed from the French to the British eras, transitioning from civilian to military use. The best-documented row houses at Michilimackinac are in the southeast quadrant, the “poor” section of the fort.\textsuperscript{43} The dwellings within the Southeast row houses are labeled A/B, C, D, E and F.\textsuperscript{44} House A/B is designated as such because it was originally two dwellings and in the British era, the wall between them was knocked down and it became a single unit.\textsuperscript{45} Michilimackinac had a number of private buildings including the row houses and the powder magazine. The powder magazine became Crown property soon after 1763,
but the row houses remained privately held according to the terms of capitulation at the end of the Seven Years’ War. British officers occupied Houses A/B, D and F; House E apparently remained a trader’s residence.46

House C is probably the best-documented dwelling from the British era. It is also known as the Solomon-Levy-Parant House and is located in the southeast row house section of the fort. Originally inhabited by Parant, a French trader, and his family, the house was sold to Solomon Levy around the time of the British takeover. Like other row houses at the fort, it had been razed and rebuilt in the poteaux-en-terre style. Because of that, the house was most likely rebuilt by its owner employing French workers. The British had abandoned the poteaux-en-terre approach to house construction nearly a century earlier.47 Any such construction indicates the presence of French habitants or French workers employing a style with which they were quite familiar.

House D, the most recently excavated of the Row Houses, revealed a new understanding of who lived and worked at Michilimackinac. The 1749 Lotbinière map of the fort identifies the Bolon family as the occupants. Archaeological evidence such as Catholic artifacts and a “wide variety of wild mammals, birds and fish” also suggests that French-Canadians had lived in the house, indicating the reliability of Lotbinière’s map.48 House D became a barracks during the British occupation. Foot soldiers lived there until 1770, when the official barracks was completed.49

The South Southeast row houses are indicated by number, rather than by letter. House 1, in the South Southeast row house was located near the powder magazine. A Mr. Chevalier owned House 1 during the British occupation, although it
is not clear whether he simply owned and rented out the house, or occupied it. Either way, when the British arrived, they destroyed the house and rebuilt it. This time, however, the construction was more solid than in the French era. Archaeologists discovered deep pits that contained large support posts, [anchored] deep into the natural beach. The house was rebuilt in the *poteaux-en-terre* style, but the workers added pink-colored clay, used for waterproofing, that was typical of other British construction at Michilimackinac, indicating that there was a mixture of French and British styles at the site. British soldiers occupied House 1 soon after 1761. Most likely, between 1772 and 1774, members of the 10th Regiment lived there. Arent De Peyster, post commandant, had the house razed a final time in 1775. He informed General Gage of his actions in May of that year, implying that he had safety on his mind. He wrote, “I have also with the consent of the Inhabitants curtailed their several inclosures, and removed an old house bordering too near upon the powder magazine.” The lot where House 1 stood was left vacant. If an habitant owned that land, which is possible since the house lots were privately owned, then that person did nothing with it. The British may have considered the lot to be the property of the King and simply decided not to rebuild because of De Peyster’s safety concerns. Either way, archaeologists found no artifacts on the site that dated from 1774 to 1781.

According to Charles Cleland, during the British occupation, “the character of Michilimackinac was abruptly changed.” The existence of “poor” and “wealthy” sections of the fort attests to the alteration of social interaction. As a result, the daily life of the French and British inhabitants differed. The French had a reputation of
being somewhat lazy and General Thomas Gage considered the habitants to be troublemakers. He had little patience for the “cursed” French settlements, such as Michilimackinac. They were content to mind their gardens and trade with the Indians, although it was the British who discovered that potatoes could be grown at Michilimackinac. The upper classes at Michilimackinac, those who lived on the northern side of the fort, enjoyed such luxuries as “Madeira wine, Bristol beer, brandy, Cheshire cheese, not to mention rum, coffee, tea, and sugar.” Each of those items had to be imported and certainly would have been expensive. Post commissary John Askin owned a farm that provided a number of items that the British palate must have preferred. His gardens in the fort also must have been a welcome sight to the British. British troops lived on a strict rationing program and worked their own gardens.

When the British moved in to Michilimackinac, they remodeled it in a more military fashion. The north end of the fort was for officers and the south end was for traders. The Lieutenant Perkins Magra map, dating from 1766, shows a separation of all French and British occupants. A north to south ordering of hierarchy is apparent with the “high ranking officers grading to property owners and finally to the lowly foot soldiers.” Even though the habitants initially were able to keep their private property, the British gradually forced some French traders to move outside of the fort to the village that developed on the east side of the posts during the 1760s. As some members of British society grew wealthy during the 1770s, most notably John Askin, others became more and more marginalized. There are two examples of this marginalization at the Fort. The first is that the Jewish traders Solomon and Levey...
who occupied House C, experienced anti-Semitism. The second example is that the post commissary, John Askin, owned slaves.

Three maps of Michilimackinac dating from 1749 to 1768 give some insight into the built environment of the British era. The maps depict the locations of such things as the traders’ houses, barracks, gardens, stables and officers’ quarters and reflect the tension between the goals of the local residents and the British government.

The first British map of Michilimackinac is the Magra map of 1766. It depicts some of the exterior features of the post including a wharf, gardens and stables. The gardens reflect the continued influence of habitant culture, indicating that the British were willing to grow some of their own food, and the wharf demonstrates the importance of trade to both the British and the French. Magra attached a “relation” to the map, which indicated a variety of structural changes to the fort. Oddly, there is no reference to any houses that may have existed outside the palisades at the time.

The purpose of the Nordberg map of 1769 was to “depict British Crown ownership of property.” The map is sparse and does not show the correct number of dwellings per row house. However, Captain Glazier, the commandant who commissioned the map, did not need the map to be accurate in that sense. Glazier wanted to construct a barracks and needed to know what parts of the fort were privately held and what parts belonged to the Crown before he could begin construction. The Crown apparently owned the church and the Jesuit house and garden. What is not surprising, though, is that the map shows Crown ownership of the powder magazine, something that had been an issue since the British first
occupied the post. It is clear that by the end of the decade, British authorities were laying claim to properties inside the fort.

The last known historic map of Michilimackinac is the Crown Collection Map, which has never been accurately dated. Most historians place the map somewhere between 1766 and 1769, based on various repairs and changes it depicts. The legend describes six structures to the east of the stockade, which are “houses in which the traders are lodged.” However, it does not give much information on possible land use.

What the maps do not show is the gradual population increase of the British era. While none of the maps indicate any habitation outside the palisades, by 1778, according to John Askin, there were “near to one hundred houses in the suburbs.” Permanent Michilimackinac population increased during the British occupation, but by how much is not clear. What is clear, though, is that English traders owned many of the houses and when the time came for the move to Mackinac Island they were somewhat reluctant to give them up.

Trade continued to be important at Fort Michilimackinac even up to the transfer of the community to Mackinac Island. In the summer of 1780, the last summer at the fort, the British counted thirty-five proprietors at the post, indicating a vigorous economy. Of those, six lived full-time at the Straits, including Ezekiel Solomon, whose house was excavated in the 1970s. The total value of the traders’ canoes that summer was £138,750, out of £438,750 recorded.

The corn trade, often overshadowed by the fur trade, also flourished, but more out of necessity than anything else. The British, however, were not inclined to eat
Indian food and either imported raw materials from Detroit and L'Arbre Croche or, in limited quantities, tried to grow their own food in gardens and fields. The soil and climate at the Straits, however, affected what could be grown. Corn grew well southwest of the settlement. A mere twenty miles southwest along the Lake Michigan shoreline, L'Arbre Croche was well-known for its corn production. The British trader Alexander Henry wrote of “the Otawas of L'Arbre Croche, who, when compared with the Chipeways, appear to be much advanced in civilization, grow maize, for the market of Michilimackinac, where this commodity is depended upon, for provisioning the canoes.” Land suitable for farming along the northern stretch of Michigan was harder to come by. The sandy soil made it difficult for the British to engage in agriculture.

The weather at the Straits is famously unpredictable, making it difficult to farm successfully. In addition, Michilimackinac is located at 45 degrees 45’ north and 84 degrees, 45’ west. Winter sets in early, leaves late and the growing season is short. As such, farming was a difficult endeavor. While the French may have tried to grow some crops, the British were the first to make any large-scale attempt at agriculture at the Straits. According to archaeologists at the Mackinac Island State Historic Parks, only two notable farms, both British and owned by the same person, were located inland, not along the lakes.

John Askin owned those farms in the Straits region in the 1760s and 70s. Askin was not only a farmer, but post commissary and businessman as well. He met with mixed success as businessman and farmer. The Québec Act as well as American
Colonial discontent found its way to the Straits. In a letter from his business associates in Schenectady, Phyn & Ellice, Merchants, they wrote,

The other Act of Parliament establishes the French Laws in Canada, and our Criminal Law, this gives great uneasiness to the English and many of the French Inhabitants who have Petitioned the King to have it repealed but their Success is very doubtful, we should be sorry these things affected our further Connections with you, which we believe could be carried on with Credit and Satisfaction, but those things will be more certainly known before our R. Ellice goes up next Spring (via Montreal) with a Parcell of Dry Goods, as we have another Non Importation.77

The first of his farms, at L’Arbre Croche, twenty miles to the southwest of the fort, was located near a Jesuit mission. The mission “resides on a farm attached to the mission and situated between the village and the fort, both of which are under his care.”78 Little is known about this farm and it has yet to be found.

The second Askin farm is documented both historically and archaeologically and provided some needed grains for the garrison, but did little for the community at large. Askin received title to this parcel of land in 1774, and apparently unworried about the legality of his claim, starting working the land in 1773. It was an example of the looseness of Mackinac area land grants at the time. In May of 1773 Captain Vattas, post commandant, wrote to General Gage, “Mr. Askin Comisary & Mr. Ainse Indian Interpreter, have applied to me for leave to enclose some few acres of land & build each a house within about three miles of the Fort, which I have ok’ed.”79 In July of 1774, Vattas, in clear violation of British land law, officially granted the land. He wrote,

I do hereby certify having given permission to Mr. Jn.
Askin Depy Commissary & Barrack Master of the Fort

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of Missilimackinac to enclose from three to five Acres of Ground near a Spot call'd three Miles pond from its said suppos'd Distance from the Fort & to build thereon a House with such other Conveniences as He from Time to Time may judge necessary of which I advis'd His Excellency the Honble Ths Gage. Esq., Commander in Chief in the Course of Summer 1773.

Askin employed a simple, yet effective, method of crop rotation and fertilization. The *habitants* probably knew little of crop rotation or even animal husbandry. Apparently some *habitants* applied a kind of crop rotation, but it was rare. The most detailed example of British-era agriculture and crop rotation comes from Askin's diary. He began farming in earnest in April of 1774, on the eve of the American Revolution. By 1775, his livestock were reproducing. The "Ewes began to Lamb" and "a Cow Calfed" early in the year. He explained his planting style: "Sowed Garden pease in drills 3 foot apart. Sowed Turnip Seed in drills 2 foot apart with dung in the trench under the Seeds." In another entry, Askin described his crop rotation practices:

> Thro bracking when green, rotten Hay or any such Stuff on the land where pease & Buck wheat have been, plow it in the Month of Sept Harrow it in the Spring & Plant Potatoes with Ye Plow without any more dunging. When Potatoes are dug up in the fall Clover seeds may be sowed. Buck Wheat may be sowed the 20<sup>th</sup> of June on Land twice plowed where Pease have been the year before. Potatoes may be planted on Stuble Grownd with Dung. New Ground twice plowed I think best for Pease. Oates may be sowed in old Turnip Ground.

Askin was one of the wealthier residents of the region and as a consequence, probably not typical. He apparently also held property inside the fort and occasionally worked his gardens and farm south of the fort on the same day. He owned not only the two farms, but also two trading houses, one at Michilimackinac and the other at St.
Mary's. Nonetheless, Askin’s farm system explains several things. First, it highlights pivotal relationships in the Michilimackinac community. The military and civilian populations had to work together to survive. Second, it seems that Askin, and perhaps others, farmed creatively. Askin grew crops under harsh conditions and had to work to discover rotation and fertilization methods. And finally, Askin’s devotion to the land emphasizes British reluctance to eat Indian food, with the possible exception of corn.

Askin did not work his farms by himself. Slavery existed in the Straits region, as it did at Detroit, and he owned at least one slave. The land tenure system found in the Straits was not conducive to large-scale agriculture so the reasons for the existence of slaves must be cultural. Slavery was common in all of the English colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from New England to the southern colonies. Like the English, the French held slaves in all of their North American territories. But historian Carl Ekberg has argued that slavery rarely existed in market agriculture economies, such as those found in the Illinois Country.

No established manufacturing economy existed in the Straits region in the pre-statehood era, but other subeconomies flourished and encouraged a variety of communities to settle and expand. Limited evidence exists for corn processing such as turning corn into sagamité at Michilimackinac. No archaeological remains have been discovered to explain where and how the processing was done at the fort. House C might have been used for hominy production. Most food processing in general was done on the household scale. But some foods may have been produced as an industry, such as baked goods, maple sugar, lye hominy, and spruce beer. Mill
Creek is the sole example of large-scale industry at the Straits. Early in their tenure at Mackinac, the British recognized the need for a saw mill. A 1779 letter from Patrick Sinclair to his superiors at Québec contains the earliest known reference to a mill at Mackinac.

We now mix a Barrel of old Four (indeed not good) to thereof new to make it eatable. If the General sends in the Spring men capable of erecting & working a Saw and Grist mill with some of the Dutch Refugee Families from below, I will answer for the success of the scheme, of Agriculture & make Provision to turn to some account which might have been useless.94

By 1793, a mill had been constructed at PC 334.95 Robert Campbell, the owner of the lot, apparently worked hard to improve it. By the time he died in 1808, the lot contained a “house, mills, and other improvements.”96 In 1819, Campbell’s heirs sold PC 334 to Michael Dousman. He expanded the mill and began manufacturing barrels, although it is not clear how many and for what purpose.97 The mill produced lumber well into the 1830s. Dousman often contracted with the island garrison to supply beef as well as lumber.98

After 1781, Mackinac Island became the focus of British military and civilian land use and settlement patterns. The British were in the process of moving and expanding their fortifications in Detroit as well, anticipating an American attack. The reasons for the move to the island date from before the American Revolution, however. British commandants had repeatedly criticized the condition of Michilimackinac and its general location since the early 1760s, often complaining about the near constant wind and sand and the commandants were eager to move the fort. The post was not a fort in the proper sense. Antoine Bougainville described it at

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the close of the French era. He wrote, "Michilimackinac is a fort of standing pickets, situated on the strait of communication between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron; it is the entrepot of the posts of the north; it is on the same footing as Detroit entrepot for the southern posts." In 1767 John Porteous, British fur trader described the fort in much less flattering tones, "It stands on a dry barren beach, the soft small sand surrounding it for some distance is intolerably troublesome, both for filling the shoes & blowing in the Eyes & crevices of houses & vessels &c." Captain Beamsley Glazier, commandant from 1767 to 1770 wrote a letter to General Gage in 1769 describing the conditions at the fort:

As this Fort stands in so bad a place the landing is so difficult, large hills and deep gullies, which are within 40 yards of the west and south Bastions and spread themselves a Quarter of a Mile in circumferrence, where 1500 Indians may ly under cover from any fire from the Fort excepting Shells, and the Repairations this Fort will want in a little time; If I may be allowed to give my opinion it would be but little more expences to build a Small Fort about 3/4 of a mile from this, round the point to the Eastward where there is a good Cove for Landing and a high spot of ground very convenient; but the best place would be the Island called Michilimackinac about 8 Miles North from this Fort where there is good landing and wood plenty, which in little time will be very difficult to be got here as we are now obliged to go 7 or 8 Mile for it and it is a great distance from the Shore there.

The fort was surrounded by sand dunes "which required leveling off from time to time since the sand blew in with every storm." Fort Michilimackinac possessed no harbor and the low-lying dunes made it difficult for the British to keep an eye out for potential trouble along the Straits. And
Glazier's comment that the wood supply was running low indicates the extent to which the British consumed that commodity.

Patrick Sinclair, commandant from 1779-1782, finally made the move. On his way to take command of the post in 1779, he made a brief stop at the island. In a letter to Captain Brehm, aid to Governor Frederick Haldimand, in October of that year, he wrote, "On my way to this place I stop'd at Michilimackinac Island for several hours, in a very fine Bay well covered by the little White Wood Island. The situation is respectable & convenient for a Fort, in the Major De Peyster's opinion as well as in mine." During the winter of 1780-1781, he had the entire community—settlers, traders, soldiers and even some buildings—moved to Mackinac Island. (See Figure 5.1) The American Revolution still raged in the east and Sinclair believed that Michilimackinac was vulnerable to attack. While the Revolution never found its way to Michigan, guerilla warfare took place to the south in the Illinois Country and the American victories there by George Rogers Clark prompted the British to strengthen their Great Lakes holdings. If the Americans planned to attack, the British would be ready. Sinclair made the move before obtaining permission from British authorities, although Governor Haldimand seemed amenable to the idea.
The proposed move to the island found a welcome audience at Fort Michilimackinac. A group of English traders expressed delight at the prospect of moving to Mackinac Island. They saw "several very great advantages from the removal" and listed two of the "very great advantages:" "our lives and property would be in much better security" and "the necessities of life may be procured much cheaper & easier when properly established on the Island from the superior Fertility of the soil & the Fishery being much more convenient." The biggest loss to the traders, in their minds, was their houses, which had "cost [them] very dear."
As on the mainland, the settlement pattern was divided between the soldiers and the civilians. One important difference between the mainland post and the Mackinac Island was that the British designed the new fort solely as a military post. Michilimackinac, from its inception, was essentially a palisaded village. Fort Mackinac did not contain houses, but barracks, and the island village was set apart from the fort. The habitants continued “to construct houses as they had always done...as a means of maintaining their culture even though they had become British subjects.” Such effort by the habitants is an example as to how local conditions at the Straits could thwart British plans. The village and the fort became distinct societies, each developing their own communities, yet, out of necessity, maintained close ties. The fur trade was the main economic base of the village, and the garrison at the fort protected fur traders’ interests. The village sat below the fort where the “traders’ facilities would be located,” indicating that the military took precedence over the civilians. Even within the fort, a hierarchy developed. Sinclair, in an undated letter to Captain Brehm wrote,

The upper ground for officers and soldiers barracks, Powder Magazine & Provision Store House- The lower for other Store Houses- Traders and the house of the Person who managed the Indians, will be a safe and easy disposition of the whole charge at this post.

Some of the interior buildings at Fort Mackinac had been brought over from Fort Michilimackinac. The King’s Storehouse and the guardhouse, for example, had been in service on the mainland. Sinclair constructed the new fort from squared logs, clapboard blockhouses and squared stone. Island limestone served as mortar. The island fort would look “British” but be constructed under Sinclair’s terms. In
fact, Sinclair himself designed much of the fort and from his superiors at Québec he requested engineers who could think in non-linear terms. He wrote, “this point of rising ground overlooks all the accessible beach on that side of the island— In short no situation can be more favourable— but for God’s sake be careful in the choice of An Engineer & don’t send up one of your paper Engineers fond of fine rectangular polygons.” Sinclair’s plan did not conform to any standard fort architecture.

The British commandants of the island fort granted the majority of the land claims between 1781 and 1796, in violation of standard British policy. The grants were not “titles in the regular sense” but rather, “‘estates at will,’ and were given conditionally during the pleasure of his Majesty, or the governor of the province of Quebec.” In at least one case, a land grant was used for food production for the garrison. Sinclair, in a February 1780 letter to Captain Brehm, noted that “two Canadians are preparing Post & rail fence to enclose a fine grass Platt of about thirty acres for the King’s Cattle which will be sent to the Island before the Ice breaks up.” Brehm responded in April, “the General is much pleased by the flattering Prospect you give of success in his favorite scheme of Agriculture, & you may Depend on having every assistance in his power in forwarding it- Some Garden Seeds will be sent by this Opportunity, & some Rye if it can be produced.”

In general, the Americans found British style of land granting irritating because they found the grants to be poorly recorded. One bright spot in the record keeping was that the British had a deed of purchase for the island in 1781, which Winthrop Sargent, the civilian leader of Mackinac Island at the start of the American occupation wrote, was able to copy and send to American authorities. He wrote,
“whilst I was a Michilimackinack Sir I examined the Land Records of the Island which was purchased from the Indians in 1781 and a formal Deed is now with the Commandant—a copy of which I have the honour to transmit.” Sargent continued, “it appears that their Land Transactions were sometimes extremely loose.” Still, the Americans were hopeful that any ownership problems could be sorted out “by oral Testimony” since most British residents could “very generally define their Lots.” That optimism would be put to the test during the American occupation of the Straits of Mackinac.

Even during the British occupation, which was marked by increased military activity, the settlements at the Straits of Mackinac were places of trade, and as such they attracted a diverse population. The original mainland settlement in particular, was, in the words of Lynn Evans, a “cosmopolitan settlement” with a mix of “Anishnabeg and Huron families...French Canadians, English and a few German Jews,” not to mention a number of African American and Native American slaves. Many of these people would remain during the American era as well

The American Era: 1796-1837

The British held Mackinac Island until 1796, relinquishing control under the requirements of the Jay Treaty. American tenure on the Island was brief, initially. The American flag flew over the island from 1796 until 1812 and returned after the Americans and British signed the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. American settlers purchased land on the islands in the Straits as well as on the mainland. The American government and military may have technically been in charge in 1796, but British fur interests ruled the region. The fort “was the only symbol of American sovereignty
over the region." Like the British, the Americans found Mackinac Island to their liking. A visitor in 1796 indicated a variety of land uses on the island describing the fort, a “Roman chapel,” two streets, a park, stables and gardens. The village contained eighty-nine houses and stores at the time with two streets “of nearly a quarter mile in length.” The houses were generally well-built, “some of them spacious and handsome, with white lime plastering in front, which shews to great advantage from the sea.” The government house in particular stood out from the rest of the buildings. It was described as “one story high, the rooms fifteen feet and a half in the clear.” It also had a large garden and “a very lovely grove of sugartrees, called the park” as well as “suitable out-houses, stables and offices.”

The U.S. military, however, gave the fort mixed reviews. The Americans considered Fort Mackinac inadequate for their needs, unlike the British, who seem to have been pleased with it. The United States Army’s 1796-1799 Order Book noted that the south rampart was “in a state of total decay,” but that the buildings were “in tolerable good order.” The Americans altered the fort soon after taking command. They “realigned the curtain walls, removed bastions, incorporated the ravelin into the fort, added blockhouses, and made many other changes during their early years at the site.” In fact, the addition of the blockhouses corrected a major strategic and structural failure in the Sinclair version of the fort. Sinclair preferred half bastions instead, something that British military engineers failed to appreciate. The provisions storehouse was described as “a log building, one hundred and fifteen feet long and thirty-one feet wide: two storeys hight: it is in good order.” Another source
cited the building as “one hundred and fifteen feet long, and twenty feet wide, two Storyes high.”

The U.S. military used the land on the north end of the fort as a dump. Archaeological work from the 1980s showed that between 1820 and 1824, a variety of items were deposited outside the north wall of Fort Mackinac. Most of the items discovered consisted of a “predictable range of domestic materials” such as “ceramics, bottle and window glass, kaolin pipe fragments, and a range of metal artifacts including cutlery and military buttons.”

The War of 1812 changed the built environment of Mackinac Island, which saw the addition of another fort. The opening battle of the war was fought on the Island. The British surprised Lt. Porter Hanks, commandant of the fort, in July of that year. Hanks surrendered without firing a shot. The British were able to take Fort Mackinac because they attacked from the north, and Sinclair had designed the fort to be defended from the south. The British constructed Fort George on the rising ground to the north of Fort Mackinac during the summer of 1814. The post would defend the Island from the north and from an anticipated American attack. It consisted of a two-story blockhouse with a powder magazine in the basement and adjacent “bombproof” buildings that would later serve as the powder magazine. The Americans renamed the post Fort Holmes after the Treaty of Ghent. They strengthened the post and added artillery. It was garrisoned only during the summer months, when attack seemed more likely. The fort was likely abandoned by 1818, with little apparent fanfare.
Once the war ended, the Americans, like the British, found Mackinac Island difficult to supply. Northern Michigan was a logistical nightmare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the opening months of the American occupancy of the Island, the schooner *The Swan* delivered a cargo of salt pork to the fort. Such trips must have been rare, for in at least one instance, in a gesture of goodwill, the British at Fort Malden on the Detroit River supplied the garrison with the food.\textsuperscript{146} Both events indicate a lack of animal husbandry in the early years of American occupation.

Yet by 1827, it is clear that the military felt confident enough in its ability to feed the garrison that the storehouse was razed and a hospital was constructed on that site. Soldiers built the hospital and may have used some of the materials from the storehouse.\textsuperscript{147} The unfinished hospital burned at the end of October 1827. In November, Major Alex Thompson, the commandant, wrote to the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C., “it causes me much regret to report when our new hospital was within about 10 days of its being completed it took fire on the 31st Ultima and was totally consumed altho every exertion was made to save it.”\textsuperscript{148} The fire was apparently more serious than Thompson let on because in a letter, Amanda Ferry, a missionary on the island wrote, “[the fire] consumed the new building designated for a Hospital, and a shop occupied by Mr. Bailey, and if there had been a wind the village would have been consumed, or stood a narrow chance, as well as other buildings in the Fort.”\textsuperscript{149} In June of 1828, the garrison prepared to build a new hospital as well as make some changes inside the fort. A report from 1828 indicated the extent to which the Americans wanted to alter the interior of the fort.

the parade is enlarged and very nearly rid of certain disgusting looking root houses which have long
offended the sight of all who like decency of appearance, well which once afforded water enough for the purposes of a full garrison will in the course of the summer be cleared of the rubbish which now fills it to a depth of 80 feet and be rewattered.\textsuperscript{150}

By the 1820s, Mackinac Island had become the epicenter of the Great Lakes fur trade. The island had two primary uses at that point, first, as a military post and second, as a business district, especially for the fur traders. Tourism was a third, nascent, industry that began to rear its head during this decade. Mackinac Island became home to a mix of permanent residents, traders, soldiers, Indians and visitors. A description of the island that details some of Mackinac's charms is found in Henry Schoolcraft's journal from his 1822 voyage of exploration. He noted that the town was "pleasantly situated around a small bay" and consisted of around "one hundred and fifty houses, several of which are handsomely painted."\textsuperscript{151} The village had become larger than the original one at Michilimackinac, and the paint may indicate a degree of wealth not found at the original village. Around 450 permanent residents lived on the island making up half of the total population of Michilimackinac County, which stood at 819 in the 1820 census.\textsuperscript{152} (See Table 5.1) The population swelled up to 2,000 during trading season.\textsuperscript{153} In that respect, the village resembled the original one on the mainland when the population would increase during the busy trading season. Of merchants, wrote Schoolcraft, there are always too many.\textsuperscript{154}
Table 5.1: County Census Information

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<th>Michilimackinac County Census Information</th>
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Additional 1840 Census Information

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<th>Number of Residents in Selected Professions</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Commerce</th>
<th>Manufacturing and Trade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>191</td>
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</table>

As a military post, Mackinac started to decline in importance. At the Rush-Bagot Convention at Washington, D.C. in 1817 British and American officials declared the Great Lakes off limits to most military vessels as of April the following year. The move reflected the improved relations between the two countries after the War of 1812. A strong military presence on the island simply became unnecessary and Mackinac Island began new phases of development.

Agriculture never became a major industry on Mackinac Island, but not for lack of trying. Both the British and the Americans attempted to farm Mackinac Island, with mixed results. Schoolcraft noted the presence of good soil on Mackinac Island. Several individuals tried their hand at farming. David Mitchell, Michael Dousman and a number of others filed claims with the Detroit Land Office, probably in hopes of making a living at farming the island.

David Mitchell’s claims on the mainland and on Mackinac Island shed some light on the politics and conflicts of land ownership on Mackinac Island. Mitchell was a doctor for the British army. He moved with the garrison to the island in 1781. In 1783 he resigned from the army when his regiment left Mackinac. Mitchell “dabbled” in the fur trade, fished, and started a farm. He owned “one of the few

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farms and raised crops of hay, potatoes, oats and corn, and a few fruit trees. His wife maintained a “several acre vegetable garden” as well. The Mitchells stayed on the island after 1796 and on April 18, 1808, filed a claim with the Detroit Land Office. The Detroit Land Office recognized Mitchell’s ownership of Private Claim Number 110, located nearly in the center of the island (See Figure 5.2). Forty acres of his claim was set aside for use by the garrison at Fort Mackinac. When the War of 1812 broke out, Mitchell found himself aiding the British. He was not the only island resident to have mixed loyalties. Michael Dousman also helped the British. When Mackinac Island was returned to the Americans in 1814, Mitchell decided to follow the British army and left. His wife Elizabeth then took charge of their extensive holdings.

Michael Dousman owned the largest Private Claim on the island. His PC 1 encompassed the entire northern end of the island (See Figure 5.2). It can be said of Dousman that he was land hungry. He went before the Land Office on a number of occasions to file claims. The Land Office approved most of them. However, in September of 1810, Dousman made an enemy of the Fort Mackinac garrison. Dousman attempted to survey a section of the island and Captain Lewis Howard, the commandant, issued a protest and ordered the survey halted. In a letter to William Eustis, Colonel Jacob Kingsbury of the 1st Regiment Infantry noted that Dousman’s claim “of a certain Tract, or Tracts of Land..., the greater part of which [had] always been considered as a Military reserve, for fire wood for the use of the garrison, at that post, and which should [his] claim be granted, will materially injure the public, as it will take the best of the woodland on the Island.” Captain Howard himself
protested that if Dousman were "to get a survey, a final certificate & Deed, & then to sell the wood to the U.S. or let them go some where else for it, of the Island, of course at great cost & inconvenience." Howard expressed confidence that the matter would be settled in the best interest of the garrison: "I trust however; that he will find himself disappointed; when this Business is once properly explained." In December of 1810, the matter was indeed settled to Howard's satisfaction, when the Treasury Department, reinforcing an American perception of land ownership, ruled, "no individual claim can be successfully opposed to the public right."

Private Claims Two, Three, Four and 331 filled out the west side. Claim 331, filed by George Shindler on October 19, 1808 contained 640 acres. However, only
twelve acres were “under cultivation,” emphasizing the difficult time farmers had on Mackinac Island.\textsuperscript{167} By 1823, when Dousman made yet another Island claim, he had sixty acres under cultivation.\textsuperscript{168} Dousman’s 1823 claim also noted that a distillery and horsemill existed on the property, and that Dousman’s “improvements [had] always been more extensive than any other in this country.”\textsuperscript{169} Other claims were much smaller. By the late 1820s, dozens of small lots, most with some lakefront, developed around the bay. The result was a tightly packed community of houses (See Figure 5.3).

Jacob Franks’ November 1810 claim is an example of the American government’s attempts to please the landowners and provide for the public good, an ideal not found in the British land tenure system. His claim was approved, but the DLO reserved “one hundred feet in width in front of this tract for the use of a public street.”\textsuperscript{170} Augustus Cadott’s claim, filed on October 28\textsuperscript{th}, 1823 is another example. Cadott claimed an unspecified number of acres along the Lake Huron shore. The Land Office confirmed the claim and reserved “one hundred feet from high-water mark for the public highway.”\textsuperscript{171} Other claimants had an easier time. Ambrose Davenport’s May 1823 claim of an 8 by 12 \textit{arpent} tract was readily approved by the
Figure 5.3: Mackinac Island. Detail from John Mullett's 1828 "Michilimackinac Showing the Survey of Private Claims."
Courtesy of the Peterson Center, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Mackinac City, Michigan
Land Office. He had occupied the land since 1807 and "had a house upon said farm and he had several acres under cultivation, and raised considerable grain upon it."172 Unfortunately, the land claims can at times be maddeningly vague. Neither the commissioners on the Land Office, nor those testifying on behalf of claimants defined exactly how much of any commodity was grown.

Tourism, another type of land use, became more common by the 1830s. Although no commercial ferry system seems to have been taking visitors to Mackinac Island in the 1830s, it was possible for tourists to visit. A notable visitor to Mackinac Island at that time was Harriet Martineau.173 She stayed on the island only for a day, but left behind a vivid description of the islanders' lives. For Martineau, Mackinac Island represented the "wildest and tenderest little piece of beauty that I have yet seen on God's earth."174 While the physical beauty of the island may have enthralled her, Martineau was less generous about the French residents. Their houses were "shabby-looking, dusky and roofed with bark."175 The nicer neighborhoods possessed gardens, mainly of kitchen vegetables and some corn.176 The islanders possessed a keen sense of humor. Martineau was told that Mackinac Island had "nine months of winter and three months of cold weather."177

Bois Blanc Island

The other major island in the Straits of Mackinac, Bois Blanc, did not see the same kinds of changes in the built environment. Its land use differed substantially from its smaller neighbor in part because of its lack of a natural harbor and its lower
elevation. In other words, land use and settlement patterns on Bois Blanc did not
mirror those found on Mackinac Island.

Bois Blanc Island lies to the southeast of Mackinac Island. The most
notable feature on a plat map of Bois Blanc Island is Private Claim Number 323,
located on the northwestern end of the island. This parcel of land was the center of a
conflict among the first habitants on the Bois Blanc and the British, and later the
Americans that demonstrate their differing views on land ownership and land use. At
the start of the American era, PC 323 belonged to Michael Dousman (See Figure
5.4). He entered his claim with the Detroit Land Office on October 18, 1808,
claiming a tract of land “situate on the north side of Bois blanc, containing on the
whole six hundred and forty acres, being twenty acres in front by thirty-two acres in
depth.” The witness Daniel Daly noted that there “were six or eight acres
improved and cultivated in 1796.”

Tensions between landowners on Bois Blanc and American authorities
occurred as the Detroit Land Office began to assert its power to grant land. The heirs
of the original French owners of PC 323 then became involved in a legal dispute with
Dousman. Charles Gauthier and his family claimed and farmed the site as early as
1780 and continued to do so through 1807. Louis Chevalier testified before the Land
Office that Gauthier had “six or seven acres under improvement and cultivation.”
Gauthier’s widow, Magdaline, testified that it was more like forty acres. Gauthier
long had problems maintaining title to his land. During the British occupation,
soldiers from Fort Mackinac cut timber on Bois Blanc without permission from
Gauthier, although he always received payment for the timber and the British
acknowledged his right to the land. The Land Office attempted to make sense of the dispute and made a questionable ruling:

This claim appears to be well supported by the testimony of occupation from 1796 to 1807. No proof of notice of claim having been given within the time limited by law accompanying the present application, the commissioners do not consider themselves authorized to confirm it. They recommend to the revising power of the confirmation of a tract not to exceed six hundred and forty acres.

The Gauthier family did not receive all of their land, but they accepted the more Americanized version of a lot conforming to the then-common 640 acres.

Dousman grew a limited amount of hay on his tract. However optimistic he may have been about his acquisition, farmers never made a permanent imprint on Bois Blanc and instead the island served as a source for raw materials during the British and American occupations. The scarcity of trees on Mackinac Island made Bois Blanc an attractive place for lumbering. In 1827, in the wake of the fire that destroyed the hospital in Fort Mackinac, Major Alex Thompson indicated that Bois Blanc would be the lumber source for the new hospital. He wrote, “it is my intention during the present winter, to procure, from our Military Reservation on Bois-Blanc all the necessary timber for a new hospital, and for the purposes of repair and in a very short time in the spring we will replace our loss without difficulty.” In addition, Bois Blanc served as a kind of giant pasture. Mackinac Island farmers kept their sheep, cattle and horses there, presumably by boat.

A lack of archaeological work on the island and the limited amount of historical information makes the study of Bois Blanc Island difficult. Aside from its agricultural and lumber contributions, the French, British and the Americans largely
ignored the island. Archaeological evidence and historical documentation abounds regarding the settlement found across the Straits from the Fort Michilimackinac site. St. Ignace, named for Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, is one of the oldest settlement sites in Michigan.

St. Ignace

Although abandoned by 1712, St. Ignace was settled before any of the other sites discussed here. Medard Chouart de Groseilliers and Pierre Espirit Radisson explored the Straits area in the 1650s and returned to Quebec with valuable furs. In 1671, Father Jacques Marquette founded a mission at St. Ignace, which served Ojibwe, Huron and Ottawa Indians. The mission was a success. According to George Pare, the Hurons “thronged [the] chapel, and came to pray and to sing their favorite hymns even in [the priest’s] absence.

By 1683, the French may have constructed a “fortified house” near the Indian settlements of St. Ignace, but it was not, as popularly assumed by historians, to be Fort de Buade. The fort was built by 1690, although it does not appear on a 1703 map of the Straits that was based on a 1688 report. At any rate, according to Joseph Peyser and José Brandão, “very little …can be said with certainty about Fort de Buade.”

The mission site remained undiscovered until 1877 when Peter D. Grondin found what was “termed a rectangular limestone foundation.” Archaeologists working that year claimed to have found the mission as well as Marquette’s burial site. The 1971 excavation, led by Lyle Stone, uncovered five features, not all of them
related to the original mission. Feature 1 was a water line trench that fed a drinking fountain at the Marquette Park. Feature 2 was a nineteenth-century outhouse.

Figure 5.4: Bois Blanc Island. Detail from John Farmer's 1831 "Map of the Straits of Mackinac, from Actual Survey On a Scale of 4 miles to an inch."
Courtesy of the Peterson Center, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Mackinaw City, Michigan

Feature 3 was a "curved section of a structural wall trench." Feature 4 was yet another nineteenth-century outhouse. And Feature 5 was an undated wall trench, although Stone claimed that it may "represent evidence" of the Marquette Mission.193
He notes in his conclusion that “conclusive evidence was not provided to demonstrate the presence of Marquette’s mission at the site” although “it may be said that the site supported an occupation which would have been approximately contemporary with this mission period.” Unfortunately, little more has been done at the site. After the French left the St. Ignace area, they, along with the British, concentrated their trading, settling and military efforts on the northern end of the Lower Peninsula and Mackinac Island.

Not until after the American occupation began did settlers return to the northern end of the Straits, although they had a presence on the southern end since the early 1800s. French speakers moved there first soon after Michigan became a Territory and they established a series of ribbon farms, odd considering their distance in time and place from the Canadian rang farms.

As settlers began to file land claims during the 1820s, they maintained the long lot shape (See Figure 5.5). The land claims in St. Ignace had a tremendous impact on its physical geography. The imprint of French-Canadian land tenure can be seen on modern maps. Most of the St. Ignace land claims filed in the 1820s were for long and narrow strips of land. Alexis Lorrain claimed a 3 by 80 acre lot. Daniel Bourrassa’s 14 chains by 80 acres lot contained “a dwelling-house, a bar, a stable, and several out-houses, and he [had] a very considerable field enclosed.” Francois Lapointe’s 8 by 80 acre claim had “a dwelling-house, barn, out-house, and had several acres of land under enclosure.” Other French-style claims included Jean Bt. Tesserron’s five chains by seventy-five links lot upon which he had “made considerable improvement,” and Joseph and Mary Babbien’s claim of four chains.
and fifty-five links by 80 acre lot. What is interesting about the latter claim is that it was the couples' second claim, their first being rejected by the Land Office. And it is noteworthy that the couple filed together, it being a rarity. Michael Dousman had his hands in the Pont St. Ignace region as well. He filed a claim on a piece of land "generally called Hog's Back" where he "was in the habit of cutting hay yearly" yet the Land Office denied his claim.

One final settlement in the Straits area, L'Arbre Croche, witnessed long-term occupation, if not growth, from the Indians through the American era. It is little studied in Michigan history, yet it was considered to be an important site in the colonial era.

L'Arbre Croche

While not the only outre-fort settlement along the Straits, L'Arbre Croche, twenty miles to the south and west on Lake Michigan, certainly was one of the most important, and continues, down to the present, to be underappreciated in the context of Mackinac history. The Jesuits founded a mission there in 1742, and referred to it at the time as the "Ottawa Mission." Because it served only the Indians, it has been called the "last typical Jesuit mission in Michigan." It also appears to be one of the few places along the Straits conducive to large-scale farming. The Odawas and Ojibwas, who first occupied the area, grew corn in abundance. The corn trade continued to be important even as late as 1822. Henry Schoolcraft visited L'Arbre Croche on his journey of exploration and noted that the
Indians often sent large shipments of corn to Fort Michilimackinac. In 1822, the reference to “Michilimackinac” would have been to the fort on Mackinac Island.

Figure 5.5: St. Ignace Land Claims. Detail from John Farmer's 1831 “Map of the Straits of Mackinac, from Actual Survey On a Scale of 4 miles to an inch.”

Courtesy of the Peterson Center, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Mackinaw City, Michigan
Father Gabriel Richard visited the following year. The Indians at L’Arbre Croche submitted a petition to Richard to give to President James Monroe asking for a priest to be sent to the mission, demonstrating the continued influence of Catholicism, and by extension, the French. In 1825, the Indians completed a new chapel to commemorate the arrival of Father Francis Badin. He “made two long stays at L’Arbre Croche,” indicating that the mission was still important to the Jesuits.

By 1826, Americans were investigating the area to see if it were fit for either agricultural purposes or settlement. The *Travellers’ Guide; or Pocket Gazetteer of the United States* by Jedediah and Richard Mores described the landscape in harsh terms. It stated, “the country along the eastern shore of lake Michigan, and extending into the interior as far as the dividing ridge, consists of sand hills, sometimes crowned with a few stunted trees, and a scanty vegetation, but generally bare, and thrown by the wind into a thousand fantastic shapes.” That description of the land certainly would not endear agriculturalists or settlers. It is perhaps interesting to note that the description of L’Arbre Croche as “generally bare” is inaccurate in that the Indian nations had, for many years prior, grown corn.

Although the settlements in the Straits of Mackinac region were separated by both time and space, some land use themes stand out and some comparisons to Detroit can be made. Like at Detroit, the Jesuit missionaries at the Straits generally first interacted with local tribes and were followed by a French military-economic...
settlement. Even after the temporary abandonment of the Straits area at the turn of the eighteenth-century, the French military-economic establishment continued to exert influence and trade continued to be the most important land use. The British occupation brought a rigid social order to the Straits, which resulted in the increased economic marginalization of the habitants. In contrast, British officials at Detroit made concessions to the habitants, in part because of their larger numbers. At the Straits, the British attempted to introduce new types of land use to the area including agriculture, in the form of Askin’s farms, and industry, in the form of the mill on the Lake Huron side of the Straits. In both cases, the British met with limited success. After Askin moved to Detroit, his concerns became less about agriculture and more about commercial success. After the transfer of the Straits community from the mainland to Mackinac Island, the British tried yet again to engage in agriculture. American occupation, a start and stop affair at the beginning, initially did little to curb British economic and social influence. Finally, by the 1820s, the Straits region began to look, and, by virtue of the arrival of settlers thanks to the efforts of the DLO, perhaps sound, American. The flurry of land claims filed at the Detroit Land Office in that decade helped bring about a permanent American cultural, societal and economic presence. By the time statehood arrived in 1837, the region was beginning to attract tourists, a cultural trait that continues down to the present time. Detroit, as noted in the previous chapter, became a commercial and political center over the course of the American era.
Endnotes

1 Gage to Barrington, 4 March 1769, CGTG, II: 502.
2 Letters and Papers, 1747-1774, JAP, I: 50.
3 Uriah Tracy to Secretary of War Samuel Dexter, 20 December 1800, MPHC, XXXVIII: 86.
4 As noted in Chapter II: Michigan History: Past and Present, the Straits area has been the subject of intense professional archaeological work since 1959. Residents of Mackinaw City, which was first platted in 1857, recognized the historical and cultural importance of the region and established a park at the site of the old fort. Avocational historians and archaeologists had picked away at the area for decades and the site needed official protection. During the Great Depression, workers excavated and rebuilt the Michilimackinac palisade. See Stone, Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781, 12-17.
5 Gilles Havard noted the importance of Indian villages to the French when he wrote, “la connexion entre le poste français et ou les villages indiens voisins est in effet l’un des traits caracteristiques de la presence francaise en Amerique du Nord.” See “Postes francaise et villages indiens,” 12. A discussion of the Odawa village and the Jesuit village can be found in Cleland, Rites of Conquest, 96. For more information on the farm at L’Acre Croche see Heldman, Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake in Northern Michigan, 1981-1982. Corn production at L’Acre Croche is discussed in Blake and Cutler, eds., Plants from the Past.
6 “Mackinac” today refers to the general Straits area, as well as the Island and its fort, as well as the modern-day county on the southern tip of the Upper Peninsula. “Mackinaw” refers to the village of the same name in modern-day Emmet County. The word “Michilimackinac,” and its variations, derives, according to Alexander Henry, from “Mackinac, or Mickinac, [which] signifies a turtle, and michi (mishi), or missi, signifies great, as it does also several or many. The common interpretation of the word Michilimackinac is the Great Turtle. It is from this island [Mackinac Island] that the fort, commonly known by the name of Michilimackinac, has obtained its appellation.” Michilimackinac referred to the St. Ignace area up to 1715. From 1715 to 1780, it was the fort on the south side of the Straits. And after 1780, it referred to Mackinac Island. Alexander Henry, Massacre at Mackinac: Alexander Henry’s Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the Years 1760 and 1764. (Mackinac Island: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1966), 19. See also Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Narrative Journal of Travels through the Northwestern Regions of the United States, Extending from Detroit through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River, in the Year 1820 (New York: Harper, 1833). Richard Alan Sambrook’s “Historical Lineaments in the Straits of Mackinac: An Investigation in Cultural Cartography” (East Lansing: M.A. Thesis, Department of Geography, Michigan State University, 1980) makes the claim that “Michilimackinac” was shortened to “Mackinac” soon after the fort was moved from the mainland to the Island. But a cursory check of American military records found in the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections and the post returns from Fort Mackinac found in the Michigan Collection at the State of Michigan Archives shows that the Americans continued to refer to the Island as “Michilimackinac” well into the
8 Halchin, Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 12.
9 Halchin, Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 12.
10 Whitaker, The Functions of Four Colonial Yards, 19.
11 Halchin, Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 16.
12 Copy of a Representation of the Lords' Commissioners for Trade and Plantations to the King, Upon the State of His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations on the Continent of North America, Dated Septemr the 8th 1721, MPHC, XIX: 5.
13 Whitaker, The Functions of Four Colonial Yards, 19.
17 In the 1970s, researchers at the Mackinac Island State Historic Parks Commission repeatedly and without any evidence, made the claim that the French redesigned the post as a Vauban-style fortress. Sebastien LaPrestre de Vauban worked as a chief engineer for Louis XIV. Vauban's treatises on offensive and defensive military positions influenced the rulers of Western Europe at the close of the seventeenth century. His defensive theories were outlined in A Manual of Siegecraft and Fortification. It is unlikely, however, that Michilimackinac was Vauban-inspired since descriptions of the post from the French era do not describe anything found in Vauban's book. For example, Vauban recommended that a trench be dug around the fort, something not possible at a post built on the beaches of Lake Michigan. See Sebastian Le Prestre de Vauban, A Manual of Siegecraft and Fortification. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968) George Rothrock, trns.
19 Halchin, Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 14.
20 Halchin, Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 15.
27 Morand, Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac, 44.
28 Morand, Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac, 39.
29 Morand, *Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac*, 50.
30 Morand, *Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac*, 77.
31 Morand, *Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac*, 81.
35 Hauser, *Jesuit Rings from Fort Michilimackinac*, 39. Hauser argued that the priests originally used brass rings and other items as incentives for the Indians to convert to Catholicism. An ample supply of these rings has been found at the fort, although none were manufactured there. Hauser writes, “it might be possible that this fort was a manufacturing center. However, this has not been established archaeologically, nor is it mentioned in the historical documents.” It seems that with the publication of Lynn Morand’s (now Evans) *Craft Industries at Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781*, the question of manufacturing at Michilimackinac has been settled.
37 As mentioned, the French were class conscious as well, but archaeologists such as Charles Cleland, who have worked with the Michilimackinac archaeological reports, seem to think that the British version of the fort was more obviously class-based than the French version, a conclusion that is by no means accepted by all historians and archaeologists.
38 Whitaker, *The Functions of Four Colonial Yards*, 11.
40 And, oddly enough, the post looked more Vauban-style than when the French occupied it.
41 Whitaker, *The Functions of Four Colonial Yards*, 12.
44 According to Lynn L. M. Evans, the Curator of Archaeology at Mackinac State Historic Parks, “The letter system applies to the Southeast Rowhouse. The individual units are lettered starting on the eastern end. Units A & B were combined during the British era. The numbers apply to the South Southwest Rowhouse and begin on the western end. House 1 was a late addition and does not show up on most maps.” Personal correspondence 10 July 2005. Dr. Evans also noted that the fort is reconstructed as it looked during the British occupation.
Charles Cleland, "Comparison of the Faunal Remains from French and British Refuse Pits at Fort Michilimackinac: A Study in Changing Subsistence Patterns," Canadian Historic Sites 3 (1970), 16. Cleland writes, "the society of this establishment must have been a rather egalitarian one composed of a few soldiers, private traders and their wives (who were frequently Indian) and their children.

During the British occupation, he continues, "the fort became a military garrison linked to other British army posts by a fairly well-developed line of supply and communication. The social interaction of the inhabitants was no longer based on egalitarian principles but was now highly stratified with a privileged class consisting of the officers and wealthy traders.”


Each map possesses certain inaccuracies, but they are not significant for the purposes of this study.

Sambrook, “Thematic Innovation on the Colonial Frontier,” 8. Magra wrote, "Platforms in the Bastions [were built or repaired] on each of which are mounted a pair of cannon six and nine pounders, besides a brass pair carrying a pound ball...Turrets of wood [were] raised on the Bastions, to overlook the adjacent grounds...The pickets of the Fort [are] all new lined, and those of the land Curtains and Bastions [are] all in good shape.”


Williams, A Search for the Eighteenth-Century Village at Michilimackinac, 4.

The records do not indicate what kinds of “proprietors” were at the post. It can be assumed that they served the economic interests of the villagers and fur traders.


See Blake and Cutler, Plants from the Past, passim.

Blake and Cutler, “Corn for the Voyageurs,” Plants from the Past, 58.

Cleland, “Comparison of the Faunal Remains from French and British Refuse Pits at Fort Michilimackinac,” 16.

Letterbooks of Phyn & Ellice, Merchants at Schenectady, NY, 1767-1776, Vol III: Askin-Business Affairs Peterson Center Archive, Mackinaw City, Michigan.

Heldman, Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake, 9.

Heldman, Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake, 11.

Heldman, Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake, 11.

Harris, The Seigneurial System in Early Canada, 150.

Harris, The Seigneurial System in Early Canada, 150.

Letters and Papers, 1747-1774, JAP, I: 50.

Letters and Papers, 1747-1774, JAP, I: 54.

Letters and Papers, 1747-1774, JAP, I: 55.

Letters and Papers, 1747-1774, JAP, I: 57.

Heldman, Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake, 11.

Heldman, Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake, 7.


Ekberg, French Roots in the Illinois Country, 173. See also Brett Rushfort, “A Little Flesh We Offer You’: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” William and Mary Quarterly 60 (October 2003): 777-808. Rushfort argues that Indian slavery was used by both Indians and French as a way of strengthening trade relationships.

Morand, 73. Sagamité was “corn which, after being dried and pounded, was turned into...a mush.” See Peyser and Brandão, Edge of Empire, Introduction.

Blake and Cutler, Plants from the Past, 64.

Morand, 71.

Martin, The Mill Creek Site, 32. That is the only known reference to a grist mill. The saw mill is mentioned multiple times in British sources, however.

PC is the abbreviation used by the Detroit Land Office for “Private Claim.”

Martin, The Mill Creek Site, 37.

Martin, The Mill Creek Site, 43.

Martin, The Mill Creek Site, 49. Dousman died in 1844 and his property eventually was sold in 1856.

Goodrich, The First Michigan Frontier, 265.


Raymond Arthur McCoy, The Massacre of Old Fort Mackinac (Michilimackinac), a Tragedy of the American Frontier, with the Early History of St. Ignace, Mackinaw City and Mackinac Island. (Bay City: NP, 1945), 11.

Goodrich, The First Michigan Frontier, 279.


Widder, Reveille Till Taps, 4; Phil Porter, The Eagle at Mackinac: The Establishment of United States Military and Civil Authority on Mackinac Island,
In the end, Mackinac Island was Sinclair’s undoing. He was relieved of his command in 1782 in part because of cost overruns, and not just because of the cost of moving the post. Sinclair had become too much of a heavy spender for the authorities at Québec. Governor Haldimand advised Major Arent De Peyster to reign in Sinclair’s spending. In February of 1780, Haldimand wrote: “The Expenses attending the Indian department at that Post this last year has been enormous...I hope you have cautioned Governor Sinclair to moderate as much as possible the expenses of that Department.” See Haldimand to De Peyster 12 February 1780 The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, IX: 634. De Peyster and Sinclair did not get along well, in part due to Sinclair’s overbearing personality, and due to the fact that Sinclair’s role at Michilimackinac was not clear. See Armour and Widder, At the Crossroads, 119. His appointment did not define his powers, except that he was to serve with the “rights, privileges, profits, and prerequisites and advantages during the King’s pleasure.” See William Jenks, “Patrick Sinclair; Builder of Fort Mackinac,” MPHC, XXXIX: 69.

The fort would not be called that for several decades, but is referred to that way here for the sake of clarification. In 1780, Governor Haldimand requested that the new post be called “Fort Mackinac” but the name did not stick. See Grange, Excavations at Fort Mackinac, 1980-1982, 16.


Armour and Widder, At the Crossroads, 163.

Archeologists working for the Mackinac Island State Historic Park District have identified four historic settlement patterns at Fort Mackinac. The Early British period was from 1780 to 1796, followed by Early American from 1796 to 1812. The British Occupied pattern lasted from 1812 to 1815 and the final pattern is Late American, from 1815 to 1875, when the fort became a National Park. Archaeologist Robert Grange identifies two other settlement patterns that fall outside the temporal scope of this dissertation. The National Park era was from 1875 to 1895 and the State Park era from 1896 to 1982 (it continues to the present). See Grange, Excavations at Fort Mackinac, 1980-1982, 65-6.

Sinclair to Brehm, 7 October 1779, The Haldimand Papers, MPHC, IX: 529.

Sinclair expressed frustration at the slowness of the construction. In June of 1781, he wrote, "the Provision Store is raised within the new Works, a Powder Magazine and the mens barracks are raising as fast as our scarcity of men, Tools and Materials will admit." See Grange, Excavations at Fort Mackinac, 1980-1982, 30. Yet he often seemed pleased to report any progress to his superiors. In February of 1780, as the preparations for the new construction commenced, he sent a report to Captain Brehm, as quoted in Grange, Excavations at Fort Mackinac, 1980-1982, 28:

To return to the subject of our preparations for a removal of the Garrison. A corporal & eight men have now cleared about four acres of the upper ground, proper for placing a Fort on, In so doing we have prepared Sixty Chord of firewood, Saved all the Timber that would square, with Pickets, Poles &c fit for use, - So far we are ready for lime buring, which we shall quarry Stone for- out of a Ditch which shall be cut from Bank to Bank- It is a dry limestone, very light, easily quarried, and with it we will fill up at a cheaper rate and with more expedition and ease, between our Cedar Frames, the officers Barricks, the addition to the Provision Store & a kind of lodge for the Indian Manager in the village.

Despite Sinclair's best efforts at strengthening the position of the British in the Straits, the new fort met with mixed reviews. In 1788, after Sinclair's recall, Gother Mann, a British military engineer wrote disparagingly of Fort Mackinac, as quoted in Grange, Excavations at Fort Mackinac, 1980-1982, 15:

Considering the foregoing circumstances and situation of this place, I cannot help being of the opinion, that as a Military Post, the great part of the expense bestowed here has been a waste of money. If the works were intended as a Defence against Musquetry or Indians only, too much was designed, and if against Cannon far too little, and most of that little ill judged. In the first case a Picketed Fort Flanked with Block houses, or if designed to be permanent, a Loop-Holed Wall instead of Picketing would have been quite sufficient. But if an Enemy with Cannon was to be apprehended, it was then absolutely necessary to have taken Post on the Commanding Ground, either by Redoubt or such other works as the strength of the garrison proposed to be kept there would have pointed out.

But for the immediate protection of the Town, it would still have been necessary to have had the small picketed or walled Fort in the situation where the present work stands. The Town being under the Hill is too distant and not seen from the Commanding Ground.

Sambrook, Historical Lineaments, 50.
Quoted in Patrick Martin, Mill Creek, 35. The letter reads in full,
Whilst I was at Michilimackinack Sir I examined the Land Records of the Island which was purchased from the Indians in 1781 and a formal Deed is now with the Commandant—a copy of which I have the honour to transmit—By those records it appears their Land Transactions were sometimes extremely loose—scarcely a single Deed made where a Boundary was expressed, and in many Cases neither Boundary nor Quantity—at the same Time, the principal part of the Island appears to have been granted away, and the Possessors or Claimants can, I believe by oral Testimony, very generally define their Lots, which were all derived immediately from Lieutenant Colonel P. Sinclair, the Governour of the Island.


Wood, Historic Mackinac, 280.

Wood, Historic Mackinac, 280.

Wood, Historic Mackinac, 280.

Wood, Historic Mackinac, 280.


Widder, Reveille Till Taps, 33.


Brian Leigh Dunnigan, Fort Holmes: Reports in Mackinac History and Archaeology, Number 10 (Mackinac Island: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1984), 7.

Dunnigan, Fort Holmes, 11.

Dunnigan, Fort Holmes, 17.

Dunnigan, Fort Holmes, 21.
For more detail about Mackinac Island during the War of 1812 see Brian Leigh Dunnigan, *The British Army at Mackinac, 1812-1815 Reports in Mackinac History and Archaeology, Number 7* (Mackinac Island: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1980), May, *War 1812* and Widder, *Reveille till Taps*. The May and Dunnigan books are brief popular histories of the conflict. Widder's contains a chapter on the topic. May's book contains a bibliographic essay recently updated by Dunnigan.


Census information compiled from United States Census Office, *Census for 1820* (NC: Gales & Seaton, 1821); United States Census Office, *Fifth Census, or, Enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, 1830: to which is prefixed, a schedule of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States, taken according to the acts of 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820* (New York: L.M. Cromwell, Co, 1951 [reprint]); United States Census, *Sixth Census or enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, as corrected at the Department of state, 1840* (NC: Printed by Blair and Reeves, 1841).


*1820 Census*. Michilimackinac County comprised most of the northern 2/3 of the Lower Peninsula.


Howard to Eustis, 4 September 1810, *Documents, MPHC XL*: 319.


Howard to Eustis, 4 September 1810, *Documents, MPHC XL*: 319.

Howard to Eustis, 10 December 1810, *Documents, MPHC, XL*: 324.

Martineau was aboard a chartered boat hired to carry passengers from Detroit to Chicago. The boat made a brief stop at Mackinac Island and the captain allowed the passengers a few hours to explore the island.

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Between them is Round Island, which in modern times has been used as a lighthouse base, but seems to have been ignored in the colonial and early American eras.

For a discussion of possible class differences in the fort, see Introduction.

Patrick McGulpin filed a claim with the Detroit Land Office in June 1811 for 640 acres measured out in metes and bounds. BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI3140 .210 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. The site is now called McGulpin’s Point.

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Patrick McGulpin filed a claim with the Detroit Land Office in June 1811 for 640 acres measured out in metes and bounds. BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI3140 .210 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. The site is now called McGulpin’s Point.


Pare, *The Catholic Church in Detroit*, 191.

In "Corn from Michilimackinac, A.D. 1770-1780, Leonard Blake noted, "Fort Michilimackinac was and still is near the northern limit of corn agriculture."

Pare, *The Catholic Church in Detroit*, 342.

Pare, *The Catholic Church in Detroit*, 346.

Pare, *The Catholic Church in Detroit*, 357.

CHAPTER VI

THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER VALLEY

Missionaries, Traders and Settlers

It was eight days yesterday since I arrived at this post, where we have a mission, and where there is a commandant with a small garrison.
-Father Pierre de Charlevoix, 16 August 1721

The destruction of the magazine of provisions and goods which the English had there (the greater part of which was divided among our Indians and those who lived at St. Joseph, as had been offered them in case the did not oppose our troops) was not the only advantage resulting from the success of this expedition, for thereby it became impossible for the English to execute their plan of attacking the fort of St. Luis of the Illinois, and it also served to intimidate these savage Nations, and oblige them to promise to remain neuter, which they do at present.
-Madrid Newspaper Account, 1782

I take this opportunity, by Mr. Tabeau, to acquaint you that I have here two hundred & Twenty Bushels of Corn; And as I have no canoe nor Batteau to send the Corn to Makina, you will please endeavor to get what I have here put into the vessel if She is to come back again.
-William Burnett, 14 May 1786

The St. Joseph River valley stretches across the southwestern corner of Michigan in what is now Berrien County. It is part of Michigan’s “fruit belt,” a region of comparatively mild temperatures, rich soil and, during the era discussed here, with a mixture of trees, swamps and grasslands. (See Figure 6.1) The river starts in central Hillsdale County, Michigan, flows through northern Indiana and empties into Lake Michigan while serving as the boundary between the modern-day cities of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor.
Figure 6.1: Vegetation in Berrien County, circa 1800. Michigan State University. This map depicts the course of the river and the various soil types.

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The Miami and Potawatomi nations inhabited the region before the arrival of the French. The French called the St. Joseph the “River of the Miamis,” likely named for an Indian settlement in the area of present-day Niles. The Indians became involved in the economic and military activities and alliances that the French and later, British, inevitably brought with them. For the Americans, the Indians briefly became a source for souls until they got in the way of good land and were forced west, especially after 1827.

Of the three sites under discussion in this dissertation, the St. Joseph valley experienced the most radical change in land use and settlement patterns. Like the Straits region and Detroit, the French era in the St. Joseph valley was characterized by trade and limited agricultural activity. The British occupation was short and focused on some military activity at Fort St. Joseph. Neither the French nor the British left a lasting impact on the landscape. Because of that, the Americans found what they considered to be a relatively untouched country where their land offices and land laws could shape the region to their liking.

The French Era to 1761

The French used the St. Joseph River valley as an important link between the colonies of New France and Louisiana. The river provided the French with a nearly all-water route from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico. Only in two places did the natural environment deny them an unobstructed water route through North America, a portage at Niagara Falls and another at the St. Joseph River. At one point, the St. Joseph is a mere five miles from the Kankakee River, which drains into...
the Mississippi, which in turn empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The French realized all of this early in their exploration and settlement of the Great Lakes region. As a result, during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, southwest Michigan became the focus of French exploration, and missionary and economic activity, but there was little in the way of permanent settlement.

The French explorer René-Robert Cavalier, the Sieur de La Salle built Fort Miami at the mouth of the St. Joseph, on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan, at the site of the present-day city of St. Joseph. Later, Jesuits founded a mission just south of present-day Niles, some 40 miles upriver from Lake Michigan and close to the portage to the Kankakee River. Soon after, the French military established a small fort nearby.

La Salle’s Fort Miami was the earliest European post on the St. Joseph River. He arrived at the mouth of the river in 1679 to await the return of the Griffon, the first sailing ship on the Great Lakes. The ship never arrived and La Salle decided to depart for the Mississippi. Before leaving, he built Fort Miami. It was triangular, with “two sides formed by the river and a third by a ravine.” The fort disappeared by 1689. Whatever may have happened, the destruction of Fort Miami was not the end, but rather the beginning of the French presence in the valley.

The French established a longer-lasting site near the south side of the present-day city of Niles. Collectively, the mission, the fort and the ensuing settlement were referred to as le fort de St. Joseph by 1746. The post began, like so many other French sites in Michigan, as a Jesuit mission. According to Gerard Malchelosse, “une concession de terrain est accorde aux Jesuits le 1er octobre 1686.” They received
the official land grant from the Crown in 1689. Louis de Buade, comte de Frontenac, ordered the French military into the region and Ensign Augustin Legardeur de Courtemanche built the fort in 1691. It was “created primarily as a military and commercial center to influence and develop trade with the French-allied Indians,” indicating how seriously the French took the region and their relationships with local nations.

The location of the French trading post and fort on the St. Joseph River was once one of the longest-enduring mysteries of colonial Michigan (See Figure 6.2). For decades, local townsfolk had collected artifacts that seemed to date from the colonial era. French and British maps offered few clues as to the whereabouts of the post. One of the reasons for the confusion surrounding the location of the fort was the abundance of conflicting interpretations of maps by historians. Some believed that more than one fort existed, or that early maps could be viewed uncritically. The best, and “most reliable” map, produced by the Englishman Thomas Hutchins, dates from 1762. He visited the post in August 1762 and wrote a description of the site. He noted that the fort seemed to have been built for trade rather than for defense. While there had been no shortage of guesses as to the fort’s location, some better than others, it was not until 1998 when archaeologists from Western Michigan University discovered colonial artifacts in Niles. In 2002, the site was definitively located and archaeological and fieldwork excavation continues down to the present day.

The most recent fieldwork from the site has yielded a number of important clues as to the material history of the fort and provides some insight into French-era
land use. The 2002 and 2004 field seasons "revealed evidence of two European style structures, several pit features, and undisturbed artifact deposits of French origin."23
Descriptions of the settlement vary. According to José Brandão and Michael Nassaney one Native leader in the 1740s had a structure that was built with 400 linear feet of squared timber and had two doors. It seems unlikely that French homes were any less solidly build of wood, possibly upon a stone foundation. The latter style, known as *poteaux sur sole*, is indicated by the presence of *bousillage* (fired clay used to fill in space between posts) and by the lack of evidence of post holes near the hearth and fire place found to date.24

This structure is significant, because although *bousillage* is found at Fort Michilimackinac, it dates from the British era. And the French did not employ *poteaux-sur-sole* construction methods at that site, but rather *poteaux-en-terre*. A 1763 description of Fort St. Joseph indicated “a palisade of ‘rounded stakes’ stuck in the ground,” which seems more typically French.25

In military terms, Fort St. Joseph existed as a “fort” in name only. Dunning Idle noted that the post existed in the shadow first of Fort Michilimackinac, and later, Detroit.26 But the post was not meant to be as powerful as Fort Michilimackinac or Fort Pontchartrain at Detroit. St. Joseph existed to influence the Indians and serve as an important communications link between Montréal and the *pays d’en haut*.27 Neither Michilimackinac nor St. Joseph was constructed to withstand a concerted military assault by an enemy, but rather to serve as commercial centers.28

But because the French sent a garrison to St. Joseph, the place, by default, became a fort. Initially, the fort consisted of “a small commander’s house, a building that could garrison 20 men (although it appears that no more than ten or twelve were ever posted there), and some buildings used to store trading goods and furs.”29 In
1695, a party of Iroquois “were able to put their guns through its gaps and shoot into the fort” indicating that Fort St. Joseph “had no platforms or bastions from which to fire upon the attackers.” It was in no better shape when, in 1721, Father Pierre-Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix, on a tour of the North American interior, left what is probably the best-known description of the fort. He noted that the post was located about twenty leagues from the mouth of the river. It included the Jesuit mission and “the commandant’s house, which is but a very sorry one, is called the fort, from its being surrounded with an indifferent pallisado.”

In addition to his description of the post, Charlevoix left tantalizing clues as to Indian land use, or at least its potential in the St. Joseph River valley and in doing so betrays his European bias about the value of land. He noted its economic importance and lamented that the “fertile” lands were going to waste. He wrote,

The river St. Joseph is so commodious for the commerce of all parts of Canada, that it is no wonder it has always been much frequented by the Indians. Besides it waters an extreme fertile country, but this is not what these people esteem it most for. It is even a pity to give them good lands which they either make no use of at all, or soon run out by sowing maize on them.

By the close of the French era, at least, some habitants were taking advantage of the lands and engaging in a variety of types of agriculture. Louis Chevalier, a thirty-five year resident of St. Joseph noted the presence of “ten houses, good lands, orchards, gardens [and] cattle” at the site of the post.

The onset of the Seven Years’ War in 1754 was the start of a slow end for the French Fort St. Joseph. The French government recalled the garrison from the post to shore up strength at other forts further east. Left behind was a small group of
farmers. The French military returned briefly only to abandon the habitants after the surrender of Montréal in 1760. The habitants, along with their Potawatomi neighbors, became the core of the settlement until sometime in early 1781 when the site was abandoned.

The British Era: 1761-1781

After the surrender of French forces at Montréal, the British military moved into Michigan to occupy the French posts. They did not heavily settle the St. Joseph region, instead, as seen in the previous chapters, concentrating their energies on expansion and reconstruction efforts elsewhere at Detroit and the Straits of Mackinac and only lightly garrisoning Fort St. Joseph. In addition, French settlement was light and the British did not have to contend with a restless population as they had to at the Straits and Detroit.

The first British commandant of Fort St. Joseph, Ensign J. George Schlosser, arrived in the fall of 1761. By then the French garrison had already withdrawn to the Illinois Country. Schlosser’s command was marred by massive incompetence. The Indians rather easily captured the fort during the 1763 Indian War, known sometimes as Pontiac’s War. Schlosser ignored a warning that an attack was imminent from Louis Chevalier, and on May 25, the Indians overwhelmed the fort.

Initially, it appears that the British were unconcerned over the loss of St. Joseph. That attitude quickly changed as Indians along the St. Joseph continued to give the British grief for years after the 1763 attack. As a result, General Thomas Gage frequently commented on the activities at Fort St. Joseph. In April of 1765, in a
letter to Lord Halifax, he noted the continued violence in the Great Lakes region, with special mention of Fort St. Joseph:

The Pouteatamies of St Joseph, recommenced Hostilities, very soon after their Conference and Treaty last year with Colonel Bradstreet at Detroit; in killing and Scalping two Men of the 17th Regiment, in November. The Chiefs of the Village, have been since with Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, who Commands at Detroit, to make Apologys for it, and to promise Him all the Satisfaction they could give: Assuring him, that it was the Action of some of their young Men, related to an Indian killed by us at Detroit the last summer. and was not done with the Knowledge or Approbation of the Nation.  

Gage believed the *habitants* and the Indians to be in league with one another, and in August 1765, he again expressed his concerns to Lord Halifax:

The Indians in general find Belief, as fast as the French can invent Storys, but the Punteatamies of St. Joseph, and a Tribe of Chippewas of Saguinam, appear the most forward and ready to commit Hostilities. 

The relationship between the British and the Indians at St. Joseph continued to deteriorate through the late 1760s. In May of 1768, Gage expressed his continued anger regarding the Indians at St. Joseph:

I have received Information from the Interior Country, that two English Traders have been killed in the Course of the winter, by the Pouteatamies of St. Joseph: one of them named Rogers, carried Goods to the Village of these Indians to trade with them, but receiving some ill treatment removed to the Theakiki [Kankakee], a Branch of the Illinois River, where he was soon afterwards killed, and his Goods plundered. The other trader, named Hombach, was killed at the Miamis by five Pouteatamamies, who went there with that Design.
In his letter, Gage implied that trade continued to play an important role in the St. Joseph River valley. The post and the trade were important enough to warrant his attention in the three letters, even if the British military did not have a strong presence there. Not only did he repeatedly express his concern over the violence, he concluded that *habitants* in general should be removed from the western posts. He wrote, “the vagabond Canadian Settlers in the Indian Villages do a great deal of hurt, and should if possible, be removed.”

Although the post was relatively quiet for the better part of the 1770s, Fort St. Joseph became the center of attention again late in the American Revolution. From the Straits of Mackinac, Lt. Governor Sinclair noted his concern for the post in early 1780. Because the site could have been a staging ground for American attacks against British interests in the West, he wanted the post to “cut off the supply of any Rebel Force directed against the Detroit or Niagara.” In addition, he unjustly suspected Louis Chevalier, a long-time St. Joseph and later, Mackinac resident of “intrigues” and “villany.” His plans reflected the general concern the British had regarding American military movements in the West, which led to the expansion of the fort at Detroit and the relocation of the British garrison from the mainland to Mackinac Island. And his attitude toward Chevalier reflected the general feeling that British officers held toward the *habitants*, as seen in his August 1765 letter.

By 1780, the British had evacuated the settlers from the post, fulfilling General Gage’s request. Louis Chevalier, in particular, felt the wrath of the British government. When asked to move from St. Joseph to the Straits of Mackinac, Chevalier did as told. His petition to British authorities in Canada protesting the
move gives some insight as to the state of the settlement and its land use at the time.

In October of 1780, Chevalier wrote,

The Petitioner began to obey the others did so led by his example, sixty eight years of age his wife of seventy having all his fortune in the neighborhood, ten houses, good lands, orchards, gardens, cattle, furniture, utensils and debts, of which he has made an entire sacrifice to obedience.46

Clearly Chevalier had been making important use of the land. The fact that he had claimed to have “good lands, orchards [and] gardens” demonstrates that the British had little idea of what the habitants did with the land. Chevalier was an industrious habitant defying the stereotype. Additionally, Chevalier asked Governor Haldimand permission to return to the post “to gather together the remains of his fortune and to order that his papers be sent to him.”47

British suspicion of Chevalier seems unfounded. In June of 1780, for example, Chevalier delivered over two thousand pounds of merchandise to Joseph Ainsssé, “goods for the Service of His Britannique Majesty.”48 It does not sound like the work of someone opposed to the crown, but rather someone interested in making a living.

In 1780 the British sent an officer to the post but he had no garrison, underscoring the relative military unimportance of the region to the British. A census from the same year indicated that the settlement remained small. There were “eight houses and seven shanties inhabited by 45 French, counting men, women and children, and by four Pawnee slaves.”49

Two curious incidents, which have garnered their fair share of academic and popular attention and served the needs of the Niles Chamber of Commerce, occurred
near the end of the British tenure at Fort St. Joseph. Twice the post was attacked by a small band of militia under the nominal command of Spanish authorities in St. Louis. The first assault took place in December of 1780 when a group of sixteen men from Cahokia stole fifty bales of goods from the trading post and took prisoners. A small British force caught up with the Cahokia expedition and the goods and prisoners were freed. The fact that the raiders stole bales of goods indicates the continued economic activity occurring around the post. The second attack came in February of 1781. The fort was captured, the Spanish flag raised, and after a twenty-four hour occupation, the party departed for St. Louis. This event clearly had less to do with settlement than simply making a point. At the close of the American Revolution, the British military left the St. Joseph River valley, although it retained a presence in the Great Lakes in general until the summer of 1796.

The American Era: 1781-1837

The kinds of local conditions that existed at the Straits and Detroit did not occur in the St. Joseph valley. French and British settlers, traders and military personnel were absent when the Americans arrived on a large scale in the decades following the War of 1812. As such, U.S. land offices and other government officials did not have to contend with the same issues that plagued American settlement at the Straits and Detroit.

Americans established trading interests resulting in light settlement along the St. Joseph starting in the 1780s. Baptist missionaries from Indiana found their way to the area after the War of 1812, establishing Niles and modern-day St. Joseph, as well
as a number of other towns along the Lake Michigan shoreline and along the river.\textsuperscript{52}

By the 1820s, the American presence could be seen in the landscape. It is in Berrien County, much more so than the other two sites in this dissertation, that the American ordinances and land laws and land offices had the most effect. While the Ordinance of 1787 had little impact on Detroit and the Straits of Mackinac, because the first was largely an urban center, and the latter too isolated, the Ordinance aided in shaping the built environment along the St. Joseph River because it provided the blueprint for western settlement. And, interestingly, other acts and laws, such as the Québec Act, had little impact along the St. Joseph River valley because of the sparse \textit{habitant} population.

Although American influence was monumental in the St. Joseph region, it was not until the dust settled after the Treaty of Ghent, signed by the Americans and British in 1814, that settlers found their way toward west Michigan. Settlement in southwest Michigan began on a large scale once Lucius Lyon, future U.S. senator from Michigan, surveyed the St. Joseph River valley in the 1820s, in the wake of the controversial Tiffin Report.\textsuperscript{53} In contrast to the report, Lyon gave the region an enthusiastic account. The local land offices did a booming business in southwestern Michigan during the 1820s. Land offices at Monroe, Bronson (modern-day Kalamazoo) and White Pigeon served the southwest Michigan region.\textsuperscript{54}

The Americans did not merely pick up where the French and British left off in the valley. Because of the sparse population, they established brand-new settlements at modern-day Niles and St. Joseph, as well as other places in what would, in the late 1820s, become Berrien County. Niles has a similar history to that of Mackinaw City,
although the latter was platted a few decades later. In both cases, the colonial sites were abandoned for a number of years only to be platted as townships and villages during the Antebellum Era. St. Joseph was laid out in 1831\textsuperscript{55} and Niles was incorporated as a village in 1835.\textsuperscript{56}

As surveyors moved west across the territory from Detroit, settlers followed, although it was sometimes the other way around and the settlers arrived before the surveyors. The logical, systematic method of survey, required by U.S. land ordinances, allowed for the orderly settlement of Niles, St. Joseph and the rest of Berrien County, and wiped out any vestiges of French or British culture and their respective land use. Because the habitant presence was gone, Yankee migrants could settle the area without the same kinds of cultural and legal conflicts that developed at the Straits of Mackinac and Detroit.

The two largest settlements were St. Joseph and Niles. Both were the result of the land booms in the 1830s, but still developed differently (See Tables 6.1 and 6.2). St. Joseph held onto its trading reputation and Niles became an agricultural settlement. In the 1840 census, nine settlers in St. Joseph were listed as being in the “navigation trade,” nine in commerce, 34 in manufacturing and only 54 in agriculture.\textsuperscript{57} In contrast, Niles had only two in the “navigation trade,” 29 in commerce, 146 in manufacturing and 210 in agriculture.\textsuperscript{58} However, both settlements experienced an important land use in pre-statehood Berrien County, speculation. Berrien County’s population stood at 877 in 1830 and increased to 5,011 in 1840.\textsuperscript{59} Niles was always the larger of the two settlements with 1,420 settlers in 1840 to 489 in St. Joseph the same year.\textsuperscript{60}
Table 6.1: Census Information

1820 Census Information, Wayne County (Exclusive of Detroit)\(^{61}\)

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Total Population: 2,152

1830 Census Information, Berrien County

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Total Population: 877

1840 Census Information, Niles

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**1840 Census Information, St. Joseph**

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**1840 Employment, Berrien County**

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Total Population: 5,011

**1840 Employment, Niles**

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Total Population: 1,420

**1840 Employment, St. Joseph**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Population: 489
Table 6.2: Land Sales Receipts, 1818-1837 Depicting Michigan’s Land Boom of the 1830s.62

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Michigan Territory/State</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>$119,000</td>
<td>$13,619,000</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>$52,000</td>
<td>$8,980,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>$111,000</td>
<td>$1,736,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$1,279,000</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>$26,000</td>
<td>$1,017,000</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
<td>$807,000</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>$94,000</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>$136,000</td>
<td>$1,292,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$1,130,000</td>
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<td>1827</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$1,405,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>$33,000</td>
<td>$1,219,000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
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<td>1830</td>
<td>$185,000</td>
<td>$2,409,000</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>$403,000</td>
<td>$3,366,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>$323,000</td>
<td>$2,803,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>$623,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>$2,272,000</td>
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<td>1836</td>
<td>$5,242,000</td>
<td>$24,934,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>$969,000</td>
<td>$6,941,000</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

St. Joseph

Even though settlers were slow in arriving, American trading interests did not wait long to set up business after the British quit the St. Joseph River valley. One of the best known of the American traders was William Burnett. Originally from New Jersey, Burnett had been in the area at the end of the British occupation and stayed in the St. Joseph region after the British military left. In 1780, he established a home and a trading post at modern-day St. Joseph and conducted business along the river.63 Burnett built his house at the foot of a hill “about three or four hundred feet from the river.”64 His post contained a number of buildings including a blacksmith shop,
storehouses and a large warehouse. He also maintained an orchard of apple, peach and cherry trees. In fact, Burnett is credited with planting the first peach trees in Michigan’s “fruit belt.” Burnett even tried his hand at farming, keeping small plots of wheat and corn. However, Burnett’s *raison d’être* was trade and that is where he put his energy. And like all traders at the time, he had to ship his goods across the Great Lakes so the location of his base of operations, the St. Joseph River, was probably more important to him than any attempts at agriculture. The river served the same purpose as it had during the French occupation.

Burnett’s life and times serve as a window into early American culture in the St. Joseph River valley in the decades before permanent settlement began. Unusual for an American, he married a Potawatomi woman in 1782, cementing his cultural and economic ties to the tribe. According to his children, soon after marriage he cleared large fields, erected a valuable mansion house, barn storehouses &c., and cultivated the earth, and traded with the Potawatomies and other nations of Indians, and that he never removed from thence except when he occasionally departed about his necessary business or for the purpose of advancing the interests of the United States of America and increasing their influence with the Chiefs and others of the Indian nations—interest which he greatly promoted in a variety of ways.

While Burnett seems to have been a successful businessman, he had troubles navigating through the cultural norms of the region. Apparently frontier Americans were easily offended. When Burnett’s neighbor built a new house and asked Burnett’s opinion of it, he stated that it looked “more like a hog-sty than a house.” The comment greatly offended the neighbor, but Burnett seemed not to mind. He
wrote, "their displeasure is of very little importance to me, and I care but very little what construction they put on what words that might have fallen from me."  

The circumstances surrounding Burnett's death are mysterious, which is odd for someone so well-known. He disappeared in 1812, possibly killed in the violence at Fort Dearborn in August of that year. In 1828, his son James petitioned Congress for a parcel of land he felt owed to him because of his father's service to the United States. Included in his petition was a letter describing the Burnett household in 1828. It stated,

We the undersigned, being called upon to value the improvements of James Burnett now living near the mouth of St. Joseph River M.T. and finding a very valuable orchard, together with other improvements, house, fencing, etc., do hereby certify on honor that we believe the same to be worth at least $600.00

It is significant that the younger Burnett referred to the orchard as "valuable" and mentioned little else about how the family used the land. Based on the "cleared large fields," it is clear that the elder Burnett was a successful farmer and the orchards were either a source of pride or income for the Burnett family, and certainly they were well known symbols of improvement in the land, and warranted special mention when James petitioned Congress. In September of 1831, a few years after acquiring his parcel of land at the mouth of the river, James purchased an additional 91.75 acres in the river valley from the Monroe Land Office.

Another important early trader was John Kinzie. The Kinzie family is well known in Michigan and Illinois history. John Kinzie and his sons set up a lucrative trade between the St. Joseph River and Chicago. By the 1830s, the Kinzies had purchased 234.5 acres of land in Berrien County, most of it near St. Joseph. The
Kinzies combined a lucrative fur trade business in conjunction with the Astor Company, with large land purchases, something unusual for its time.\textsuperscript{78}

While Burnett’s trading post served as the first permanent establishment in St. Joseph, it was not until 1827 when another settlement, albeit a temporary one, at the mouth of the river was established. That year the schooner “Savage” ran aground near the site of the modern city.\textsuperscript{79} The captain, Amos Hinckley and his crew built a cabin and spent the winter there.\textsuperscript{80} At the time the site was called “Saranac.”\textsuperscript{81} Few descriptions of migrants’ cabins exist. One settler, an Indiana migrant called William Kirk, left a description of his abode:

The logs were grooved at the ends so they would lay close together, and chinked with split sticks and mud. A slit was left open in the sidewall to provide a window. A larger opening in front served for the doorway. During inclement weather, blankets covered the openings. The roof was covered with boughs or coarse grass. The fireplace was constructed with sticks and mud.\textsuperscript{82}

Hinckley himself did not make his claims legal until 1831. He filed three claims in and around the St. Joseph area totaling 213.09 acres. Kirk’s claim was one of the smallest in the region. His 1831 filing was for a mere 80 acres.\textsuperscript{83} Kirk clearly was not a speculator and his small claim indicates that his primary interest was in agriculture. Many of the St. Joseph area claims are for acreages much too large to have been used for agriculture.

The Carey Treaty allowed for the orderly settlement around the St. Joseph River. In 1831, Calvin Britain, a former teacher at the Carey Mission in Niles and Augustus Newell became the first settlers on the site that would become modern-day
St. Joseph proper, platted a settlement on the south bank of the river. Britain made a several land purchases starting in 1831. His first purchase was for two fractional sections on the south bank of the St. Joseph River for a combined 154.5 acres on the former site of the Burnett homestead. Newell also made two purchases, one fractional, totaling 154.85 acres adjacent to Britain’s claims. The new settlement was called “Newburyport,” after Newburyport, Connecticut, yet another indication of Yankee influence in the region. The name was changed to St. Joseph in 1832. Britain later served on the Territorial Legislative Council, as state senator and eventually, Lieutenant Governor of the state, and eventually owned an additional 320 acres. The surveyor Lucius Lyon, a friend of Britain, purchased land in St. Joseph in 1833 and 1834. He apparently did not do much with it and sold it by 1840 for tax purposes.

As in the rest of the territory, land sales in Berrien County continued at the end of the decade and the beginning of the 1830s. Daniel Wilson arrived to St. Joseph in 1829. He made three land purchases between 1831 and 1839 totaling over 243 acres. Timothy S. Smith and William Huff arrived together in 1828 or 1829. Smith made a modest purchase of 80 acres in 1839. However, Huff seems to have been involved in land speculation. He made a total of fifteen claims between 1831 and 1839, ten of them in Berrien County. Some of his purchases were with others, most notably Thomas Fitzgerald, one of the largest landowners and speculators in the county. The Federal government did not recognize one of Huff’s claims. Although settlers had wide latitude “to acquire land and exploit it, with little direction or restraint from the government,” that did not mean that the land offices

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recognized every claim. One of Huff's 1831 claims had an unidentified “anomaly” and was not certified by the Federal government until 1921, long after the land had been settled.

Lemuel Johnson set up a homestead in 1830. The records are silent as to what he did early in the decade, but by 1839 he owned over 1600 acres, most of it in 80-acre increments, indicating, like so many others in Berrien County, that he may have engaged in land speculation since it would have been difficult to farm so many separate plots.

Amos Amsden arrived in 1832. He purchased 160 acres over the course of the decade, apparently engaging in farming. Pennsylvania farmer Edward Deacon migrated to the St. Joseph area in 1832 and may have farmed a little, but primarily engaged in land speculating. He filed an astonishing 67 land patents between 1833 and 1839 for a total of 9,636.77 acres in Berrien, Van Buren, Ottawa and Kalamazoo counties. Most of his claims are in 40 or 80-acre increments, which, as in the case with Johnson, might indicate speculation. His largest single claim was for 1,178.1 acres on the Berrien and Van Buren border (See Figure 6.3). What makes Deacon unusual is that all 67 of his claims were filed without a partner. He filed once, in 1835 at the White Pigeon Land Office, with William McKaleb for a 47.43-acre plot in Berrien County. In what was probably not a coincidence, Deacon and McKaleb had opened the first sawmill in St. Joseph in 1832.

Thomas Fitzgerald migrated from Indiana in 1832. He was the first attorney in St. Joseph and a major landholder as well. Between 1834 and 1839, he purchased 2,446.19 acres in the St. Joseph region as well as other parts of Berrien
County. His purchases ranged from four to 507 acres. Clearly Fitzgerald had speculation on his mind because he purchased hundreds more acres in Ottawa, Van Buren and Wexford counties.

Despite all of the land purchases in the late 1820s and the early 1830s, by 1831 there were only 25 houses in St. Joseph.\textsuperscript{107} That indicates the substantial

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure6.3.png}
\caption{Edward Deacon's Land Patent. One of the largest single purchases in Berrien County. U.S. Bureau of Land Management.}
\end{figure}

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amount of land speculating happening at the time, which seems to have been the primary land use, which continued well into the 1830s.

A local land boom seems to have occurred in Berrien County in the years surrounding statehood. Some of the largest landowners in the area made substantial purchases. One of the largest includes George Kimmel. Kimmell purchased 2,240 acres from the Kalamazoo Land Office on 1 May 1839. There is no record of him farming the land, indicating that he was a speculator. It seems that land speculation was common in the St. Joseph River valley.

Once the settlement boom began, the natural environment began to be changed radically. The fertile soils and relatively mild temperatures of southwest Michigan produced favorable conditions for fruit orchards. Peach orchards at the Carey Mission in modern-day Niles followed William Burnett’s peach trees in 1826. In both cases, however, the produce was used locally. That changed in the 1830s. Between 1834 and 1839, a small fruit trade came into being with settlers selling their produce in Chicago. Benjamin Hoyt, one of the major growers at the time, purchased four tracts of land in Berrien County between 1831 and 1835 totaling 284.87 acres. He cultivated orchards on some of his land, but the rest may have been for speculation because it was purchased with others. Plus, orchards were not his only concern as he was also a banker and hotel operator. Not only that, but he became involved in the “warehouse and commission business” as well. Commercial orchards did not appear on the scene in Berrien County until after 1847,
but the “seeds” of this type of land use can be found at the turn of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{115}

The orchards along the St. Joseph River valley differed from the ones found at the Detroit region.\textsuperscript{116} The orchards at the latter site were not commercial, nor were they intended to be. The habitants used their orchards for subsistence. In Berrien County, the orchards produced an important economic export, one that continues down to the present day.

Not long after statehood, St. Joseph settled into its role as an agricultural center in Michigan. In 1842 the city shipped more wheat than Chicago. Despite the rapid growth, the settlement remained relatively rural into the 1840s and 1850s. W. George, landowner and settler described St. Joseph,

\begin{displayquote}
St. Joseph at that time was a small hamlet surrounded by great forests, and it was no uncommon thing for deer, wild turkeys, and bear to wander into the village. I have seen wild bears on the beach at the mouth of the river as late as 1851. During the same year, four were killed while swimming across the river into the village.\textsuperscript{117}
\end{displayquote}

Although plenty of land had been sold around the mouth of the St. Joseph River in the decade leading to statehood, settlers did not follow right away. It was a different story upriver from St. Joseph. Niles, the site of missions and a fort, witnessed early and continuous settlement during the American era.

\section{Niles}

The first Americans to arrive in the Niles area were not settlers, but Baptist missionaries from Fort Wayne, Indiana. Much like the Jesuits in the French
occupation, these Protestants wanted to save the Indians’ souls. The Carey Mission, opened in 1822, by Isaac McCoy served that purpose. The Mission, named for the Baptist missionary who “first penetrated Hindoostan,” served as an important cultural link between the colonial era and the early Republic. Prior to the mission, traders and Indians dominated the St. Joseph River Valley. By time the mission closed, Niles was a rapidly growing community.

The American missionary impulse differed from that of the French Jesuits and that difference is reflected in how the French and the Americans viewed land use. Generally, Jesuit missionaries did not surround themselves with French settlers. The French crown did require, however, that missionaries travel with the fur traders, at least early in the French regime. No such policy existed in the United States. Any businessmen that traveled with the Baptist missionaries did so only coincidentally. The American missionaries at Niles wanted to “civilize” the Indians by introducing them to a distinctly Euro-American way of life and that required extensive land purchases. Like many contemporary political leaders, in D.C. and in Detroit, the missionaries wanted to create a society of Protestant Indian farmers. U.S. Indian policy from the time of President Thomas Jefferson harbored such intentions.

Issac McCoy, founder of the Carey Mission, had been living and preaching in Indiana and opened a school there in 1819. McCoy first arrived in the Niles area in late December 1821. He was distressed to find that conditions in southwest Michigan were less than comfortable. He described the conditions after enduring his first Michigan winter:

The earth was covered with snow from the time we reached the station until the 20th of March; generally
from ten to fifteen inches deep. Our houses, being unfinished, were cold and uncomfortable. We had only four fires, one of which was our kitchen fire, for the benefit of about fifty persons.123

He returned to Fort Wayne and in October of 1822, he set out for Michigan and McCoy and his followers quickly built a small settlement. By November they had constructed six buildings. Four were for housing, one for a blacksmith and one for a school.124 The school building was rudimentary and incomplete and was the cause of some discomfort. He wrote,

Soon after our arrival at the station we commenced the erection of a schoolhouse; and on the 27th of January, 1823, we opened our school with thirty Indian scholars, all of whom were fed, clothed and lodged at our expense. Our schoolhouse was without floor, shutter to the door, or chimney. We built a large fire within, around which we sat, greatly annoyed with smoke and cold.125

McCoy struggled to prepare his mission for its second winter. Apparently, very little construction had been done during the summer of 1823. Livestock had been arriving all summer from Fort Wayne, but there was no building in which to house the animals.126 By October, it became apparent that “the buildings needed to be improved before winter to prevent the recurrence of the sufferings of the previous year, and preparations were necessary for wintering the live stock.”127

The mission contributed directly to the cultural development and built environment of Niles. The missionaries not only constructed a school and houses, but also a mill and they continued to clear land. Almost all of the early economic development in the Niles area, especially agricultural, can be attributed to the mission. Interestingly, many of the initial migrants to the Niles region in the 1820s
were not of Yankee stock, but southerners.128 And the missionaries were less than pleased by their arrival. Some of the lands ceded by the Potawatomis, only a mile from the mission, began to fill with “adventurers and worthless characters…with whiskey to sell, and demoralizing habits to bestow.”129

By 1823, the missionaries had cleared sixty acres of land and plowed and planted forty of those. In addition, they possessed 150 head of cattle and 100 sheep. Two years later, two hundred acres had been cleared and a large orchard containing 200-300 peach and apple trees had been planted.130 The missionaries needed more land so in 1827, the Potawatomis signed the Carey Treaty, surrendering yet more of their land.131

The mission closed its doors in 1830, as the Michigan land boom commenced. No record remains indicating if the missionaries were as successful in turning Indians into farmers as they were turning Niles into an American settlement. Niles quickly became secular, attracting easteners looking for cheap and abundant land. The 1833 Treaty of Chicago ensured that such land would be available and that any remaining Indians would be removed to reservations further west. Such were the Indian policies of the Jackson administration.132

A large influx of migrants started arriving in the mid-1820s, some attracted by the mission, others by the prospect of abundant land for either “improving” or speculating. An examination and description of the settlers from the mid-1820s until statehood will shed some light on land use in southwest Michigan and how it contributed to the nearly uniform cultural landscape found in that part of the state.
The first permanent settler to the site that would become the modern city of Niles was Squire Thompson. In 1822, he arrived from Indiana in the company of the Baptist missionaries to investigate the area. He returned a year later to clear the land and build a cabin, although he did not file a land claim until 1830. He is an example of a settler preceding a surveyor. He made a brief return trip to Indiana for his family, and then the Thompsons settled down for a solitary life until 1824 when a second settler arrived, William Kirk. By 1836, Thompson had purchased 741.21 acres of land in southwestern Michigan, 134.54 of them in Berrien County, the rest in Cass County, some of it with other individuals, perhaps implying that some of the land was for speculation. In July of 1831, Kirk filed a land claim at the Monroe Land Office for 80 acres in Berrien County.

Benjamin Potter and Nathan Young purchased land, cleared it and planted corn. John Lybrook, who worked briefly at the Carey Mission, arrived from Indiana and eventually brought others to the St. Joseph region and he had plenty of land to sell to them. In April of 1831 he filed four separate claims at the Monroe Land Office for 361.25 acres. Around forty acres of that was purchased with Squire Thompson. John Johnson purchased land and planted corn and briefly engaged in lumbering.

Evidence that Niles was becoming less of a frontier and more of a permanent settlement is found in Benjamin Collins. He arrived at Niles in 1834 from Delaware and opened a shoe and boot factory and eventually began to produce bricks. While it seems logical that his brick factory aided in the settlement of the St. Joseph region, he seems not to have made any land purchases himself in the area. His only
appearance in the GLO records is for a 160-acre purchase from the Traverse City Land Office in 1869.

Lucius Lyon and John Mullett surveyed southwest Michigan in 1829-1830. Their map of Niles Township shows how fast the land was being sold, if not settled (See Figure 6.4). The first stage between Niles and St. Joseph opened in 1832. And that same year Niles became connected to Detroit with the opening of the Chicago Road.\textsuperscript{141}

Joseph Bertrand, Jr. and Job Brookfield constructed a double house along with “several cabins or outhouses, a barn with a thatched roof.” And grew “half a dozen” apple trees.”\textsuperscript{142} Interestingly, Brookfield did not make an official land purchase until 1848.\textsuperscript{143} But Bertrand filed nine claims between 1830 and 1839 in various counties. His Berrien County claims totaled 539.60 acres and much of it was scattered across the county including a small claim of only 2.13 acres.\textsuperscript{144} However, he held over 100 acres in the heart of what is now Niles.\textsuperscript{145}

Former teachers of the Carey Mission remained after the mission closed. Some took up farming and others became land speculators. John Pike, James Gillespie and George Claypool were four of those teachers who settled in the Niles
Figure 6.4: Survey Notes from Lyon and Mullett, Niles Township, 1829-1830. Department of Natural Resources, State of Michigan.

area.\textsuperscript{146} Pike made nine land claims scattered across the county between 1831 and 1838 totaling 780.49 acres, indicating he dabbled in speculating, but not at the level that others in the region had.\textsuperscript{147} Claypool filed for one in 1834 at the White Pigeon Prairie Land Office for 40 acres indicating a farmstead.\textsuperscript{148} Gillespie made four claims in Berrien and Cass Counties.\textsuperscript{149} His claims were relatively small which means that he may have farmed some of the land himself or found it more convenient to sell smaller plots of land to newcomers.

Morgan Wilson arrived in 1829 and built a tannery “with ten or twelve vats” the following year.\textsuperscript{150} In January of 1831 he made his claim legal at the Monroe Land

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Office, filing a claim for 123.5 acres. Hiram Chilson from Ohio arrived in 1829. In 1833 he filed a claim at the White Pigeon Land Office for 40 acres.

Jacob Beeson migrated from Pennsylvania in 1829 to St. Joseph, but soon moved to the Niles area and became a storekeeper. In addition, he made four land purchases totaling 479.8 acres, and of that the largest single claim was 320 acres.

Thomas Dennison, who arrived with his family from Ohio in 1830, built a small “board shanty” where they lived until a cabin could be finished. It took him three weeks to build the cabin, giving an indication as to how fast the settlement at Niles was growing. Nine years later, he officially purchased his lot of 160 acres through the Bronson Land Office.

Two settlers who seem to have been prominent early in the history of Niles are Isaac Gray and John Meek, but their names do not appear in the GLO records, indicating either they did not purchase land from the land office or they bought it from another seller. Isaac Gray arrived in 1828. He constructed a double house, two stories high and made from hewn logs. John Meek and family migrated from Indiana in 1832.

While most of the settlers to the Niles area were from northern Indiana, in at least one instance, a settler came from the Straits area. Brothers George and Henry Hoffman arrived from the Straits in 1832. Henry had a store at Mackinac and removed his goods to Niles and reopened the store. He became one of the largest landowners of the 1830s, having filed 17 claims between 1834 and 1839 totaling 1,838.81 acres, indicating that his store did quite well and making him one of the largest landowners in southwest Michigan.

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The settlement grew quickly, with new arrivals each year. By 1828, a dam and mill had been constructed and a mercantile house had opened. Eli Ford built the dam to serve the needs of the quickly growing settlement. The only other mill in the area was at the Mission and it was horse-powered. Ford combined his business acumen with several land purchases totaling nearly 1,000 acres. Niles was finally platted in 1829. The area had previously been known as "Pogwatigue" then changed to Niles, named after Hezekiah Niles, a Baltimore newspaper publisher. William Justus, Samuel B. Walling and Ephraim and Elijah Lacey marked off the first plat of the village of Niles. All of the lots on the south side of the plat belonged to Walling and the Laceys. The plat was expanded in 1831 and again in 1832, indicating the continued expansion of the village. A military road between Detroit and Chicago was completed in 1832, contributing to the influx of settlers to the area.

In contrast to the French occupation of the region, the St. Joseph River soon became an impediment to progress. In order for settlers on both sides of the river to exchange goods, or even simply cross, a ferry had to be established. In March 1831, the needed ferry was established in Niles. Benoni and Moses Finch were the operators. The ferry was not free and in 1835, the town council resolved "that the business, growth, and general prosperity of the town requires the immediate construction of a free bridge over the St. Joseph River at the foot of Main Street." Even though at this point it is clear that economics, much like in the French era, were the driving force of the settlement, the bridge was not built until 1845.
Niles closely resembled other towns in Berrien County as more settlers reached southwestern Michigan during the land boom of the 1830s. But the southern character dominated the early years of southwestern Michigan settlement. One historian referred to these southerners as

a cheerful, contented people, whose wants were few and those easily supplied; hospitable to a fault, the latch strings of their cabin doors had knots in the end and were always out. No one was refused accommodation, white or Indian; the cabin never was full. They had plenty of time to visit or for amusement.174

Evidence for Yankee cultural influence can be found in the town names, however. For example, New Buffalo, a few miles south of St. Joseph along the Lake Michigan shore was named for Buffalo, New York and St. Joseph was originally called “Newberryport” after a town in Connecticut.175

The plats also resembled the New England-Upstate New York region. Berrien County towns were platted in a logical fashion, in accordance with U.S. land ordinances, often ignoring geological realities, a common practice in the Midwest, as a cursory glance at early maps of Michigan will attest. Exceptions include mill sites, which by definition had to be located by water. Niles had a town square, an important component of Yankee settlement patterns. The Yankee built environment, found all over the Midwest, can symbolize an “industrious, thrifty, democratic community.”176 These town squares, always designated as “public” had a variety of uses. Some were market squares, others merchant squares.177 Such land use was common until the arrival of railroads after statehood. By then Niles and other towns in Berrien County were dependent on the whims of rail builders.
By March of 1836, enough settlers had entered Berrien County to prompt the County Board of Supervisors to appoint someone “to procure from the Land office, and furnish to the assessors of each Township in the County, Plats or suitable Lists of all the non-Residents Lands liable to taxation.” The board selected Pitt Brown for the job and voted twenty-five dollars for him to spend on the plats and lists. Brown was a leading landowner, having purchased over 768 acres in the St. Joseph area from the Bronson/Kalamazoo Land Office between 1831 and 1839.

A year after statehood, the Berrien County Board of Supervisors assessed the value of the land in all of the townships. Total receipts for land taxes in Niles Township equaled $571.86, of which $247.86 came from non-residents. It seems clear that by 1838, then, Berrien County was becoming better-settled and land values were increasing. Although settlement continued at a fairly rapid pace after statehood (and picked up even more after the Civil War), land sales slowed late in the 1830s because of the economic fallout of the Panic of 1837.

Of the three sites discussed in this dissertation, the St. Joseph River valley witnessed the most dramatic changes in the built landscape. Each occupation—French, British and American—started in an abrupt manner and for all purposes wiped out the previous one. As a result, the continuity the habitant landscape found at Detroit and to a lesser degree, at the Straits of Mackinac, did not exist in southwestern Michigan. The light British imprint on the St. Joseph valley easily faded during the last years of their occupation. In contrast to events at Detroit, the Americans did not make a significant physical impact on the St. Joseph valley until after the War of 1812. They

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did, however, make their presence known in the form of traders and light settlement and through treaties with Great Britain and Congressional land acts even before the end of the British occupation. Once large-scale settlement and land sales started in the 1820s, the St. Joseph River area quickly assumed an American landscape, in contrast to the ribbon farms, Catholicism and French language found in varying degrees at the Straits and Detroit. As such, it stands out as the region that changed the most during the American era.

Modern-day St. Joseph, and Benton Harbor across the river, resembles Detroit in that little to no archaeological work has been conducted and so the built environment in both locales is modern. At Niles, the post of the St. Joseph existed in the shadow of settlements along the Straits of Mackinac and the Detroit River in the eighteenth-century, and so it does in the twenty-first. As the archaeological work continues and more discoveries of the French, British and Indian settlements are found, perhaps popular and academic interest will increase. It is probably important to remember that in 1959, the reconstructed Fort Michilimackinac did not yet exist and Fort Mackinac had relatively recently been an actual working fort. Nearly fifty years of continuous work at the Straits has resulted in a substantial body of both academic and popular histories and sustained public interest. The same may eventually be said of Fort St. Joseph.
Endnotes

1 Charlevoix, *Journal, II*: 93.
2 Office for Foreign Affairs, *JCC, XXXI*, 539.
3 Burnett to Meddum, 14 May 1786, *LBWB*, 1.
4 Lawrence G. Brewer, *Presettlement Vegetation of Southwestern Michigan* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, Department of Geography, 1984). See also Kristin Jass Armstrong, "The Secret Ingredient" and Kristin M. Szylvian and Jennifer Gaydos, "Voices of the Growers" *Michigan History Magazine* 90 (May/June 2006): 6-12, 14-20 for discussions of Michigan's "fruit belt." Most of the 2006 April/May issue of *Michigan History* is dedicated to Berrien County. An enthusiastic account of the Michigan fruit industry can also be found in Ellis *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*.
5 The St. Joseph River continues to be important down to the present day for agricultural purposes. About half of the St. Joseph watershed is agricultural/urban and between 25%-50% is forested. More data on the river can be found in the *St. Joseph River Watershed Planning Project* produced by the Friends of the St. Joe River Association. The full report is available at www.stjoeriver.net.
6 For a discussion of pre-contact settlement and subsistence patterns in the St. Joseph River valley see Elizabeth Garland, ed. *Late Archaic and Early Woodland Adaptation in the Lower St. Joseph River Valley, Berrien County, Michigan, Volume II* (Lansing: Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan Department of State and the Federal Highway Administration, 1990), passim.
8 See Chapter III: Land Policies. The Treaties of Chicago, the Carey Mission Treaties and the Indian Removal Act had a significant impact on Southwest Michigan.
The details surrounding the initial search for the fort can be found in Nassaney, *An Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey to Locate Remains of Fort St. Joseph*.


Both posts were built close to the water and of wood construction. Contrast that to Fort Mackinac, built of limestone and on a bluff overlooking the Straits of Mackinac. The builders of Michilimackinac and St. Joseph were not too concerned about enemies. Their proximity to water indicates other uses than military.


Petition of Louis Chevallier, 9 October 1780, *MPHC XIII*: 61.

Petition of Louis Chevallier, 9 October 1780, *MPHC XIII*: 61.


Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 83-4. A copy of a letter in the *Madrid Gazette* referencing the attack can be found in Office for Foreign Affairs, *JCC, XXXI*, and reads in full:

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By a letter from the Commandant General of the Army of operations at Havana and Governor of Louisiana, his Majesty has advices, that a detachment of 65 Militia men, and 60 Indians of the nations Otaguos, Sotu and Putuatami, under the command of Don Eugenia Purre, a Captain of Militia, accompanied by Don Carlos Tayon, a Sub-lieutenant of Militia, by Don Luis Chevalier, a man well versed in the language of the Indians, and by their great Chiefs Eletuno and Naquigen, which marched the 2d January, 1781, from the town of St. Luis of the Illinois, had possessed themselves of the post of St. Joseph, from which the English occupied at 220 Leagues distance from that of the above-mentioned St. Luis; having suffered in so extensive a march, and so rigorous a season, the greatest inconveniences from Cold and hunger, exposed to continued risks from the Country being possessed by Savage Nations, and having to pass over parts covered with snow, and each one being obliged to carry provision for his own subsistence, and various merchandises which were necessary to content, in case of need, the barbarous nations through whom they were obliged to cross. The Commander, by seasonable negotiations and precautions, prevented a considerable body of Indians, who were at the devotion of the English, from opposing this expedition; for it would otherwise have been difficult to have accomplished the taking of the said post. They made prisoners of the few English they found in it, the other having perhaps retired in consequence of some prior notice. Don Eugenio Purre took possession, in the name of the King, of that place and its dependencies, and of the river of the Illinois; in consequence whereof the Standard of his Majesty was there displayed during the whole time. He took the English one, and delivered it on his arrival at St. Luis to don Francisco Cruyat the Commandant of that post.

The destruction of the magazine of provisions and goods which the English had there (the greater part of which was divided among our Indians and those who lived at St. Joseph, as had been offered them in case the did not oppose our troops) was not the only advantage resulting from the success of this expedition, for thereby it became impossible for the English to execute their plan of attacking the fort of St. Luis of the Illinois, and it also served to intimidate these savage Nations,
and oblige them to promise to remain neuter, which they do at present.

When you consider the ostensible object of this expedition, the distance of it, the formalities with which the place, the Country and the river were taken possession of in the name of his Catholic Majesty, I am persuaded it will not be necessary for me to swell this Letter with remarks that would occur to a reader of far less penetration than yourself.

52 In Michigan, the name “St. Joseph” can be confusing. The post, or “fort” St. Joseph was in what is now Niles. The modern city of St. Joseph is the location of La Salle’s Fort Miami, at the mouth of the St. Joseph River. Neither city is in St. Joseph County, however. That county is to the south and east of Berrien County, the focus of this chapter. Indiana also has a St. Joseph County. Another Fort St. Joseph briefly appeared on the scene during the seventeenth century in St. Clair County and its location has yet to be discovered. For a brief discussion of that post, see Donald P. Heldman, “Euro-American Archaeology in Michigan: The French Period,” in Halsey, Retrieving Michigan’s Buried Past, 295-6. The reason that the name is so common in Michigan is because St. Joseph was the Patron Saint of New France.


54 See Chapter III: Land Policies for maps with the locations of the land offices. The Land Office at White Pigeon was sometimes called White Pigeon Prairie.

55 Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 316.

56 Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 161. The village of Mackinaw City was founded much later, in 1857. Apparently there is a current attempt to recreate the early American village of Mackinaw City. A replica of the old village is being constructed about five miles west of downtown Mackinaw City.

57 United States Census Office, Sixth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States, as corrected at the Department of State, in 1840 (NC: Printed by Blair and Rives, 1841)

58 United States Census Office, Sixth Census.

59 United States Census Office, Fifth Census; Sixth Census.

60 United States Census Office, Fifth Census; Sixth Census.

61 All information compiled from Fifth Census and Sixth Census. Population figures include only white settlers. Wayne County included southwest Michigan in 1820. That census divided the population between “County of Wayne, exclusive of Detroit” and “City of Detroit.” Therefore, it is not entirely clear how many people lived on the west side of the state at the time.


64 William Burnett: A Representative Eighteenth Century American Trader, Pioneer and Home Builder, MPHC, XXX: 89.
Letter of Wm. Burnett to James May, 20 January 1804, *MPHC, VIII*: 547. May's name turns up only once in the General Land Office Records. Although he had a house near Burnett, he apparently did not file a formal private claim. His only land claim on record is an eighty-acre purchase from 1837 at the Ionia Land Office. BLM, GLO Records Accession No. MI2570_270 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. Burnett, for that matter, does not turn up in the records at all since he made his homestead well before the land offices opened for business.

Letter of Wm. Burnett to James May, 20 January 1804, *MPHC, VIII*: 547. It is unclear whom "they" refers to.

*LBWB*, xvi.

*LBWB*, 207.

William Burnett, *MPHC, XXX*: 89.

BLM GLO Records Accession No. MO0360_018 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.

Kinzie Street in Chicago is named for John Kinzie.

GLO BLM Records Accession Nos. MI0570_372 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0570_373 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.


BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI0350_455 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.

BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI0350_072 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. The GLO records have his name as "Brittain." A claim is deemed "fractional" if a body of water does not allow for a full 640-acre survey. Fractionals are common at the mouth of the St. Joseph River. See General Land Office glossary at www.glorecords.blm.gov/Vistors/Glossary.asp.

GLO BLM Records Accession No. MI0350_075 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.


Chauncey, *Berrien County*, 33. BLM GLO Records Accession Nos. MI1380_165 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1380_167 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1380_168 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.

While no numbers exist specifically for Berrien County, it is noteworthy that land sale receipts increase from $9,000 to $136,000 between 1820 and 1829. Receipts reached $2,272,000 in 1835 and peaked the following year at $5,242,000. See Arthur Cole, “Sectional Variations in the Sale of Public Lands, 1816-1860,” in Carstensen, The Public Lands, 234-35.

Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 312.

Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 313.

GLO BLM Records Accession No. MI1530_.325 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.

GLO BLM Records Accession Nos. MI0540_.436 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0540_.437 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1400_.116 (with Thomas Fitzgerald) BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1400_.117 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0350_.076 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0350_.077 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0350_.094 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0350_.477 (patent imperfect) BLM Serial No. MI NO; MI1240_.221 (with James LaRue) BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1240_.222 (with James LaRue, James Randles and Josiah Rodgers) BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. GLO BLM Record No. 836612 states “This patent is granted as and for a patent intended to have been granted and issued on July 1, 1831, but the issuance of which is not sufficiently evidenced by the records of the General Land Office or by other obtainable evidence.”


Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 313.

GLO BLM Records Accession Nos. MI1330_.335; MI1340_.230; MI1340_.232; MI1430_.455; MI1440_.007; MI1570_.169; MI0560_.496; MI0610_.145; MI0610_.184; MI0610_.269; MI0610_.270; MI0610_.271; MI0610_.272; MI0610_.273. BLM Serial No. for all records is MI NO S/N. Record MI1570_.169 for 320 acres, was Johnson’s largest single purchase. It is in Van Buren County.

Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 313.

BLM, GLO Records Accession Nos. MI0580_.005 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0580_.114 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1210_.346 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.

Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 313.

GLO BLM Record Accession Nos. MI1390_.341; MI1500_.371; MI1310_.196; MI1310_.197; MI1310_.198; MI1310_.199; MI1310_.200; MI1310_.217; MI1310_.218; MI1310_.219; MI1310_.220; MI1310_.221; MI1310_.330; MI1390_.342; MI1400_.059; MI1400_.086; MI1410_.438; MI1410_.447; MI0550_.290; MI0550_.291; MI1480_.099; MI1480_.206; MI1480_.207; MI1500_.287; MI1500_.325; MI1500_.326; MI1500_.370; MI1500_.372; MI1500_.373; MI1500_.485; MI1500_.374; MI1500_.375; MI1500_.429; MI1500_.430; MI1500_.431; MI1500_.432; MI1500_.433; MI1500_.434; MI0560_.167; MI0570_.466; MI0570_.467; MI0580_.022; MI0580_.037; MI0580_.094; MI1260_.326; MI1260_.327; MI1260_.328; MI1260_.329; MI1260_.330; MI1260_.331; MI1260_.332; MI1260_.333; MI1260_.334; MI1260_.335; MI1270_.336; MI1270_.337; MI1270_.338; MI1270_.339; MI1270_.340; MI1270_.341; MI1290_.001; MI1290_.002; MI1290_.003;
Many claims were filed by two, and sometimes more, people, especially in the case of large claims totaling thousands of acres. Deacon filed all of his as an individual.

Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 158. As prominent as Hoyt seems to have been, he is given little ink in the county history, which is generally about the movers and shakers of the region.

Wyeth, Issac McCoy: Missionary Memorial (Philadelphia: W.N. Wyeth, Publisher, 1895), 68. For a discussion of McCoy’s advocacy of Indian removal, see Robert Myers, “Isaac & Christiana McCoy,” Michigan History 77 (July/August 1993), 46-7.

See Chapter III: Land Policies for more on the Chicago Treaties and the Jackson Administration's Indian policies.

Ellis, History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 20.

Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records Accession No. MI0350_.455 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. By 1839, Kirk owned land in Cass and Calhoun Counties as well.

Their names do not appear in the land records for Berrien County. However, Potter purchased tracks of land in Jackson and Washtenaw Counties, Young in Cass County.

Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records Accession Nos. MI0350_.134 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0350_.158 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0350_.160 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI0350_.158 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. No. MI0350_.158 stands out because it was for 79.5 acres, a rather odd number for a land purchase.
The name George Hoffman appears in the General Land Office Records for a claim in Emmet County for 40 acres, however, the claim is dated 1 January 1885, long after he moved to Berrien County. It is not clear if it is the same person. BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI2950_.361.

The first two claims were filed at White Pigeon, the latter two at Bronson. Beeson made another claim in 1864 in Marquette County at the Marquette Land Office for 80 acres. BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI2010_.086.

Out of his total acreage, Hoffman owned 1,350.05 in Berrien County, the rest in Ottawa and Allegan Counties. He filed his claims variously at the Ionia, Bronson/Kalamazoo and White Pigeon Land Offices. BLM GLO Records Accession Nos. MI2570_.216 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI1530_.118 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI1530_.120 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI1530_.121 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI1530_.122 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI1530_.123 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI1530_.124 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.423 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.424 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.425 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.426 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.427 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.435 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.436 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI0570_.438 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N; MI1230_.110 BLM Serial No MI NO S/N.

GLO BLM Records Accession Nos. MI0600_.493; MI0600_.494; MI0530_.034; MI0530_.138; MI0330_.347; MI0330_.348; MI0330_.349; MI0330_.350. BLM Serial No. for all records is BLM MI NO S/N. Ford also purchased 80 acres in Cass County. BLM Record Serial No. MI0340_.402 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N.

Carney, Berrien Bicentennial, 179.

BLM GLO Records Accession No. MI0330_.380 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. William Justus’ name does not appear in any of the Bureau of Land Management Records for Berrien County. He does seem to have purchased some land in Jackson County, however. Walling and the Laceys, along with Squire Thompson bought much of their land together.

Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 160.


Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 159.

Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 159.

Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 159.

Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 159.


Ellis, *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*, 316. There is some controversy over the origin of the name. See also Romig, *Michigan Place Names*.

D.W. Meinig, “Symbolic Landscapes: Some Idealizations of American Communities,” in D.W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 165. Italics in the original. Meinig notes that such an interpretation is “a projection from an actual landscape and society.” And that “the New England village as a landscape form was...evident in some degree well beyond its source region,”166.


Board of Supervisors Minutes for Berrien County Michigan, Box A-1694, Folder 1, 23 March 1836. Regional History Archives, Western Michigan University.

BLM, GLO Records Accession Nos. MI0350_.073 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1270_.476 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1270_.481 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1290_.198 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1350_.226 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1370_.273 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N; MI1400_.036 BLM Serial No. MI NO S/N. The Bronson Land Office was called the Kalamazoo Land Office after 1838. His first claim, filed on 1 April 1831 was for a mere 8.67 acres. Subsequent claims ranged from 40 to 240 acres indicating either large-scale agriculture or land speculation.

Board of Supervisors Minutes for Berrien County Michigan, Box A-1694, Folder 1, 5 April 1838. Regional Archive, Western Michigan University.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this dissertation is comprised of two sections. The first part summarizes how the inhabitants of Detroit, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph Valley shaped the landscape in various ways in response to local, national and international conditions. The second part of the conclusion fleshes out the major themes in land use and settlement patterns in the Midwest and places this dissertation in its regional context and in the literature of the Old Northwest.

The built environment, population and land use in the three locations discussed in this dissertation changed dramatically from 1763 to 1837. In 1763, the primary use of the landscape was for trade and the population small. Both soldiers and civilians generally lived within palisaded villages, particularly at the Straits and Detroit, although it is not clear yet exactly where anyone lived at Fort St. Joseph. Each of these sites was what archaeologist David Keene has referred to as an entrepot engaged in “extraction, processing, and shipping of natural resources.” Fur was the primary natural resource, although as seen at Mackinac and Detroit, there were attempts at other processing activities, some more successful than others, such as lumbering. In 1837, land use was more diversified, as was the population. Michigan residents in Detroit, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph valley engaged in a variety of agricultural pursuits, land speculation, military construction and urban development. And as such, these sites did not, in the strictest sense, become involved in the other end of Keene’s spectrum of “basic economic pursuits,” that is, “the
production, processing and shipping of surplus agricultural goods” because agricultural products did not become a major export during the era before statehood.\(^2\) Regardless, Keene’s point that “the movement away from static hierarchal models toward dynamic cultural and economic models can prove invaluable” for understanding economic applications to land use and applies to the sites discussed here because the changes that occurred were based on cultural and economic issues, such as military expansion, land sales and land tenure systems.\(^3\)

Other factors, aside from economics, as has been seen, altered the landscape. By the time of statehood, the township and range system was firmly in place in rural areas such as the St. Joseph River valley, and although its presence at the Straits and Detroit was less significant, it would be only a matter of time until the whole of the state was carved up into American-style lots. Eventually, most of the long, narrow strips of land along the Detroit River would give way to the now-familiar square-shaped lots that resulted from the U.S. land ordinances.

However, the successive occupations witnessed at Detroit, the Straits of Mackinac and the St. Joseph valley did not erase completely from the built landscape evidence of the previous occupations before statehood, with the exception of the St. Joseph valley. Modern plat maps show the vestiges of ribbon farms in St. Ignace, for example. The lots are broken up and divided now, but their original shapes are still clear. Historically important private claims still survive on the modern landscape as well such as McGulpin’s Point, to the west of Mackinaw City, the state park at Mill Creek and plats of Mackinac and Bois Blanc islands. The city of Niles, with the aid of archaeologists and historians from Western Michigan University, is in the process
of reclaiming Fort St. Joseph, an important part of its settlement history, although its exact shape and size are not yet clear. But nowhere along the river valley are there examples of the French and British occupations on the landscape. However, a few miles south of Detroit, along the west bank of the river, in Monroe County, traces of ribbon farms can still be found.

The *habitants* and the British and American settlers developed distinctive ways of life in Michigan and each group left its particular imprint on the culture and landscape of Michigan. The French with their ribbon farms, language and willingness to adapt to the natural environment, as evidenced by their use of local food supplies such as game and fish; the British and their insistence on crown ownership of property, military expansion at Detroit and the Straits, and increased importation of food, especially luxury items such as wine; and the Americans, who by sheer numbers and through land ordinances, were able to shape the landscape to their will on a scale not known during the French and British occupations because of their small populations.

Of all the settlements discussed here, the Detroit region retained its French character for the longest period. The French language lingered until the 1880s and British and American private claims, although often conforming to a standard 640 acre size, were still shaped like ribbon farms in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

The Mackinac region underwent a faster change than Detroit. At Mackinac, British and American military and agricultural interests shaped the land. The region always had fewer residents and as a result, French influence was not as strong.
British influence primarily facilitated by trading companies, faded by the 1830s. The land claims filed at the Detroit Land Office by Mackinac residents reflected the desire to shape what they considered to be an untouched landscape.

The St. Joseph River valley witnessed the most abrupt changes. The region, used extensively by the French for trade and lightly settled, became only a minor military post during the British era. Once the British military left the region in 1781, the valley was left to what remained of the Indian nations and perhaps a few habitants. Only after the War of 1812 did American influence become important. The region grew rapidly, with towns and counties platted by the 1830s.

What can be concluded from all of this is that changes in land use and settlement occurred through a combination of local conditions and national and international laws and treaties. Locals chose to ignore certain directives, such as when British commanders granted land at Detroit during the American Revolution, or in other cases took full advantage of them, as when American settlers purchased thousands of acres of land in Berrien County in the 1820s and 1830s. While national and international events were certainly important in the development of Michigan, significant changes in the land, some temporary, some longer lasting, occurred when populations shaped the landscape to their own needs.

In order to place this dissertation in context, it is necessary to understand the two themes that stand out in the discussion of land use and settlement patterns in the American Midwest between the 1760s and the 1830s, Indian removal and the westward migration of Anglo-Americans, both orderly and in the form of squatters. Most of the American Midwest more or less followed the same pattern, French
exploration and missionary work followed by British military conquest then permanent American settlement. Michigan settlement and land use bears some similarities as well as differences to those found in other parts of the Midwest. What follows is a discussion of how Michigan fits into these themes in the Midwest.

Ohio, admitted to the Union in 1803, was the first state formed from the Northwest Territory and the first beneficiary of the Land Ordinances of the 1780s. The state witnessed a land boom in the 1780s and 1790s of a similar intensity to that which hit Michigan’s Lower Peninsula in the 1820s and 1830s. Government land sales in Indiana began in 1804.4 Like in Michigan and Ohio, Indiana, too, experienced a land boom. It was briefly interrupted by the Panic of 1819, and then picked up again in the 1820s.5

New Englanders settled the Ohio River valley in much the same way they did the St. Joseph River valley. However, they encountered more Indian resistance than settlers in Michigan did, in large part because of their earlier arrival to the area.6 Historian Andrew Cayton claimed that Ohio “embodied the major themes in the history of the Atlantic World from the middle of the eighteenth through the middle of the nineteenth centuries.” One of those themes was the “history of colonial encounter, conquest and postcolonial development.”7 That theme includes the “bitter and brutal” conflict between the Indians and the rapidly increasing numbers of white settlers for possession of the land.8 But his emphasis on migration and settlement can be applied to the entire Old Northwest.

The earliest white settlers in the Ohio region were squatters who arrived before the American Revolution. Their exact number is not known but probably
numbered in the thousands. Like in Michigan, local conditions dictated how they would live their lives as well. For the most part they grew corn, hunted and lived in log cabins. They did not live all that differently from Michigan settlers in Berrien County in the 1820s. A kind of “frontier aristocracy” developed in the Ohio Valley during the late eighteenth-century, which also happened in Michigan, although at a later date. The first settlers usually took leadership roles in the frontier communities and they often held public office and owned substantial amounts of land.

The American settlers of the Old Northwest followed some common patterns. Robert Pulliam, the protagonist in John Mack Faragher’s *Sugar Creek*, which deals with settlement in central Illinois, serves as a prototype for the American-era explorer/settler in the American Midwest. Pulliam came to the Illinois County in the early nineteenth century seeking land, to be sure, but more than that. Central Illinois, much like the rest of the Old Northwest, “encompassed a considerable range of environmental diversity with an abundance of life forms prospering amid the variations of soil and drainage, prairie and woodland.” The variety in the landscape mirrors that in Michigan, indicating that the natural environment may be an example of a “local condition” that dictates how people would shape the land.

*Land Fever*, by James Marshall, contains a first-person account by Omar Morse, a farmer in Wisconsin in the mid-nineteenth century. Marshall’s book is “an analytical study of the relation between the autobiography of a dispossessed homesteader and a pioneer culture’s resistance to the loss of the frontier promise of Jeffersonian democracy.” Morse wrote a general account of his life on the frontier. For the most part he describes a difficult life, not so different from Robert Pulliam’s
or Isaac McCoy's understandings of the frontier. Although Indians do not figure in Morse's narrative, land speculators and federal land policy and their negative economic impact are featured. And like in Michigan, the French remained in Wisconsin after the 1763 Treaty of Paris. By 1820, the U.S. government was sending agents into Wisconsin to sort out property rights. Another similarity is the presence of land speculators and the removal of the Indian nations in the 1830s.

Indian removal became one of the most important issues in early Midwestern settlement. The Treaty of Greenville, signed between the United States and Ohio Indian nations in 1795, opened the region for mass migration from the east. It set the tone for future treaties between the United States and the Indian nations as well since it contained many promises and in fact gave the Indian nations a considerable amount of power, but yet was not honored by the Americans. Although the British still technically controlled the region, they did little to stop Americans from entering what is now Indiana. Once it started on a large scale, American settlement devastated the natural landscape. The reduction of forests "decimated the animal populations," making the landscape "increasingly hostile to deer and beavers." The 1803 Treaty of Fort Wayne, signed between the United States and the Indians "of the Wabash and Maumee valleys" provided more room for Anglo-Americans to "develop the territory into a model of domestic agriculture." Isaac McCoy played a role in the Indian removal controversy in Indiana. McCoy founded two missions in Indiana, first in present-day Parke County and later at Ft. Wayne. Both missions met with a minimum of success, driving McCoy to move to Michigan and causing
him to believe that Indian “separation from the whites was essential for their conversion to Christianity and civilization.”

Wisconsin, for example, had something in common with urban planning in Michigan. John Hudson, in “The Creation of Towns in Wisconsin,” noted that the fur trade, coupled with French missionary activity, led to the development of settlements in the seventeenth century and many of those settlements are referenced in the Michigan claims sections of the *American State Papers*. Whereas the rebuilding of Detroit after the fire was a morass of competing ideas and clashing personalities, in the planning of Marietta, Ohio “fulfilled all the requirements necessary for the ‘perfect harmony’ prized in the rhetoric of its builders.” The city emphasized republican values, reflected in its street names. The main thoroughfare was called “Washington Street.”

Susan Gray, in *The Yankee West*, while focusing primarily on Yankee migration to Michigan, shares much with Faragher’s work on Illinois and Cayton’s work on Indiana and Ohio. In each case, the authors have attempted to place settlement patterns in their proper historical contexts. This dissertation fits into those discussions by analyzing how cultural institutions such as the *Coutume de Paris*, British land policy and American laws and treaties, as well as local conditions can impact land use and settlement patterns. The *Coutume* helped to preserve habitant land use, British land policy made it difficult for settlers to acquire and work the land and American policies opened up most of the Lower Peninsula to speculation and, eventually, to large-scale agriculture. The most significant difference in Michigan history when it is compared to the rest of the Old Northwest is its relatively late
development. Of the states compared here, only Wisconsin entered the Union later, although it had its share of *habitants* well before American era began.

This history of Michigan land use may not be "particular," but because it shares much with the rest of the history of the westward expansion, it serves as an excellent model in the Midwest for understanding the interactions between the French, British and Americans from the decade before the American Revolution to the middle of the Antebellum Era.

The differences in land use among the three sites examined here are now clear. The settlers in each location were subject to various laws and treaties and dealt with them in their own particular ways. The one thing they all had in common, however, is that the local populations, whether they be *habitants* in Detroit, traders at Mackinac or farmers in Berrien County, had a say in how and when land would be distributed in Michigan's population centers before statehood. That demonstrates the problems governments had in dealing with populations so far from the main centers of political power. Communication from 1763 to 1837 was relatively slow, and as such, local populations needed to be creative and exercise a free hand in their approaches to land use. As has been noted earlier, the history of land is the history of the United States, and Michigan has an important chapter in that book.
Endnotes


2 Keene, “Fort de Chartres,” 40.

3 Keene, “Fort de Chartres,” 40-1. The “static” model that Keene criticized was Judith Tordoff’s five-level ranking of Colonial French sites in North America: ports of entry, government/economic centers, regional distribution centers, local distributions centers and aboriginal distribution centers. See Keene, 34-5.


10 Cayton, *Frontier Republic*, 3.


19 The British retained control over the land ceded by the 1783 Treaty of Paris until the Jay Treaty in 1795. See Chapter II: Land Policies for details.


21 Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 199.


Appendix A

Military Commanders of Michigan, 1758-1837

COMMANDANTS OF DETROIT FORTS, 1758-1821
(INCLUDES FORTS PONCHARTRAIN, DETROIT, LERNOULT AND SHELBY)

FRENCH
1758-1760 Captain François-Marie Picoté de Belestre

BRITISH
1760 Major Robert Rogers
1760-1762 Captain Donald Campbell
1762-1764 Major Henry Gladwin
1764 Colonel John Bradstreet
1764-1766 Lieutenant-Colonel John Campbell
1766 Major Robert Bayard
1766-1769 Captain George Turnbull
1769-1770 Major Thomas Bruce
1770-1772 Captain James Stephenson
1772-1774 Major Henry Bassett
1774-1776 Captain Richard Beringer Lernoult
1775-1778 Lieutenant-Governor Henry Hamilton (civil authority)
1776-1777 Captain John Mompesson
1777-1779 Captain Richard Beringer Lernoult
1779-1784 Colonel Arent Schuyler De Peyster
1784-1785 Captain Henry Bird
1785-1787 Major William Ancrum
1787 Captain James Wiseman
1787 Major Robert Matthews
1787-1788 Captain James Wiseman
1788-1789 Major Farman Close
1789-1790 Major Patrick Murray
1790-1792 Major John Smith
1792-1796 Lieutenant-Colonel Richard England

AMERICAN
1796 Captain Moses Porter
1796-1797 Lieutenant-Colonel John Hamtramck
1797-1799 Lieutenant-Colonel David Strong
1799-1800 Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Burbeck
1800-1802 Major Thomas Hunt
1802-1803 Colonel John Hamtramck
1803 Colonel Henry Burbeck
1804 Captain John Whistler

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1804-1805 Colonel Thomas Hunt
1805-1808 Captain Samuel Dyson
1808-1809 Colonel Henry Burbeck
1809-1811 Colonel Jacob Kingsbury
1811-1812 Captain John Whistler
1812 Brigadier General William Hull (concurrently Governor of Michigan Territory)

The Americans surrendered Detroit to the British in August of 1812.

BRITISH
1812 Major General Isaac Brock
1812-1813 Colonel Henry Proctor
1812-1813 Captain Adam Muir

The Americans officially regained Detroit in 1815, per the terms of the Treaty of Ghent.

AMERICAN
1813 Brigadier General Duncan McArthur
1813 Brigadier General Lewis Cass
1813 Captain Abraham Edwards
1813-1814 Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony Butler
1814 Lieutenant-Colonel George Croghan
1814 Captain Alexander Gray
1814 Captain John Miller
1815 Major Charles Gratiot
1815 Colonel Anthony Butler
1815 Major William Puthuff
1815-1817 Captain John Biddle
1815-1821 Brigadier General Alexander Macomb

COMMANDANTS OF FORT MICHILIMACKINAC, 1760-1781

FRENCH
1760 Louis Lienard, Sieur de Beaujeu-Villemonde

BRITISH
1760 Captain Henry Balfour
1761-1762 Lieutenant William Leslye
1762-1763 Captain George Etherington
1763-1764 Abandoned. Chevalier nominal civilian leader
1764-1766 Captain William Howard
1766-1767 Major Robert Rogers
1767-1768 Captain-Lieutenant Frederick Spiesmacher
1767-1770 Captain Beamsley Glazier
1770-1772 Captain George Turnbull
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Commandant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1772-1774</td>
<td>Captain John Vattas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774-1779</td>
<td>Major Arent S. DePeyster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779-1781</td>
<td>Lieutenant-Governor Patrick Sinclair (civil authority, but given rank of Captain)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The British razed Fort Michilimackinac and the garrison was moved to Mackinac Island during the winter of 1780-1781.

**COMMANDANTS OF FORT MACKINAC, 1781-1837**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRITISH</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1781-1782</td>
<td>Lieutenant-Governor Patrick Sinclair (civil authority, but given rank of Captain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782-1787</td>
<td>Captain Daniel Robertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787-1788</td>
<td>Captain Thomas Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788-1789</td>
<td>Captain Alexander Malcolm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789-1790</td>
<td>Captain John Parr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1792</td>
<td>Captain Edward Charlton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792-1796</td>
<td>Captain William Doyle (Major after 1795)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Lieutenant Andrew Foster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The British surrendered Fort Mackinac to the Americans in June of 1796, per the terms of the Jay Treaty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMERICAN</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1802</td>
<td>Captain Henry Burbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1804</td>
<td>Major Thomas Hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804-1807</td>
<td>Lieutenant-Colonel Jacob Kingsbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807-1808</td>
<td>1st Lieutenant Jonathan Eastman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808-1811</td>
<td>Captain Louis Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811-1812</td>
<td>Lieutenant Porter Hanks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Americans surrendered Fort Mackinac to the British in June of 1812.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRITISH</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1812-1813</td>
<td>Captain Charles Roberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813-1814</td>
<td>Captain Richard Bullock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814-1815</td>
<td>Lieutenant-Colonel Robert McDouall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Americans regained Fort Mackinac in 1815, per the terms of the Treaty of Ghent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMERICAN</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Colonel Anthony Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815-1816</td>
<td>Lieutenant-Colonel Talbot Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816-1817</td>
<td>Lieutenant-Colonel John McNiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817-1819</td>
<td>Captain Benjamin Pierce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819-1821</td>
<td>Lieutenant-Colonel William Lawrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821-1823</td>
<td>Captain Thomas Legate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823-1825</td>
<td>Captain William Whistler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825-1826</td>
<td>Captain William Hoffman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1826-1828  Captain Alexander Thompson
1828-1829  Captain Joseph Vose
1829-1831  Lieutenant-Colonel Enos Cutler
1831-1832  Captain R.A. McCabe
1832-1833  Major Alexander Thompson
1833-1834  Major William Whistler
1834-1836  Captain John Clitz
1836-1837  2nd Lieutenant J.W. Anderson

Fort Mackinac was abandoned in June of 1837 and garrisoned for two months in 1839, and garrisoned again from 1840 until 1895.

COMMANDANTS OF FORT ST. JOSEPH, 1760-1781

FRENCH
1760  Corporal Bontemps

BRITISH
1761-1763  Ensign George Schlosser

Appendix B

Civilian Leaders of Michigan, 1755-1837

GOVERNORS OF NEW FRANCE
1755-1763 The Marquis de Vaudreuil

GOVERNORS OF BRITISH CANADA
1760-1763 Jeffrey Amherst
1763-1767 James Murray
1768-1777 Guy Carleton
1777-1785 Frederick Haldimand
1785-1786 Henry Hamilton
1786-1796 Lord Dorchester (Guy Carleton)

GOVERNOR OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY
1796-1800 Arthur St. Clair

GOVERNOR OF INDIANA TERRITORY
1800-1805 William Henry Harrison

GOVERNORS OF MICHIGAN TERRITORY
1805-1813 William Hull
1813-1831 Lewis Cass
1831-1834 George Porter
1834-1835 Stevens T. Mason
1835 John Horner
1835-1837 Stevens T. Mason (acting as state governor)

Appendix C

Abbreviations

ASP  American State Papers
BLM  Bureau of Land Management
CGI  Center for Geographic Information (Michigan)
CGTG Correspondence of General Thomas Gage
DAH  Documents of American History
DLO  Detroit Land Office
GLO  General Land Office
JAP  John Askin Papers
JCC  Journals of the Continental Congress
LBWB Letter Book of William Burnett
MPHC Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections
PDBP Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America
SP   John Simcoe Papers
WBR  The Windsor Border Region, Canada’s Southernmost Frontier: A Collection of Document
ARCHIVAL SOURCES

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND REGIONAL COLLECTIONS, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN
Board of Supervisors, Minutes for Berrien County, Michigan, Box A-1694, Folder I, 23 March 1836.

STATE OF MICHIGAN ARCHIVES, LANSING, MICHIGAN

Survey of Private Land Claims. RG 87-153 Box 2 (1809-1810) Microfilm Reel no. 6088

PETERSON CENTER, MACKINAC ISLAND STATE PARKS ASSOCIATION, MACKINAW CITY, MICHIGAN
Letterbooks of Phyn & Ellice, Merchants at Schenectady, NY, 1767-1776, Volume III. Cards I – II, 3 January 1775.


John Farmer’s 1831 “Map of the Straits of Mackinac, from Actual Survey On a Scale of 4 miles to an inch,” Map Collections, m.1 2 c 1-2.

John Mullett’s 1828 “Michilimackinac Showing the Survey of Private Claims,” Map Collections, m.1.7 1 c-2.

MICHIGAN CENTER FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, LANSING, MICHIGAN
Department of Information Technology, Department of Geographic Data Library Database
www.mcgi.state.mi.us/mgdl

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.
General Land Office Records Database
www.glorecords.blm.gov

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