

FORT ST. JOSEPH: A HISTORY

by Elizabeth Vincent

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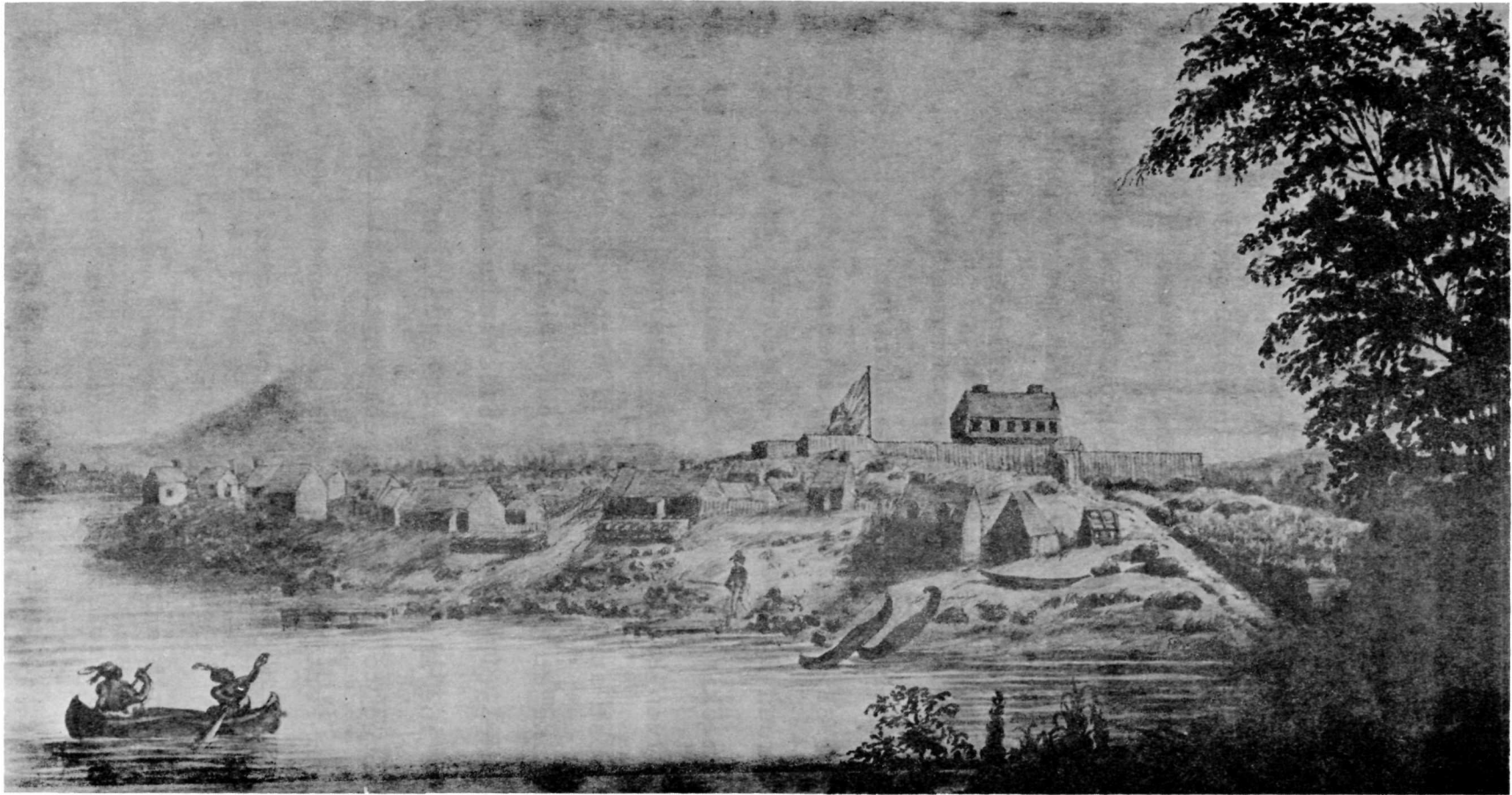
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## Abstract

A British military post was established on St. Joseph Island in 1796 to replace Michilimackinac, which was being handed over to the Americans. Although according to the boundary agreed on in the treaty of 1783 ending the American Revolutionary war Michilimackinac and other British posts were in American territory it was not until Jay's Treaty, signed in 1794, that the British agreed on a time for handing them over to the Americans. Michilimackinac had been an important centre for the fur trade since the days of the French regime and it was hoped that the new post on St. Joseph Island would supplant Michilimackinac in this regard. However it never achieved great importance in the fur trade though both the North West and South West Companies had establishments there. The post at Michilimackinac had always been important in dealings with the western Indians and following the British move to St. Joseph Island the British Indian Department at that post worked to retain the friendship of these Indians. The first of the permanent buildings to be constructed at Fort St. Joseph was the



blockhouse, followed by a bakehouse, guardhouse and palisades. Later a stone powder magazine, a stone bakery and kitchens were built. Around the fort was a collection of private buildings, dwellings and storehouses belonging to traders and some of the officers of the Indian Department. The most noticeable feature of life at the post was its isolation. Almost everything needed by those living there had to be brought in during the short shipping season. When war broke out with the United States in 1812 the British troops at Fort St. Joseph, aided by the traders and the Indians attacked and captured the American fort at Michilimackinac. Fort St. Joseph was abandoned and in the summer of 1814 was burned by an American expedition on its way to attack Michilimackinac. When the war ended Michilimackinac was given back to the Americans and the British built a new post at Drummond Island although they used the powder magazine at Fort St. Joseph. When the boundary through the Great Lakes was established Drummond Island was awarded to the Americans and in the fall of 1828 the British troops moved to Penetanguishene on the other side of Lake Huron and Fort St. Joseph was abandoned.



- 1 "View of the Post of St. Joseph at the Head of Lake Huron", dated July 1804, a water colour by Lieutenant Edward Walsh, surgeon in the 49th Regiment. This is the only contemporary picture we have of Fort St. Joseph. Around the fort can be seen some of the traders' dwellings and storehouses. The north corner of the palisade wall is shown as a simple right angle with no bastion. At the time that Walsh was at Fort St. Joseph the powder magazine was being constructed in the north bastion. (William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.)

## INTRODUCTION

On a lonely, exposed and barren point of land, overlooking the channel used by ships on their way to and from Sault Ste. Marie, stand the few remaining ruins of what was once the most westerly British military post in Canada. Fort St. Joseph was one of those posts which were built in great haste to accommodate the troops and stores forced to move in 1796 when the "Western Posts" were given up to the Americans. The British had continued to occupy the western posts after 1783, using as their excuse the fact that the Americans had not carried out that part of the treaty relating to the restoration of Loyalist property. However, a more important reason was the fact that the treaty had angered the Indians, who felt that they had been forgotten by the British statesmen who had negotiated it. Because of the discontent among the Indians the British felt that the frontiers needed protecting and the Indians placating. In effect, the British troops were continuing to do at least part of the job for which the American colonists had refused to pay taxes before the revolution and for which in many cases they were still refusing to pay taxes.



Although Fort St. Joseph was only built at the end of the eighteenth century, the island itself must have been known long before the small detachment of British soldiers arrived there to establish a post in the summer of 1796, for the island lay in the centre of the westward expansion of the fur trade. As St. Joseph was the patron saint of New France the name St. Joseph was given to many locations in New France. Although this sometimes makes it difficult to determine what place is meant when a writer refers to St. Joseph or Fort St. Joseph it seems highly unlikely that there was a permanent post on St. Joseph Island before 1796. During the French regime there were important posts established at both Sault Ste. Marie and Michilimackinac, but there is no mention during this period of a post between the two. The British troops who landed on the island in 1796 to build a post there found some evidence of earlier occupation, but this may simply have indicated that the spot was commonly used as a stopping place for those travelling up or down the St. Mary's River.

In the early 17th century the fur trade of New France had been carried on mainly with the Huron Indians who, acting as intermediaries, obtained furs from the more westerly hunting Indians. The Hurons were also the focus of an intensive missionary effort by the Jesuits. After the destruction of the Huron villages by the Iroquois in the



late 1640's the French missionaries and traders were forced to withdraw eastwards for a time, but they soon began advancing west of Lake Huron. Various movements of Indian tribes and bands occurred throughout the lands surrounding the Upper Lakes in the 17th and 18th centuries. By the mid 18th century the Ottawas and the Chippewas, living in the general area of the junction of Lakes Huron, Michigan and Superior, had become the most important middlemen in the fur trade, and Michilimackinac, on the shores of the Straits of Mackinac, leading from Lake Huron to Lake Michigan, had become the most important trading post of the area.

The Anglo-French wars of the mid 18th century did not reach the Upper Lakes, but the disturbances caused by these wars were felt there and control of the area was affected by the final outcome of these wars. All the inhabitants of the Michilimackinac area resented the transfer of control of New France to the British by the Treaty of Paris in 1763, and during the Pontiac uprising of 1763-66 British control over the area was completely lost. The British, however, soon regained control and won over the Indians and the Canadian inhabitants to such an extent that during the American Revolution there was little threat to the British interest in the area. At this time the post of Michilimackinac was moved from the south shore of the Straits of Mackinac to the Island of Michilimackinac for greater security against

possible attack. By cutting off trade from south of the Great Lakes, the American Revolution ensured the continued dominance of Montreal-based merchants in the trade of the area. By the treaty signed in 1783, which ended the American Revolution, Michilimackinac and all the area bordering Lake Michigan became American territory. Nevertheless, fearing another Indian uprising, the British remained in possession of the western posts. Their justification was that they could see no other way to protect British traders who were in territory which technically belonged to the Americans but over which the Americans could at the time exercise no control.

Jay's Treaty, signed in November 1794, provided for the surrender of the western posts to the Americans by the summer of 1796. It also permitted traders from Canada to continue to carry on trade within American territory. Plans were made to build blockhouses on the British side of the Detroit and Niagara rivers in order to replace the posts to be surrendered to the Americans. The governor, Lord Dorchester, questioned the need for any post west of the Detroit River, but in the spring of 1796 it was decided that a post should be built on St. Joseph Island in order to retain the friendship of the western Indians and to attempt to replace Michilimackinac as the centre of the fur trade. Michilimackinac's chief importance at this time was for the

trade to the southwest though it was also an important source of provisions for the northwest trade. This trade to the southwest, though within American territory, was controlled by British merchants trading through Michilimackinac and this continued to be the case after Michilimackinac was taken over by the Americans. Although some Michilimackinac traders moved to St. Joseph Island after 1796 or built storehouses there to supplement their establishments at Michilimackinac, St. Joseph Island never supplanted Michilimackinac as the centre of the trade to the southwest. The lack of competition from American merchants which permitted Montreal-based merchants to retain control of this trade changed, however, after 1800, as American interest in the fur trade increased. At the same time American attempts to prohibit foreign trade, a response to British and French interference with American shipping, made the continuation of British trade through Michilimackinac more difficult. Several attempts at combinations among the traders in the area culminated in the formation in January 1811 of the South West Company, a union between the Montreal partners of the North West Company and John Jacob Astor, a New York Merchant who was striving for control of the American fur trade. St. Joseph Island was used as a depot for the southwest trade at times when American regulations closed Michilimackinac to goods from Canada, but it never

achieved a permanent importance to rival that of Michilimackinac.

While it had been hoped that the new post on St. Joseph Island would attract traders from Michilimackinac, the post was primarily a military one, intended to protect Canada from attacks on its western frontier. The fort was not large or particularly strong, and for carrying out this task great reliance was placed on the friendship of the western Indians. Along with the army garrison there were stationed at the post officers of the British Indian Department, which had responsibility for managing British relations with the Indian tribes. The British Indian Department negotiated the purchase of the island from the Indian proprietors and maintained the friendship of the Indians by annual councils with the various tribes at which presents were given to the Indians and speeches exchanged. In theory the Indian Department had sole responsibility for dealings with the Indians and was independent of the commanding officer at the post. However, the commanding officers at Fort St. Joseph always took a great deal of interest in what was happening among the Indian tribes of the area, and frequently interfered in the management of the Indian Department at the post. As relations between the United States and Great Britain grew worse after 1805, the attitude of the Indians became even more important. No matter how unreliable as

allies some Indian tribes might be, it was realized that as enemies they would be extremely dangerous, particularly at such an isolated post as Fort St. Joseph.

When war broke out in 1812, most of the Indian tribes of the northwest frontier were only too ready to help the British in hopes of ending the threat to their lands and way of life posed by the rapid western expansion of American settlement. At Fort St. Joseph the commanding officer gathered a force of Indians and fur trade employees to augment his small garrison and attacked and captured the American fort at Michilimackinac. Once in command of Michilimackinac, the British gradually abandoned Fort St. Joseph, and the civilians who had lived there followed their example. Holding Michilimackinac, the British were able to maintain control of the Upper Lakes throughout the war. It was from Michilimackinac that an expedition was launched in 1814 to dislodge the Americans from the fort which they had built at Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi near the mouth of the Wisconsin River. The war ended with the British in possession of the Upper Lakes and of the upper Mississippi Valley, but by the peace treaty all captured territory was to be returned. An American expedition which had been sent from Detroit in the summer of 1814 to attempt to recapture Michilimackinac had burnt most of Fort St. Joseph. When Michilimackinac was returned to the Americans in 1815 the



British chose not to rebuild at Fort St. Joseph, but constructed a new fort on Drummond Island. The commission appointed to establish the American-Canadian boundary on the Great Lakes awarded Drummond Island to the United States. In 1828, therefore, the British garrison left the island and moved to Penetanguishene, on the eastern side of Lake Huron. St. Joseph Island was left abandoned.

Although St. Joseph Island was never able to rival Michilimackinac as a centre of trade a small settlement grew up around the fort. The way of life which developed in both the settlement and the fort was strongly affected by the isolation of the post. Everything which could not be grown or made at the post had to be brought in during the short shipping season. For a few weeks in summer when merchants, traders and Indians visited the post there was a bustle of activity. Then a long spell of quiet set in when the few year-round inhabitants were almost completely cut off from the rest of the world. Quarrels between officers and civilians assumed a greater importance because of the isolation and small number of people at the post. For officers and men Fort St. Joseph was usually an undesirable posting. Officers frequently requested a transfer; the men made attempts at desertion, which were sometimes successful.

A history of Fort St. Joseph must take into account not only the construction of the fort itself but the activities of the Indian Department and of the fur traders and the way of life which grew up in this little settlement.

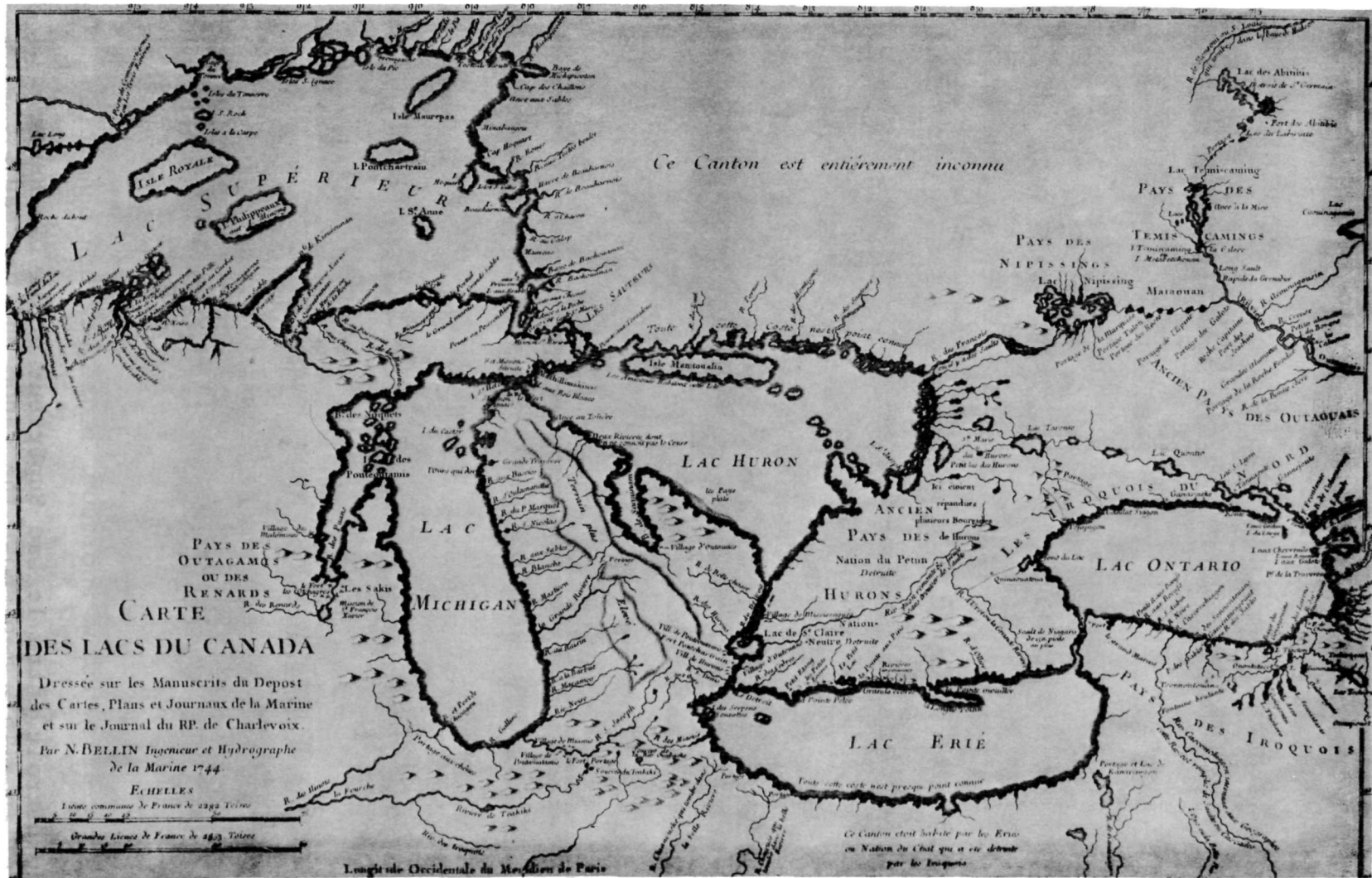
## THE FRENCH PRESENCE ON ST. JOSEPH ISLAND?

The fort whose ruins can now be seen on St. Joseph Island was built at the end of the eighteenth century, but the island itself must have been known long before. The island lay in the centre of the westward expansion of the fur trade routes and was near important French mission posts and military forts. Various histories of the island and of the surrounding area have made statements about French posts on the island which have to be examined closely.

The question of a French presence on St. Joseph Island, as with other questions relating to the island, becomes entangled with the problem of names. If a person or a post is recorded as being at St. Joseph, which St. Joseph is meant? As St. Joseph was regarded as the patron saint of New France the name was a very popular one, given to many sites. When the Jesuits with their small band of Huron converts fled from Sainte Marie among the Hurons in 1649 they moved for a time to an island which they called St. Joseph. The fact that this island was called St. Joseph and was near a place called Sainte Marie became garbled into a

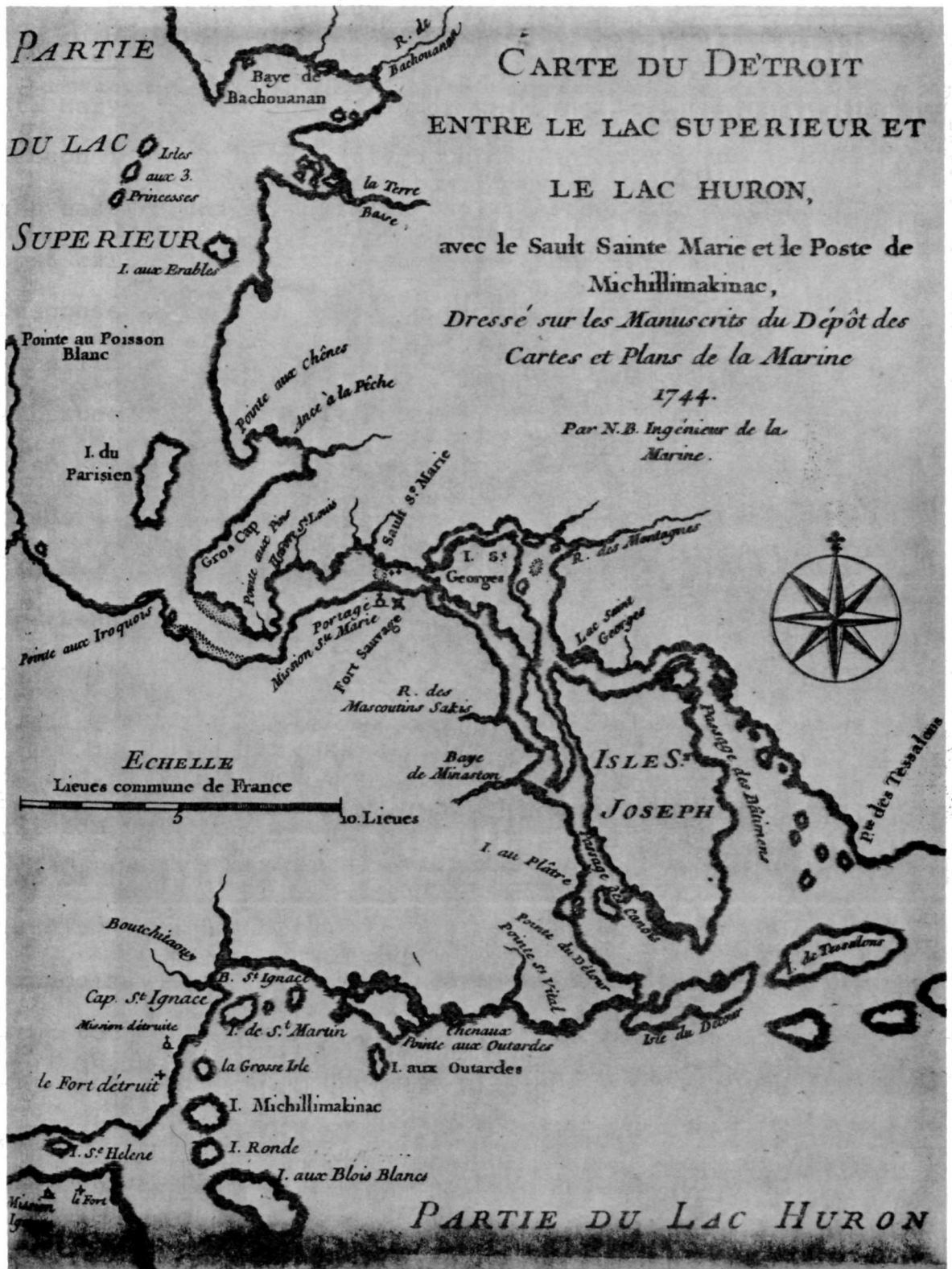
story, perpetuated in the latest edition of the Encyclopedia Canadiana, that the Jesuits fled to St. Joseph Island in the St. Mary's River. The island which the Jesuits called St. Joseph in 1649 is now called Christian Island and is near the eastern end of Georgian Bay. Another St. Joseph was a post called Fort St. Joseph established in 1686 as a response to English attempts to capture the trade of Michilimackinac. This post was located, however, near the entrance of the St. Clair River into Lake Huron. There are also references during the French era and later to fur traders at St. Joseph, but these relate to various posts on the St. Joseph River which runs into Lake Michigan from the southeast.

Although forts and missions were shown on many French maps of the area none show a post or mission on St. Joseph Island.<sup>1</sup> Early maps tended to show several small islands in the St. Mary's River (for instance, the Champlain map of 1632) or one long island (for example, a Jesuit map of 1660). In a map illustrating the travels of the Sulpicians François Dollier de Casson and René de Bréhant de Galinée, sent to France in 1670, this island is called Anipich, which may be the origin of the name of Neebish Island. One group of maps shows three islands in the St. Mary's River. They seem to follow a Jesuit map of Lake Superior, ca. 1670. A 1700 map shows Isle du Détour, which appears to be the island now known as Drummond Island, but no islands to the



3 Carte des lacs du Canada, by N. Bellin. This and the following map appeared in Charlevoix's Histoire de la Nouvelle France in 1774. Indian settlements, forts, and missions are shown but none is indicated on St. Joseph Island.





- 4 Carte du Détroit entre le Lac Supérieur et le Lac Huron, by N. Bellin. This map shows the canoe and batteau routes passing on either side of St. Joseph Island and is probably the map Simcoe referred to when he expressed doubts that the island was British territory.

west of this. A map by Chassegras de Léry in 1725 shows three islands in the St. Mary's River, one of which, possibly the one now known as Drummond Island, is called Isle St. Jean. Henry Popple in his 1733 map returns to the idea of one long island in the St. Mary's River. A map of 1735 seems to be the first to use the name Isle St. Joseph. This map gives a fair amount of detail for the area of the St. Mary's River. St. Joseph Island is shown reasonably accurately and later French maps show the island much the same, though not always mentioning its name. Bellin's map of 1744 shows all the forts and missions in the area including those which had been abandoned, but there is no sign of any post on St. Joseph Island. The only map to give any name other than St. Joseph to the island is a British map of the St. Mary's River enclosed in a letter from Dorchester to Portland, 18 April 1796, which labels the island "Cariboux Id. or St. Josephs Id."

There is, however, one reference to a French post in the area. In the summer of 1784 Captain Daniel Robertson set out from Michilimackinac on an exploring trip to look for suitable sites for a new post. When the terms of the Treaty of Paris ending the American Revolution had become known, it was assumed that Michilimackinac would soon have to be given up to the Americans. Governor Frederick Haldimand had suggested locations which he felt Robertson

should investigate including one he referred to as "La Traverse, about fifteen leagues from Michilimackinac".<sup>2</sup> After visiting the Sault and then exploring the mouth of the Thessalon River, which he considered the best spot for a post, Robertson set out in search of "the (supposed) Traverse", which it took him eight and a half hours to reach. He explored the south eastern part of the island and found "some remains of an old french building (supposed to be a store House) but the foundation is now quite covered with Shrubs and Bramble."<sup>3</sup> It is possible that the island on which Robertson found the ruins of a French storehouse was St. Joseph Island but the name La Traverse is not given to the island on any map. The only "Traverse" on any contemporary plan is "Grande Traverse" (now Grand Traverse Bay) on Bellin's map which appeared in the 1744 edition of Charlevoix's Histoire de la Nouvelle France. Drummond Island, however, appears on several early maps as Isle du Détour, which is closer to La Traverse than any name given to St. Joseph Island. On the other hand, the description Robertson gives sounds somewhat more like St. Joseph Island than Drummond Island. The description of the ruins is too slight to tell what sort of building they represent. Robertson did not consider La Traverse a suitable place for a post, and in any cast it was decided not to give up Michilimackinac at that time.

There is some concrete evidence of an early post or habitation on St. Joseph Island, but who established it, or why is unknown. In the summer of 1796 Lieutenant Foster, who had been ordered to take a detachment of men to St. Joseph Island to establish a post, reported that "the place we have fixed on for building our huts is on a little eminence close to the shore, about ten feet above the level of the lake and two hundred yards East of an old French Intrenchment... --this spot...is higher and dryer than any we could find, the wood is very thin having been I imagine once cleared....The aspect is South East."<sup>4</sup> If this spot could be found and investigated we might obtain some information about the early history of St. Joseph Island.

The first white man whom we can definitely identify as having travelled up the St. Mary's River was Etienne Brulé. There are some suggestions that the Norsemen may have penetrated the continent as far as Lake Superior and even stories that they worked the copper mines there, but these have not been proven. By 1600 much of the eastern coastline of North America had been visited and the fisheries were well established, but there had been little attempt to penetrate inland or to establish permanent settlements. An interest in settlement and colonization was, however, developing. In 1608 Samuel de Champlain built a habitation at Quebec. Champlain was deeply interested in exploring

further inland in hopes of finding a water route to the Pacific and of expanding the fur trade. In 1609 he travelled up the Richelieu River and in 1611 he was at the Lachine Rapids. As well as continuing to press inland himself Champlain sent some of his young men to live with the Indians to learn their language, and to find out what they could about the lands to the westward. Etienne Brulé had been sent to live among the Hurons. By the winter of 1618-19 he had reached Manitoulin Island and by 1622 he was at the Sault, which he named Sault de Gaston, in honour of the brother of the King of France. In reaching the Sault, Brulé must have passed St. Joseph Island, and may even have landed there. Champlain's map of 1632 shows the Mer Douce (Lake Huron); west of this is the Grand Lac (Lake Superior), and at the head of the river joining them the Sault de Gaston. Many small islands are shown in the river, but not named. Another explorer and trader sent out by Champlain was Jean Nicolet. In the summer of 1634 Nicolet, escorted by some Hurons, made his way to Lake Huron by the Ottawa River route. He followed the strait leading to Lake Superior, pausing at the rapids. Going on to Lake Michigan he entered Green Bay and went up the Fox River, making contact with the Indians of the Wisconsin area.

French missionaries as well as fur traders began to push inland from Quebec. By the late 1630's the Jesuits had

established missions to the Hurons in the area between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay. In 1641, at a gathering of several tribes in Huronia, the Jesuits met the Ojibway or Chippewas. That fall Father Charles Raymbault and Father Isaac Jogues travelled to the Sault, which they renamed Sault Ste. Marie, and preached to the Indians there. Meanwhile the Iroquois were preparing for an all-out offensive against the Hurons, who had become the middlemen bringing the furs to the French from the hunting Indians to the west. In 1649 the Jesuit missions in Huronia were wiped out and the missionaries and their few surviving converts moved back to the settled area along the St. Lawrence. As a result of the disruptions caused by the Iroquois wars the fur trade dwindled. In response adventurous traders began to make greater efforts to penetrate the interior, and to evade both the Iroquois blockade and the monopoly of the fur trade which had been established in the colony. In the search for furs, two brothers-in-law, Pierre Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart des Grosseilliers, spent the years 1658-1660 wandering in the area of the upper Great Lakes. They are said to have spent the winter of 1659-60 at the Sault before returning to Quebec with an enormous load of furs, which was immediately confiscated. Other adventurous traders left the settlements along the St. Lawrence in search of furs and the Jesuit missionaries also ventured further into the interior. In

1665 Father Claude Allouez was sent to establish a mission at Chequamegon Bay on Lake Superior. He followed the long established route via the Ottawa and Nipissing Rivers and by early September had reached Sault Ste. Marie. Allouez spoke of the St. Mary's River as "pleasing, not only on account of the Islands intercepting its course and the great bays bordering it, but because of the fishing and hunting, which are excellent there."<sup>5</sup> Allouez and his guides found a resting place for the night on one of the islands, but it is impossible to say which one was the site of their camp.

Three years after Allouez arrived at Chequamegon, Father Marquette established a mission at Sault Ste. Marie, which was already a meeting place for traders. In 1670 Galinée reported that there were often twenty-five or thirty French traders there.<sup>6</sup> In June 1671 a solemn ceremony of annexation took place at Sault Ste. Marie. With great pageantry the Sieur de Saint Luson took possession of all the lands around the western lakes in the name of the King of France. Meanwhile the Hurons and Ottawas of Chequamegon had foolishly picked a quarrel with the Sioux, were defeated and were forced to flee the area. Father Marquette, who had taken over the Chequamegon mission, went to Michilimackinac with a group of these Indians and in the summer of 1671 established a mission on the north shore of the straits.

Michilimackinac rapidly became an important trading centre. With the westward expansion of the fur trade of New France, Michilimackinac's share of this trade grew. To Michilimackinac came the trade from the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, from the posts on the Illinois and St. Joseph rivers, from Green Bay and from Chequamegon. The French traders faced rivalry from the English, Dutch and Iroquois to the south of the Great Lakes. Following the failure of a French expedition against the Iroquois in 1684 an expedition from Albany reached Michilimackinac in the fall of 1685 and returned home laden with furs. A second party of traders from Albany reached Michilimackinac in 1687 but were not able to return successfully to Albany. The chief menace to French control of the Great Lakes was the power of the Iroquois, and this menace reached a new height in the summer of 1689 when an Iroquois army destroyed the settlements on the exposed parts of Montreal Island. Following the outbreak of war between France and England the Count de Frontenac had been appointed to a second term as governor of New France and he arrived at Quebec in the fall of 1689. Frontenac pushed forward a vigorous offensive against the English and Iroquois and also strengthened the western posts. Despite this the French were unable to maintain an absolute monopoly of the fur trade of the west. Traders from the English colonies were still finding their way into



the western lands where the comparative cheapness of the English trade goods attracted the western Indians.

Despite the importance of the western posts as the chief barrier protecting the French fur trade the French government decided to evacuate all these posts. In May 1696 a royal ordinance was issued revoking all licenses for the fur trade and prohibiting all colonials from carrying goods to the west. The officers and garrisons of the western posts were to be recalled, leaving only the missionaries in the area. The immediate reason for this change in policy was economic. Markets in France were being flooded with furs, but because France was at war with most of the rest of Europe there were no foreign markets for these furs. As a result prices fell drastically causing great distress to the merchants. It was hoped that the withdrawal from the west would lessen the flood of furs and raise prices. Another reason for the new policy was the wish of the missionaries to free the Indians from the harmful influence of the soldiers and the coureurs de bois.

The plan to bring the traders back from the interior and focus the fur trade at Montreal did not succeed. The Indians did not want to make the long trip to Montreal and the coureurs de bois did not want to abandon the free life of the woods and return to the settled areas. Attempts to subdue those who persisted in trading illegally scattered

the coureurs de bois even further. The country was left open to outside traders and many of the Indians went to Albany. In order to re-establish French power in the west it was decided to place garrisons at a few strategic points. French colonists were to be concentrated around the posts and Indian allies to be settled nearby. The straits between Lake Huron and Lake Erie were chosen for one of these posts and in 1701 the post of Detroit was founded. The Indians from Michilimackinac were drawn to Detroit for a time and the missionaries had at last to follow them, but after a few years the trade of Michilimackinac was re-established. It was not until 1750 that the post at Sault Ste. Marie was re-established. In 1761 there were about thirty families at Michilimackinac, depending for their living on the traders going to and from Montreal. At Sault Ste. Marie there were four houses, the only family being that of the interpreter, M. Cadotte.<sup>7</sup> With the two posts of the Sault and Michilimackinac so close it is not likely that any trading post existed on the islands between. St. Joseph Island, however, being about half way from Michilimackinac to the Sault, may have been used as a convenient resting place on the journey between the two posts.

By mid 17th century French explorers, traders and missionaries had passed up the St. Mary's River and presumably at least seen St. Joseph Island. However, it was

not until the next century that the islands in the river were represented on maps with any degree of accuracy, indicating that there was no interest in the individual islands other than as temporary resting places for those proceeding further west. From the beginning of French interest in the area the Straits of Mackinac and the head of the St. Mary's River seem to have been the two important sites for traders and missionaries. It was not until late in the French period that St. Joseph Island was identified by this name on maps and there is no indication of any permanent post there.

## EARLY INDIANS OF THE AREA

The two major forces which pushed the French into the interior of North America were the desire to obtain furs from the Indians and the zeal of the missionaries to convert the Indians to Christianity. The Indians played a key role in both cases. They provided the motivation for a drive into the interior and were the first and most knowledgeable guides. On the other hand, hostility from some Indians was the greatest obstacle to be overcome in any attempt to penetrate the interior. Whether the Indians were a hindrance or a help depended in part upon the shifting alliances and enmities of the various tribes, and in part upon which tribes were encountered. Before the arrival of the Europeans in the area the Indians of the upper Great Lakes had evolved networks of trade and important travel routes which were to be utilized by the newcomers. The pattern of distribution of the tribes in the area was not a stable one, as it was disrupted by wars, famine and disease. The flight of the Hurons westward from the villages east of Georgian Bay in the mid 17th century, the French wars

against the Fox Indians of the Wisconsin area in the first half of the 18th century and the pressure to the west from the Sioux all caused disturbances as tribes moved from one locality to another in response to these pressures. During most of this period, despite the shifting pattern of habitations, the area between Lakes Huron, Superior and Michigan was in general inhabited by Chippewas and Ottawas who were important as middlemen in the fur trade and as the most consistent allies of the French. In the area to the west of Lake Michigan were various Algonquin tribes whose friendship to the French was much less certain.

By the end of the 16th century the agricultural Indians of the Huron-Iroquois family who had met Cartier in the late 1530's had been driven from the St. Lawrence Valley. When Champlain founded the first settlement at Quebec in 1608 the area was inhabited by Algonquin and Montagnais Indians who were at war with the Iroquois--a war in which the French soon became involved. This involvement was to set the pattern for future French relations with the Indians--almost constant enmity from the Iroquois and consequent alliances with many of the tribes whom the Iroquois attacked. At times there were brief periods of truce with the Iroquois but these were only minor interruptions in a general state of warfare.

As the French pushed westward they encountered the Hurons, who lived in several large villages between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay. South of the Hurons were their allies and kindred the Petuns or Tobacco Indians, and the Neutrals. The Hurons were agricultural in habit and keen traders. They soon established themselves as middlemen in the fur trade, trying to keep the other tribes from contact with the French. Their increasing involvement in supplying furs for the French led to neglect of their agriculture and left the Huron settlements more exposed to attack by the Iroquois.<sup>1</sup> The Neutrals, although trying to remain uninvolved in the Huron and Iroquois war, were by the 1640's at war with the Algonquin tribes to the west, pushing them westward toward the shores of Lake Michigan. On the other side of the lake the Winnebagos who lived near Green Bay were at this time almost wiped out by war and disease. In Huronia the Iroquois, who were competing for furs with the tribes allied with the French, and who had been able to obtain large supplies of firearms and ammunition from the Dutch in the upper Hudson River valley, increased their attacks on the Hurons. Huron villages were destroyed and by 1650 the surviving remnants of the Huron tribes had fled from Huronia. The Iroquois then turned on the Neutrals and the Tobacco Indians and destroyed these nations.

The destruction of the Huron, Neutral and Tobacco nations and the flight of the surviving remnants of these nations to the westward resulted in a general upheaval among the tribes to the west. Ottawa, Sauk, Mascouten and Kickapoo Indians fled from Michigan to Wisconsin to avoid war with the Iroquois confederacy. When the tribes from the Georgian Bay area moved to the area around Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, the Ottawa tribes who had been living around Manitoulin Island and Michilimackinac and the Saulteurs or Chippewas of the Sault were driven to the southern shores of Lake Superior, particularly around Chequamegon Bay, and to the shores of Green Bay on Lake Michigan. In 1671 the Indians living near Chequamegon Bay were forced by attacks from the Sioux to the south to move to Michilimackinac. By the late 1650's central Wisconsin was inhabited by Algonquin tribes such as the Sauks, Foxes, Mascouten and Kickapoo, among whom dwelt a remnant of the Winnebagos.<sup>2</sup> Because these Algonquin tribes were unfamiliar with the use of the canoe, the Ottawas and Saulteurs, who were excellent canoemen, succeeded the Hurons as the middlemen in the fur trade.

The increasing desire of the western Indians for European goods, the emergence of the Ottawas as middlemen, and long periods of tribal warfare greatly affected Indian life and the organization of the fur trade. By the end of

the 17th century those Algonquin bands in the interior of Wisconsin who had not been forced out of the area by the Iroquois wars or by famine had settled in locations such as Green Bay where they had access to goods brought by the middlemen. Settlements were also made near French posts. In response to a royal ordinance of 1696 prohibiting all colonials from carrying goods to the western country, the western posts were abandoned. It quickly became apparent, however, that there had to be some posts in the west as the Indians were no longer willing to make the long journey to Montreal to sell their furs. It was realized that garrisons must be established at a few strategic points in the west and in order to strengthen these posts it was decided to encourage colonists to concentrate around them and to settle Indian allies nearby. When Detroit was founded in 1701 friendly Indian tribes such as the Hurons, Ottawas and Potawatomies were encouraged to settle along the Detroit River. In an effort to subdue the Fox Indians the Sieur de Cadillac, commanding at Detroit, invited them in 1710 to move to his post. They soon clashed with the tribes already settled there. With French assistance the Foxes were defeated and most of those who had settled near Detroit were wiped out. There were, however, some bands of Fox Indians still in the Wisconsin area, who sought revenge for the slaughter of their kindred by destroying any Frenchman or



Indian allied to the French within their territory. A military expedition sent out against them succeeded only in patching up a very temporary peace. The Foxes, still resentful of the way they had been treated by the French and at the same time feeling increasing pressure from the Chippewas who were expanding into the Lake region of northern Wisconsin, began building up a confederacy of tribes hostile to the French. A military force sent into Wisconsin in 1728 by Governor Beauharnois forced the Foxes to retreat and the confederacy began to break up. Neighbouring Indians began to attack them, eventually wiping out a large part of the tribe. The remaining Foxes fled to the west along with the Sauks of Green Bay, who had been attacked by the French for sheltering some Foxes.

The end of the Fox wars did not bring peace to the Upper Lakes. The blocking of the Fox-Wisconsin and Chicago-Illinois routes by the hostility of the Foxes had resulted in the development of the St. Joseph-Wabash and Maumee-Wabash routes, leading to conflicts with English traders. The long continuing war between the Sioux and the Chippewas broke out with increased virulence, forcing the French to abandon a post they had established in Sioux territory. The Anglo-French wars of the mid 18th century were harmful to the fur trade because the loss of French merchant vessels

drastically reduced the quantity of goods which reached New France. As the French could no longer supply their Indian allies with the goods upon which they had become dependent several tribes defected for a time at least. The chief allies of the French were the Chippewas and Ottawas, the former living on the island of Michilimackinac, at the head of Thunder Bay on Lake Huron and on the shores of the St. Mary's River, and the latter living chiefly at L'Arbre Croche on the shore of Lake Michigan. Along the Fox-Wisconsin route lived the Sauks, Foxes and Winnebagos, who were much more luke warm in their alliance with the French. When news of the capitulation of Montreal in 1760 reached the western posts, the commandant at Michilimackinac prepared to depart rather than face the humiliation of handing the garrison and post over to a British officer. Taking all he could from the fort, he set out with all his troops for the Illinois, being joined on his way by the garrison from Green Bay.<sup>3</sup> The Indians of the area were left in a very perturbed and restless state, angered at the conduct of both French and English. It was not till late in 1761 that English troops arrived to garrison Michilimackinac, Green Bay and Sault Ste. Marie. They found that many of the French inhabitants of the area had been busy trying to build up the hostility of the local Indians

to the English and had continued spreading rumours that French troops would soon return.

The attitude of the Indians towards the French and English was greatly influenced by the behaviour of individual traders, who had usually lived in the Indian villages for a time and often married into one of the tribes. By the mid 18th century trade had become highly dependent on such individual traders. Furs were collected over increasingly wider areas and the ability of a trader in dealing with the Indians was of overriding importance. Because of the larger distances and greater bulk of commodities involved, large numbers of voyageurs had become essential to the trade. Expenditures on wages, supplies and the purchase of goods in France were increasingly great and the return on money expended was slow. At the end of the French period a fairly stable organization had grown up in which merchants in Quebec and Montreal were represented by correspondents at Detroit and other points, who in turn outfitted the individual traders. Out of this arrangement there grew up a type of profit-sharing or partnership between the trader in the interior and the Montreal merchant.<sup>4</sup>

The key to the successful operation of the fur trade was, however, the relationship between the individual trader and the Indians. This relationship influenced the attitude of the Indians to governments and to conflicts between governments in the interior.

## THE ENGLISH CONQUEST

Though the Michilimackinac area was remote from the scenes of battle in the Seven Years War it felt the effects of the conflict. Several of the Indian tribes of the Upper Lakes, particularly those removed from the major French posts, had for various reasons become friendly, or at least not hostile, to the English. The tribes which had remained loyal to the French did not see why their loyalties should be changed by the results of battles so far away. When the news that the Governor of New France had surrendered the entire colony to the English reached the Upper Lakes, the French troops departed. The Indians, feeling betrayed, refused to accept the idea that the area was to come under control of the English. The first English traders to venture into the area felt the hostility of the Indian tribes, which after the arrival of English troops to garrison the former French posts smouldered for a time and then erupted into open warfare. Despite the hopes of the Indians and of the French settlers in the area, French troops did not return. Control of the trade of the area

shifted from the hands of the French, who, however, continued to be important because of their long experience in the trade.

The trade of the interior was badly disrupted during the Seven Years War. The blockade of the St. Lawrence which prevented goods reaching Montreal cut off the upper country from its usual supplies. Merchants from Albany had always been interested in diverting the trade of the upper country from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson River route, and after the capitulation of Montreal in the late summer of 1760 English-speaking merchants from the south, and particularly from Albany, saw a new opportunity to increase their trade. Among the first English merchants to arrive in the Michilimackinac area was Alexander Henry, who left a detailed account of his journey to Michilimackinac in the summer of 1761 and of conditions and events in that area during the first years after the departure of the French garrisons. On his way to Montreal from Kingston in the winter of 1760-1761 Henry had stopped at the home of a M. Leduc, the seigneur of Ile Perrot. Leduc had formerly been engaged in the fur trade and had told Henry of the riches of the trade at Michilimackinac. Once he reached Montreal Henry arranged for the services of a guide and then made a speedy trip to Albany to purchase goods for the Indian trade, as there were none available in Montreal at

the time. On his return to Montreal, Henry engaged as his assistant Etienne Campion, who had some experience in the fur trade. In general most of the English traders who came to Canada after the conquest worked with Canadians who knew the fur trade. Henry obtained permission from General Gage, the military governor of Montreal, to go to Michilimackinac and in early August he set out from Lachine with his brigade of canoes. All along the route Henry heard rumours of discontent among the Indian tribes and of hatred for the English. Before he reached Michilimackinac he decided it would be wisest to disguise himself as a Canadian and let Campion pass as the proprietor of the outfit. However, the inhabitants at Michilimackinac soon saw through this subterfuge and warned him of the great risk he ran in staying there. At this time the French garrison had left the fort but no British troops had yet arrived. The residents of Michilimackinac suggested to Henry that he would be wise to escape to Detroit to avoid being murdered by the Indians. Campion, however, told Henry that in his opinion the Indians were not as hostile as were the Canadians, who were jealous of the English traders. The inhabitants of Michilimackinac, who gained their living from the traders who assembled there on their voyages to and from Montreal, saw this living jeopardised by the arrival of English traders. When the Chippewa band from the island of

Michilimackinac arrived at the fort to see Henry they announced that as he had come to bring them trade goods they would regard him as a friend. The Ottawas of L'Arbre Croche heard of the arrival of English traders and they too travelled to Michilimackinac. By this time Henry had sorted his goods into outfits and hired interpreters and clerks to take them to the St. Peters River and to Lake Superior. The Ottawas expressed annoyance that the goods were to be sent away from their district and demanded large amounts of merchandise on credit from Henry and the two other merchants who had arrived from Montreal. As the Ottawas had a bad reputation for not paying for what they received on credit, the merchants refused and prepared to fight for their lives if necessary. Fortunately, at this point a detachment of British soldiers arrived to garrison the fort and the merchants were able to send off their canoes as they had originally intended.<sup>1</sup>

As can be seen from Henry's experiences the Indian tribes all along the western frontier were discontented and inclined towards hostility to the British. There were many reasons for this. After the French lost control of the Ohio Valley the Indians saw the inrush of American settlers threatening their very existence. They contrasted the behaviour of the Americans, who were beginning to occupy large tracts of Indian lands and who often treated the

Indians as animals rather than men, with that of the French, who had treated them as friends, brought presents, usually dealt fairly in trade and been interested in trading with them rather than turning their hunting grounds into agricultural settlements. French hunters and traders were still widely scattered among the Indians and kept them in a state of agitation, putting the English in as black a light as possible, and predicting that the French would soon recapture Canada. The slowness with which the far western posts were garrisoned by British troops lent credence to these rumours. Moreover, in an attempt at economy General Jeffery Amherst, the British commander in chief in North America, had decided to discontinue the expensive annual presents to the Indians. At a council held with the Indians in September 1761 at Detroit, Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of Indian affairs, informed the gathering that he, and by implication the British government, regarded the Wyandots as the leaders of the western Indians, who were mostly Algonquin tribes formerly allied to the French.<sup>2</sup>

Johnson's preference for the Wyandots angered the Ottawa chief Pontiac, who had expected in return for his professed friendship for the British to be recognized as a paramount leader among the western Indians. During the winter of 1762-63 discontent among the Indians grew. War belts from the Senecas in the east and the preaching of the



Delaware prophet, who condemned the effects of the whites on the Indians' way of life, led to plotting against the English. In May 1763 Pontiac attacked the fort at Detroit. As word of this spread other posts were attacked. Detroit and Fort Pitt withstood the Indian onslaught but all along the frontier other posts were taken, settlers murdered and their houses burned, traders captured and their belongings looted.

At Michilimackinac the Chippewas, learning that Pontiac had begun a war to drive the British out of the country, planned their own surprise attack. The commanding officer of the post at Michilimackinac, having refused to heed the warnings of the traders about the hostility of the Indians and the rumours of war, permitted the Indians to gather at the post in much larger numbers than usual. In honour of the King's birthday, 4 June, the Indians proposed playing a game of lacrosse, the Chippewas against some visiting Sauks. In the course of the game the ball was hit into the fort. The Indians chasing after it grabbed their hatchets from the squaws, who were standing around the entrance to the fort, and attacked the English. Many of the soldiers and officers were killed and the rest taken prisoner, while the Canadians of the village remained aloof. When planning their attack on the fort the Chippewas had neither informed the neighbouring Ottawas of L'Arbre Croche nor invited them to

join. As a result the latter were annoyed and refused to join in further attacks on the English.

Michilimackinac was not the only fort in the upper country where English troops had taken possession after 1760. Detachments had also been stationed at Sault Ste. Marie, Green Bay and St. Joseph (on the St. Joseph River). In late 1762 the fort at Sault Ste. Marie burnt down and the troops were withdrawn to Michilimackinac. Fort St. Joseph was captured 25 May 1763 by a party of Potawatomes who had come from Detroit. In the area of Green Bay were powerful tribes who had not been as close allies of the French as the Chippewas and Ottawas had been. Because the English officer in charge of that post had used great tact with the Indians, the Sauk, Fox, and Winnebago bands who were at the fort at the time declared themselves supporters of the English. The commanding officer, his garrison and a deputation from these Indians left Green Bay, crossing Lake Michigan to L'Arbre Croche, where the Ottawas were holding as prisoners the survivors from Michilimackinac. The Ottawas were persuaded to take their prisoners down to Montreal for ransom. The Indians of the Michilimackinac area continued restless throughout the rest of 1763, several times almost deciding to send warriors to aid Pontiac at the siege of Detroit. In the spring of 1764, however, they decided to send deputies to a council held by Johnson at Niagara. Johnson's efforts

were successful and the tribes agreed to peace terms.<sup>4</sup>

An army under Colonel John Bradstreet raised the siege of Detroit and Captain Howard, with a detachment of troops, was sent to Michilimackinac. The smaller posts were not reoccupied.

Even before peace was established Johnson had been considering the problems of managing and regulating the trade with the Indians. He decided that the trade should be confined to specifically named posts and proposed that it be placed under the control of the superintendent of Indian affairs (namely himself). He further proposed that he should station a commissary at each post to control the traders, adjust prices and see that the regulations were observed. Each trader was to be licensed by the province from which he set forth, and within the Indian territory he was to be under the control of the Indian Department.<sup>5</sup> The Board of Trade drew up a tentative plan along the lines of Johnson's proposals, and Johnson was authorized by the new commander in chief to put the plan into operation as he saw fit. The essential feature of Johnson's plan, the restriction of trade to the forts where the traders could be supervised and the regulations enforced, proved, however, impossible to put into effect. Commanding officers of the posts granted permission to some traders to winter with the Indians; this naturally led to complaints from traders who

were not granted such permission. At Michilimackinac, Captain Howard granted to Alexander Henry the trade of Lake Superior. Goddard and Bostwick, who had also been at Michilimackinac at the time of the Indian rising, were allowed to go to Green Bay.<sup>6</sup> The Indians preferred to have the traders winter with them and trade in their villages, rather than being forced to go to the designated posts to trade. At the same time, the British government, trying to economize after a long and costly war, was not prepared to pay for the large garrisons which would have been necessary to enforce Johnson's scheme. There were numerous protests against these attempts at control, and more and more traders were evading the regulations and going out to the Indian villages. Major Robert Rogers, newly appointed commandant at Michilimackinac, sent out agents to the various Indian tribes in 1766 inviting them to attend a grand council the following June. Fearing that the trade of the western Indians might be captured by the Spaniards on the Mississippi he gave these Indians as many presents as he could. In order to obtain presents for the Indians Rogers borrowed heavily from the local traders, involving many of them in ruin when he was later arrested on a charge of treason. Rogers had not obtained authority for many of his actions at Michilimackinac and had acted independently of the Indian Department commissary in his dealings with

Indians and traders. Johnson's attempt to confine the trade to the posts and keep the management of all relations with the Indians, including trade, under his control was failing. Garrisons were withdrawn from all the frontier posts except those at Niagara, Detroit and Michilimackinac, and management of Indian affairs was restored to the various colonies.<sup>7</sup>

From Michilimackinac the trade was being pushed further and further west and was rapidly increasing in volume. In 1767 121 canoe loads of trade goods were sent out from Michilimackinac, a large proportion of these going to the southwest, either by way of Lake Michigan or by the south shore of Lake Superior. Fewer of the traders at Michilimackinac came from Albany, as the Albany traders were turning to Detroit.<sup>8</sup> By 1768 English traders from Montreal were beginning to penetrate beyond Lake Winnipeg.<sup>9</sup> When Jonathon Carver visited Grand Portage in 1767 he found it in general use by those engaged in the northwest trade. Carver noted not only the trade but other possibilities of the Lake Superior area, particularly large deposits of copper which he thought might be profitably exploited. He suggested that the metal "could be conveyed in boats or canoes through the Falls of St. Marie to the Isle of St. Joseph, which lies at the bottom of the Straights near the entrance into Lake Huron; from thence it

might be put on board larger vessels, and in them transported across that Lake to the Falls of Niagara."<sup>10</sup> The idea of transshipping goods at St. Joseph Island was probably not original with Carver. The merchants may have considered using the island for this purpose and may even have done so, though no evidence of this has been found. Certainly large quantities of goods were being transported to Grand Portage and beyond. In 1755 James McGill, Benjamin Frobisher and Maurice Blondeau obtained a license for twelve canoes with three guides and 75 men and a cargo which included 150 bales and 15 trunks of dry goods and 110 kegs of pork and lard. Trade to the northwest was being carried out on such a large scale that it was becoming difficult for individual traders to operate successfully on an independent basis or even in small partnerships. In the winter of 1775-76 the four different interests who were struggling for the trade of the Saskatchewan area decided to join their stock and at the end of the season divide up the skins and meat. Returns were excellent. This co-operation set a pattern for future arrangements.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile the transfer of the management of Indian affairs to the control of the various colonies had resulted in quarrels over jurisdiction. Quebec merchants protested against taxes imposed by the New York Assembly. The outcome was a redefining of boundaries in the Quebec Act of 1774, by

which the region north of the Ohio was annexed to the Province of Quebec. Civil governments were to be created in the regions of Detroit, Michilimackinac, Vincennes and Kaskaskia and the rest of the area was to be preserved for the Indians and fur traders.<sup>12</sup> This represented a victory for the traders of Quebec and Montreal over those from Albany and New York; it was, however, regarded by the land-hungry American settlers as "intolerable".

## THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND AFTER

British efforts to protect Indian lands from the westward expansion of settlers was one of the irritants which stirred the American colonists into open rebellion. In the struggle which followed, most of the Indian tribes sided with the British. The Upper Lakes remained in British hands during the war. When trade was disrupted and that from the south cut off, the supremacy of the Montreal-based traders became firmly established. Unfortunately, in the peace negotiations the claims of the Indians and of those interested in the fur trade were ignored. The boundary decided upon gave to the Americans much territory important both to the Indians and to the fur trade.

The outbreak of the American Revolution did not make its effects felt at once in the North West. Major de Peyster, who was in command of the fort at Michilimackinac, seems to have considered himself as outside the theatre of war during the first few years. In 1779 Lieutenant Governor Hamilton of Detroit, on an expedition to secure the Wabash settlement for the British interest, was captured by



George Rogers Clark at Vincennes. News of this caused alarm and led to efforts to strengthen the defences of Michilimackinac. However, Clark's proposed expedition against Detroit was delayed and Michilimackinac was not threatened. In the fall of 1779 de Peyster was transferred to Detroit and replaced at Michilimackinac by Lieutenant Governor Patrick Sinclair. Sinclair, after taking one look at Fort Michilimackinac, declared that it was incapable of defence against anything but small arms fire. He considered the existing fort so hopeless that it would be preferable to build a new fort on the island of Michilimackinac, where he had found a fine bay, well sheltered by a small island, which would provide good protection for vessels anchoring there. Around the bay was a large space of lower ground suitable for dwellings and storehouses, and above this a ridge commanding the bay which he thought would be a good site for a fort.<sup>1</sup> During 1780 Sinclair busied himself with plans for his new fort. As much as possible was moved from the old fort, and new buildings and palisades were erected. By the following year the move was completed and the old fort and village of Michilimackinac on the mainland were abandoned. Meanwhile, not solely concerned with defensive measures, Sinclair had fitted out a party of traders and Indians to attack the Spaniards on the Mississippi in the spring of 1780. This expedition met with

little success, however, and the members soon returned north by various routes.

The war never reached Sinclair's new fort but its effects were felt by the traders and Indians of the region. Throughout the war the British maintained firm control on the Upper Lakes. Traders coming from south of the lakes were cut off from the commerce of the Great Lakes and the Upper Mississippi, and the hold of the Montreal merchants on the trade of this area was thereby strengthened. Because of this Simon McTavish, the firm of Phyn and Ellice, and others who had been engaged in supplying the fur trade left Albany and moved to Montreal.<sup>2</sup> In the immediate vicinity of Michilimackinac and to the northwest the Indians remained loyal to the British, but to the southwest it was a different matter. The Potawatomi, Sauk, Fox and Winnebago tribes of the Mississippi, Rock and Wisconsin rivers were allied with the Spanish and the Americans, though a few Winnebagos and most of the Menominees remained friendly to the British. In January 1781 a Spanish raid from St. Louis captured the post on the St. Joseph River.<sup>3</sup> Such plundering expeditions and tribal rivalries hurt the fur trade, particularly on the Mississippi. Because of the disruptions caused by Indian hostilities General Haldimand, the governor of the province of Quebec, requested that Sinclair investigate the possibilities of supplying the

Illinois and Mississippi country from the south side of Lake Superior rather than from Lake Michigan.<sup>4</sup> With the difficulties encountered by the southwest trade and the increasing expansion of the trade west of Lake Superior, Grand Portage was more and more becoming an important centre for the fur trade. To some extent it displaced Michilimackinac, which remained, however, an important source of provisions and canoes. With more and more traders involved in the fur trade and greater and greater expense being incurred, competition was becoming fierce. There had already been some attempts at pooling resources among groups of traders in the west, and the larger merchant houses involved in the trade saw that some form of co-operation would be necessary if chaos was to be avoided and if any profits were to be made. In 1779 a sixteen share partnership was formed, bringing together the Frobishers, Simon McTavish, Isaac Todd, the McGills and others. This agreement was renewed the following year, and during the winter of 1783-84 a five year agreement was concluded and the name North West Company, which had been used unofficially for some time, was applied officially to the new concern. This agreement seems to have marked a splitting up of the areas of trade among the Montreal merchants. By the Treaty of 1783 which ended the Revolutionary War the whole region south of the Great Lakes was ceded to the newly independent United States. At this

time the trade to the southwest was highly important to the merchants of Montreal but now, for at least some of these merchants, continued access to this trade became uncertain. There seem to have been two reactions to this--to get as much as possible out of the southwest trade before it was closed to British and Canadian traders, or to expand into the northwest and abandon the southwest trade to others. Some of the merchants, notably Simon McTavish, apparently decided to shift their emphasis to the northwest, while others, such as the McGills, continued in the southwest trade, counting on its continued domination by traders supplied from Montreal. The North West Company agreement of 1783-84 included only those who were concentrating on the trade to the northwest, while people such as Isaac Todd and James McGill who continued in the southwest trade were not included.<sup>5</sup>

The traders at Michilimackinac had also begun to think in terms of co-operation, particularly in face of the interruptions to trade caused by the Revolutionary War. In 1779 a group of traders, including Ezekiel Solomons who had been at Michilimackinac since the 1760's, requested permission to establish a general store in which all traders might place their goods and pool their receipts. The agreement included 38 individuals who contributed about 35 canoe loads of goods. Although permission was granted and

various trading areas were allotted for the season, the majority of the traders still preferred to pursue a competitive policy. When the agreement expired in 1780 it was not renewed.<sup>6</sup> With the end of the war the quantity of goods for the Indian trade sent to the upper country expanded greatly, and competition increased rapidly. The Montreal merchant houses who supplied the southwest trade, seeing the success of the form of organization developed for the northwest trade, and the disastrous effects of continued competition on their profits, pressed for some form of combination. About 1785 a number of those involved in the Michilimackinac trade formed a partnership known as the Michilimackinac Company, with Todd and McGill as backers and outfitters and Charles Paterson as director of the trade in the Upper Mississippi. Once again this attempt to keep the trade in the hands of one group working together failed after a short time.<sup>7</sup> The smaller amounts of capital needed for the southwest trade made it easier for any of the inhabitants of the area to engage in trade and thus made it difficult for any large organization to control the trade.

During the American Revolution there was considerable apprehension on the part of the British authorities in Canada that trade goods and supplies shipped to the Upper Lakes for the fur trade might be diverted southwards into

rebel hands. As a result of these fears private vessels were banned from the lakes and orders were given that trade goods were to be carried only on the King's vessels. While this did not greatly affect the goods carried by the Ottawa River route, restrictions on the number of passes did.

Despite numerous complaints and petitions from the merchants for relief, which increased in vehemence when the war ended, regulation of the trade continued. As long as shipping on the lakes was restricted to government vessels the merchants felt that their trade would be seriously hampered. In the first place priority would naturally be given to government supplies, resulting in considerable delay for merchants in shipping their goods. As well, the merchants considered that the government vessels did not have sufficient capacity to carry all the goods which they needed to transport on the lakes. The situation was particularly bad on Lake Superior where after 1780, when Lieutenant Governor Sinclair ordered down all the vessels on the lake, there were only boats and canoes available even for the transportation of bulky goods such as provisions. In 1784 the North West Company was given permission to build a small vessel at Detroit which they intended to take up the St. Mary's River and to use to transport supplies and provisions across Lake Superior.<sup>8</sup> The vessel, the Beaver, proved to be too large to get over the rapids in the river, and permission was asked and

granted to use it for transporting provisions from Fort Erie and Detroit to Michilimackinac. Gradually the restrictions were lifted. In 1785 the merchants were permitted to take goods from Montreal to Niagara in their own boats and canoes. In 1787 permission was given to navigate private vessels on Lake Ontario. Private navigation was extended to the Upper Lakes in 1789. In 1790 the North West Company had two vessels of 12 and 15 tons on Lake Superior. By 1793 it had the sloops Beaver and Athabaska on Lakes Erie, Michigan and Huron, mainly carrying goods between Michilimackinac, Detroit and the Sault.<sup>9</sup> As well there were other private vessels on the lakes and trade was rapidly increasing.

Throughout the war and after it British officers at Michilimackinac continued their efforts to keep the Indians of the area friendly. In 1782 Captain Robertson reported a great increase in the Indian Department at Michilimackinac in recent years which he considered to a large degree unnecessary, though he felt there should be members of the Indian Department with the Indians west of Green Bay and at the Sault as well as two interpreters, a storekeeper and a blacksmith at Michilimackinac.<sup>10</sup> The next year Robertson sent George McBeath, one of the local traders, accompanied by Charles Langlade as interpreter, to Prairie du Chien, at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi

rivers, to hold a council among the Indians and speak to them in the interest of peace.<sup>11</sup> McBeath's mission was not a success, and war soon broke out among the western tribes. Indian wars were always detrimental to trade as they prevented the Indians from hunting and endangered the lives of the traders, and the merchants soon reacted to this war. In the spring of 1786 those Montreal merchants interested in the trade of Michilimackinac sent a memorial to Sir John Johnson, Superintendent General of the Indian Department, asking him to do what he could to bring about a peace.<sup>12</sup> In response to this request Johnson sent John Dease from Niagara to Michilimackinac to try to bring peace to the area. By large distributions of presents among the Indians Dease was able to persuade the tribes to agree to a peace, which was, however, of short duration. The merchants of Michilimackinac complained of Dease's actions, accusing him and his assistant Joseph Ainse of embezzling the public stores for their own use and conducting an unfair competition on the Upper Mississippi. Dease was eventually cleared of any wrongdoing, but until this decision was reached he was suspended from his post, while Ainse lost his situation permanently. The problems encountered by Dease illustrate the difficulties faced by any public official at a post such as Michilimackinac.



It was the merchants of Montreal who had asked for the Indian Department's help in establishing peace among the Indians of the upper country, and it was the merchants at Michilimackinac who had complained about the activities of Dease and Aitse. This does not, however, imply a conflict between the two groups of merchants, for their interests were closely allied. In this particular case they all wanted peace among the Indians, but none wished for so large a distribution of presents among the Indians that the latter would not need the merchants' goods. It is not always possible to draw a clear line between Montreal merchants and local traders. Some merchants from Montreal visited Michilimackinac frequently; traders from the upper country sometimes moved to Montreal. In general the more successful, those who were able to accumulate a large amount of capital, gravitated to Montreal, while those who operated on a smaller scale continued to operate out of Michilimackinac or one of the upper posts. As the local traders were indebted to the Montreal merchants from year to year, there was often a problem establishing what debts had priority, for a trader might be indebted to several merchants for various years' outfits. As well as the goods brought from Montreal the traders who went out to the Indian villages needed provisions, which were bought at Michilimackinac. Both Michilimackinac and Grand Portage

were the centres of feverish activity for a short time when the goods arriving from Montreal were distributed to the traders going into the interior, and the furs obtained the previous season were tallied and sent to Montreal. A report on the subject of regulation of the trade of the upper country in 1788 stressed the need for judges resident in the area. For Michilimackinac, however, it was only felt to be necessary for the judges to visit the post during the early summer.<sup>13</sup> While most of Michilimackinac's trade was carried on at this time of year, a number of people resided there year round and had families settled there. For instance, in 1778 the merchants of Michilimackinac sent a petition to Sir Guy Carleton, the governor of Canada, asking that a missionary be sent to the settlement and promising to contribute to the expense of this.<sup>14</sup> The existence of a more or less permanent population at the post was one of the factors which made it difficult to bring about any large scale organization of the trade to the southwest.

By the 1790's there was a fairly stable population resident at Michilimackinac, largely dependent upon the fur trade and closely connected with the Montreal merchants and the local Indians. Although their homes were within American territory, they looked to Montreal and beyond that to England for merchandise and supplies. As well, the only law which existed in the area was British law. As long as

the British garrison remained at Michilimackinac the residents of the little village on the island and those who traded inland from Lake Michigan could ignore the boundary set forth in the Treaty of Paris. The Montreal merchants had made strenuous but unsuccessful efforts to have the question of the border renegotiated and were preparing to deal with the effects of eventual American control of the area which had been placed within American territory by the Treaty of Paris. Trade to the northwest within British territory expanded and through amalgamations of various interests came under the control of one or two large organizations. Trade to the southwest, into territory which would eventually come under American control, continued to flourish, with small traders dealing individually with the Montreal merchants and with the Indians.

## THE WESTERN POSTS AT LAST GIVEN UP

Although the Treaty of Paris had established a boundary line between American and British territories in the North West, the Indians of the area were hostile to the Americans and unwilling to give up their hunting grounds to settlers. They defeated several American forces sent out against them but were at last themselves defeated and forced to come to an agreement with the United States government and recognize the boundary set forth in the Treaty of Paris. After continuing for several years to hold military posts on the American side of the boundary, and even to establish one or two new ones, the British at last agreed to withdraw their troops from American territory. New forts had to be established to replace those given up to the Americans. Eventually St. Joseph Island was decided upon as the location for a post to replace Michilimackinac and maintain the British presence on the Upper Lakes, showing the Indians of the area that they had not been completely abandoned.

In the negotiations leading to the peace treaty of 1783 the claims of the Indians had been virtually ignored by the

British negotiators. Lands which the Indians had held throughout the war were to be ceded to the Americans. When they learned of the provisions of the treaty the Indians felt betrayed. With memories of the Pontiac Rebellion still fresh in their minds the British in North America feared another Indian uprising. According to the boundary laid down in the treaty ending the American Revolution the western posts were in American territory. In the summer of 1783 Washington was already giving instructions to Major General Baron Von Steuben to discuss with Haldimand arrangements for the transfer of the posts to American control. Haldimand, however, refused to discuss the evacuation of the posts with Von Steuben or to allow him to make a tour of inspection, claiming that he must wait for instructions on the subject.<sup>1</sup> Haldimand wanted to retain possession of the posts at least long enough to give the British traders in the area now within American territory time to remove their goods, and to provide an opportunity to reconcile the Indians to the terms of the treaty. Indian resentment of the treaty was so high that it was felt that it would be disastrous for British troops to pull out of the area immediately.

The merchants of Canada too felt that their advice and interests had been completely ignored in the negotiations leading to the treaty. For the North West Company the major

concern was the realisation that Grand Portage, their major inland depot and the meeting place for the Montreal partners and the wintering partners, was located in American territory. When the question of the surrender of the western posts was being discussed the Montreal merchants pressed for a renegotiation of the boundary; if that were impossible, they asked that the route leading westward from Grand Portage be considered an open highway belonging to both parties. They claimed that unless this was done the part of the North West still within British limits would become useless to them. Meanwhile the North West Company were also endeavouring to find a new route to the country west of Lake Superior and suggesting that a monopoly of the trade of the area for ten years would scarcely compensate them for their expense in this enterprise.<sup>2</sup> The greatest concern for the traders as a whole was that so much of the area from which they obtained furs was on the American side of the new boundary. James McGill estimated in 1785 that over half the trade originated in country which was to be within American territory.<sup>3</sup> McGill felt that it would be some time before American traders would be able to take even a small part of this trade away from those supplied by the Montreal houses. It was at this time that a splitting up of areas of trade among the Montreal merchants seems to have taken place, with those forming the North West

Company pursuing the trade west of Lake Superior, which was mostly in British territory, while others, such as McGill, concentrated on the trade based on Michilimackinac.

In reaction to the neglect of their rights shown by the British negotiators at the end of the war, the Indians attempted to form a confederacy to oppose American territorial demands. The Americans meanwhile were trying to organize some form of government for the western territory. In 1787 Arthur St. Clair was appointed governor of the territory north west of the Ohio River and instructed to negotiate a peace with the Indians.<sup>4</sup> Treaties had been signed with some of the tribes, in which the Indians relinquished their claims to lands along the northwest frontier, but the Indians had become so enraged by the Indian policy of the United States that they repudiated all treaties made with the American government. Punitive expeditions sent out against the Indians served mainly to anger the latter still further. Violence along the frontier increased. American forces sent out in 1790 and 1791 to subdue the Indians suffered serious defeats. The Indian victories gave the British government a chance to put forward a plan, long cherished in certain quarters, of a separate Indian state, to be a buffer between British and American territory. This would protect Upper Canada from American territorial ambitions, and preserve some Indian

hunting grounds. The Americans, however, firmly rejected this idea and demanded a surrender of the western posts. In the summer of 1793 the American government sent commissioners to meet with the Indians and discuss a new settlement of the boundaries. Although the Americans offered to pay for lands which the Indians ceded, the negotiations failed. The following year Lord Dorchester, the Governor of Canada, in a speech to an Indian delegation spoke of the possibility of war with the United States. Meanwhile he had ordered Lt. Col. John Simcoe, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, to establish a garrison at the rapids of the Maumee River, which was within the territory of the United States. The Indians, hopeful of receiving British aid, prepared to resist American attempts to subdue them. The command of the American army on the frontier had been given to General Anthony Wayne, who carefully built up his forces. Expecting British support the tribes prepared to meet the American army. At the Battle of the Fallen Timbers, 20 August 1794, Wayne inflicted a crushing defeat on the Indians. The battle took place almost within sight of the British Fort Miami. Contrary to Indian expectations they received no help from the fort, which even closed its gates against Indian fugitives.

Meanwhile Washington had sent Chief Justice John Jay on a mission to England to negotiate a settlement of Anglo-



American differences. The British tried to reserve a right to mediate for the Indians, but this idea was not acceptable to the Americans. Jay's Treaty, as finally signed in November 1794, provided for the surrender of the western posts to the Americans by the summer of 1796. It was agreed that British subjects, American citizens and Indians would be allowed to pass freely back and forth across the border.<sup>5</sup> In explaining the treaty to the Indians British officials tried to portray it as meaning freer trade but the Indians saw it only as another betrayal. Feeling that they had been abandoned by the British, the Indians decided to negotiate a peace with the Americans. By the terms of the Treaty of Greenville signed on 3 August 1795 by the tribes of the North West, the Indians gave up most of the Ohio Valley and recognized the boundary set in 1783.

Once a definite date had been set for surrendering the western posts to the Americans, the question of finding suitable alternatives for these posts became more pressing. Some thought had earlier been given to finding an alternative to the post at Michilimackinac, if it had to be given up. Early in 1784 Benjamin Frobisher informed the governor that in his opinion it would be necessary to build a post which could command the entrance into Lake Superior. He was unable to point out any particular location below the falls of St. Mary's which would be suitable for the purpose

(this would seem to indicate that the North West Company did not, as some people have claimed, establish a post on St. Joseph Island in 1783). Above the falls, however, he suggested that Point aux Pins would be a good location.<sup>6</sup> Haldimand sent instructions to Captain Daniel Robertson, the commanding officer at Michilimackinac, to examine the route from Lake Huron to Lake Superior in search of a suitable site for a post. Haldimand mentioned that from the information he had received and from the map in his possession Point aux Pins appeared the best location. Before closing his letter Haldimand added that he was "just informed by Mr. St. Luc (who is well acquainted with that country) that a place called La Traverse, about Fifteen Leagues from Michilimackinac, is a very proper situation for the Post I wish to take."<sup>7</sup> Robertson had already recommended that if Michilimackinac had to be abandoned and another post established in the area the best place would be the mouth of the River Thessalon which was "contiguous to all the different nations of Indians and to the traders of Canada." The results of his trip confirmed him in this view. At Point aux Pins he found the soil poor and the area lacking in stone for building or making lime, and in good fire wood. At the Traverse he found that it would take several years and great expense to create a harbour. The end of the island he investigated seemed to afford no timber

suitable for building and did not seem suitable for attracting settlers.<sup>8</sup> Robertson sent some men to Thessalon to begin preparations for building a post there, but when it was decided to postpone for a time at least the surrender of the posts the site was abandoned. In 1792 Lt. John Humfrey RE recommended to Lieutenant Governor Simcoe that, if it was ever decided to establish a post at the head of Lake Huron or change the post at Michilimackinac, the Island of St. Joseph would be the best situation for a post, as it was in the route of the canoes from the French River and commanded the ship channel to St. Mary's.<sup>9</sup> Humfrey considered that the mouth of the Thessalon River was not suitable, as sunken rocks and shoals made the approach to the river unsafe.

Following the signing of the Anglo-American treaty, preparations had to be made for leaving the posts on the American side of the line. In November 1794 instructions were sent to Dorchester to pay early attention to the erection of new posts on the British side of the line in proper situations which would facilitate trade with the Indians, and make the evacuation of the existing posts, particularly Detroit and Michilimackinac, as little felt as possible.<sup>10</sup> Despite these instructions, Dorchester took his time about making arrangements for new posts. In November 1795 Gother Mann, Commanding Officer of the Corps

of Royal Engineers in Canada, drew up a statement of the buildings which it would be necessary to erect to house and lodge troops withdrawn from the western posts.<sup>11</sup> The buildings listed were to be erected opposite Isle aux Bois Blanc on the Detroit River, at Navy Hall on the Niagara River and at Kingston. No mention was made of any replacement for Michilimackinac. Dorchester informed Simcoe that he intended to station about one hundred of the Queen's Rangers on the Detroit River and one hundred on the Niagara River, with the other regiments which had been stationed in Upper Canada being withdrawn from the province.<sup>12</sup> Simcoe feared that the failure to establish a garrison on Lake Huron might seriously weaken the already strained loyalty of the Indians to the British cause.<sup>13</sup>

These differences over the question of the necessity of having any British post west of the Detroit River were part of a larger conflict between Simcoe and Dorchester over the whole question of the best strategy for the defence of Canada. Dorchester felt that Upper Canada was basically indefensible, and that in the event of a conflict with the United States the troops should be concentrated in Lower Canada for the defence of Quebec. If Quebec were lost Canada would be lost. Attempts to establish large garrisons so far west as Lake Huron would be a drain on the resources of Quebec and a liability in time of war. Simcoe, on the

other hand, felt that Upper Canada should be strongly defended, and in time would become a bastion which could stand independent of outside help. He felt that it would be immoral to encourage people to settle in Upper Canada while knowing that they might be abandoned by the withdrawal of the troops supposed to be stationed for the protection of the province.<sup>14</sup> Simcoe wanted strong garrisons, particularly at York and on Lake Huron where he felt they would encourage and protect settlement.

The Montreal merchants were deeply interested in this question of replacements for the posts which were to be transferred to the Americans. In February 1796 Joseph Frobisher was in Quebec on business. Among other things, he was interested in learning what orders had been given for establishing garrisons in Upper Canada. As far as he could learn orders had been given only to build blockhouses at Detroit and Niagara. Frobisher advised that persons who knew the local situation of the country about Michilimackinac should be consulted and gave it as his opinion that the new post ought to be built at St. Mary's.<sup>15</sup> It was not until the spring of 1796 that Dorchester gave any orders for the stationing of troops west of Detroit. In April orders were sent to Major Doyle, commanding at Michilimackinac, to send an officer, a sergeant, and twelve men to the Island of St. Joseph (the

order refers to the island as being sometimes called Cariboux Island, but this seems to be almost the only reference to that name being used for St. Joseph Island). The men were to establish themselves at the southwest end of the island at a spot where boats and canoes might conveniently land, and where the channel for vessels going from Michilimackinac and Detroit to the Straits of St. Mary approached the nearest, and to build themselves huts similar to the ones used by the traders at their wintering grounds. When the 24th Regiment was sent down to Quebec troops for St. Joseph Island were to be provided from the Queen's Rangers stationed at Detroit. According to Dorchester:

The object is, to form, within our frontier, a Rendezvous for the Indian Traders (returning with Furs from their wintering grounds round Lake Michigan and near the Mississippi) where they may meet the Merchants, or their Agents from Lower Canada, discharge past Credits with their Peltries, and receive a fresh supply of Goods for the ensuing Winter: this Commerce has hitherto been carried on at Michilimackinac during the whole of the month of June, at which time about eight hundred Persons are thus assembled, besides Indians of various Tribes who resort to the Rendezvous for Presents, or

for News, and sometimes to make Peace under the King's Protection.

It may be necessary to build a blockhouse on Cariboux Island but for the present I have ordered only an Officer and a few men.<sup>16</sup>

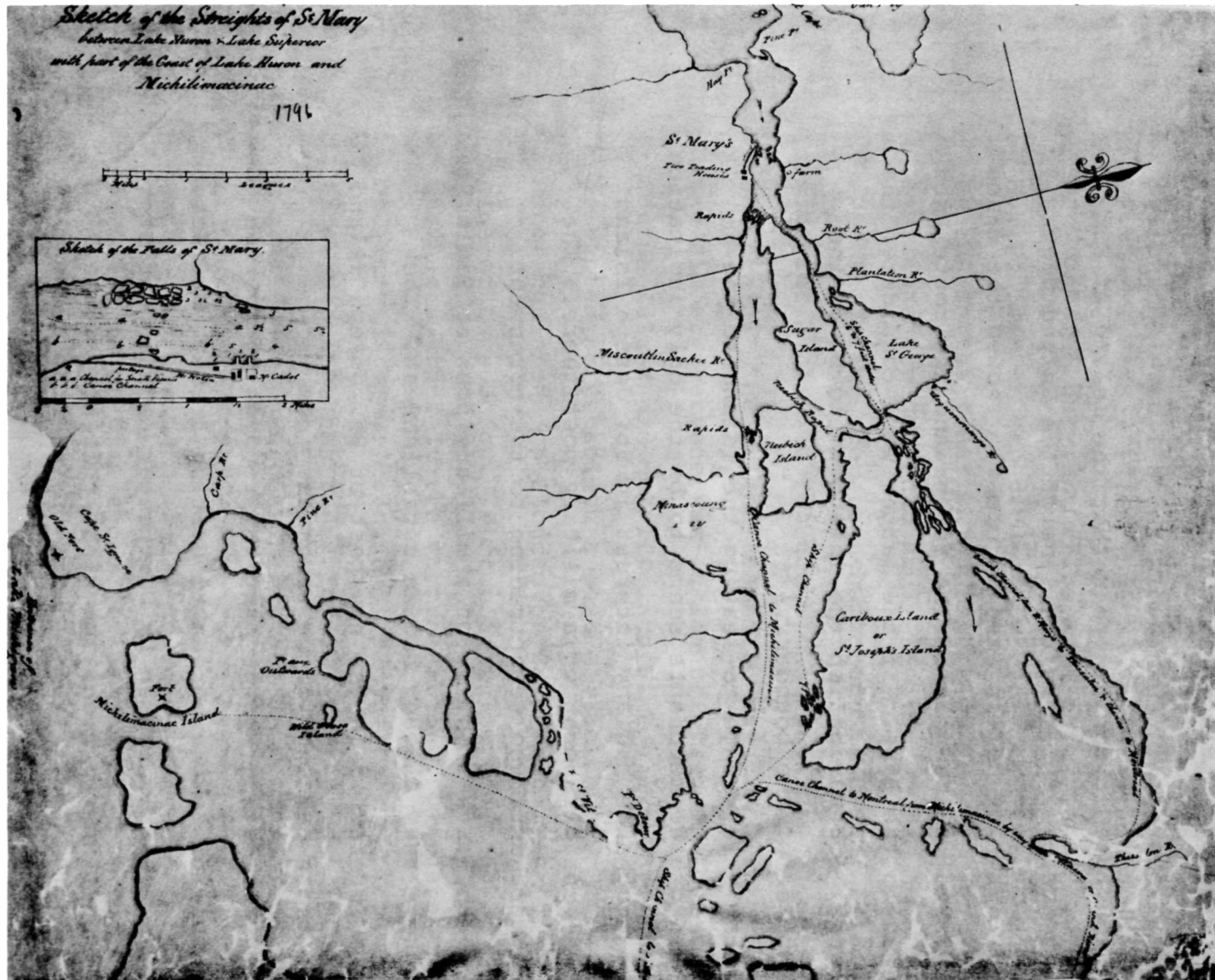
How Dorchester expected one officer and twelve men to establish the flourishing centre of trade which he envisioned he does not say.

The reason for the choice of St. Joseph Island as the site for a post to replace Michilimackinac is somewhat uncertain. The island seemed to have little to recommend it and almost everyone was in favour of some other spot. St. Joseph Island did not fit into Simcoe's strategic plan, for he wanted to establish a post at the harbour of Penetanguishene on Gloucester Bay, which was on the east side of Lake Huron. Simcoe felt, as did many of the merchants, that if the communication from there to York were well established, merchants trading to the northwest would find this the best route for the conveyance of their goods. Simcoe thought it possible that the Island of St. Joseph might require a detachment rather than being "left totally to the protection of the merchants" but even in that case he felt the major post should be at Penetanguishene. When Dorchester ordered the posting of a detachment on St. Joseph Island, Simcoe was most perturbed. Not only was he

prevented from establishing a post at Penetanguishene, but he also had grave doubts whether St. Joseph Island was in British territory. Simcoe felt that "from the map of the Sault of St. Mary's in Charlevoix which I have generally found to be true it would appear that the Island of St. Joseph by treaty is within the line of the United States." This map, drawn by Bellin (see Figure 4), showed the canoe route passing to the west of the island and the route used by bateaux to the east. If the latter were considered the main channel for navigation the island would be on the American side of the boundary.<sup>17</sup>

Simcoe's reference to leaving the island to the protection of the merchants seems to be the only indication that the merchants had any interest in St. Joseph Island before the establishment of a military post there. The Montreal merchants who were trading to the northwest preferred the establishment of a military post at Sault Ste. Marie, where they already had an establishment. The merchants interested in the new post at St. Joseph Island would be those trading to the southwest from Michilimackinac, who feared that the removal of British troops would close the border to British trade. St. Joseph Island was probably chosen by Dorchester as the nearest British territory to Michilimackinac. It was at the



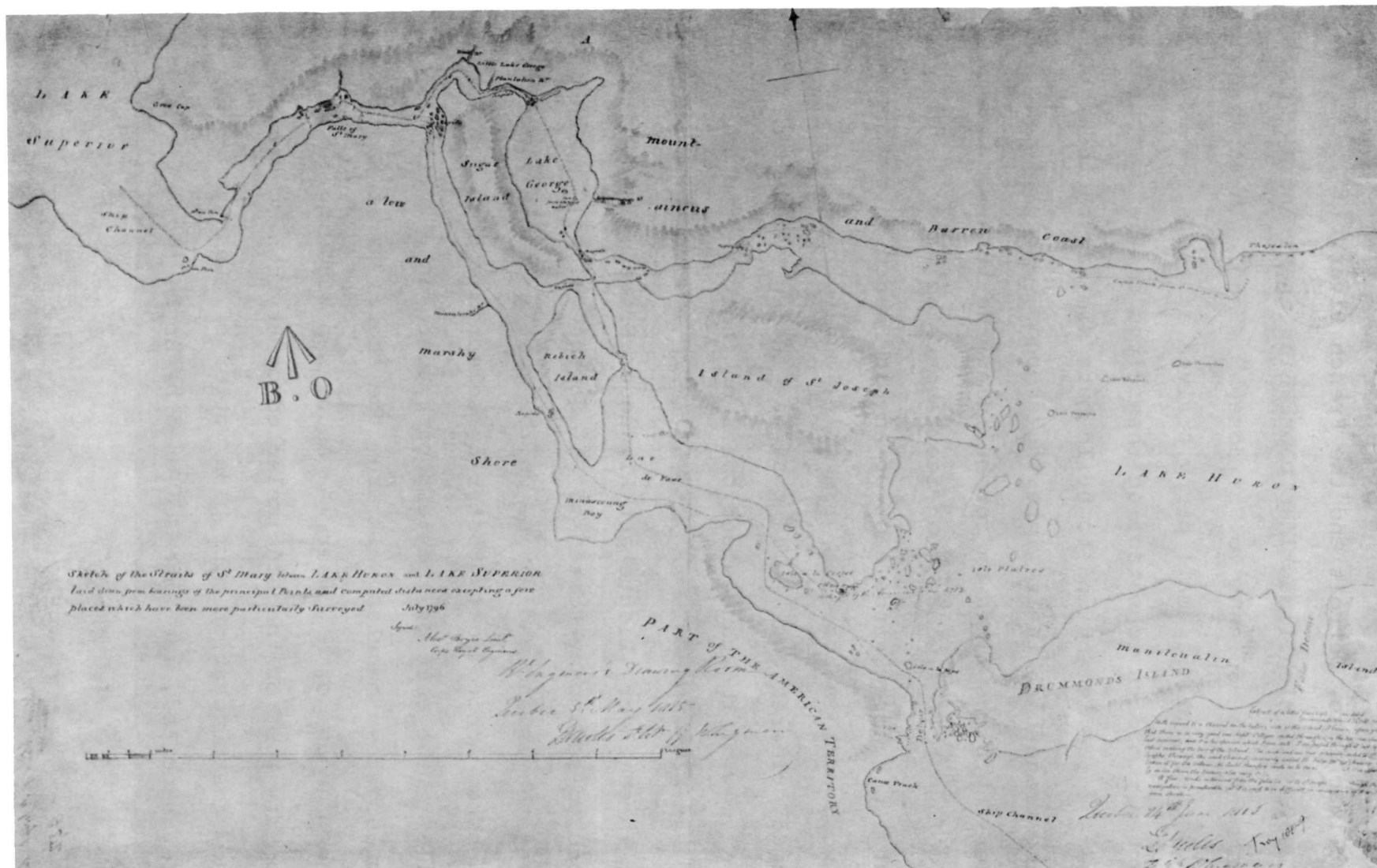


5 This and the following illustration are 1796 maps showing the St. Mary's River. It is only at this time that the name Cariboux Island appears as an alternate name for St. Joseph Island. This map was the one sent by Dorchester to the Duke of Portland and shows the various ship and canoe routes converging near the site selected for the new fort. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

junction of the routes to Sault Ste. Marie from Michilimackinac, Detroit and the French River.

Doyle at Michilimackinac chose Lieutenant Andrew Foster to command the men sent to St. Joseph Island. In early June 1796 Foster and his small party arrived at the site. They were under orders to establish themselves on the southwest corner of the island and to build huts similar to those used by the traders at their wintering grounds. According to Foster the place fixed on for building the huts was a small hill close to the shore, ten feet above the water level and about two hundred yards east of an old French entrenchment. The wood in this area was very thin, having been, Foster assumed, cleared once. The post was facing southeast, and had a view of the canoes and boats on their way to Sault Ste. Marie.<sup>18</sup>

An engineer, Lieutenant Alexander Bryce, was sent from Quebec to accompany Foster to St. Joseph Island, in order to survey the island and advise on the most suitable place for the post. According to Foster he selected a spot about half a mile to the east of the temporary post, on a small hill about eighteen minutes walk from the shore, as it was the highest ground of any near.<sup>19</sup> As no maps showing the temporary post or the site selected by Bryce have been found, their location must be a matter of guesswork. If, as Foster reported, the site selected by Bryce for a fort was



6 This map was copied in 1815 from a map drawn in 1796 by Lt. Alexander Bryce, who surveyed St. Joseph Island that summer. It contains later comments. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

eighteen minutes walk from the shore, it cannot be the spot on which the fort was finally built, as this is much closer to the shore. Foster said that Bryce's reason for his choice was that this was the highest ground of any near. According to a report on the defence of Upper Canada, originally submitted to the Duke of Kent in 1800, the post on St. Joseph Island was most injudiciously placed because a neighbouring hill commanded the fort.<sup>20</sup> This hill was probably the site chosen by Bryce. There is no indication why the site was changed. It is possible that neither the commanding officer who succeeded Foster nor the engineer who began construction of the blockhouse was shown the location chosen by Bryce. Even if they knew where it was, they may have felt that the site actually used, being almost entirely surrounded by water, would be easier to defend. They may also have felt that the site chosen by Bryce was too far from the shore, making it difficult to get supplies, including construction materials, to the fort.

The spot chosen by Bryce was about half a mile east of the huts erected by Foster's party in 1796. These huts were probably about three quarters of a mile west of the present site of the fort, on the west shore of St. Joseph Island, facing Lime Island. Foster reported that his men had made comfortable huts for themselves but gave no further description. No estimate for the materials needed to build

these huts has been found; presumably they were built mainly of materials found on the spot or easily brought from Michilimackinac, and were erected as quickly as possible. Landmann in his Adventures and Recollections describes the hut which was built by Lieutenant Lacey, and which he occupied while supervising construction of the permanent post:

My hut was about twenty feet square formed of logs in the usual way, but had no chimney; this defect was remedied by a wide space paved in the middle for the fire-place, and a hole two feet square in the roof to let out the smoke--for there was no ceiling and no boarded floor, but it could boast of one window with oiled paper, a tolerable good substitute for glass.<sup>21</sup>

This hut was probably built along the same lines as the others on the island at the time. Lieutenant Foster also reported that he had got some flat stones and clay to build an oven, which he intended to do as soon as the ground for the buildings was cleared. By November temporary accommodation for thirty men was reported at the Island of St. Joseph.<sup>22</sup>

Foster also reported that Bryce had found a harbour very near their temporary post, so completely landlocked

that no wind whatever could affect it. This information, too, does not seem to have been passed on to those in charge of building the fort, as the 1800 report describes the harbour at Fort St. Joseph as follows:

The harbour if an extensive Bay deserves the name, inconvenient if not unsafe, a vessel coming in with a hard Gale, and heavy Swell, must come to at a distance, and ride out the gale with both Anchors at her head; if she comes in with a light wind to get under Cover of a Wharf which stretches out in a right line and turns at right Angles, she must throw an Anchor and be warped in with a hawse on her cable, 'tis true the Anchorage is good, but a heavy swell beats against the shore, and when moored her safety depends on the power of Resistance in the wharf.<sup>23</sup>

One of the important parts of the post at Michilimackinac had been the Indian Department, and the fear of losing British influence over the western Indians was one of the reasons Simcoe had felt it would be disastrous if the British forces were to be totally withdrawn from Lake Huron. When in the spring of 1796 orders were sent to Michilimackinac to send a small party of men to St. Joseph Island, by oversight of intent, no provision was made for

the Indian Department. When the British garrison evacuated Michilimackinac the Indian Department stores and most of the members of the department at that post were sent to Amherstburg with the troops. This situation was remedied as soon as possible, and Thomas Duggan, the storekeeper, along with the blacksmith and some stores was sent back up the lake, but this mix-up was not the sort of thing which would leave a favourable impression in the minds of the Indians. There were no Indian presents at St. Joseph Island at a most critical time, when, supposedly, the Department's aim was to persuade Indians who had formerly come to Michilimackinac to resort to the new post at St. Joseph. The Assistant Secretary of the Indian Department feared that the removal of the Indian Department and the goods intended for the Indians would be extremely prejudicial to the King's interest and would increase the Indians' suspicions that they were being abandoned.<sup>24</sup>

The small size of the force sent to St. Joseph Island, one officer, two NCOs and twelve privates, was also likely to create a very unfavourable impression in the minds of the Indians. Moreover, when Duggan was sent to St. Joseph from Amherstburg only a part of the stores intended for the post could be sent with him as there were no storehouses at St. Joseph Island. Already some Indians had begun to visit the post and were raising the question of payment for the

island.<sup>25</sup> Fears were expressed that the small garrison might be in danger from the present temper of the surrounding Indians. Although the detachment was increased in September to forty-two men Captain Peter Drummond, being uncertain of the disposition of the Indians, considered it would be prudent to surround the post with pickets in order to defend it against possible attack and this he had done the following spring.<sup>26</sup>



BUILDING FORT ST. JOSEPH

In the fall of 1796 Gother Mann had recommended that a substantial blockhouse for fifty men be built at St. Joseph Island. It was decided that this blockhouse should provide storage space for military stores and provisions as well as accommodation for troops. Orders were sent to Captain Drummond at St. Joseph Island to prepare what materials he could for the construction of the blockhouse. It was originally intended to send James Russell, the master carpenter at Kingston, to St. Joseph Island to superintend the building of the blockhouse. Russell was to be furnished with a plan and instructions from Lieutenant Colonel Mann. In April 1797 an estimate for building a blockhouse and a building containing a kitchen and bakehouse at St. Joseph Island was approved; Lieutenant Thomas Lacey was assigned to take charge of the construction. Six civilian artificers accompanied Lacey to St. Joseph Island. These artificers were promised an allowance of half a pint of rum daily, and in consideration of the difficulties to which they would be exposed it was decided that the military artificers should receive the same allowance.<sup>1</sup>

Although instructions had been sent to Drummond to prepare materials for construction of the blockhouse, little had been done before Lacey's arrival in late June, the instructions having been delayed for some time at Amherstburg. Drummond's men had, however, cleared the site for the building and prepared some square timber. Another hindrance to construction was the reduced state of the marine establishment on the Upper Lakes. Orders were given that supplies might be forwarded in merchant vessels if necessary. By November 1797, when Lacey and the civil artificers left St. Joseph Island, construction of the blockhouse was well under way, but it was not nearly ready for the troops to occupy it. Thomas Duggan, the Indian Department storekeeper felt that he could not live through the winter in the building he was using to store the Indian Department goods as it was so open; having built himself a small house, he asked for some compensation for his expenses.<sup>2</sup> Lacey had already erected a log hut on the construction site rather than live at the temporary fort.

During the winter the troops prepared materials for the next summer's construction. Once Lacey had reached Quebec and reported on his progress, plans were made for this work. It was decided that a wharf, a guardhouse, and a temporary powder magazine should be built, the works should be enclosed with strong picketing and the wood around the

blockhouse should be cleared away--quite an ambitious programme for one summer. Construction of a council room for the Indians and an Indian Department storehouse was to be left till later. Estimates were prepared for the buildings and approved by the commander in chief.<sup>3</sup>

In April 1798 Lieutenant George Landmann RE, newly arrived in Canada, and only eighteen years old, was ordered to St. Joseph Island to superintend construction of these buildings. According to Landmann's later recollections he received a few general instructions and estimates for a blockhouse, guardhouse, powder magazine, provision store, Indian Department storehouse and council house, and a bakehouse, all to be enclosed by palisades, and also a wharf for the use of shipping. No estimates seem to exist for the provision store and Indian Department buildings and quite possibly these were not among the buildings Landmann was instructed to build. Landmann recalled that he had been given neither plans, nor even descriptions of the buildings. However, as an engineer had been at the site the summer before, there may have been plans for the blockhouse and bakehouse already on the site, and in any event the blockhouse was already well under way. Landmann himself obtained a passage to St. Joseph Island with William McGillivray and Alexander Mackenzie by the Ottawa route in

one of the North West Company's canoes, but the two military artificers who were to assist him went by way of Kingston.<sup>4</sup>

Although work was well under way on building a fort on St. Joseph Island the land had not yet been purchased from the Indians. In the summer of 1797 Colonel McKee, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and Captain McKee, the superintendent for the post of St. Joseph, held a conference with the Indians, who readily agreed to the sale of the island. The following summer commissioners were sent with the goods agreed on as the purchase price and at a formal council the deed of sale was signed by the commissioners and the chiefs.

Work continued all summer on the new fort and by fall Drummond had hopes of being able to get into the blockhouse before the onset of winter. After Landmann's departure in November work continued at the post under the direction of one of the officers stationed there. By spring the guardhouse was nearly finished except for the chimney; the kitchen and bakehouse needed only floors and partitions.<sup>5</sup>

As usual during the winter, preparations were made for the following summer's work. Square timber for the wharf was prepared and logs were readied at the sawpit. As Landmann took much longer to return to Quebec than expected,

and as he had not sent sufficient information on the progress he had made during the summer, a decision on the works to be planned for Fort St. Joseph for the summer of 1799 had to be postponed. In April an estimate for various services at St. Joseph Island was approved, including further expenses necessary for completion of the works ordered the previous year, particularly enclosing the post with picketing and the cost of building four gun platforms. Four six pounder guns were to be sent from Amherstburg for these platforms, along with an artillery man to take charge of them.<sup>6</sup> Twelve artificers hired by Landmann at Amherstburg were sent to St. Joseph Island in early June 1799 along with necessary supplies such as rum and bricks and the guns for the garrison.<sup>7</sup>

Landmann spent the summer of 1799 at St. Joseph Island, again returning to Quebec in the late fall. He superintended further military construction at the post and was also in charge of erecting a building for the North West Company. Landmann's work for the government did not give very great satisfaction. Drummond for example complained that he lost a great deal of time and money by sinking part of the wharf in the wrong direction. Because he relied heavily on his overseer, who could keep accounts when sober but was seldom if ever in that condition, Landmann had to return to St. Joseph Island in early 1800 to correct all

the errors in his accounts. The Commanding Engineer at first planned to keep the young lieutenant at Quebec when he returned from Fort St. Joseph so as to keep him under his own eye, but decided it might be safe to allow him to remain in Montreal where there could be no danger of his doing anything materially wrong.<sup>8</sup>

Once Landmann was out of the way Drummond continued with the works he considered necessary. There were 413 feet of the fort still not enclosed besides the gates, and 71 feet of the wharf nearly finished (presumably in the right direction this time). Drummond also felt that the blockhouse and other buildings should be clapboarded. They had been built with green timber, and, as the wood seasoned, large cracks were appearing between the logs through which the wind blew rain and snow at every storm. Drummond was ordered not to incur any expense not already provided for by approved estimates, but in November 1800 he reported that he had already enclosed the fort. He feared that the work carried out would exceed the original estimate, but the work performed under his direction had been done as economically as possible and he had understood from Landmann that an additional estimate was to be made out at Quebec. Along with the accounts of the works carried out during the summer of 1800 Drummond sent an estimate of the expense of clapboarding the blockhouse, bakehouse, guardhouse and

powder magazine.<sup>9</sup> This would indicate that during the summers of 1799 and 1800 the bakehouse and guardhouse were finished and a powder magazine was built. According to a report on the state of the public buildings at the Island of St. Joseph, 1 August 1801, the blockhouse and other buildings still needed weatherboarding and the chimneys were in want of repairs.<sup>10</sup>

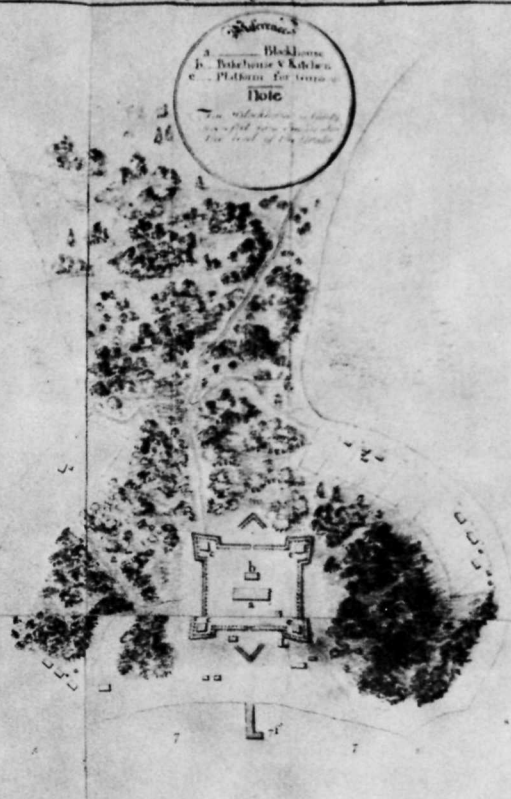
The poor state of the chimneys was a special danger as one of the greatest risks to which the fort was exposed was that of fire. All the buildings were of wood and the roofs were covered with cedar shingles. Several times the shingles were ignited by a spark from one of the chimneys and only prompt action on the part of the sentry saved the buildings. One night in January 1802 the bakehouse caught fire and it was only with great difficulty that the blockhouse, less than thirty feet away, and the powder magazine, were saved. The Commanding Officer's servant, who was sleeping there, escaped with his life, but Lieutenant Cowell, the Commanding Officer, lost all his kitchen furniture and all his vegetables for the winter which were stored in a cellar under the kitchen.<sup>11</sup> Following the fire the commanding officer built a shed over the oven so that the men might have some use of it. The following winter a fire was discovered in the blockhouse under the hearth of one of the barrack rooms which communicated with

- 7 This and the two following illustrations are part of a set of plans prepared and copied by J.B. Duberger in the Engineers' Drawing Room at Quebec for the Duke of Kent and sent to him in July 1800. Figures 7 & 8, "Plan of the Post on the Island of St. Joseph in Lake Huron" with plans and sections of the works of defence, were probably taken from plans at Quebec showing what buildings were supposed to be erected on St. Joseph Island. We do not have the plans from which they were copied. In some cases it is doubtful if the fort was built as shown here. For example there is no evidence that the gun platforms shown in all four bastions and illustrated in section were ever built and there seems only to have been one redan built, covering the water gate. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

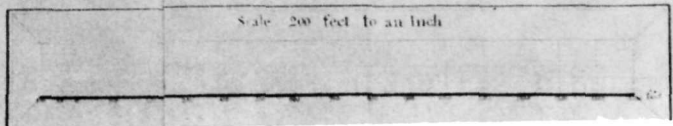


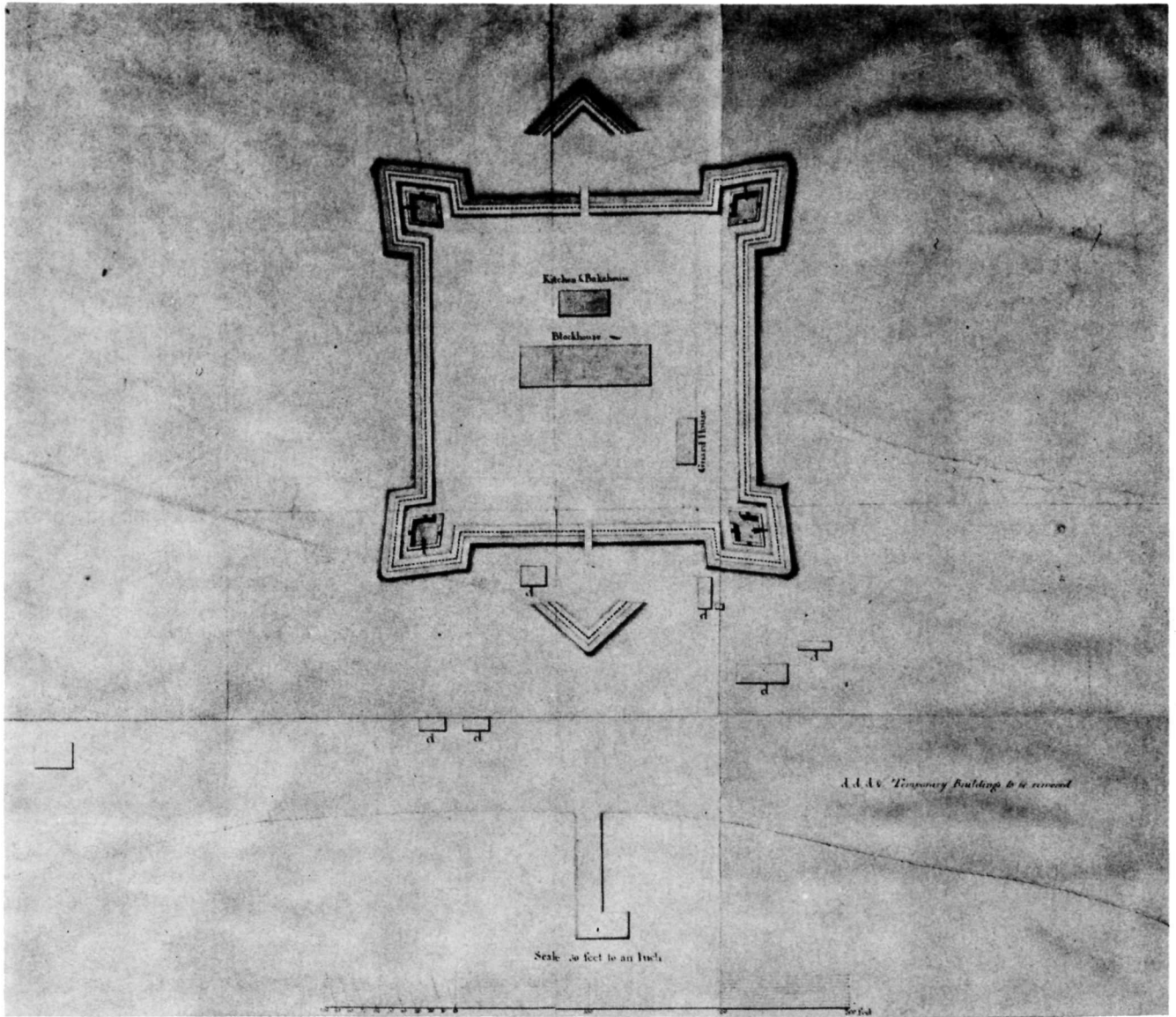
**Plan**  
of the POST on the ISLAND of S<sup>t</sup> JOSEPH in  
**LAKE HURON**  
Copied on the Engineer's Drawing Room Tables by J. E. DeLong in 1860

*Cather Murray  
Capt. Command. U.S. Army*



Scale 200 feet to an Inch





8 See Figure 7.

the part of the store in which the artificers' tools were kept. The fire had been burning for several days before it was noticed, as evidenced by a large beam under the fireplace being burnt completely through.<sup>12</sup> A similar fire occurred the following winter when a beam passing directly under a hearth in the other chimney caught fire and had to be cut away.<sup>13</sup>

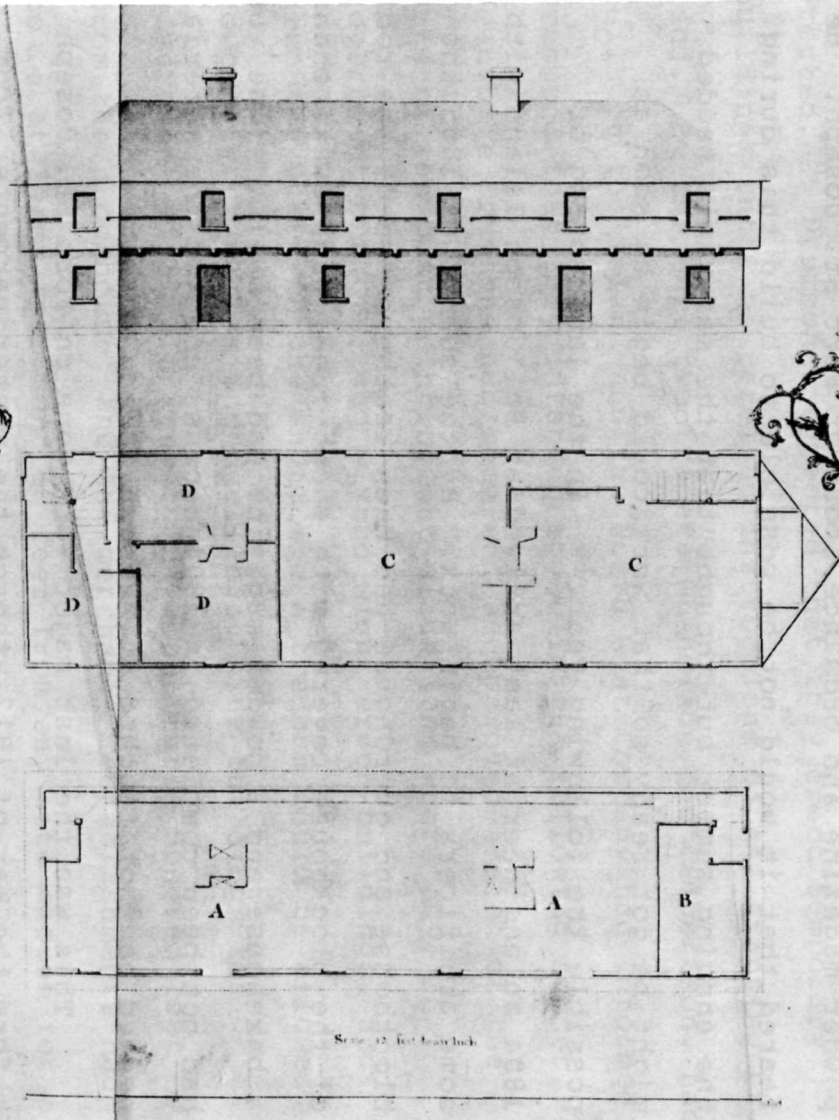
In the summer of 1802 Captain Bruyères of the Royal Engineers was sent to Upper Canada to report on the state of the various military posts in that province. In his report, submitted that fall, he stated that the stockade at Fort St. Joseph was completed and in good repair. Only one redan, that on the south, was finished, however, and none of the gun platforms for the bastions were built. As there was no banquette around the inside of the stockade the loopholes were still useless. Bruyères recommended weatherboarding the various buildings of the fort and replacing the cedar shingle roofing with some more fire resistant material. He also recommended the reduction of the wharf to a boat wharf because of its exposed location and the construction of several new buildings including kitchens for officers and men, a bakehouse and a powder magazine.<sup>14</sup>

By the spring of 1803 preparations were being made for the repairs and other works to be carried on at Fort St. Joseph. The fire in the blockhouse during the winter

- 9 "Plan and Elevation of an Ordnance Storehouse and Blockhouse built at Fort George, Amherstburg and the island of St. Joseph". There may have been separate plans for each blockhouse or this may have been taken from a single plan showing how a large blockhouse should be built. This plan does not always agree with descriptions of the blockhouses as built. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

**Plan**  
 and  
**ELEVATION**  
 of an Ordnance Storehouse and  
 Blockhouse erected at  
**FORT GEORGE, AMHERSTBURG**  
 and **S. JOSEPH**  
 1766  
 Drawn by the Engineers Drawing Room under the Direction of the Major General

*Gottlieb Maron*  
*Col. Command. W. G. Eng.*



**References**  
 AA. For Ordnance Stores  
 B. Small Store Room for Troops  
 C.C. Rooms for Soldiers  
 D.D. Rooms for Officers

accentuated the need for some sort of fire-proof roofing for the buildings. An engineer was to be sent to superintend the work but as usual there were delays. By the time Captain Hughes arrived at Amherstburg it was so late in the season that he decided it was useless to go to St. Joseph Island before the following spring.<sup>15</sup> Early in 1804 Gother Mann forwarded to General Hunter an estimate for building a powder magazine and ordnance store at Fort St. Joseph. He feared that it would not be possible to build this during the ensuing summer but thought that the materials needed might be got ready so that work could begin as soon as possible the following year.<sup>16</sup> In the late spring of 1804 an engineer at last arrived at St. Joseph Island with some artificers to begin work. By the summer of 1805 the blockhouse and guardhouse had been weatherboarded, the roof of the blockhouse covered with sheet iron, and new kitchens, a bakehouse and a powder magazine had been built. (The work had not been completed in 1804 because some of the materials needed had not reached St. Joseph Island in time.)<sup>17</sup>

This was the last major work done on Fort St. Joseph before the War of 1812, though the master carpenter from Amherstburg was sent to the Island in 1806 and an engineer in 1810 to carry out some repair work.

The military buildings were not the only ones on St. Joseph Island. When the first detachment arrived on the

island it was "entirely uninhabited and uncleared"<sup>18</sup> but soon the soldiers were followed by others who built on the island. Around the fort several other buildings were erected over the years. In the summer of 1797 Drummond reported that Captain LaMothe, the Indian interpreter, Mr. Duggan, the storekeeper, and some traders had applied for lots to build on near where the blockhouse was to be erected.<sup>19</sup> Drummond suggested that they erect temporary buildings until he received instructions on the granting of land. By the fall two traders, Langlade and Culbertson, had built on the island and the North West Company had informed Drummond that they intended to build the following summer. Meanwhile Drummond had received an approved sketch of the site of the post pointing out situations where any government officers who wished might erect buildings, and also the place on the shore where traders could be allowed to construct stores and dwellings. The buildings for government officials were to be about three hundred feet from the blockhouse, and the merchants' establishments had to be at least four hundred feet from any site chosen for a battery. In March 1798 McTavish, Frobisher and Company, the Montreal agents of the North West Company, wrote to Drummond requesting two building lots.<sup>20</sup> In September 1798 the commanding officer reported that there were several people building or preparing to build on the island:

Building	Capt. LaMothe
	Mr. Duggan
	Mr. Langlade
	Mr. Birkett
	Mr. Chaubuie [?]
Preparing to build	North West Company
	Mr. Ogilvie
	Mr. Gillespie
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Pothier
	Mr. Chiset
	Mr. Frerot

LaMothe and Duggan have already been mentioned as officers in the Indian Department. Langlade was a well known local trader. Landmann in his Adventures and Recollections mentions a visitor to the island in the summer of 1798 named Birkett, who appeared to be somewhat of a mystery man. "Chaubuie" may be Drummond's misspelling of Chaboillez, a fur trader and later a member of the Indian Department. Ogilvie and Gillespie were probably members of the firm of Parker, Gerard, Ogilvy and Co., which was involved in the northwest fur trade. Mitchell was probably David Mitchell Jr., a fur trader and the son of Dr. David Mitchell, formerly a surgeon's mate at Michilimackinac. Pothier was probably Toussaint Pothier, later a member of the South West



Company. Chiset seems to be unidentifiable, and there was a Frerot among the artificers engaged in building the fort.<sup>20</sup>

In the summer of 1799 Drummond reported that in addition to the lots he had granted the year before, Messrs. Blakeley, McKenzie, Young and Ademar proposed to build. Blakeley (possibly Joseah Bleakley, later a member of the South West company), McKenzie and Ademar were likely traders, while Young was probably George Young, Landmann's overseer. When Daniel Harmon visited St. Joseph Island in May 1800 on his way west to serve as a clerk for the North West Company, he noted that there were four dwelling houses and two stores. By 1804, judging from Edward Walsh's painting of the point, (Fig. 1) a small village had grown up around the fort.<sup>21</sup>

FORT ST. JOSEPH AS A MILITARY POST

The chief military purpose of Fort St. Joseph was the defence of the frontier against attacks by Americans or Indians. It was the most westerly of the military posts in Canada. As was discussed earlier, in the 1790's it had been a subject of conflict between Dorchester and Simcoe over the best strategy for the defence of Canada. Hardly anyone saw St. Joseph Island as a point of strength. John Johnston, a merchant living at the Sault, wrote in 1809:

Although the position of St. Joseph's is far from being the most judicious that might have been chosen for a permanent post yet as a great deal of money has been already laid out upon it all that is now left to the wisdom of government is to improve to the best advantage what can be no longer conveniently changed.... I should think the first step to be taken would be to have the island surveyed and laid out into one or two hundred acre lots with encouragement to settlers.... A road should be opened the length of the island

which would terminate at the northeast channel and which would enable the garrison to obstruct the invasion of St. Mary's from that quarter; a second should be cut nearly across its southwestern extremity so as to fall upon the entrance of the ship channel where it is little more than a gun shot over which would rectify in some degree the blunder of having placed the fort where it cannot check the progress of either vessels or bateaux. Industrious persons [settling there] ... would add to the strength and respectability of the post and enable it to become what no doubt government intended it should be an asylum in case of a rupture with America or contention among the Indian tribes, to the British subjects dispersed through the country and where the faithful Indians would receive the reward of their attachment and the insolent and ungrateful be put in mind that they had lost a father and found a master.<sup>1</sup>

A military post on the upper Lakes was needed, and while the location of Fort St. Joseph might not be the best possible one it was the only British fort in the area.

In 1799 four six pounder ship guns were ordered to be sent from Amherstburg for the defence of the post. As it

was left to the commanding officer at Amherstburg to choose which of his guns were to be sent to Fort St. Joseph, it can be imagined that those chosen were the ones he felt could most easily be spared. By 1807 two of these guns were found to be unfit for service and had to be replaced--by guns which could be spared from another post.<sup>2</sup> The general attitude to Fort St. Joseph continued to be one of indifference--its needs were almost always considered last. Reports and requisitions from Fort St. Joseph were always late in reaching headquarters, partly because of the distance, and partly because of the inefficiency of some of the officers, and this affected the attitude to the post, which one disgruntled officer called "the military Siberia" of Upper Canada.<sup>3</sup> When the commanding officer at Amherstburg felt the need of more troops or supplies than he had available for his post his first thought was to utilize those destined for or already at Fort St. Joseph.

The original detachment sent to St. Joseph Island in the summer of 1796 consisted of a lieutenant, a sergeant, a corporal and only twelve men of the 24th Regiment. Although fears were expressed for the safety of such a small garrison at such an isolated post, the strength of the garrison remained at about a company until 1812. The command of Fort St. Joseph was generally given to a captain or sometimes a subaltern, and it was only in 1806, when fears of war were

running particularly high, that a field officer was sent to Fort St. Joseph. This major remained less than a year and had begun to request leave of absence even before he set out for the post.<sup>4</sup> From June 1807 until war broke out in 1812 Fort St. Joseph was commanded by a captain. In addition to the commanding officer there were generally two or three (in later years usually three) junior officers at the fort.

Various regiments served at Fort St. Joseph between 1796 and 1812. The soldiers sent there in the late spring of 1796 belonged to the 24th Regiment and were under the command of Lieutenant Andrew Foster of that regiment. In August they were relieved by Ensign Leonard Brown, a sergeant and twelve men of the Queen's Rangers. When Prescott decided to strengthen the garrison at Fort St. Joseph later that year, he sent Captain Peter Drummond, with two junior officers, and 42 men of the Royal Canadian Volunteers to replace the small detachment of Queen's Rangers. The Royal Canadian Volunteers remained until July of 1801, when they were relieved by a detachment of the Queen's Rangers under Lieutenant Robert Cowell. The following year, when the Queen's Rangers were disbanded, their place at Fort St. Joseph was taken by men of the 49th Regiment, commanded by Captain Alexander Clerk. In September 1805 Captain Clerk and his men were relieved by a

detachment of the 41st Regiment under Captain Arthur Trew. The 41st Regiment remained till 1809, commanded at various times by Trew, Captain Adam Muir, Major Alexander Campbell, and Captain William Derenzy. From the summer of 1809 to the fall of 1811 Fort St. Joseph was manned by a wing of the 100th Regiment, commanded first by Captain Thomas Dawson and then by Captain Thomas Ormsby Sherrard. In September 1811 Captain Charles Roberts took command with a detachment of the 10th Royal Veterans and it was these men who participated in the capture of Michilimackinac the following year.

There were other branches of the army represented at Fort St. Joseph as well as the infantry. When construction was planned an officer of the Corps of Royal Engineers was usually sent to the post for the summer to superintend the work. In 1796 Lieutenant Alexander Bryce, accompanied by Théodore Depencier, surveyed the island and chose a site for the fort. Lieutenant Thomas Lacey in 1797, and Lieutenant Landmann the following two summers, superintended construction of the buildings. In 1804 Captain Gustavus Nicolls superintended repair work, and in 1806 Wheeler Cornwall, the master carpenter at Amherstburg, was sent to St. Joseph Island to oversee further repair work. From the time that guns were supplied for Fort St. Joseph there were two gunners and sometimes a sergeant of the Royal Artillery stationed at the post.

When war finally came to Fort St. Joseph its defences were not very formidable. Despite the repairs carried out in 1806 and 1810 the fort was not in a condition to repel a determined attack. Lieutenant Colonel Bruyères of the Royal Engineers described the post in 1811 as a square consisting merely of high cedar pickets enclosing the blockhouse and public buildings, all in bad repair and incapable of defence. A gale of wind in the fall of 1811 blew down much of the picketing, which then had to be propped up. The ordnance of the fort consisted of the four six pounders mentioned above, and six half pound swivel guns, with a small amount of ammunition. In 1812 the fort was manned by 36 privates, four corporals, two sergeants, and four officers of the 10th Royal Veterans and a sergeant and two gunners of the Royal Artillery. The opposing force at Michilimackinac was larger, had more artillery, and occupied a fort in much better repair. Sir George Prevost, the Governor General and Commander in Chief, considered Fort St. Joseph useful only for providing a place of assembly for friendly Indians and some degree of protection for the fur trade, but not as a defensive strong point, and he turned down an offer by the North West Company to transport reinforcements to the fort in June 1812. Prevost, like Dorchester, considered Quebec as the key to Canada and felt that any other military operation must be subservient to the defence of that position.<sup>5</sup>

THE INDIAN DEPARTMENT AT FORT ST. JOSEPH

One of the reasons for establishing a post on St. Joseph Island was to provide a place where the Indian tribes from the west could come to receive presents and be encouraged to remain friendly to British interests. Fear of an Indian war had kept the British from handing over the western posts to the Americans after 1783. By 1796 British influence over the western Indians had been considerably weakened by the British refusal to join the Indians in the fight with the Americans in 1794 and by the British agreement to leave the western posts. In order to reassure the Indians that they had not been entirely abandoned, British troops had remained on the Upper Lakes and had established the post on St. Joseph Island. Since responsibility for relations with the Indians lay with the Indian Department, however, it was essential that the Indian Department as well as the army be represented at the new post. Unfortunately the instructions for the surrender of Michilimackinac made no reference to the Indian Department. The commanding officer at Michilimackinac, before leaving that post, did send an



interpreter with some stores to St. Joseph Island, and considered that this was sufficient to prevent any harmful effects to relations with the Indians.<sup>1</sup> The rest of the Indian Department at Michilimackinac, both officers and stores, was brought to the Detroit River with the garrison. As soon as possible the Indian Department storekeeper, blacksmith, and some stores were sent to St. Joseph Island and the department was established at the new post.

In 1796 there was a reorganization of the British Indian Department due to the re-location of the military posts and the ending of the struggle for control of the Ohio Valley. The department as a whole was under the direction of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Sir John Johnson. Responsible for the department in Upper Canada was the Deputy Superintendent General, Colonel Alexander McKee. In the summer of 1796 superintendents were appointed for the three new posts, William Claus for Fort George, Matthew Elliott for Amherstburg and Thomas McKee for St. Joseph Island. Unfortunately the superintendent for St. Joseph Island did not receive his commission until after the last vessel of the season had sailed for that post, and so he stayed at Amherstburg. The Indian Department was supposedly under civil control, with appointments made by the Governor, but pay and other expenses were to be provided out of army funds. When the Governor was also the Commander of the

Forces this was not a problem, but the death of Alexander McKee in 1799 was followed by a major dispute over patronage. A commission was issued to J. Baby, the Honourable Alexander Grant, and Thomas McKee to administer the affairs of the Indian Department in Upper Canada until a successor to Colonel McKee was appointed. Sir John Johnson recommended his nephew William Claus, because of his long experience in the department, and Lieutenant Governor Peter Hunter appointed Claus to the position. Meanwhile the Duke of Kent, who was Commander of the Forces in British North America, had appointed Lieutenant Colonel John Connolly. After a considerable dispute the appointment of Claus was confirmed.

This problem of dual responsibility for the Indian Department was felt at individual posts as well. Local Indian Department officers felt that they were accountable only to their superiors within the department, whereas the commanding officers of the posts felt that the officers of the Indian Department should come under their authority. This was a particular source of annoyance in the case of the issue of presents to the Indians, as the military had to account for these goods, yet had no control over the amounts issued. An acrimonious and long drawn out dispute at Amherstburg over the question of whether an army officer should be present on every occasion when the Indians

received goods, in order to verify the figures reported by the Indian Department as to the number of Indians present and the amount of goods issued, culminated in the dismissal of Matthew Elliott, the Indian Department superintendent. This sort of clash was likely to break out at any time when the commanding officer of a post and the officers of the Indian Department were not on good terms.

The normal establishment of the Indian Department at Fort St. Joseph was a superintendent, a storekeeper and clerk, a blacksmith, and an interpreter. Thomas McKee, the son of Colonel Alexander McKee, the Deputy Superintendent General, was appointed superintendent for St. Joseph Island in 1796. Throughout the period before the War of 1812 McKee continued as superintendent for the North West District though he never lived at Fort St. Joseph. From 1797 to 1808 he was also superintendent of the Indian Department at Amherstburg, where he continued to live until Proctor's retreat in the fall of 1813. Thomas Duggan began his duties as storekeeper and clerk at Michilimackinac in the fall of 1795 and continued in that position following the move to St. Joseph Island. Vasseur, the Indian Department blacksmith at Michilimackinac, did not wish to move, and Duggan recommended Louis DuFresne, who appears on lists of the Indian Department establishment from 1799 on. The interpreter at Michilimackinac was Guillaume LaMothe, who

was apparently the first officer of the Indian Department to arrive at St. Joseph Island. There seems to have been a certain rivalry between Duggan and LaMothe, and Duggan reported that LaMothe was not capable of doing the job at St. Joseph Island at such a critical period.

In 1797 Peter Russell, the Administrator of Upper Canada, on the recommendation of Colonel McKee, named Charles Langlade Jr. as interpreter at St. Joseph Island. General Prescott refused to confirm this appointment as he felt he could not increase the establishment at Fort St. Joseph, and as LaMothe had been in the situation many years and was considered a faithful and zealous servant of the government, he could not be removed. On LaMothe's death in 1799 various persons were recommended to succeed him. The appointment was offered to Charles Chaboillez in May 1800, but he declined it and John Martin was appointed to act from June 1801. In the interim the duties of the post were performed by Langlade. Martin was an unfortunate choice as interpreter. While, according to Lieutenant Cowell, the commanding officer at the post, he was a very honest, sober, well behaved man, he was not sufficiently fluent in the Indian languages to converse with the Indians. After Cowell mentioned this problem to McGillivray, (probably William McGillivray of the North West Company) the latter persuaded Charles Chaboillez to act as interpreter without pay. In

the meantime Duggan had taken to drink and was frequently reported intoxicated, as well as being suspected of trading with the Indians; Cowell suggested that Martin should replace him. In January 1802 Cowell suspended Duggan and named Martin to act in his place. The following May Chaboillez was officially appointed storekeeper and clerk as well as interpreter in place of Martin. Cowell was not particularly pleased with the appointment of Chaboillez as storekeeper and clerk. He reported that in order to carry out his duties properly Chaboillez needed an assistant who understood French and accounts. Captain Clerk, who succeeded Cowell as commanding officer, found that he had to translate all the letters and orders for Chaboillez into French and explain them to him.

Despite the complaints about Chaboillez' unsuitability for the post of storekeeper and clerk there were no changes in Indian Department personnel at Fort St. Joseph until the death of Louis DuFresne, the blacksmith, in November 1805. There was no blacksmith on the pay lists for Fort St. Joseph from then until 25 December 1806, when John Johnston was first listed as blacksmith, but in the accounts for 1807 there appeared a payment to Messrs. Spinard, Fields, and Vavant for furnishing a blacksmith from 25 February to 7 July 1806. Chaboillez continued to have trouble with his accounts and late in 1806 his pay was ordered stopped until they were straightened out. In the summer of 1807 Chaboillez was

replaced by John Askin Jr. and Joseph Chiniquy was given the position of clerk, for which he was paid until December 1808. Governor Sir James Craig apparently did not know or did not approve of Askin's appointment to succeed Chaboillez, for in May 1808 he ordered Jean Baptiste Cadotte to go to St. Joseph Island as storekeeper and interpreter in the Indian Department there. This appointment did not, however, take effect at the time, as Cadotte's name first appeared on the Indian Department pay lists for 25 June to 24 September 1809, in which both he and Askin were listed as interpreters at St. Joseph Island, Askin continuing as storekeeper. Cadotte continued on the pay list for Fort St. Joseph for a year and then appears to have been transferred to Fort George. From 1810 until the outbreak of war in June 1812 Askin and Johnston continued on the pay list for Fort St. Joseph, the former as storekeeper, clerk and interpreter, and the latter as blacksmith.<sup>2</sup>

The major purpose of the Indian Department at St. Joseph Island was to maintain the friendship of the western Indians. According to Dorchester the Indians had come to Michilimackinac for presents, for news, and sometimes to make peace under the King's protection<sup>3</sup> and it was hoped they would now do the same at St. Joseph Island. The small group of soldiers who first went to St. Joseph Island early in the summer of 1796 were accompanied by Indians who gave them what information they possessed about the island and helped them establish temporary quarters there. Because

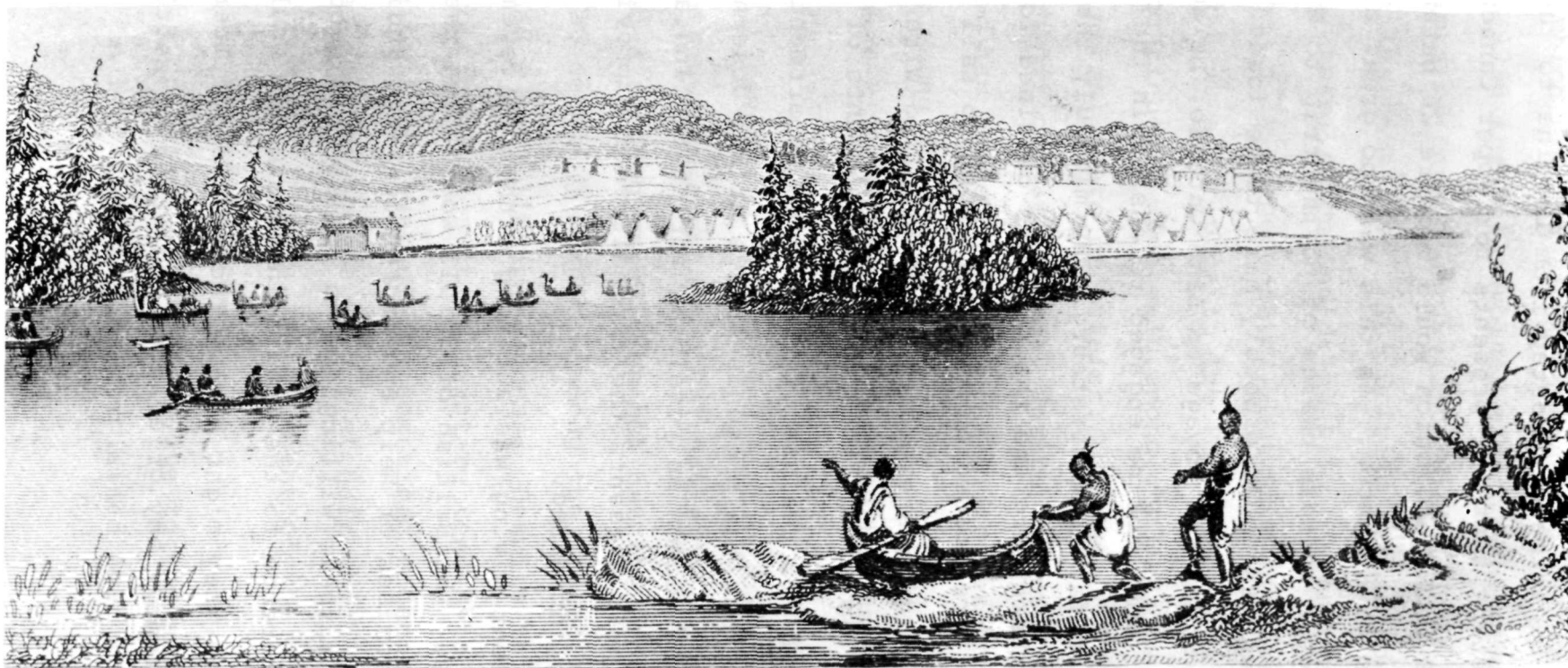
many of the Indians felt angered by the treaty of 1794 and by the transfer of Michilimackinac to American control, at first only a few were willing to go to St. Joseph Island. During the winter of 1796-97 the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph was unable to send a winter express, because he could not procure proper Indians for that purpose. By the summer of 1797, however, he was able to report that the Indians of the area were visiting the post as they formerly had Michilimackinac and that they seemed to be friendly. The Americans too were wooing the Indians of the area. In August 1797 General Wilkinson visited Sault Ste. Marie and gave presents to the Indians there. He also held an Indian Council at Michilimackinac and gave out more presents.<sup>4</sup>

The decision to build a permanent fort on St. Joseph Island made it necessary to purchase the island from the Indians. In the late summer of 1796 Ensign Brown, the commanding officer, was proposing to pay the Indians for the island that fall, but he was informed that matters such as purchases of land from the Indians had to be carried on through officers of the Indian Department in accordance with its regulations. This of course was a much slower procedure than that contemplated by Brown, who had intended to use the goods allocated for the spring distribution of presents and have these replaced from the lower posts as soon as possible. However, normal procedures were short-circuited to some degree as steps were taken to order the goods

necessary for the purchase from England before the price was agreed on. Early in the summer of 1797 Colonel McKee went to St. Joseph Island to negotiate with the Indians for the sale of the island. By August the necessary goods had arrived in Quebec and arrangements were being made to forward them to Upper Canada as soon as possible. In June 1798 the purchase of the island was completed at a formal council held with the Indians; in return for possession of the island the Indians were given goods worth £1200.<sup>5</sup>

As well as the goods which were given to the Chippewas in return for the ownership of the island, a supply of presents was forwarded annually for all the Indians who visited the post. The giving of presents was the most important way by which the government tried to retain its influence over the Indians. Among the items sent to St. Joseph Island as presents for the Indians were ornaments such as ear bobs, cloth of various kinds, tobacco, knives, kettles, fish hooks, and guns and ammunition. In 1798 fifty common guns, twenty-four chief's guns, eighteen rifles and twenty-five hundred pounds of ball and shot were required for the Indians visiting Fort St. Joseph.<sup>6</sup> The presents for the Indians of Upper Canada were at this period all supplied from England. From Quebec they were sent up river to Lachine where they were packed up and forwarded under charge of a conductor. In May 1798 the Storekeeper General





*Indian Rendezvous, on Drummond Island, Lake Huron.*

- 10 "Indian Rendezvous on Drummond Island." This would be similar to Indian gatherings at Fort St. Joseph before the War of 1812. Sketch by Bigsby (Public Archives of Canada.)

of the Indian Department reported from Lachine to the Military Secretary that the presents for Upper Canada would form about 760 packages, which would require 26 bateaux to transport them to Kingston. As this was too great a number for one conductor to take charge of on the trip to Kingston and as the packages would probably have to be loaded on more than one vessel for the voyage up Lake Ontario, he suggested that an extra conductor be engaged to assist in the charge of the goods as far as Amherstburg. By mid July the goods had reached Amherstburg and the packages destined for St. Joseph Island were loaded on a vessel about to sail for that post.<sup>7</sup> As the Indians expected to be supplied with food while they were visiting the post, large amounts of corn had to be purchased for the use of the Indian Department. It was important that the presents arrive at St. Joseph Island as early in the season as possible, for if the Indians had to wait for their presents the expenditure for provisions would be much increased.

The present giving was attended with much ceremony and many speeches. The British officials would give the Indians advice and promises of help and protection; the Indians would proclaim their willingness to follow this good advice and their adherence to the King's interest, and would air any grievances they might have. The British officers promised to remedy any grievances and tried to settle any

quarrels which existed among the various tribes. In the summer of 1798 the Folleavoines and the Chippewas, who were very jealous of each other, visited the Island of St. Joseph at the same time. The British persuaded the two groups to smoke, dance and drink with one another and they parted seemingly on good terms, but soon afterwards the Chippewas sent a war pipe to the Folleavoines and the quarrel continued.<sup>8</sup> Quarrels among the various tribes were the normal state of affairs. In May of 1801 the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph reported that nothing particular had happened during the winter except the usual accidents among the Indians at their hunting grounds. A Chippewa had killed one or two Ottawas but as the murderer had been handed over to the Ottawas there might not be any attempts at revenge. This seemed to have been the case as shortly afterwards a group of Chippewas joined some of the Ottawas in a raiding expedition against the Sioux.<sup>9</sup> Attempts at settling disputes among the Indian tribes usually had a very limited success. Despite this, such efforts continued, for tribal warfare tended to keep the Indians from their hunting and sometimes endangered traders as well as decreasing the amount of help which might be expected from the Indians in the event of the outbreak of a war with the United States.

Indian grievances were often due to the actions of traders. In 1797 the Ottawas complained that it was not

they but the white merchants who had broken the peace.<sup>10</sup> In the spring of 1804 a young Indian living near St. Joseph Island shot himself through the heart. According to the chief, who was his father-in-law, he had done this as a protest against the treatment his band was receiving from the traders. During the time of sugar making there had been traders in the Indian lodges, quarrelling over the sugar and forcing the Indians to exchange their sugar for liquor. The Indians had been kept in a constant state of intoxication and been unable to prepare as large a quantity of sugar as they usually did.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately it was difficult to exercise any control over the traders once they left the immediate vicinity of the post. On occasion there were complaints against members of the Indian Department of trading with the Indians and of defrauding them of their due allowance of presents and provisions. Thomas Duggan's trading with Indians who had brought corn and sugar to St. Joseph was one of the causes of his suspension from his post. One of the traders at St. Joseph accused Louis DuFresne, the blacksmith, of trading with the Indians, but the commanding officer did not give much credence to these complaints, which he felt proceeded from a private quarrel.<sup>12</sup>

As well as expecting their annual supply of presents, the Indians had come to depend on the Indian Department for

various services. The Indian Department had some medical officers of its own who attended the Indians in the vicinity of the posts at which they were stationed, but regimental surgeons as well were often called on to give medical assistance to the Indians. Smallpox was a particularly dangerous enemy to the Indians and efforts were made to vaccinate as many of the Indians as possible. The death of Louis DuFresne, the Indian Department blacksmith at Fort St. Joseph, in November 1805, was a blow to the Indians, who began to complain almost immediately that their arms, axes, etc. needed repair. A new blacksmith was not appointed for over a year, but in the interim a group of local traders provided a blacksmith for the Indians for several months. It was one of these traders who had complained a year or two earlier about DuFresne's activities. In 1810 Presque LeGris was paid £22 10s for building and completing a blacksmith shop at Fort St. Joseph, presumably to replace an old one. When Michilimackinac was captured in July 1812 and the garrison from Fort St. Joseph moved there, so too did the Indian Department, including the blacksmith. An assistant blacksmith was hired and a blacksmith shop was rented from Michael Dousman.<sup>13</sup>

The Indians who visited St. Joseph Island not only received presents from the government, they brought them as well. A large amount of maple sugar was received which was

sent down to Amherstburg, where it was sold by public auction, and the sum realized credited to the government. Between 20 November 1797 and 24 March 1800 about 13,300 pounds of sugar were received at Amherstburg from Fort St. Joseph. During this period 13,500 pounds of sugar were sold, realizing £436.<sup>14</sup> In years of good harvest the Indians brought corn to the post, which was also shipped to Amherstburg. In bad years they relied on help from the British to keep from starving. Furs, strings of wampum, and pipes were also given to officers at the post as presents for the government and all this had to be accounted for. More important to the people who had to live all year round on the island were the fish which the Indians frequently brought, and which were a welcome change from the eternal salt pork and salt beef.

The Indians visiting the post brought information as well as presents. Soon after the transfer of the western posts to the Americans rumours began spreading that the French and Spanish were planning an invasion of Upper Canada from the Mississippi. In 1798 the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph was sent instructions to report anything occurring in the vicinity of his post, for instance the presence of emissaries from the enemy among the Indians. He was to pay particular attention to what was happening on the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. He was not to raise any of these

questions with the officers at the American posts. In particular the British authorities wanted to know what the French and Spanish were up to, as there was always a fear that the Indians would join the French and Spanish if the latter did launch an attack on Canada by way of the Mississippi. In January 1799 Joseph Jackson was sent from Sandwich to the Indian settlements on the Mississippi to learn if possible whether they had received any invitation from the French or Spanish to join in any attack.<sup>15</sup>

Information received from the Indians who visited St. Joseph Island helped the British keep in touch with events in the Mississippi Valley and helped dispel many of their apprehensions. The Indians also kept the British informed of American activities. When Governor Hull held a council with the Ottawa and Chippewa nations at Michilimackinac in August 1809 several of the chiefs, after receiving medals and colours from Hull, visited Fort St. Joseph, presumably bringing a report of what had happened. When John Askin of the Indian Department reproved them for allowing themselves to be made chiefs by the Americans, they promised to return the colours and medals.<sup>16</sup>

Officers of the Indian Department at Fort St. Joseph faced the same difficulties in their relations with the military as at other posts. While they were responsible to their superiors in the Indian Department, the commanding

officer considered them under his control and saw himself as responsible for affairs in the Indian Department, as well as in every other sphere of life at the post. Moreover, Indian Department needs often had to take second place to military needs. In 1797, for example, Peter Russell, then Administrator of Upper Canada, requested that estimates be prepared as soon as possible for storehouses with apartments for the storekeepers in the Indian Department at Malden, Niagara and St. Joseph Island. Yet, when the building programme for 1798 was settled, it was decided that the Council Room for the Indians and the Indian Department storehouse would not be built till after the military construction was finished. The following year work on the Indian Department buildings at Fort St. Joseph had to be deferred once again, as the completion of the picketing around the fort superseded every other work. The Indian Department buildings never were reinstated in the construction programme. Because of the lack of a storehouse the Indian presents had to be kept in the blockhouse and taken to the interpreter's house when they were wanted.<sup>17</sup>

As well as having their needs considered secondary to those of the military, Indian Department officers at Fort St. Joseph often had to suffer interference on the part of the commanding officer at the post in affairs which they considered exclusively the province of the Indian Department.



As mentioned above, in the summer of 1796 Brown proposed negotiating the purchase of the island from the Indians, but was quickly told that this was the prerogative of the Indian Department. As the Indian Department superintendent for St. Joseph Island was never resident at the post, the storekeeper and the interpreter worked directly under the eye of the commanding officer. Drummond, for example, frequently took part in councils held with the Indians, advising them on their conduct. Cowell upon taking command of the post began to investigate the conduct of the officers of the Indian Department. In January 1802 he suspended the storekeeper for misconduct, and by his complaints had both the storekeeper and the interpreter removed from their posts. When Clerk forwarded to Headquarters complaints against the Indian Department blacksmith, he was informed by the Military Secretary that he should settle this matter himself. Although he protested that he always tried to interfere as little as possible in disputes between traders and Indians, it was Clerk also who reported complaints made by Indians of the vicinity against traders living in their villages.<sup>18</sup>

When Major Campbell took command of the fort in 1806 he seems to have considered that he had also taken charge of the Indian Department. According to Campbell, when he had visited Michilimackinac the previous fall he had been informed that the Ottawa chief, Little King, had sent his

son to the American commandant with a string of wampum and that the chief had said his heart was American. On the chief's arrival at St. Joseph Island in May 1807, Campbell sent him the charges against him. Little King asked to be allowed to reply to these accusations in council, which was held the next day. Little King said that his son had only given wampum to the doctor of the American garrison who had pulled a tooth for him, and that as for himself he would always be faithful to the British cause. Although Campbell felt himself unable to spare an officer to accompany Little King to Michilimackinac to clear up the matter, he did agree to give the chief a letter to Dr. Mitchell on the subject. Shortly afterwards Captain Denham, the commanding officer at Michilimackinac, arrived at Fort St. Joseph. Denham said Campbell must have misunderstood what had been said about Little King, as it had always been his understanding that Little King was firmly attached to the British government.<sup>19</sup> In this controversy over the loyalty of Little King it was Campbell, rather than any member of the Indian Department, who played the leading role. It was probably the affair of Little King that prompted Lieutenant Governor Gore to issue orders for the conduct of the Indian Department at Fort St. Joseph in December 1807. Gore noted that the officer commanding at the post had in many cases assumed the direction of Indian affairs, particularly in

demanding information of the Indians as to the behaviour of a principal chief who had been improperly stripped of his medals and colours by the commanding officer. Gore ordered that the commanding officer, though he was to preside at all public councils, was not, under any pretext, to interfere with the Indian Department agent in the management of Indian affairs.<sup>20</sup>

Relations between the Indian Department and the officers of the 41st Regiment seemed to have been fairly amicable, but when the 41st was relieved at Fort St. Joseph by a detachment of the 100th Regiment, under Captain Thomas Dawson, the situation rapidly deteriorated. Various squabbles over the issuing of presents and provisions led finally, on 31 January 1810, to Dawson suspending John Askin Jr., the Indian Department storekeeper and interpreter. Askin was ordered to hand over all his official papers to J.B. Cadotte when the latter arrived from Sault Ste. Marie, where he was spending the winter, and Charles Spinard was appointed to act as interpreter and issue provisions until Cadotte arrived. Askin immediately sent his son to York with a letter explaining the situation to Prideaux Selby, the Secretary of the Indian Department, and requested that Selby would put his case before the Deputy Superintendent General or the Lieutenant Governor. The Lieutenant Governor, Francis Gore, asked Matthew Elliott, who was at

York at the time, to report on the effect this dispute between Dawson and Askin would be likely to have on the Indians. Elliott pointed out that the officers commanding posts were forbidden to interfere with the officers of the Indian Department in the exercise of their duties. He feared that the suspension of Askin without the provision of a suitable substitute would create a very bad impression in the minds of the Indians, and forward the American plans to detach the Indians from the British interest. Gore then ordered Captain Sherrard to proceed immediately to St. Joseph Island to take command of the post. Accompanying Sherrard was James Givens of the Indian Department, who was ordered to investigate the affairs of the Indian Department at St. Joseph Island. Sherrard was given explicit instructions that as commanding officer of the post he was to co-operate with the senior officer of the Indian Department in his efforts to preserve the attachment of the Indians to the British interest, but he was not to interfere with the management of the Indians or their affairs. By the time Sherrard arrived at Fort St. Joseph, Dawson had been forced to approach Askin for help from the Indians in dealing with a threatened mutiny. Sherrard and Givens reinstated Askin in his position, investigated his accounts, and found everything in very good order in the Indian Department.<sup>21</sup>

The real test of the effectiveness of the policies of the Indian Department came with the American declaration of war in June 1812. War had been anticipated for some time, and during the winter of 1811-12 the officers at Fort St. Joseph were considering all possible means to strengthen their position. John Askin Jr. felt that in the event of war he would need two interpreters to assist him. He recommended his son, who was residing with a Chippewa band at Lac des Flambeaux and would bring some of them if needed, and Charles Langlade, who was one of the best interpreters in the country and respected by the Indians. Captain Roberts, the commanding officer, suggested keeping the Indian corn at St. Joseph Island rather than shipping it down to Amherstburg, in case it might be needed for issue to the Indians. In February 1812 General Brock, who was in command of the troops in Upper Canada and also in charge of the civil government in Gore's absence, sent a letter to Robert Dickson, a prominent British fur trader on the Upper Mississippi, asking him what Indians he could gather. Dickson arrived at Fort St. Joseph in the summer of 1812 with a group of Sioux, Follenvoines, and Winnebagos. When the news of war reached Fort St. Joseph a council was held with the Ottawa Indians, who were persuaded to aid the British. One of the reasons that Roberts did not wish to delay in attacking Michilimackinac was that he feared that

the Indians who had been collected at the island might desert him if he did not take action. On the other hand, fear of Indian atrocities was one of the reasons for the capitulation of Michilimackinac.<sup>22</sup> When the need for Indian assistance arrived, the Indians were gathered where they were needed and were willing to support the British. This was the real justification for the existence of the Indian Department at St. Joseph Island.

## FORT ST. JOSEPH AND THE FUR TRADE

Around the fort and military buildings on St. Joseph Island grew up a cluster of other buildings, dwelling houses and trading establishments. As has been seen above Dorchester had hoped that St. Joseph Island would replace Michilimackinac as a centre for the fur trade, but much of the focus of the trade had already shifted westward to the far end of Lake Superior. While the terms of Jay's Treaty seemed to ensure that British traders would continue to have access to the fur trade to the southwest, merchants who were established at Michilimackinac still had to decide whether they wanted to live in American or British territory. Some of the Michilimackinac merchants decided to move to St. Joseph Island, and were among those asking for lots on which to build. They still maintained close connections with the Michilimackinac-based trade, however, and for some trading houses the move to St. Joseph Island was part of an effort to keep a foot in both camps.

At the same time the American government was interested in lessening British influence over the Indians within

American territory and the most obvious way to do this seemed to be to get the Indian trade into American hands. In April 1796 Congress passed a law to establish government trading houses at posts on the western frontier or in the Indian country. In addition the licensing of private traders was to continue and no one was to be allowed to trade in the Indian country without a license.<sup>1</sup>

Although American merchants began to take an interest in the fur trade, the British traders still continued to dominate the trade of the Upper Mississippi for some time. American authorities, recognizing the influence of the British traders, attempted to win their support. In 1802 Governor Harrison of Indiana Territory sent American commissions to some of the British traders on the Upper Mississippi.

Robert Dickson and John Campbell were appointed justices of the peace; Henry Monroe Fisher, Basil Giard and Michel La Battre were appointed militia officers.<sup>2</sup> With the purchase of the Louisiana Territory American interest in the area increased and with this interest grew a determination to obtain complete control of the western territory. In 1805 Lieutenant Zebulon Pike was sent on a voyage of exploration to the headwaters of the Mississippi. His instructions were to select sites for posts, bring the Indian tribes into alliance with the United States, and learn what he could about the British traders operating in



that region.<sup>3</sup> That same year General James Wilkinson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Territory of Louisiana, announced that no foreign citizen would be permitted to enter the Missouri for the purpose of Indian trade.<sup>4</sup> It was the American contention that the area of the Louisiana Purchase, not having been American territory at the time of Jay's Treaty, was therefore not covered by the treaty and thus could be closed to traders from Canada.

Despite various efforts to follow the example of the North West Company and organize the British trade to the southwest, this trade was still carried on by individual traders and small partnerships. In the face of American determination to gain control of the trade of the Upper Mississippi and exclude British traders from the territory west of the Mississippi, there were new efforts to form some sort of combination among the British traders. In the summer of 1805 the firm of Robert Dickson and Company was organized. Concerned in this firm along with Dickson were Alan Wilmot, Murdoch Cameron, James Aird, Jacob Franks, John Lawe and possibly Joseph Rolette. The chief suppliers were the firm of James and Andrew McGill & Co. The company had a chain of trading posts in the lake region of the Upper Mississippi. Because of a heavy burden of old debts, uneasiness among the Indians because of teachings of the Shawnee religious leader, the Prophet, and a failure to

eliminate competition from traders outside the company, this venture was not a success. By the summer of 1806 there were serious problems over financial arrangements.<sup>5</sup> In the fall of 1806 the large outfitting firms of Montreal decided to organize the trade of the Upper Mississippi region. Conduct of the business in Montreal was to be in the hands of Forsyth, Richardson & Co., McTavish, McGillivrays & Co., James and Andrew McGill & Co., and Parker, Gerard, Ogilvy & Co. An agreement was reached with the North West Company, assigning spheres of influence to the two concerns. All traders interested in the traffic from Michilimackinac westward were invited to take shares in the new concern, to be known as the Michilimackinac Company. In the early spring of 1807 agents representing the new company were sent to Michilimackinac to arrange with the traders the quantities of goods they would put into the concern, apportion territory among the wintering partners and secure supplies. Among those who joined the Michilimackinac Company were several such as Toussaint Pothier and David Mitchell Jr. who had establishments on St. Joseph Island.

The period of the formation of the Michilimackinac Company was one of growing hostility between the United States and Britain. The traders forming the Michilimackinac Company probably felt that it would be extremely difficult for the American government to enforce Wilkinson's

regulations against foreign citizens trading in the Upper Mississippi. However, though their trading posts were remote, the routes leading to these posts were vulnerable to American interference. In May 1808 eight bateaux belonging to the Michilimackinac Company were fired on by American troops near the entrance to the Niagara River and forced to put into Fort Niagara, where they were seized by the customs officer. The other bateaux in the brigade had to return to Kingston to avoid a like seizure. According to the Montreal partners of the Michilimackinac Company, the goods which these boats carried were supposed to go to St. Joseph Island, where they were to be met by the agents of the company and receive instructions on their ultimate destination. Earlier that spring George Gillespie had been sent to Washington on behalf of the Michilimackinac Company to ascertain:

whether it was the intention of the American Government to continue to act upon the permanent part of the Treaty of 1796 as to the admission of British subjects to participate in the Indian trade within their Territory or to consider it at an end, as upon such ascertainment the agents of the Company at Saint Joseph's were to regulate their further proceedings.

Whether an unfavourable report from Washington would have prevented the Michilimackinac Company from trying to send these goods into American territory is a matter for speculation. The Michilimackinac Company felt that unless the British government took up their cause they would soon be driven from American territory, and pressed the governor, Sir James Craig, for help.<sup>7</sup>

At this time the Michilimackinac Company had a considerable establishment on St. Joseph Island on the point adjacent to the fort, now called Rains Point. According to John Askin Jr., by early 1808 they had erected a large store 80 by 40 feet, and by June they had another store and a dwelling house and plans for other buildings. However, when the Company's agent arrived from Montreal in the summer of 1808, he brought word that their goods would be allowed into Michilimackinac and their furs might be exported anywhere. This put an end to their plans for further building at St. Joseph Island, and there was even talk of taking down the buildings already there and moving them to Michilimackinac, but this seemed too expensive.<sup>8</sup>

As well as trading to the far west, the Michilimackinac Company was also interested in trade along Lake Michigan. Michilimackinac notarial records show several engagements, particularly in 1808 and 1809, between the company and individuals who were to winter at St. Joseph (presumably the

post of that name on the St. Joseph River, and not St. Joseph Island, as the company had a resident agent and partner at the latter place).<sup>9</sup>

The difficulties under which the Michilimackinac Company operated did not cease with the permission they received in 1808 to import goods into the United States. American attempts to prevent the import of foreign goods continued. The goods seized at Niagara were held until the next year. British traders complained that the collector of customs at Michilimackinac discriminated against them in the rate of duty charged on goods and in demanding almost immediate payment of duties charged. On the other hand, the American government trading house at Michilimackinac was able to bring goods in duty free. In 1808 John Jacob Astor obtained a charter establishing the American Fur Company; his visit to Montreal in the fall of that year was probably for the purpose of discussing the Michilimackinac trade. When the returns of the Michilimackinac Company declined seriously in 1809 the wintering partners, becoming discouraged, insisted on the dissolution of the company. In the summer of 1810 George Gillespie and Toussaint Pothier were sent to Michilimackinac by McTavish, McGillivrays & Co. and Forsyth, Richardson & Co. to buy out the interests of the wintering partners. The Montreal Michilimackinac Company, formed by the Montreal partners, carried on the

trade for another year. However, the prospects for British trade in American territory were becoming less and less encouraging and the partners of the Montreal Michilimackinac Company decided to propose to Astor an arrangement for sharing the trade. William McGillivray went to New York to negotiate with Astor and in January 1811 an agreement was reached for the formation of the South West Company. Astor and the Montreal merchants were to share equally in the trade, but if the American government factories were abolished Astor's share was to be increased to two-thirds. The North West Company was to be invited to take a share in the enterprise. Upon accepting this invitation, the North West Company agreed to withdraw from all American territory as far west as the Rockies.<sup>10</sup>

Negotiations with Astor had been facilitated by a lifting of the American embargo on trade with Britain, but this proved to be only temporary. When news of the Non-Importation Act, passed in the spring of 1811, arrived at St. Joseph Island, the South West Company's storehouses on the island were filled with goods intended for the trade of the Upper Mississippi. The agents of the company remained at the island for a time, voicing hopes that the act would be repealed. At the same time Robert Dickson was at St. Joseph Island announcing his intention to visit his brother at Queenston and then to journey on to the head of the

Mississippi by way of Buffalo and Fort Pitt. By mid-September news had reached St. Joseph Island that Dickson had reached the Upper Mississippi with a large assortment of goods, though the way in which he had escaped the American collector of customs was still supposed to be a secret. Thomas Anderson many years later recalled a successful effort to smuggle goods from St. Joseph Island into the United States. Anderson remembered this as taking place in 1810 but his story is probably the explanation of how Dickson reached the Upper Mississippi in 1811 with his trade goods. With seven boats, laden with goods worth £10,000, Dickson and a group of traders slipped past Michilimackinac at night, escaping the notice of American officials.<sup>11</sup>

During the winter of 1811-12 Dickson noticed signs of unusual activity among the American government agents on the Upper Mississippi. Attempts were being made to secure the friendship of the Indians and encourage them to be neutral in case of war. Leading warriors were invited to visit Washington. Dickson began to distribute provisions among the Indians, who were suffering because of crop failures, and to encourage them to refuse the American invitation. As a result of the American defeat of the Indians at Tippecanoe and of the influence of the followers of the Prophet, most of the western Indians were hostile to the Americans, and they were more ready to heed Dickson than the American

agents. In the spring of 1812 Dickson was able to gather a large number of Indians who were prepared to fight the Americans should war break out. When he returned to St. Joseph Island he brought some of these Indians with him, just in time to participate in the expedition against Michilimackinac.<sup>12</sup>

Although the focus of the northwest trade had shifted from Michilimackinac to Grand Portage before the western posts were handed over to the Americans, the merchants involved in the North West Company still had an interest in ensuring that a post within British territory was established to replace Michilimackinac. They recommended the Falls of St. Mary's as the best location for such a post, since they already had an establishment there, but when St. Joseph Island was chosen instead the North West Company began to take an interest in that locality. In 1798 the Company requested two lots at St. Joseph, those on each side of the neck of land leading to the point on which the fort was being built. There was a sandy bay which would be convenient for loading and unloading canoes, and by having a lot on each side of the point they would always be able to load and unload on the side sheltered from the wind. By 1800 the North West Company had a house and store on the island; at the store they built canoes for sending into the interior and to Montreal.<sup>13</sup> Aside from the canoe



building establishment, the major importance of St. Joseph Island to the North West Company was as a stopping place and depot for those on their way to or from Sault Ste. Marie.

There seem also to have been traders with establishments at St. Joseph Island who were not directly connected with either the North West or the South West Company. They were probably engaged in trading with the Indians of the local area, and perhaps also in selling goods to the soldiers of the fort and some of the people living around the fort. One such trading partnership was that of Charles Spinard, James Fields, G. Varin and Louis Pelladeau. This concern began in 1804 and was broken up in 1808.<sup>14</sup> During the time it was in operation the partnership obtained goods from Toussaint Pothier, at one time an agent for the North West Company and later a partner in the South West Company. This same concern provided the services of a blacksmith for the Indian Department in 1806, and on occasion accused members of the Indian Department of trading with the Indians. Of the traders who built houses or stores on St. Joseph Island, only a few remained there year round; the rest only visited the island for a month or two in the summer to exchange furs for supplies.

The fur traders always had an interest in ensuring that any effects which military policy might have on their trade would be beneficial, and on St. Joseph Island they

maintained a close relationship with the military. It was particularly important for the traders that they remain on good terms with the commanding officer at the post. As an example of the problems which could result for the traders if they were not on good terms with the commanding officer, when the North West Company was building on the island they complained that the commanding officer was making it difficult for them to obtain lumber.<sup>15</sup> In such a small society as that on St. Joseph Island officers and traders had to work together in many ways. The lack of proper accommodation for officers in the blockhouse, particularly during the periods when there were several officers stationed at the post, led officers to look for places to live outside the fort. They often found accommodations in dwellings belonging to the traders. When Captain Derenzy was commanding officer at the post he occupied the North West Company's dwelling house, which was later promised to John Askin Jr. of the Indian Department when Derenzy was relieved.<sup>16</sup> When Landmann was sent to St. Joseph Island in 1798, Alexander Mackenzie gave him a passage in one of the North West Company's light canoes about to proceed to Grand Portage by way of the Ottawa River. The following year Landmann also obtained passage in a North West Company canoe, this time by way of Kingston, Niagara and Detroit.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Landmann superintended

the building of a house for the North West Company at St. Joseph Island.

Isolated as St. Joseph Island was, it was difficult and expensive for the officers to get any supplies which they might need, and here the traders, and in particular the North West Company and its agents, proved invaluable. The letterbook of Angus McIntosh, who was the North West Company agent at Sandwich and was responsible for the Company's ships on Lakes Erie and Huron, contains considerable correspondence with various officers, and even a sergeant, at Fort St. Joseph concerning goods which he was sending to them on board the Company's vessels. In 1810 Angus Shaw, the North West Company agent, told the officers of the garrison that they could ship what cattle and provisions they wished by the North West Company vessel. The traders at St. Joseph Island and their Montreal connections often aided the officers financially by extending credit and banking facilities. John Askin Jr. of the Indian Department, who obtained the appointment of Collector of Customs at St. Joseph Island, hoped to persuade the North West Company to enter its tobacco at that post rather than Niagara or Queenston, as this would add considerably to his income.<sup>18</sup>

The North West Company was frequently able to assist the government and the military authorities in the difficult

task of maintaining effective communications with Fort St. Joseph. On any occasion when the North West Company felt it necessary to send an express to Sault Ste. Marie it was customary for them to offer to deliver any dispatches for the garrison at Fort St. Joseph. The report of the fire in the blockhouse in February 1803 was transmitted to the Commanding Engineer by means of an express going from Sault Ste. Marie to the North West Company partners at Montreal. When the United States declared war on Great Britain in June 1812 the news was forwarded to Quebec by the Montreal merchants, who proposed sending an express to St. Joseph and offered to convey any dispatches the Governor might wish to send. They intended sending six large canoes to bring down their furs as a measure of safety and suggested that if Prevost wanted to reinforce Fort St. Joseph these canoes could carry six soldiers each as passengers. Prevost turned down the offer of space for troops, but he did send dispatches in the North West Company's canoes. These canoes went by the Ottawa River route, which the merchants felt was the only safe route in time of war. In peace time both the merchants and the government carried large amounts of provisions up the Great Lakes to supply their posts. In times of urgency government stores were sometimes shipped on merchant vessels. Such favours were not entirely one sided. When a vessel from Detroit carrying supplies to the North

West Company post at Sault Ste. Marie was unable to complete its voyage, General Hunter authorized the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph to lend flour and pork to the North West Company.<sup>19</sup>

A major reason for the traders' frequent offers to assist the government and the military authorities in various ways was their desire to ensure that the decisions made by these authorities would be favourable to their interests. The merchants had a considerable influence in the filling of certain positions particularly in the Indian Department. Charles Chaboillez, the father-in-law of Simon McTavish, was for a time the storekeeper and clerk for the Indian Department at St. Joseph Island. When it seemed likely that he would retire, John Askin Sr. wrote to several of his friends in Montreal, such as Isaac Todd and James McGill, seeking their help in obtaining the post for his son. When Justices of the Peace were being appointed for the Indian territory recommendations were requested from Simon McTavish and John Richardson, representing at the time the two rival North West Companies.<sup>20</sup> The fur traders were also interested in the locations selected for military posts, but judging from the choice of St. Joseph Island, a site they had not recommended, they had very little influence in this matter.

The chief interest of the merchants lay in the protection of their trade routes and their freedom to trade. This was closely paralleled by the interest of the military in maintaining their supply routes and preserving the friendship of the distant Indian tribes. Whenever war with the United States seemed likely the fur traders turned their efforts to preventing war if possible, and also to strengthening the defences of Canada. In January 1812 Captain Andrew Gray, the Acting Deputy Quarter Master General, was ordered to communicate with the heads of the North West Company concerning the protection of their trade in the event of hostilities and the expediency of supporting or withdrawing the troops at the post of St. Joseph. The North West Company offered the use of their vessels on Lakes Huron and Superior, some of which were already armed. They reported the number of men they would have at St. Mary's and Fort William in the summer and stated that the company's agents would always be ready to protect their own property and use all their influence on both Canadians and Indians to urge them to do the same. The heads of both the North West and the South West Companies suggested that the military post be removed from St. Joseph Island to St. Mary's. They felt that Fort St. Joseph offered no real protection to their trade, as it had no command of the channel. If the garrison were moved to St. Mary's the North West Company

could concentrate its forces on Lake Superior at St. Mary's as well in order to assist in dislodging an enemy established at any point on Lake Huron. The fur traders also suggested the capture of Michilimackinac, as it was very weak.<sup>24</sup> Although Brock approved of the suggestion for moving the post to St. Mary's it was too late to carry it into effect, as war broke out that summer. The fur traders proved the sincerity of their offers of help, for a large number of the men gathered by Captain Roberts at St. Joseph Island in July 1812 were employees of the fur trading companies.

## SHIPS AND SHIPPING

The needs of government and the merchants created a fair amount of shipping on the Great Lakes, particularly as almost all the supplies for the upper posts had to be brought in from outside. During the American Revolution attempts had been made to prohibit private shipping on the Great Lakes but after the end of the war private trade flourished again, though the government still had some vessels on the lakes. Government vessels would sail from Fort Erie to Amherstburg, then on to Fort St. Joseph. The North West Company had several vessels on Lakes Huron and Erie, which usually sailed from Fort Erie to Sandwich or Moy and then on to Sault Ste. Marie. Vessels passing St. Joseph Island usually stopped there, despite the poor harbour. On occasion British merchant vessels might go to Michilimackinac, but this was generally not a profitable detour.<sup>1</sup> In theory the King's vessels were supposed to transport all government stores and provisions, as well as personnel and Indian presents, to Fort St. Joseph, but this was not always practicable. When repairs were being made to



the fort in 1804 it was feared that the construction materials needed could not be brought up to the post in one season, as the Maria was so small that she could not bring more than a few boards at a time.<sup>2</sup> It was essential that the garrison at Fort St. Joseph, being so isolated, should always have enough supplies in store to last for several months, and in cases of necessity the use of merchant vessels for the forwarding of supplies was authorized.

Among the government vessels transporting supplies and personnel to Fort St. Joseph during the period 1796-1812 were the schooners Maria and Hope, the sloop Francis, and the Ottawa, Camden, General Hunter and Montreal. The vessels were operated by the Provincial Marine, though the Maria was originally owned and operated by the Indian Department. Among the merchant vessels which called at St. Joseph Island in this period were the Caledonia, the Charlotte, the Beaver, the Ellen, the Nancy, the Thames and the Saguinah. There was also a merchant vessel called the General Hunter, which called at St. Joseph Island on its voyages. This vessel was launched in May 1800 by those who were trading in opposition to the North West Company and was originally intended to be used on Lake Superior.<sup>3</sup> However, she could not be got past the rapids on the St. Mary's River and had to be used on Lakes Huron and Erie.

Whether the General Hunter of the Provincial Marine in 1808 was the vessel launched in 1800 or another with the same name is not clear. Most of the British merchant vessels on the Upper Lakes in this period were in the service of the North West Company, though in most cases the actual ownership changed hands several times over the years. In some cases the vessels were operated by the owners, who made arrangements for cargoes etc., and in other cases they were chartered. In December 1804, for example, Robert Nicol made an offer to John Askin Sr. for the charter of the Saguinah for a voyage from Fort Erie to Michilimackinac and back the following spring.<sup>4</sup> The opponents of the North West Company, known as the New North West Company or the XY Company, were likewise interested in transportation for their goods and made substantial preparations at Sandwich for building new vessels for the lake trade. One of the vessels which they used on Lake Huron was the Nancy. In late 1800 they were interested in building a new Nancy, and by the spring of 1802 a ship referred to as the New Nancy was taking goods to the Sault. As the old Nancy was involved in an accident in the summer of 1801, later references to the Nancy may be to the new vessel.<sup>5</sup>

A voyage to or from St. Joseph Island could be an adventure. Landmann in his Adventures and Recollections gives a stirring account of his voyage to Amherstburg in

November 1798. According to his account he sailed in "the 'Machedash', government sloop, a very old, and very dull sailing vessel." From other evidence it appears that he travelled in the Francis, but his account does give a vivid picture of the terrors of sailing on Lake Huron in a small vessel so late in the season. According to Landmann's account, after sailing about two weeks in snow flurries with no sight of land they suddenly discovered land ahead, which the captain thought he recognized. Further glimpses of land proved that he was mistaken; apparently he at first thought they were on the west of the lake, but then decided they were on the east side. Fearing that the vessel would be driven onto the rocks everyone was panic stricken.

According to Landmann he took over command of the vessel from her captain, who by this time had drunk himself into insensibility in a vain effort to restore his courage, and, partly by luck and partly by good management, brought her safely into the St. Clair River. According to the log of the Francis, on this trip she left St. Joseph Island November 6 and arrived at Amherstburg November 17. The log mentions strong gales and contrary winds all the voyage which caused the loss of several sails and some tackle, and great difficulty getting into the river. There is no mention of the commander being overcome by drink, but command of the vessel was given to another officer for the

voyage to Fort Erie, and Lieutenant Fleming, who was in command for the trip from Fort St. Joseph, ran into difficulties with his crew in later years because of his drunkenness.<sup>6</sup>

While journeys to and from Fort St. Joseph were not always as hazardous as the one Landmann describes, on every trip there were difficulties to be encountered, and the length of time in port was often dependent on the extent of repairs necessary before the ship could proceed on her way, as well as on the state of readiness of passengers or cargo. On one journey down Lake Huron in 1813 the Nancy took three days from Michilimackinac to the bottom of the lake, but frequently vessels took much longer, and it often took a month or more for a ship to make the round trip to St. Joseph Island from Amherstburg or Sandwich. In 1797 the Francis left Amherstburg on October 10 to bring back Lieutenant Lacey and some civil artificers from Fort St. Joseph and did not reach Amherstburg again until November 19. On another trip the following year the Francis sailed from Amherstburg July 20, arrived at St. Joseph Island July 31, left August 7 and reached Amherstburg August 15.<sup>7</sup>

The first difficulty encountered by a vessel on a voyage from Amherstburg or Sandwich to St. Joseph Island was that of getting into Lake Huron. She might have to wait for a week or more until the wind was favourable for getting up

the St. Clair River and over the rapids at the entrance to the lake. Once in Lake Huron, with favourable winds the vessel might have a speedy and easy journey, but bad weather and contrary winds often made navigation difficult, particularly in the fall. In October 1813 the Nancy, caught in a gale in Lake Huron, took eleven days after entering the lake to reach Michilimackinac. Much of the time her captain was uncertain where he was, even when in sight of land. When a vessel bound for St. Joseph Island reached the head of Lake Huron she had to make her way into the St. Mary's River and to the island. Once at St. Joseph Island the exposed situation of the harbour added to the captain's difficulties, but his stay might be prolonged in order to wait for passengers or cargo. In 1800 the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph reported that he had been unable to get Landmann to submit his accounts the previous fall until he ordered the vessel to set sail. He particularly feared that the vessel would be frozen up at St. Joseph Island, which had happened a year or two earlier to a North West Company vessel. In 1810 Captain Fearson in the Ellen was ready to leave St. Joseph Island when the wind veered to the southeast and increased greatly in strength, driving the vessel onto a sandbank. Before she could get her sails properly dried and prepare to get off the sandbank the winter set in and she was forced to remain until spring.

The government schooner Hope was wrecked near St. Joseph Island in October 1805.<sup>8</sup>

The hazards faced on a passage to St. Joseph Island were not only those of wind and weather. Another problem was the nature of the commander and crew, who were not always of the best quality. The misfortune of the Hope was attributed to the drunkenness and neglect of Lieutenant Fleet, commanding the vessel. In June 1803, on his arrival at St. Joseph Island in the Maria, Lieutenant Fleming reported the crew in a state of mutiny and refused to leave St. Joseph Island until an officer and guard were sent on board. They returned on the next voyage of the Maria, now commanded by Lieutenant Fleet. The following summer Fleet had problems with a mutinous crew and was obliged to order the Maria to sail from St. Joseph Island before Mr. Molloy, the conductor of Indian stores, was ready to depart. This was particularly heinous as Molloy had to buy a passage on a merchant vessel for the expense of which someone had to be made accountable.<sup>9</sup>

The arranging of cargoes for the merchant vessels was a complicated business. Various claims had to be weighed and priorities assigned in the shipping of goods. The season was short, the number and size of the vessels limited, and the number of trips each vessel might make in a season uncertain. Priority was usually given to the goods of the

owner and to any government stores requiring passage on a merchant vessel; after that other goods awaiting shipment would be loaded. With the small size of the vessels and the uncertainties of wind and weather, care had to be taken not to overload the ships. In September 1800 Angus McIntosh expressed great concern that the Caledonia had been unable to take Toussaint Pothier's packs in her hold, as shipping them on deck was a dangerous method of transporting property and impeded the vessel's way with a side wind. The following year McIntosh had to apologize to P.G. Cotté at Sault Ste. Marie for not sending some oxen which had been ordered on the Charlotte's first voyage of the season as the vessel's decks were already lumbered with six sheep. About the best a private shipper could hope for was that his goods would arrive the year he expected them.

As well as freight the merchant vessels carried passengers. Officers on their way to a new posting often travelled in merchant vessels. Anyone wishing to travel on private business or pleasure would have to take passage in one of the merchant ships, unless he wished to travel by canoe. On occasion people from Michilimackinac travelled to St. Joseph Island in order to take passage in a merchant ship on her way down from the Sault. Even in war time the Nancy, while on government service, carried passengers.<sup>10</sup>

"THE MILITARY SIBERIA OF U. CANADA"

In a memorial to Sir Peregrine Maitland in 1818 James M. Cawdell, formerly an ensign in the 100th Regiment, traced his present wretched condition back to a quarrel with Lieutenant Governor Gore. Cawdell had written a satire lampooning Gore and as a consequence was reprimanded by General Brock, "who as a further punishment ordered me to St. Joseph's then the Military Siberia of U. Canada." The commanding officer of the regiment had done what he could to mitigate this "doom" as Cawdell called it, but Cawdell was so upset by this sentence of exile that before leaving York he sent in his resignation from the army.<sup>1</sup> Not everyone saw Fort St. Joseph in quite such gloomy terms, but, to many, a posting there was a form of exile.

Over the years there evolved at Fort St. Joseph a style of life which, while resembling life at any military post, was in many ways distinct from that of the other posts in Canada. The first and most important factor affecting the life of everyone at Fort St. Joseph was its isolation. It was never easy to get to Fort St. Joseph. In summer the



easiest way to reach the island was by one of the vessels sailing from Amherstburg or Sandwich. Some of the difficulties of this voyage have already been discussed. For many this was, of course, only the final stage in a long and difficult journey from Quebec or Montreal. There was always a risk of reaching Amherstburg too late in the season to obtain a passage to St. Joseph Island. When orders were given in 1798 that a surgeon's mate should be sent from Fort George to Fort St. Joseph, the commanding officer at Fort George was urged to send him as quickly as possible, so that he would reach Amherstburg before the shipping season closed. Despite the urgency of the matter, by the time he could be spared at Fort George, it was too late in the season to try to reach Fort St. Joseph.<sup>2</sup> It was not only passengers who had to be hurried along in order to make the journey to Fort St. Joseph before the season closed. Orders were frequently sent to Amherstburg that whatever goods were destined for Fort St. Joseph should under no circumstances be detained at Amherstburg, as it would be much more economical to make good any deficiencies at Amherstburg than at Fort St. Joseph.<sup>3</sup> Although the route by way of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes was the easiest, it was not without hazards. In June 1806 the Military Secretary wrote to the commanding officer at Amherstburg asking him to inform those at Amherstburg and

Fort St. Joseph who were in the habit of corresponding with the government offices at Quebec that they should sent duplicates of their correspondence of that spring as many of the letters sent from Kingston on 21 April had been lost when a canoe carrying them was overturned.<sup>4</sup>

Other routes could also be used to reach Fort St. Joseph, though these were too costly to use for transporting bulky goods. Landmann on occasion travelled by way of the canoe route along the Ottawa river. On one trip he travelled from St. Joseph Island to Montreal in less than eight days, but this was an attempt to establish a new record and in general the trip was a good deal longer. A winter journey to Fort St. Joseph was particularly arduous, and was only attempted in cases of necessity. In February 1810 Captain Sherrard was ordered to Fort St. Joseph to take command of the post and to investigate the dispute between Captain Dawson and John Askin. Later he submitted to the Lieutenant Governor a memorial for some compensation for the unavoidable expense he was put to, "together with the many privations and fatigues I must have experienced during a tedious march through a wild desolate and uninhabited Country at the unclement season of the year you found it expedient that I should proceed to this Post."<sup>5</sup> Sherrard had proceeded from York to Lake Simcoe, thence to Lake Huron and then on to Fort St. Joseph, a trip of 450 miles, making the journey in twenty-three days.

St. Joseph Island seems to have been a fairly healthy location, which was fortunate as during the first few years of its existence the post had no medical officer. At Michilimackinac there had usually been a regimental surgeon's mate. As well there had been a doctor residing in the village below the fort, Dr. David Mitchell, formerly a surgeon's mate with the 8th Regiment, who had married a Chippewa woman and become involved in trade. When the British garrison left, Dr. Mitchell remained at Michilimackinac because of his business and family interests there. Although the health of the garrison at Fort St. Joseph was good it was felt that medical assistance was necessary at such an isolated post. In the summer of 1798 orders were sent to Lieutenant Colonel McDonell, commanding at Fort George, to send Surgeon's Mate Anderson to St. Joseph Island. McDonell, however, felt that Anderson's services were necessary at Fort George until the sickly season was over and by that time it was too late in the year to set out for St. Joseph Island. The following year Assistant Surgeon David Brown was ordered to St. Joseph Island from Amherstburg as soon as navigation opened in the spring. Brown stayed at Fort St. Joseph until 1801 when he was relieved by Hospital Mate William Lee. When the Queen's Rangers relieved the Royal Canadian Volunteers in late July 1801 they were accompanied by Assistant Surgeon Robert

Richardson, who remained at Fort St. Joseph until he obtained a post as surgeon's mate to the garrison of Amherstburg the following summer. In November 1803 Dr. Lee's wife died leaving him with three small children, the youngest a few weeks old. The following summer, Hospital Mate James Geddes was ordered to Fort St. Joseph from Amherstburg to relieve Lee. In the summer of 1807 Geddes was replaced by Hospital Mate Lewis Davis. Davis was stationed at Fort St. Joseph until the fall of 1811 with the exception of a temporary absence during the winter of 1810-11, when his place was taken by James Burnside, assistant surgeon of the 100th Regiment. In the fall of 1811 Davis left St. Joseph Island because of ill health, and that winter Dr. David Mitchell arrived from Michilimackinac to act as hospital mate at Fort St. Joseph. Mitchell stayed at Fort St. Joseph until the capture of Michilimackinac, when he returned there.<sup>6</sup>

Near the site of Fort St. Joseph is the site of an old graveyard. The original grave markers have long since disappeared, but it is possible to guess at who was buried there, as it is almost certain that anyone who died on the island would not be moved elsewhere for burial. In 1799 Guillaume LaMothe, interpreter in the Indian Department, died. Landmann's foreman, a man named George Young, died some time after Landmann left the island in October 1799.

The next deaths mentioned took place in 1803. Private Antony Garrinel died 9 May 1803. He was putting a loaded gun into a bateau, when the gun went off. On 29 November Mrs. Lee, wife of the hospital mate, died. In December Thomas Duggan, the Indian Department storekeeper, died after a long illness, and later that month Private William Henson died as the result of a fall. Louis DuFresne, the Indian Department blacksmith, died 5 November 1805. In late 1807 Mrs. Lewis Crawford, wife of one of the traders, gave birth to twins who died a few days later. In March 1810 Patrick Mynagh froze to death while attempting to desert and his body was brought to the fort for burial.<sup>7</sup> As well others, whose deaths have not been recorded, may have been buried in the cemetery.

The difficulty and expense of a trip to or from St. Joseph Island, especially if one had to rely on private means of transportation, meant that once at the post people seldom left unless they were moving to another post. The third year that John Askin Jr., the Indian Department storekeeper, was at Fort St. Joseph, he had intended to send his wife to Amherstburg and Detroit to visit with their families, but she was unable to make the trip because of lack of money--a change in the method of paying the department had resulted in the pay list being returned, and Askin was a year behind in receiving his pay.<sup>8</sup> This

difficulty in obtaining money was another facet of the isolation of Fort St. Joseph. When construction was being carried out at the post there were frequent complaints about the difficulties in paying the workmen and Landmann on one occasion went to Michilimackinac in order to obtain specie. Records of payments approved at Quebec show the accounts for Fort St. Joseph being dealt with as much as a year behind those for other posts, and any mistakes or omissions meant further delays. It was considered particularly important that a competent person hold the position of storekeeper at Fort St. Joseph because of the remoteness of the post and the infrequency of the communication with it, but these very factors made it difficult to learn of the inefficiency of a storekeeper and to replace him when necessary.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the difficulties of the journey, there were some visitors to St. Joseph Island. In 1798 Landmann recorded the visit of Mr. Mason, a naturalist, and of Mr. Birkett, whose nationality and business no one could make out.<sup>10</sup> Apparently a trip to St. Joseph Island and back in a government vessel was a fairly common occurrence for officers at Amherstburg, for in 1806 Major Grant reported that when the Camden was going to St. Joseph Island he had granted Ensign O'Keefe permission to go and return in her, as all the other subalterns of the post had already been given such leave.<sup>11</sup> In spring and fall, when the

fur traders were passing by on their way to or from Montreal there was a great number of visitors to the small settlement on the island, but during the rest of the year the population was small and unvarying.

This small population, added to the isolation of the island at this time, led to a very closed society which had to rely entirely on itself for entertainment. First impressions of the settlement were often unfavourable. Dr. Richardson of the Queen's Rangers spoke of the dreariness and idleness of his situation. John Askin Jr. spoke of the "horrid ideas" he had of the place, feeling that perhaps in time he might reconcile himself to it. His main ambition, however, was to save enough from his pay to discharge all his debts, and then leave St. Joseph Island as soon as he could. After Askin had been at St. Joseph Island for some years he still found the society there "very common", and only considered one or two of the other families there fit to associate with. However, his feelings about the society of the island varied according to what group of officers was stationed there. When the 41st Regiment was at Fort St. Joseph the Askins considered the group of officers and their wives very sociable and united, and spoke of dining together at least once a week as well as meeting frequently to play cards.<sup>12</sup> When Captain Sherrard was sent to the post to investigate the dispute between Askin and Captain Dawson, he

stated that he sought information from "the only respectable inhabitant at this post".<sup>13</sup>

Despite protests of poverty and the dullness of the society, the Askins did see some advantages to life on St. Joseph Island. Askin recommended that his brother-in-law, Captain McKee, who was nominally superintendent of the Indian Department at the post, would be well advised to reside there instead of at Sandwich. He considered that McKee could live as cheaply at St. Joseph as he could at Sandwich; it was easy to obtain men servants at the post who were accustomed to the country, though women servants were scarce, and Askin found that he himself could manage quite well with only three servants. Askin felt that the climate would suit McKee and his wife, Askin's sister, better than where they were.<sup>14</sup> As McKee had an unfortunate reputation for drunkenness, Askin may have felt that St. Joseph Island would be a safer place for him to live, as it would remove him from bad influences and the temptations of the more varied society to be found at Sandwich and Amherstburg.

Among the attractions of St. Joseph Island which Askin mentioned were the game and fish to be obtained and the suitability of the soil for gardens. This was fortunate, for otherwise the diet of the inhabitants would have been limited indeed. Difficulties of transport restricted the



provisions which could be imported to those which could be shipped in bulk and would survive long journeys. The staples of the army diet were salt meat and flour. Although attempts were continually being made to obtain supplies of meat and flour in Upper Canada, including supplies of fresh beef during the fall and winter months, advertisements for these items never suggested delivery at St. Joseph Island.<sup>15</sup> The meat in particular which was issued to the troops at Fort St. Joseph was generally of English or Irish origin and had often been packed years earlier. Landmann described his weekly ration in 1798 as four pounds salt pork, three pints dried peas, six ounces of butter, six ounces of rice and seven pounds of flour. For the soldiers one of the most important structures at the post was the bakehouse where their weekly allowance of flour was turned into bread. Thus the fire which destroyed the bakehouse at Fort St. Joseph in 1802 was truly calamitous for the men. Some form of temporary provision for baking the bread was made as soon as possible, but until the new bakehouse was built there were continued complaints that good flour was being made into unpalatable and unwholesome bread.<sup>16</sup> Fish and game were an important supplement to the diet of those living at St. Joseph. Thomas Duggan reported catching pike, trout and bass. The whitefish caught near Sault Ste. Marie were a noted local delicacy, and John Askin

Jr. even sent fish down to his family at Sandwich. Rabbits, pheasants and partridges, caught locally, added to the variety of the meals. Not all the pork and beef consumed was salted. Cattle, hogs and chickens were frequently sent up from Amherstburg for the officers of the garrison and the Indian Department, and hay was grown in the swampy meadows near the fort. Even the soldiers had some supplement to their army rations. Some of the marshy land behind the fort was drained and laid out in gardens for the soldiers where they could grow potatoes and all kinds of vegetables. This not only relieved somewhat the monotony of their diet and added to the health and comfort of the garrison, but it also kept the soldiers occupied. Some of the houses in the little settlement were surrounded by gardens. (Traces of these can be seen on the 1854 plan of the military reserve which shows some of the flowers and an apple tree.) John Askin Jr. mentioned growing onions, cabbage, turnips, celery, and potatoes, and also produced his own spruce beer. Despite all these efforts there was still a good deal of food which had to be imported to the island, including any luxury items and most staples.<sup>17</sup> One could live a comfortable, well-fed life at Fort St. Joseph, provided one could afford the high cost of transporting all these goods.

Comfort, or the lack of it, on St. Joseph Island was greatly affected by the weather. Captain Alexander Clerk,

who commanded at Fort St. Joseph from 1802 to 1805, wrote an account of life at Fort St. Joseph in which he described the three winters he spent there. The first winter was extremely cold, at times so much so that the ink had frozen on his pen; the second winter was uncommonly mild. The third winter began with colder weather than he had ever felt from the middle of December to the end of January; after that it became milder, and there was more snow than either of the previous winters.<sup>18</sup> One of the chief difficulties experienced in these cold winters was that of obtaining wood. The last winter of Captain Clerk's command at Fort St. Joseph the cold was so intense during the first part of the winter that no one stirred out of doors, and the old stoves, which had been condemned as unserviceable, had to be put up again. In January 1808 John Askin Jr. reported that winter that year had set in very early and very severe. There were five to six feet of snow in some places and about four feet in the woods, which hampered the hauling of fuel. It was not just the cold and the snow which were problems; in 1804 one of the bateaux belonging to the post was wrecked in a gale of wind, in 1810 wind caused the grounding of the Ellen, and in 1811 the pickets around the fort were blown down.

The extreme cold and the wind made the provision of adequate winter clothing for the soldiers of special

importance. For the winter a greatcoat was considered indispensable. In the fall of 1811 the long awaited supply of greatcoats for the detachment of the 10th Royal Veterans at Fort St. Joseph did not arrive before the close of navigation. The commanding officer, Captain Roberts, requested John Askin to provide blankets from the Indian Department stores at the post, to be made into coats for the men. In late November, when the men could no longer perform their duties without coats, the blanket coats were issued to them. It was as well that Roberts took steps to provide his men with coats, for, according to John Askin, that winter was the severest that had been known there.<sup>19</sup>

The severity of the winters made the question of accommodation an important one too. The soldiers lived in temporary huts on the island from 1796 to the fall of 1798, when they moved into the new blockhouse. The blockhouse, having been built of unseasoned wood, soon proved very uncomfortable. Captain Clerk recorded that the first winter he was at Fort St. Joseph (1802-03) his bed curtains were frequently coated with snow which had come into his room through the openings between the logs. One can imagine the discomfort the private soldiers, who had no bed curtains to protect them, must have suffered with snow and rain blowing in on their bunks. In the summer of 1804 the upper part of the blockhouse, in which the soldiers lived, was

weatherboarded, and the roof was covered with sheet iron, so that these quarters were somewhat more comfortable, though probably the rooms were never really warm in the winter. By the summer of 1806 the roof was in bad shape again, admitting the rain in torrents. Even the officers' quarters in the blockhouse were not very comfortable--only two of the rooms had chimneys--and whenever possible the officers secured accommodations in the houses built by the traders.

Fort St. Joseph was never a popular posting for officers or men. Desertion was the ever present nightmare of commanding officers at British posts in this period. The isolation of Fort St. Joseph, while increasing the perennial tendency of the soldiers to desert, also lessened the attractiveness of desertion as the solution to the soldiers' problems. This isolation posed two questions: Where would they desert to? How would they get away? In April 1805, at the end of a particularly hard winter, twelve soldiers of the 49th Regiment solved the latter problem by taking the garrison boat when they deserted. In doing this they killed two birds with one stone, for the boat gave them the means of leaving the island, and, as it was the only boat the garrison had, they could not be followed.<sup>20</sup>

The 49th Regiment had a particularly bad reputation for desertion. There had been numerous desertions at York and a plot at Amherstburg for a large scale desertion and possible

mutiny. Finally in March 1804 several soldiers of the regiment had been shot at Quebec for repeated desertion and for an attempted mutiny at Fort George. It was hoped that the carrying out of the death penalty in these particular cases would reduce the rate of desertion, but as this did not happen the 49th Regiment was withdrawn from Upper Canada and replaced by the 41st. While the 41st Regiment was at Fort St. Joseph, there were no desertions reported, but in the summer of 1809 the garrison was relieved by a detachment from the 100th Regiment, a unit which was building up a reputation for being ill composed and poorly officered. Events at Fort St. Joseph did nothing to improve the regimental image. First there was the dispute between Captain Dawson and John Askin; then on the morning of the third of March two men of the detachment, Privates Con. Kearey and Patrick Mynagh, deserted. The desertion was discovered late that afternoon when Private Dennis Doherty reported to one of the NCOs that he had seen Kearey and Mynagh going towards the Detour on their way to Michilimackinac. On being informed of this Dawson ordered a subaltern and a sergeant to go as far as the Detour, nine miles away. They saw the tracks of the deserters in the snow, but being without snow shoes or provisions they were forced to return to the fort. That night Sergeant Drennan, an Indian guide, and a local inhabitant named Whiting set

out again in pursuit of the deserters. Drennan returned on the sixth of March and reported that about four o'clock on the morning of the fifth he had found Mynagh frozen dead oposite Goose Island, about thirty miles from the fort. About nine miles further on they found Kearey, insensible, but still breathing. As their provisions were getting short Drennan left Kearey in an Indian lodge to get warmth and nourishment, guarded by Whiting, to whom he gave directions to recover Mynagh's body and have it and Kearey brought back to Fort St. Joseph on a sleigh. On the seventh a party of Indians arrived at the fort with Kearey, who was somewhat recovered but suffering dreadfully from frost bite, so much so that he lost all his fingers, and had both his legs amputated. Dawson meantime was trying to discover the cause of this desertion but without success. On the fifteenth of March, Mary McCauley, wife of a private in the regiment, told Dawson that she had heard that a number of men had planned to desert and had taken a secret oath:

That they were not to have discovered upon each other on pain of Death and that they would support their scheme to the last to effect their escape, that they were to have broken open the King's Provision Store and that if any person or persons were to have attempted to resist or prevent their putting their plan into execution, that they would

pay no respect to persons, but would put every man so resisting to Death.

Corroboration of this story was obtained from Dennis Doherty, who admitted that he had been involved in the plan. Those who had taken the oath were Privates Fitzpatrick, Byrne, Pat Kerr, Mynagh, and Kearey. Privates William Nesbitt, Arthur Doyle and Tom Curran, Drummer James McCahill, and David Pickles of the Royal Artillery had also been involved in the plot, but had not taken the oath in Doherty's presence. They had met in the cook house, at the Burned Hill, and at Crawford's Point. Gunner Pickles had obtained powder and shot, and Doherty had seen Pickles, Kearey and Mynagh making cartridges in the cook house as far back as November. On the eighteenth of March Dawson ordered Corporal Coffey and Cadotte of the Indian Department, with two Indians, to take two of the ringleaders and another soldier of a suspicious character to a place called the Chenouse, thirty miles away. He obtained lodging for them with some Indian families there so that they could be separated from the rest of the troops. Immediately after the departure of this party Dawson arrested four more of those involved in the plot. Corporal Coffey returned on the twentieth of March, and that evening Nesbitt appeared at Dawson's door in a desperate state. Dawson put him into the guardhouse and then went up to the barrack room where he proceeded to arrest Byrne. Byrne



attempted resistance, trying to get out his bayonet to run Dawson through, but Dawson seized him by the neck and threw him into the guardhouse. In reporting this incident Dawson expressed particular gratitude for the assistance of the Indian Department; he mentioned only Cadotte, but according to Givens, one of those sent to investigate Dawson's dispute with the Indian Department, he had called on Askin for help. The Indians not only provided secure accommodation for some of the plotters and helped in tracking down the deserters, but they were also performing military duty, mounting guard along with the soldiers, etc. Dawson regretted that some of the men of his company had been wantonly rebellious, but he praised the conduct of Sergeant Drennan, Corporals Pendergast, Lee, and Coffey, and he said that he felt that the Protestants of his company had always behaved correctly and had been most alert and steady in helping to bring the delinquents to justice.<sup>21</sup>

For the soldiers, desertion seemed to offer the only solution to the hardships of life at Fort St. Joseph, but an officer could request a transfer, or leave of absence, or, as a last resort, resign his commission. Many of those stationed at Fort St. Joseph applied to leave the post. David Brown, the first medical officer at the post, applied to be relieved on account of his bad state of health. In May 1802 Captain Drummond reported that Brown had for some

time been confined to his room because of ill health. The climate at St. Joseph may not have been the sole cause of Brown's illness, as Landmann recorded that Dr. Brown spent much of his time in a state of intoxication. Dr. Richardson of the Queen's Rangers had only been at Fort St. Joseph a short time when he was applying for a transfer to Amherstburg, where there was a vacancy on the medical staff. Dr. Lee, who replaced Brown, applied for a transfer within a few years of his arrival at the post. The death of his wife had left him with three very young children to care for, whom he wished to take to Quebec, where they could be better provided for. Major Alexander Campbell applied for leave of absence as soon as he learned that he was being sent to Fort St. Joseph, and continued his efforts until his relief arrived. Campbell felt that of all the posts in Upper Canada, York was where he would most like to be; Fort St. Joseph was his last choice. On the other hand, Captain William Derenzy actually complained because someone else had been appointed to take command at Fort St. Joseph and requested that command of the post be given to him. His complaint, however, was on the grounds of seniority, rather than the desirability of Fort St. Joseph as a posting. In 1811 another medical officer, Assistant Surgeon Burnside of the 100th Regiment, asked to be allowed to leave St. Joseph Island. Burnside had been sent to Fort St. Joseph as a

temporary replacement for the hospital mate stationed there, Lewis Davis, who had been summoned to Fort George as a witness at a general court martial. Before his return to Fort St. Joseph, Davis requested that on account of his advanced years and repeated attacks of illness he might be stationed at any other post than St. Joseph Island, the climate of which he considered very harmful to him. Davis was, however, informed that it was absolutely necessary that he return to Fort St. Joseph. On his return to the island his health continued to deteriorate and by the time Captain Roberts took command of the post in September 1811 Davis was insane. Roberts ordered a survey on the medical stores in his charge, and allowed Davis to go to Amherstburg in company of one of the traders. Davis was replaced by Dr. Mitchell from Michilimackinac. A note beside Mitchell's name in a return of hospital staff dated 30 July 1812 is a fitting comment on the general attitude of officers to service at Fort St. Joseph: Mitchell is specially mentioned as "willing to continue at that distant Post," this apparently being so unusual as to be remarked on.<sup>22</sup>

St. Joseph Island had very few natural attractions and it was only attractive to those who were willing, and able, to make it so. A comment by John Johnston of the Sault perhaps best sums up the impression left by the place on those who knew it:

One of the bleakest spots in His Majesty's domains  
though at present the seat of justice, honour,  
politeness and the most liberal hospitality.<sup>23</sup>

RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

The chief contact which the people at Fort St. Joseph had with the United States was with the American post at Michilimackinac. A certain affinity grew up between the two posts, for they had many problems in common. One problem shared by the two commanding officers was that common to every military post of the era, desertion. In 1799 Captain Drummond wrote to headquarters for instructions on how to deal with five deserters from Michilimackinac who had been claimed by two parties from the American garrison. He was advised that, although no formal arrangements respecting deserters had been made with the American government, all deserters should be given up, even if the Americans did not return deserters to the British. A few years later the question was raised again and Captain Clerk was told to assist in apprehending deserters from the United States whenever asked to. It was suggested to him that it would help to prevent desertion if some understanding on the subject could be arranged with the officer commanding at Michilmackinac. Moreover, he was not to send any parties onto American soil to pursue deserters unless he had the

consent of the officer commanding the American garrison. In April 1805 twelve soldiers from Fort St. Joseph stole the boat belonging to the post and deserted. Captain Clerk wrote to the commanding officer at Michilimackinac, Lt. Col. Jacob Kingsbury, who offered whatever help he could give. In July it was Kingsbury's turn to ask for help when he lost nine men and a new boat.<sup>1</sup>

Another problem common to both posts was the difficulty of obtaining supplies. The shipping season was short and the two posts were at the end of a very long supply line. The American troops going to take possession of Michilimackinac in 1796 were delayed because of a lack of supplies and only a loan of salt pork from the British forces at Malden enabled them to take possession of the post that year. A further loan was requested, but in view of the shortage of pork at Malden and the fact that additional reinforcements were being sent to Fort St. Joseph the request could not be complied with. In 1799 Landmann visited Michilimackinac in an effort to obtain cash with which to pay his workmen. He managed to obtain about two thousand dollars in silver, which he had been unable to get at Fort St. Joseph or Sault Ste. Marie. In the fall of 1803 provisions were once again in short supply at Michilimackinac and Captain Clerk lent the American garrison what he could spare from his limited store. In 1806 the

provisions for the garrison of Fort St. Joseph, which had arrived at Fort Erie too late to get to the post that fall by a British vessel, were forwarded from Amherstburg free of charge in an American government vessel on her way to Michilimackinac. Ironically it was the American garrison which ran short of food that winter. As they were reduced to eating Indian corn, the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph lent them twenty barrels of pork, which were returned the following year.<sup>2</sup>

There were close ties between the traders at Michilimackinac and both government officials and traders at St. Joseph Island. Many of the traders who visited St. Joseph Island, and had buildings there, also had establishments at Michilimackinac. Dr. David Mitchell, who had been a surgeon's mate with the British army, had remained at Michilimackinac, but his son was one of the first traders to request land on which to build at St. Joseph Island. In 1798 Mrs. Hamilton, whose husband had been an officer of the 5th Foot and who was the daughter of Dr. Mitchell, requested a passage to St. Joseph Island in a government vessel. Another of Dr. Mitchell's daughters was the wife of Lewis Crawford, a prominent trader living on St. Joseph Island. When the people living on St. Joseph Island wanted goods from the United States they had them sent to Dr. Mitchell or some other resident of Michilimackinac, and from there the goods reached St. Joseph Island.<sup>3</sup>

Official relations between the two posts were not always as friendly as those between individual residents. In 1798 a complaint from François Bisson, a trader, who considered that he had been ill treated by the commanding officer at Michilimackinac, was forwarded to the Governor, General Prescott. The matter was soon brought to the attention of the American Secretary at War, who reprimanded the commanding officer severely. No problems arose for some years, but as tension between Great Britain and the United States increased, the attitude of the government at Washington was reflected in the behaviour of the commanding officer at Michilimackinac. Goods belonging to McTavish, Frobisher & Co., which were seized by the customs collector at Michilimackinac in June 1805, were not returned to their owners till June 1807. A chief of the Ottawas who went to trade at Michilimackinac in the summer of 1806 complained of the treatment he received from the commanding officer at Michilimackinac which seemed to be due to official policy rather than any personal animosity towards the people at Fort St. Joseph. In October 1807 Joseph Chiniquy, clerk in the Indian Department, and John B. Askin, son of the Indian Department storekeeper, when returning from a visit to the Indian village at L'Arbre Croche, were arrested and held for some time at Michilimackinac. According to Chiniquy the



behaviour of the commanding officer, Lieutenant Cross, was such that were it not for the fact of being a prisoner he would have been quite happy to spend a few days in Cross's company.<sup>4</sup>

The time was one of increasing American hostility to Britain and increasing American efforts to lessen British influence over the western Indians. During 1807 there seems to have been a continual apprehension that war might at any time break out. In January Major Campbell, the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph, wrote that "With us the great question of peace or war is still undecided, but we hope to hear something by the return of the Express."<sup>5</sup> In the fall plans were being made to send reinforcements to Fort St. Joseph in case of hostilities and the Indian Department was trying to assemble the western Indians for a council at Amherstburg.<sup>6</sup> Rumours of war caused financial panic and political unrest in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Tensions died down and the likelihood of war lessened for a time but there was still a certain uneasiness. Among the Indians irritation caused by the continued westward flow of American settlement increased. In 1810 the American embargo against trade with Britain was lifted, but it was imposed again in March 1811. In November 1811 the American army met and defeated a gathering of Indians at Tippecanoe. The voices of the "War Hawks" were growing louder and louder in

Washington, though men such as Astor who were more interested in trade than territory continued to belittle the idea of war.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately the views of the war party prevailed, and in June 1812 the United States declared war on Great Britain.

## THE CAPTURE OF MICHILIMACKINAC

The United States declared war on Great Britain on 18 June 1812. News of the declaration of war swiftly reached the Canadian merchants, as an agent of John Jacob Astor immediately sent an express to Montreal addressed to Astor's partners in the Indian trade.<sup>1</sup> On the twenty fourth the express reached Astor's Montreal partners, who were also the Montreal partners of the North West Company. They lost no time in informing the Governor, Sir George Prevost, in Quebec, of this alarming turn of events. While the military, at least in Upper Canada, had been anticipating war and planning for it, the merchants claimed that "this is an event that we have ever considered impossible, and can be accounted for upon no principle short of French bribery or actual insanity."<sup>2</sup> The Montreal merchants informed Prevost that they intended to send an express to St. Joseph Island in order to warn their western agents and the wintering partners of the outbreak of war and would wait for any dispatch he might wish to sent. Included in Prevost's orders to the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph was a

request that he give all consideration possible under the circumstances to the protection of the interests of the North West Company. Roberts was also instructed to use the greatest vigilance and caution for the protection of his post and to safeguard a line of retreat in case of necessity. William McKay, a former partner in the North West Company, was sent with the news, and Prevost's dispatch reached Roberts on 11 July 1812.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile General Brock, commanding the troops in Upper Canada, had already learned of the declaration of war. On the eighth of July Roberts received a dispatch from Brock informing him that war had been declared and giving him orders to take appropriate action. Upon receiving this Roberts began to assemble his resources to prepare for an attack on Michilimackinac. There were at the post at the time Toussaint Pothier, who had just arrived from Montreal as agent for the South West Company, and several of the traders of the company, including Robert Dickson, accompanied by a band of over one hundred warriors from the Mississippi. More of the traders and their men arrived in the following days. As most of them had come by way of Michilimackinac, they were able to bring information on the situation there. Roberts, finding himself poorly supplied with guns and ammunition (he had very little gunpowder, only forty guns in the Indian store and only cartridges enough

for his own men), turned to Toussaint Pothier, who threw open the South West Company's storehouses to supply his needs. More bands of Indians arrived including the principal Ottawa Chief. Roberts asked them for their assistance and after some hesitation they reluctantly agreed. Amable Chevalier, an Ottawa chief, who after living several years at Lake of Two Mountains had returned to the upper country the previous fall, was instrumental in persuading the Ottawas to join the proposed expedition against Michilimackinac. The North West Company's schooner Caledonia, stopping at St. Joseph Island on her way down from the Sault, was requisitioned by Roberts. Requests for assistance were sent to the Sault and Fort William, and some of the traders from the Sault proved very helpful to Roberts. Having made all these preparations for attack, Roberts then received orders from Brock to suspend hostilities. Brock had at first intended taking the offensive, but on considering the weak state of the British forces on the Detroit River and at Fort St. Joseph, he had decided to remain on the defensive. This fitted in well with the ideas of Prevost, who considered that in view of the divided state of opinion in the United States on the subject of the war he should refrain from any measures which might unite the country in favour of the war. Roberts, knowing that reinforcements had not yet arrived at

Michilimackinac, but that they were expected any day, and fearing that the Indians who were collected at St. Joseph Island might become impatient and desert him, was forced to wait. However, on the fifteenth of July he received further orders from Brock--he was to adopt the most prudent measures, offensive or defensive as circumstances might point out, for the protection of his post. To Roberts every circumstance seemed to point to an immediate attack on Michilimackinac.<sup>3</sup>

On the morning of July sixteenth Captain Roberts embarked with two of the six pounders from the fort and every man he could muster, and at ten o'clock the little flotilla, consisting of the Caledonia, the fur traders' boats, and the Indians' canoes, set out to attack Michilimackinac. By dint of great exertions on the part of the Canadians who manned the boats they arrived at the rendezvous at three the next morning. In the meantime Lieutenant Porter Hanks, commanding the garrison at Michilimackinac, had received an indirect warning from one of the Indians visiting the post that an attack on his fort was planned. This seemed to be confirmed by the fact that the Indians and traders who had gone to St. Joseph Island had not yet returned. However, no word of war having been declared had reached Michilimackinac. Hanks asked Michael Dousman, one of the residents of the little village below

the fort, to go to St. Joseph Island to find out what was happening there--whether plans were being made to attack Michilimackinac, and whether there was any news of war having been declared. On the night of the sixteenth Dousman encountered Roberts and his force on their way to attack the American fort, was taken prisoner, and brought back to Michilimackinac. Early on the morning of the seventeenth the British force landed on the island. Roberts sent Dousman to collect the civilians from the village and take them to the other side of the island where they would be safe in case of fighting. As soon as possible one of the guns was brought on shore and hauled with much difficulty to the heights above the fort. With the gun in place and ready to open fire, Roberts sent Toussaint Pothier to the fort with a request for its surrender. Hanks looked out from his fort to find the village deserted, and the British forces ready to attack. Roberts' demand for his surrender was his first notification that war had been declared. After some negotiation, terms were agreed upon and the American colours were hauled down.<sup>4</sup>

Hanks considered that he had no choice but to surrender, as the fort could not be defended against the force which Roberts had, and he feared that the Indians might massacre the civilians if there was a battle. The fort of Michilimackinac was a log fort with wooden pickets,

on a high limestone bluff overlooking the harbour. It was in fairly good repair, probably a good deal better than Fort St. Joseph, but shared Fort St. Joseph's problem of having a hill to the rear which commanded the fort. It was this hill on which Roberts placed his unwieldy iron six pounder gun. The ordnance of the fort consisted of two five and a half inch brass howitzers, two brass six pounders on garrison carriages, one brass three pounder, and two iron nine pounders. The three pounder and the six pounders were positioned in the blockhouses. The guns of Michilimackinac, like those at Fort St. Joseph, were not particularly new, for they bore inscriptions such as "Taken at Saratoga" and "Taken from Lord Cornwallis". The garrison consisted of 61 men, two lieutenants of the regular artillery, and a surgeon's mate. There were about thirty inhabitants in the village below the fort and a few families at Point St. Ignace on the mainland. The water supply for the garrison came from a spring which was not commanded by the guns of the fort. There had been a well, but the masonry had fallen in and the well had never been repaired. According to Hanks the forces opposing him were 46 regular troops, 260 Canadian militia, and 715 Indians including 572 Ottawas and Chippewas. According to British reports there were about forty regular soldiers, three or four hundred Indians under John Askin and Robert Dickson, and about two hundred



Canadians under Lewis Crawford. Hanks may have been including in his reckoning about three hundred Chippewas and Ottawas and a group of traders from Fort William who arrived after the fort was taken.<sup>5</sup>

According to the terms of the surrender the garrison was to march out with honours of war, and then lay down arms and become prisoners of war. They were then to be sent to American territory on parole. Not all the American soldiers, however, were sent to Detroit on parole. Among the soldiers in the garrison at Michilimackinac were three deserters from British service who surrendered themselves to Roberts when he took command of the post, and whom he retained at Michilimackinac. One, Hugh Kelly, a private of the 49th Regiment, was later sent to Fort George, where he was tried by a general court martial and sentenced to be transported as a felon. The sentence was remitted, and Kelly was permitted to rejoin his regiment. The other two, Alexander Parks and Redmond Magrath, were musicians, and Roberts made use of their services. Parks had many years earlier served with the Royal Artillery and Magrath had been a private in the 5th Regiment, a detachment of which had been stationed at Michilimackinac twenty years before. By 1812 both men were unfit for any type of active service. They were enrolled in the 10th Royal Veteran Battalion and eventually sent to Canada to be discharged.

On the 26th of July the American garrison sailed for Detroit in one of the vessels which had been taken along with the fort. When Hanks reached Detroit he requested, and was granted, a court martial to review his conduct in surrendering Michilimackinac. Before the court could reach a decision its sittings were interrupted by the arrival of a British officer carrying a note demanding the surrender of the post. When this was refused the British guns opened fire. Little damage was done that day, and only one American soldier wounded, but the following day casualties were heavier. Among those killed was Porter Hanks.

All American citizens who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the King were to depart from the island within a month of the capitulation, and the vessel carrying the troops also took these American citizens to Detroit. However, Michael Dousman, though an American citizen, was still on the island in September, when he left for Lower Canada on private business. Later, rumours began to circulate about Dousman's conduct during the war, and particularly at the time of the British expedition against Michilimackinac, alleging that he had acted for the British and had piloted them to the island. Dousman collected statements from various witnesses to his behaviour to show that he had always acted as a loyal American. It was pointed out that the British had no need of a guide to show

them the route to Michilimackinac, as the traders and Indians in the force knew the way very well. Dousman, however, did have some dealings with the British after the capture of Michilimackinac. According to Indian Department records Dousman's account for almost a hundred pounds was paid at the end of August 1812, and in 1813 the Indian Department rented a blacksmith ship from him for six pounds a year.

All government property was considered as prize of war. This must have been a rich haul, as the first instalment of prize money for the capture was ten pounds a share (distribution of these shares ranged from one share for a private soldier to one hundred for the Commander of the Forces). Roberts promised to respect private property as far as was in his power and this was done to a remarkable degree, for afterwards John Askin Jr. claimed that he had prevented the Indians killing even a fowl belonging to the inhabitants. The only blood to be shed was that of a number of bullocks which were purchased in order to make a feast for the Indians.<sup>6</sup>

The problem of safeguarding private property included the problem of establishing the ownership of various types of property and goods at Michilimackinac at the time of the surrender. The two vessels, the Salina and the Mary, which were in the harbour at the time were sent to Detroit, carrying the soldiers of the garrison and those inhabitants

of the village who declared themselves American citizens, along with some private property. It seems to have been understood by the British that the crews of these vessels were to be considered on parole, though the crew of one of the vessels took part in the fighting at Detroit. After the capture of Detroit these two vessels were taken into British service and used as transports. Following the surrender of Michilimackinac the goods in the government trading house were turned over to the British Indian Department to be distributed as presents to the Indians who had been present at the capture of the fort or who had arrived shortly afterwards. (Many of the Ottawas from L'Arbre Croche arrived too late for the expedition against Michilimackinac, claiming they were detained by contrary winds, though it was suspected they had waited to see what the outcome would be.)

When it came to the furs in storage at Michilimackinac the problem of differentiating between public and private property became more complicated. Some of the furs were government property, having been purchased from the Indians by the government agent at the post. Others were claimed by British subjects as having been obtained by their agents or being due to them for payment of debts and some of the furs at the post were the property of the South West Company. After the surrender of Michilimackinac two private vessels bearing the American flag arrived from Chicago, carrying

furs, and also carrying dispatches for Hanks. These vessels were captured and treated as prizes of war, either because they were not covered under the terms of the surrender of the post, or because they were under government charter. The two, the Friends Good Will, renamed the Little Belt, and the Erie, which continued under the same name, were both part of Barclay's fleet on Lake Erie in the summer of 1813.<sup>7</sup> Some of the furs on board these vessels were government property, others were claimed by British traders or by the South West Company.

In the meantime Astor was making great efforts to protect his share of the returns of the South West Company. Almost as soon as war was declared he arranged for permission to travel to Montreal to make arrangements about his property in Canada. With the help of his Montreal partners Astor arranged to have some of his furs sent to the United States by way of Lake Champlain. In order to facilitate this he had obtained permission from the American government to have property such as furs belonging to American citizens brought into the country from Canada through the customs house at Plattsburgh. Large quantities of furs were imported on assurances that they were Astor's property, collected at Michilimackinac before the outbreak of the war, though during the first two years of the war Astor imported more furs from Michilimackinac through Canada than he had ever before brought into the country and by 1814

there were still furs at Michilimackinac which Astor claimed as his.<sup>8</sup>

Before the attack on Michilimackinac word had been sent to the North West Company agents at Fort William asking for their assistance. They immediately set out with a strong party to assist Roberts, and brought down to Sault Ste. Marie guns and ammunition, but by the time they arrived at Michilimackinac the British were already in possession. An expedition was formed by the men of the North West and South West Companies with the intention of co-operating with the forces intended to be employed against Detroit. As well about two hundred Indians assembled at Michilimackinac offered to go to the Detroit River. These forces were too late to assist in the capture of Detroit, but the knowledge of their approach had some influence on the negotiations there.<sup>9</sup>

At Chicago the Americans had a small fort and a trading post. Among the dispatches carried by the Erie and the Friends Good Will were letters from the commanding officer at Chicago, Captain Heald, to Lieutenant Hanks. Heald had received news of the outbreak of war and wrote to Hanks to inform him of this. As the Indians around the post were showing signs of hostility Heald thought it likely that he would soon have to evacuate the fort. The British began to fear for the safety of the inhabitants of Chicago, exposed

as they were to the dangers of Indian attack. Brock sent a request to Roberts that he should, if possible, obtain the surrender of the post as the only means of rescuing the garrison from the fury of the neighbouring Indians. These orders came too late; on the fifteenth of August the Indians attacked the troops and civilians as they were evacuating the post. Of the civilians only a few women and children survived along with some of the soldiers. Owing to British efforts most of the survivors were eventually released.<sup>10</sup>

#### HOLDING MICHILIMACKINAC

After the capture of Michilimackinac there was no question as to which of the two forts in the area should be held in force. An officer and a few men were left at Fort St. Joseph to take care of the buildings there and an acting interpreter was appointed for the post, but the rest of the civil and military establishment settled in at Michilimackinac. No serviceable artillery was left at Fort St. Joseph and barrack furniture and other stores were brought to Michilimackinac as they were needed. The little settlement which had grown up around Fort St. Joseph gradually became deserted as the residents moved to Michilimackinac or left the area entirely. By 1814 orders were given to abandon Fort St. Joseph completely.

Once in possession of Michilimackinac the British forces put their efforts into improving its defences. Soon after the capture of the post most of the traders and their men went off to their winter quarters. Many of the Indians went to the Detroit River to assist the British forces there. The conduct of some of the Indians who remained,



particularly the Ottawas, was extremely suspicious. They used up valuable provisions and their loyalty was doubtful. On the other hand, the Chippewas were so useful that Roberts suggested that they be moved from the area around St. Joseph Island and settled around Michilimackinac. This suggestion was rejected on the grounds that Michilimackinac might at some future date have to be restored to the Americans and it would be inadvisable to run the risk in that case of giving them the permanent advantage of being surrounded by trustworthy Indians. Roberts badly needed some form of reinforcements. He had had only a small force of regular troops at St. Joseph Island, and with some of these left behind to guard that post he had barely sufficient men at Michilimackinac to man the guns in the blockhouses. These troops Roberts considered so debilitated and worn down that they would be very little use if they had to do any fighting. Those civilians at Michilimackinac who took the oath of allegiance--eighteen of them--were enlisted in a volunteer corps, but they were very awkward and not likely to become good soldiers. Roberts' pleas for reinforcements did not fall on deaf ears and in the fall Brock sent a sergeant and twenty-five men of the 10th Royal Veterans to Michilimackinac.<sup>1</sup>

Brock's capture of Detroit lessened the danger of an attack on Michilimackinac by the Americans or by Indians but

it did not solve all Roberts' problems. His most urgent requirement at Michilimackinac, as it had always been at Fort St. Joseph, was for sufficient provisions and other stores to supply his own small garrison and the Indians who visited the post. The capture of Detroit lessened the hazards of communications, but did not remove them entirely. In early October the government vessel Detroit and the Caledonia, the latter laden with the furs of the South West Company, were captured by the Americans. By October Roberts had only twenty barrels of pork of very bad quality--it was pork which had been culled for the Indians--and sixty barrels of flour, while the Indians were arriving for their winter presents and demanding to be fed. He felt that he needed a supply of 200 barrels of pork and 300 of flour, if he were not to suffer serious problems during the winter. While unable to supply the amount requested Colonel Procter, now commanding at Detroit, sent what he could spare. As well, a supply of flour was being sent from York by way of Matchedash Bay, although this was so long delayed that Roberts feared that the boat which had been sent from Michilimackinac had been lost. It was a sickly winter at Michilimackinac, with whooping cough widely prevalent, and by February Roberts was again worrying about the lack of provisions. In answer to his requests arrangements were made to send supplies from Amherstburg as soon as possible

in the spring. Roberts was also considering the state of the defences of the post from the aspect of repairs to be made and deficiencies to be supplied. He needed cartridges and travelling carriages for his guns, and the platforms needed repairing as did the roof of the store above the magazine, through which the rain penetrated onto the small arms which were stored there.<sup>2</sup> In the early spring of 1813 Lieutenant Colonel de Boucherville was sent to the upper posts to deliver Prevost's orders and inspect the lines of defence. Following the Ottawa River route, he went first to Fort St. Joseph, where he had difficulty in gaining admission to the fort as everyone there was asleep. The next day, having engaged two men to take him to Michilimackinac, he requested provisions for the trip, but these were refused him by the commanding officer. Fortunately a North West Company trader who was at the post gave him the assistance he needed. Boucherville reported that Fort St. Joseph in its present state could not be of any importance. The only guns which remained were spiked and without carriages. At Michilimackinac Boucherville found that Roberts was doing the best he could with his limited resources, but his health was breaking under the strain.<sup>3</sup>

When Roberts' health worsened, he was forced to apply to Prevost to be relieved of his duties and to move to a

more favourable climate. During the summer orders were sent to Procter to send an officer to Michilimackinac to replace Roberts. Towards the end of August Captain Richard Bullock of the 41st Regiment embarked on board the Nancy with his family on his way to Michilimackinac. He arrived on 13 September and the following day took over command of the post. On the first of October Roberts left by canoe for Montreal. Procter had been requested to forward what stores he could to the garrison at Michilimackinac but he himself was having difficulty obtaining supplies. On 10 September the British and American fleets on Lake Erie met near Put In Bay, and all the British vessels were captured. Procter was forced to evacuate Detroit and Amherstburg and retreat up the River Thames, suffering a disastrous defeat on the way. At the beginning of October the Nancy, having brought down stores from Fort St. Joseph, had left Michilimackinac with gunpowder and ordnance stores for Amherstburg. When she reached the St. Clair River her captain, Alexander Mackintosh, learned of the British losses on Lake Erie and on land. He also learned that there were several boats waiting to capture the Nancy. Refusing to surrender his vessel, Mackintosh fought his way up river and back into Lake Huron. The Nancy eventually made her way back to Michilimackinac and Bullock discovered that he was cut off, with his provisions nearly exhausted. He had only 68

pounds of salt meat in store and only enough flour to last the garrison a month, with little prospect of receiving any more. Nothing could come by way of Lake Erie and the lateness of the season made the route from York very doubtful. Bullock directed Mr. Bailey of the Commissariat Department to proceed to all the small settlements in the neighbourhood to purchase whatever provisions he could get. He hoped that by the greatest economy with the supplies so obtained and by catching fish the garrison would be able to survive till provisions arrived in the spring.<sup>4</sup>

Efforts were being made to supply Bullock's needs. On 12 September fifteen canoes laden with Indian presents left Lachine for Michilimackinac. Robert Dickson, who had been appointed Superintendent for the Western Indians and was on his way to Michilimackinac, undertook to conduct a supply of fifty barrels of pork and a hundred barrels of flour from York. Dickson left York the end of September and arrived at Michilimackinac 22 October, without the provisions. Bullock's first thought was to send the Nancy to Matchedash where Dickson said he had left the supplies. However, the Nancy, because of the bad state of her rigging, was unfit for the voyage, and on 28 October Bullock dispatched two canoes and a bateau manned with Indians and some of the Michigan Fencibles, a locally raised unit of volunteers consisting mainly of fur trade employees, with an

interpreter and a sergeant of the 10th Royal Veterans for Matchedash. The season was so far advanced that most of the local inhabitants were certain that it was impossible for the venture to succeed. On 2 November the sergeant returned with the bateau and one of the canoes as most of the Indians had refused to continue the voyage because of the weather. No one could be found to make another attempt. The interpreter had persuaded some of the Indians to take the other canoe to Matchedash, but when they arrived they found that the provisions had not yet arrived. Bullock reduced the daily rations and waited for spring.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile Michilimackinac was assuming new importance in Prevost's plans for the campaign of 1814. Prevost considered Michilimackinac of vital importance as the rallying point for those Indians who were still loyal to the British and felt that it could also be useful in the event of an attempt being made to recover Amherstburg and Detroit. The garrison, composed of veterans who were well past their prime and the Michigan Fencibles, who, while useful as boatmen, were not considered dependable as soldiers, was not adequate to the importance of the post.<sup>6</sup> Captain Bullock, as well as worrying about how he was going to obtain enough food to sustain his men throughout the winter, was also considering the best means of defending his position, and he sent his conclusions on the subject to

Prevost. Bullock felt that six large gun boats should be built at Matchedash Bay in order to protect the supply line. Reinforcements of course were needed, including engineers and gunners. The hill behind the fort, still a menace, should be protected by means of a stockaded blockhouse, preferably with a well inside the stockade. Bullock recommended clearing out the well inside the fort, still apparently unusable. The water for the garrison had to be carried in buckets from a spring outside the fort. Any enemy could easily take possession of this spring as soon as they landed without hindrance from the guns of the fort.<sup>7</sup> Prevost was planning to send reinforcements and supplies to Michilimackinac by two routes. Preparations were being made to send ten canoes by way of the Ottawa River carrying arms and ammunition, Indian presents and provisions, along with ten men from the Royal Artillery and sixty men of the Canadian militia, as soon as navigation opened. Lieutenant General Drummond was requested to send from Kingston two companies of Royal Marines and enough sailors to man the Nancy and the gun boats which Prevost wanted built at Penetanguishene. Drummond was also to arrange that twelve months' provisions for three hundred men were sent to Michilimackinac by way of Lake Simcoe. The gun boats to carry these supplies across Lake Huron were to be built at Penetanguishene. Drummond suggested that part of the

reinforcements to be sent to Michilimackinac should accompany the Detroit expedition in order to add to its strength, but this came to nothing as the idea of an attempt on Detroit was abandoned.<sup>8</sup> As there was no road from Lake Simcoe to Penetanguishene Bay arrangements were made to forward the supplies to Nottawasaga Bay, this being an easier route to open.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall of the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles, who had formerly been Prevost's aide de camp, was chosen for the command of Michilimackinac. He was to have under his command one noncommissioned officer and ten gunners of the Royal Artillery, and two companies of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. A naval lieutenant and twenty-five seaman were to accompany him on the journey to Michilimackinac. McDouall and his men left Kingston early in February, passing through York the middle of the month, and made their way to Lake Simcoe. From there they cut a road to the Nottawasaga River where they built themselves huts. The Newfoundlanders, with a group of workmen, including boatbuilders, under William McKay, then set to work building thirty large boats. In late April McDouall, with 210 men, eight women and seven children, embarked in the boats, which were fully loaded with provisions for the garrison at Michilimackinac. They descended the Nottawasaga, cutting a channel through the ice in the upper



part of the river and in a few days reached the northeastern shore of Lake Huron. Though the lake was covered by immense fields of ice and swept by violent gales of wind they set out to cross it in their heavily laden, open boats. Struggling with the elements day after day they at last reached Michilimackinac 18 May with the loss of only one boat.<sup>9</sup>

Once at Michilimackinac the troops worked hard to strengthen the defences of the fort. By mid-July they had almost completed building a blockhouse on the hill behind the fort, which was named Fort George, but the difficulty of finding water remained. Like his predecessors McDouall stressed the necessity of obtaining an adequate store of provisions, for the danger always existed that the supply route might be cut. As the Indians reported that the Americans had ten vessels at Detroit ready for an expedition into Lake Huron, he expected to be attacked in early August.<sup>10</sup>

## WAR ON THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI

Prairie du Chien, at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers, was a favourite meeting place of the Indians of the Upper Mississippi and the principal trading post of the area. By 1812 a small village had grown up there. The permanent residents were French Canadians who were mostly related by marriage to the neighbouring Indians. Some were engaged in the fur trade and the rest were farmers, supplying the traders with flour and meal. Before the outbreak of the war the American government had attempted to win some influence over the inhabitants of the Upper Mississippi, and these attempts continued. During the winter of 1812-13 Nicholas Boilvin, the American Indian agent at St. Louis, tried unsuccessfully to persuade the inhabitants of Prairie du Chien that they should join the Americans. Some of the chiefs of the region had visited Washington at the invitation of the American government and received large presents but they still remained hostile to the Americans. Several of the inhabitants of Prairie du Chien wrote to Roberts at Michilimackinac asking him to send

them arms and ammunition so that they might supply the Indians and retain their friendship, but Roberts was unable to spare them anything from his own meager supply.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1813 Robert Dickson received a commission as agent for the Indians to the west of Lake Huron. Dickson was instructed to bind the western tribes to the British cause and to restrain them as much as possible from acts of inhumanity. In the spring of 1813 Dickson visited the Indian tribes in the vicinity of Lake Michigan and of Prairie du Chien, trying to convince them to join the British. He brought a large number of Indians from the west to Detroit, where, unfortunately, they served mainly to add to the British supply problems. After visiting the commander in chief, who was at that time at Kingston, Dickson returned to Michilimackinac. In mid October twelve canoe loads of Indian presents from Montreal reached Michilimackinac. As Dickson had not yet arrived at that post, William McKay, who had been sent from Montreal with instructions for the distribution of the Indian presents, felt himself obliged to journey to the Mississippi with the goods. Winter having already set in, McKay lost no time in transferring the goods destined for the western Indians into boats and he prepared to set off for Green Bay. When McKay

was ready to depart Dickson arrived and took charge of the goods while McKay returned to Montreal to report on the situation at Michilimackinac. Dickson spent the winter of 1813-14 on Lake Winnebago, on the route from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien. It was a difficult winter for Dickson. He was soon running short of provisions as well as having problems retaining the support of the local Indians, some of whom were beginning to lean to the American side. During the winter the Americans sent a force from Detroit against the trading post on the St. Joseph River. Several British traders were taken prisoner and the storehouses destroyed. Dickson suspected that the Potawatomi had aided the Americans in this expedition. Meanwhile there were rumours that the Americans intended to advance up the Mississippi to Prairie du Chien and that the Sioux could not be depended upon to oppose them.<sup>2</sup>

In the spring of 1814 as soon as the sugar making season ended Dickson went to Prairie du Chien where he distributed presents among the Indians. The local inhabitants feared that an American force would be sent against them and wanted Dickson to help them prepare against this. Dickson, however, considered that there was more danger of the Americans attacking Michilimackinac and gathered a band of warriors which he took to reinforce that post. Meanwhile Governor William Clark of Missouri

Territory, who had long wanted to make Prairie du Chien an American stronghold, had been building a flotilla of armed boats to further this aim. In May 1814 Clark set out from St. Louis for Prairie du Chien with a force composed both of regulars and of militia. When the flotilla reached the mouth of the Rock River several Sauk and Fox Indians were sighted. The Americans exchanged shots with the Indians, who then sued for peace. On 2 June the expedition arrived at Prairie du Chien, where they met with no resistance, the local militia having left the village. They took possession of the house formerly occupied by the Michilimackinac Company and began the construction of a fort. By 20 June the fort was ready for occupation by the troops. The fort was a substantial one, surrounded by ten foot high oak pickets and including two blockhouses, one containing a six pounder gun, the other a three pounder. Governor Clark returned to St. Louis leaving Lieutenant Perkins and a company of regulars in the fort and two gun boats manned by militia to aid in maintaining the post. Soon after this, however, Captain Sullivan, in command of one of the gun boats, returned to St. Louis with his company of militia and several men from the other boat as their term of service had expired.<sup>3</sup>

The news that the Americans had taken Prairie du Chien and were building a fort there soon reached Michilimackinac.

The Indians who had accompanied Dickson, many of whom had left their families near Prairie du Chien, began to grow uneasy. They became more and more upset as they received more news of events at Prairie du Chien. Several Indians had been captured by the Americans, and several Winnebagos had been killed. The western Indians who were at Michilimackinac began to prepare to return home to protect their families. McDouall saw that in order to retain the support of these Indians he would have to dislodge the Americans from their new post, which was a direct threat to his own position. If the Americans were allowed to retain their prize the British would soon lose all their influence over the Indians of the area, who would be forced to submit to the Americans or be destroyed. The Americans would soon gain control of the source of the Mississippi and gradually extend their influence up the Red River and in time to York Factory. This in turn could lead to the British being expelled from Upper Canada. With all this at stake McDouall felt that he must run the risk of weakening his force at Michilimackinac in order to take immediate action against this danger. He appointed Joseph Rolette and Thomas G. Anderson to be Captains of Volunteers and armed and clothed the men whom they raised. Pierre Grignon of Green Bay was also appointed a Captain and was sent to Green Bay to enlist volunteers there. At the repeated urgings of the Indians he

agreed to let the expedition have the three pounder gun he had brought from York. He assigned to the expedition Sergeant James Keating of the Royal Artillery and a sergeant, corporal, and twelve men of the Michigan Fencibles. William McKay was appointed to command, with the local rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and on 28 June he set out, taking with him about 75 of the Michigan Fencibles and Canadian Volunteers and about 130 Indians. When they arrived at Green Bay the force was nearly doubled, and more Indians promised to meet them at the portage of the Wisconsin River.<sup>4</sup>

McKay arrived at Prairie du Chien on 17 July with a force of about 650, of whom 120 were Michigan Fencibles, Canadian Volunteers, and officers of the Indian Department. The rest were Indians, whom he considered more a hindrance than a help. Most of the local residents were willing to aid him, but they had to bend their efforts to protecting their homes from pillaging Indians. McKay found himself facing the American fort, named Fort Shelby, on a small hill behind the village, garrisoned by about sixty men of the 7th Regiment, and lying at anchor in front of the fort a large gun boat, the Governor Clark. This gun boat, which McKay called a "floating blockhouse", carried seventy or eighty men, and several guns of various sizes, and had high sides to protect the men from small arms fire. McKay politely requested that the fort surrender, and the commanding

officer, Lt. Joseph Perkins, just as politely refused. In order to satisfy the impatience of the Indians McKay then ordered the small cannon he had brought with him to fire on the gun boat. To improve the effectiveness of its fire the gun was moved into position between the fort and the boat. After being fired on for about three hours the gun boat cut her cable and floated downstream to take refuge behind an island. The gun was then turned on the fort, and on the nineteenth McKay's men began to throw up breastworks close to the fort. In the evening they put the gun into position behind the first breastwork, and prepared to fire the six remaining rounds of iron shot, red hot, into the fort. Meanwhile within the fort ammunition was running low, hospital stores were non-existent and the well had caved in. Just as the British were about to load the first red hot ball into the cannon a white flag appeared over the fort, and an officer came out with a note offering surrender. The following morning Perkins and his men marched out and formally handed over Fort Shelby, which McKay renamed Fort McKay in honour of himself. Casualties in the action were light; on the British side only three Indians were wounded and on the American side five of the garrison of the fort were wounded.

In his report on the action McKay stated that every man of the Michigan Fencibles, Canadian Volunteers and the



officers of the Indian Department had behaved extremely well under hot fire. He drew attention to Captain Rolette, who had shown special courage in the action, and Captain Anderson, who had given great effort to keeping everything in order during the march from Green Bay. Lieutenant Porlier of Captain Anderson's company, Lieutenants Graham and Brisebois of the Indian Department, Captain Dease of the Prairie du Chien Militia and Lieutenant Powell of the Green Bay volunteers had all acted with courage and activity. The Indian interpreters had done their best to prevent the Indians plundering the local inhabitants. Lieutenant Honoré of Captain Rolette's company had acted as commissary on the journey and his activity in keeping an exact account of all their provisions had prevented much wastage. In particular McKay singled out for praise those who had been responsible for managing the gun: "The Michigan Fencibles who manned the Gun behaved with great courage, coolness and regularity. As to the Sergt. of Artillery too much cannot be said of him for the fate of the day and our success are to be attributed in a great measure to his courage and well managed firing."<sup>5</sup>

Once the fort had surrendered and presents had been distributed most of the Indians departed and McKay was left to defend the position with a small force of volunteers. He intended to keep the prisoners as hostages, but a shortage

of provisions compelled him to sent them to St. Louis. Fearful of attacks from down river and unwilling to place any reliance on assistance from the Indians, McKay requested McDouall to sent a reinforcement of fifty regulars. Harvest time was near and many of his men wished to return to their homes to help bring in the crops. Meanwhile General Howard at St. Louis had sent a force of 42 regulars and 66 rangers, under Major J. Campbell, up the Mississippi in several gun boats to reinforce Prairie du Chien. They reached the mouth of the Rock River on 21 July. When the Governor Clark escaped down river from Prairie du Chien McKay had sent some Indians with four kegs of powder to gather the Sauk Indians to intercept her at the Rock River rapids. This force reached the rapids the night of 21 July and the following morning they attacked the Americans' encampment and forced Campbell and his men to turn back. Some of their guns were captured and these were brought back to Prairie du Chien. McKay considered this "one of the most brilliant [sic] actions fought by Indians only since the commencement of the war."

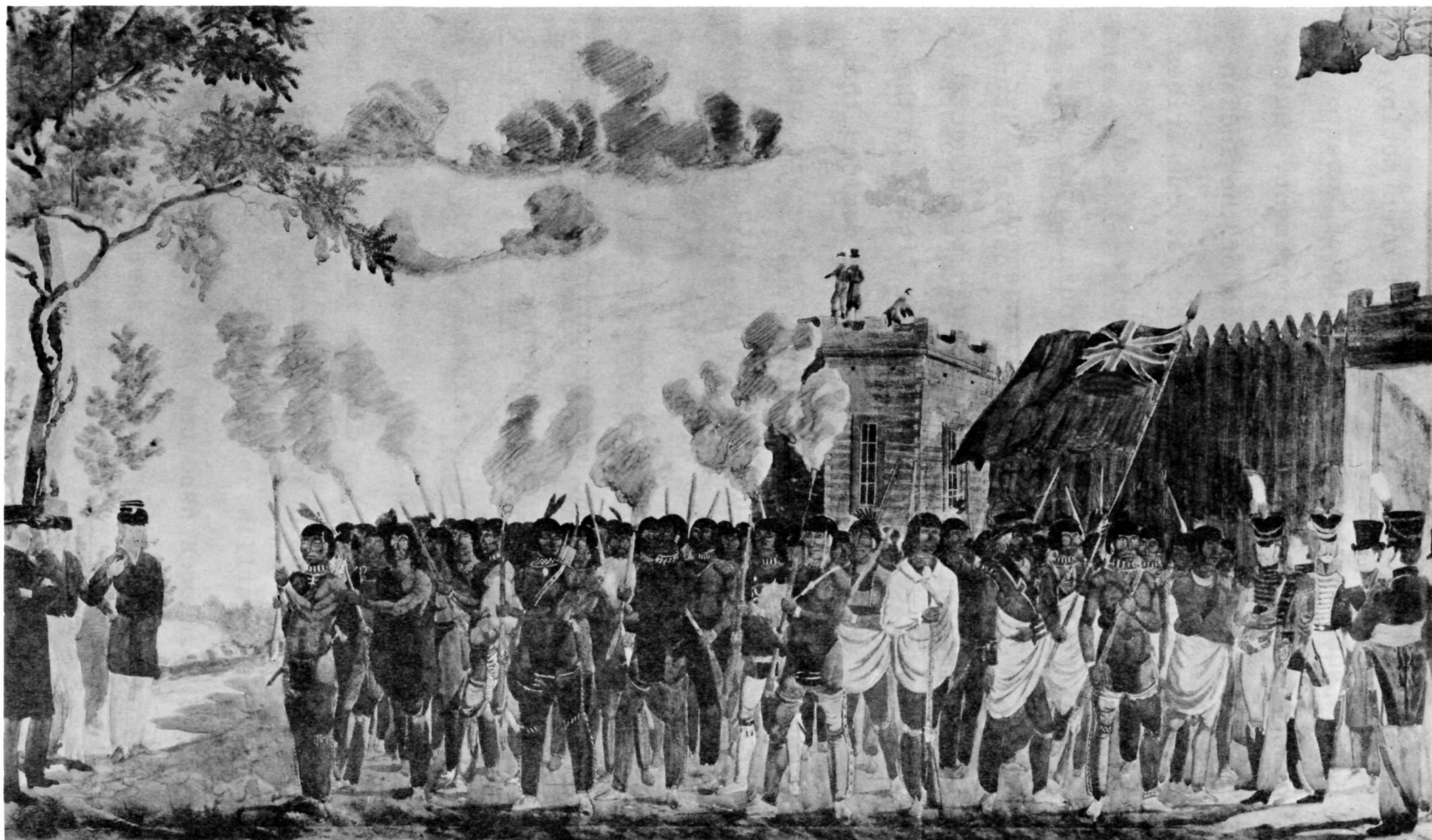
Among the papers taken by the Indians and sent back to Michilimackinac with McKay's reports on the affair was an Illinois newspaper which reported on Clark's expedition to Prairie du Chien and told of American forces having stormed and taken two old trunks belonging to Robert Dickson, which McKay considered a grand prize for the Governor, containing

as they did Dickson's business correspondence and accounts dating to 1786. The danger of attack having been removed for the time being McKay put the defences of his little fort into as good order as he could. Leaving Captain Anderson, who unlike some of the other volunteer officers was willing to continue serving till the end of the war, in charge at Prairie du Chien, McKay returned to Michilimackinac, where he later received an appointment in the Indian Department, succeeding Thomas McKee on the latter's death.<sup>6</sup>

When Lieutenant Perkins reached St. Louis he reported that the British garrison at Prairie du Chien was small and most of the Indians who had accompanied the British were leaving. An expedition to ascend the Mississippi was organized under Major Zachary Taylor (later president of the United States) who commanded over 300 men in eight barges, carrying several small cannon. The first objective of this expedition was to destroy the Indian villages and corn fields in the vicinity of the Rock River rapids. When news of their approach reached Captain Anderson at Prairie du Chien he sent Lieutenant Duncan Graham with several Michigan Fencibles and volunteers and a brass three pounder and two swivel guns in charge of Sergeant Keating of the Artillery to the Rock River rapids. Taylor and his party reached the rapids on 4 September and anchored for the night. In the

morning the British guns opened fire and the boats were forced to retreat. Taylor stated that he considered he could have carried out his mission "if the enemy had not been supplied with artillery and so advantageously posted as to render it impossible for us to have dislodged him without imminent danger of the loss of the whole detachment."<sup>7</sup>

McDouall had hoped to be able to supply a company of regulars for the garrison at Prairie du Chien but as this proved impossible he sent Lieutenant Andrew Bulger of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment to take command of Fort McKay with the local rank of captain and with orders to enlist a company locally. On 29 October Bulger and a small party set out from Michilimackinac with the snow beginning to fall. By the time they reached Prairie du Chien a month later, almost out of provisions, winter had definitely set in and the last 150 miles of the journey they had to cut their way through the ice. When he arrived at Prairie du Chien Bulger faced serious difficulties. Because of the want of transport it had been impossible to distribute to the Indians of the area more than a portion of their accustomed winter supplies and this angered many of the tribes. The garrison itself was dependent on a scanty supply of bread eked out with game whenever the hunters were successful. The local inhabitants were also short of food as their cattle and crops had been plundered by the Indians. The



11 Fort McKay (Prairie du Chien) 1815). Indian salute and farewell to the British. Tradition indicates that the two figures in the lower right are the Sauk chief Black Hawk and the British commandant Andrew Bulger exchanging farewells. Painted by Peter Rindisbacher, who was acquainted with Bulger when the latter was Governor of Assiniboia in the early 1820s. The British uniforms shown are of this period rather than of the War of 1812. (McCord Museum, Montreal.)

troops garrisoning the fort were unused to army discipline and at the end of the year were in a state of open mutiny, but Captain Bulger subdued them with the help of Robert Dickson and other officers of the Indian Department. Bulger spent much of the winter visiting many parts of the Indian country, in order to gain the support of the various tribes. It had been learned that the Americans intended to make another attack against the fort from St. Louis in the spring. In April, as a result of the arrangements Bulger had made during the winter, the Indians began to gather at Prairie du Chien. Despite strenuous efforts little in the way of food could be obtained locally. Bulger decided that his wisest course of action would be to carry the war into the vicinity of St. Louis rather than wait, with dwindling provisions, for the Americans to attack him. After gathering a large force of Indians he sent strong war parties down the Mississippi and was preparing to follow them when he received a letter from Governor Clark informing him that the war had ended.<sup>8</sup>

THE AMERICAN ATTEMPT TO RECAPTURE MICHILIMACKINAC

Once the Americans had gained control of Lake Erie they began to plan for an expedition to recapture Michilimackinac. Some thought was given to sending a force to attack the post in the fall of 1813 but it was decided to postpone this until the following year in order to make more extensive preparations. At Michilimackinac, too, preparations were being made, and by the summer of 1814 McDouall considered himself in a strong position to defend against the expected American attack, though he was in need of more troops and provisions. On 3 July the American flotilla, consisting of the Niagara, Lawrence, Caledonia, Scorpion and Tigress, sailed from Detroit under the command of Captain Arthur Sinclair, USN.

On board were five companies of regulars from Detroit and a large number of Ohio militia, the troops numbering in all over seven hundred, under Lieutenant Colonel George Croghan, a nephew of Governor William Clark. Also on board was Ramsay Crooks, who had been appointed by John Jacob Astor as his agent. Crooks' purpose was to protect Astor's

interests and in particular to try to bring back furs belonging to Astor which were at Michilimackinac. Having been delayed in the St. Clair River by low water and contrary winds, the expedition at last entered Lake Huron. The ships first set out for Matchedash, hoping to cut off the supply route to Michilimackinac and capture supplies intended for that post, but no one in the expedition knew the exact location of Matchedash Bay. After searching several days in heavy fog they gave up and headed for Fort St. Joseph. Finding the fort deserted they destroyed it and the traders' storehouses. The South West Company storehouses, on a point to the east of the fort, were not, however, demolished.<sup>1</sup>

Just off St. Joseph Island the Americans found and captured the North West Company schooner Mink, which had been brought down from Lake Superior on government service and was laden with flour. Learning that another North West Company vessel, the Perseverance, was at the lower end of Lake Superior, just above the falls, waiting to transport goods to Fort William, Sinclair sent the ships' boats and Lieutenant Turner of the Scorpion to capture her and bring her down to Lake Huron if possible. Major Arthur Holmes, with a company of regulars, was attached to this expedition. At St. Mary's the inhabitants, having been warned by Indians of the approach of the Americans, fled from the post.



Before leaving they set fire to the Perseverance in order to prevent her falling into American hands, but the Americans arrived in time to put out the fire and proceeded to bring her down the rapids. She had filled with water, however, and was finally destroyed. A quantity of dry goods, sugar and spirits belonging to John Johnston was taken back to the fleet and the rest of the property at St. Mary's, including the North West Company's storehouses there, was destroyed.<sup>2</sup> The determined attack on the North West Company's property was supposedly in retaliation for its activities in support of the British forces, but the South West Company's action in supplying Roberts' expedition against Michilimackinac was conveniently forgotten, thanks to the influence of Astor's agent.

From St. Joseph Island the American fleet then moved on to Michilimackinac. On 28 July they were sighted from the island. For several days the garrison held itself in readiness to face an attack while the fleet hovered off shore waiting for better weather and more information. The guns of the ships could not be elevated sufficiently to injure the fort or the blockhouse on the hill behind it. If the troops landed on the beach below the fort they would be exposed to the fire of the fort's guns long before they could get up the steep hills leading to the fort and be in a position to attack. Finally Croghan decided to land at the

same place the British had chosen two years earlier, on the west side of the island. It was not considered feasible to prevent the landing of the Americans, protected as they were by the guns of Sinclair's fleet, but McDouall determined to meet them in the field. Leaving only enough men in his two forts to man the guns there McDouall, with the rest of his force, took up a position in front of the forts. McDouall had a force of about 150 regulars of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, in whom he placed "the fullest confidence", some militia, and about 300 Indian warriors, who would, he hoped, protect his flanks. He was uneasy at having to depend solely on the Indians for this latter task as he was unsure how they would behave. His position was good, though he considered it a little too far from the guns of the fort. He occupied commanding ground with a clear field of fire in front and was protected on both sides and in the rear by thick woods. A natural breastwork protected the men from enemy shot. As the Americans advanced McDouall's six and three pounders opened a heavy fire on them, and though the guns were not well manned--McDouall's best artillery man was at Prairie du Chien--they inflicted considerable damage. The Americans gradually gained the British left flank, which advance the Indians at first permitted without firing a shot. Croghan ordered Major Holmes to flank the British right and McDouall moved a detachment of the Michigan

Fencibles to oppose them. Collecting many of the Indians who had drawn back, and about thirty militia, McDouall advanced to support a party of Folleavoine Indians who under Chief Thomas had begun a spirited attack on the enemy. The Americans suffered a number of casualties, including the second in command, Major Holmes, who was killed, and they retreated to the shelter of their ships' guns. The following day, after some negotiations concerning the treatment of the wounded prisoners, the American fleet departed.<sup>3</sup>

One of Ramsay Crooks' objects in accompanying the American expedition had been to try to collect Astor's furs at Michilimackinac. A large quantity of furs supposed to belong to Astor had already been carried down to Montreal and transported across the American border. Astor, however, claimed that there was still a considerable quantity of furs at Michilimackinac which were his property. In April 1814 he applied to the American government for permission to send a vessel to Michilimackinac to bring back his furs. This permission was granted on condition that Astor obtain a safe conduct for the vessel from the Canadian authorities. Astor's friends in Montreal, McTavish, McGillvrays & Co. and Forsyth, Richardson & Co., applied to Prevost for the requisite pass, which was granted. When Crooks left Detroit with the fleet this pass had not arrived, but he was in

hopes that if the American expedition was successful he would be able to bring back Astor's furs. After the failure of the American attack on Michilimackinac, Crooks requested permission from Sinclair to go on shore to ascertain whether he might bring away Astor's property but this was refused. Although Crooks was forced to leave Michilimackinac without the furs, he had been able to save the South West Company's storehouses at St. Joseph Island and had witnessed the destruction of much North West Company property. Soon after Crooks' return to Detroit, Astor's brother George arrived with the schooner Union and, having obtained the necessary passes, they were able at last to bring J.J. Astor's furs from Michilimackinac.<sup>4</sup>

During the long and uncomfortable journey from Kingston to Michilimackinac relations between McDouall and Lieutenant Newdigate Poyntz, RN, who was in charge of the party of sailors, had become increasingly strained. Poyntz considered that his command included "all afloat", which would of course comprehend the entire expedition once it had embarked in the boats on its way to Michilimackinac. McDouall expressed the wish, "That Sir James again had the pertinacious Lt. that he unfortunately sent me, who, full of his own consequence, as Commanding on Lake Huron (Commg. what? not a vessel) and a great stickler for naval etiquette is constantly disposed to cavil, and on the watch

for opportunities in his naval capacity to oppose what I wish."<sup>5</sup> Because of this attitude McDouall had found great difficulty in getting the Nancy sent to Nottawasaga Bay for supplies and was only prevented from sending Poyntz back as soon as he could by the fact that he needed the twenty sailors, who would not be willing to serve under a military officer. McDouall requested that Poyntz be replaced by someone who would be explicitly under his orders. The commander of the British naval forces on the Great Lakes, Sir James Yeo, was requested to choose someone who was not as disposed as Poyntz to assume such a great degree of self consequence. Yeo picked Lieutenant Miller Worsley and gave him strict instructions to comply with all requisitions made to him by the officer commanding at Michilimackinac.<sup>6</sup>

Worsley was, of course, to reach his new post by way of York and the Nottawasaga River. Meanwhile, McDouall at Michilimackinac was worrying about the supply of provisions for his garrison. The local crops were in danger of being completely ruined for want of rain and the quantities of provisions he considered necessary were not being forwarded to him. In mid July he sent the Nancy back to Nottawasaga to fetch a supply of corn which Mr. Crookshank, Deputy Assistant Commissary General at York, had promised he would have there by 20 July. By the beginning of August Worsley had reached Nottawasaga and taken command of the Nancy, which he was loading with provisions. When the American

squadron appeared off Michilimackinac McDouall managed to send word to Nottawasaga Bay. He considered that it would be best to pull the Nancy as far up-river as possible, have her guns brought on shore and a blockhouse built to protect her and the supply depot. While McDouall's messenger was on his way to Nottawasaga Bay the Americans, having been defeated in their attempt to capture Michilimackinac, had split up their forces. The Lawrence, Caledonia, and Mink returned to Detroit with the militia and two companies of regulars, and the rest of the expedition continued in its efforts to destroy British installations on Lake Huron. On 13 August Captain Sinclair anchored off the mouth of the Nottawasaga River with the Niagara, the Scorpion and the Tigress. Meantime Worsley had taken the Nancy up-river and built a blockhouse. Croghan landed with a detachment of men and found the Nancy just as Worsley was getting the last of her guns into his blockhouse. The following day Croghan set his howitzers up on shore and began shelling the British position. Worsley and his small force held the position as long as they could and then, having blown up the Nancy, made their escape. The Americans took the guns from the blockhouse, set it on fire, and then left. The Niagara returned to Detroit leaving the Tigress and Scorpion to patrol Lake Huron and prevent supplies reaching Michilimackinac.<sup>7</sup>

When Crookshank arrived at Nottawasaga a few days later with further provisions for Michilimackinac he learned of the destruction of the Nancy and her cargo of stores. However, there were still two bateaux and a large canoe at the Nottawasaga which the Americans had not discovered and these, loaded with provisions and manned by the crew of the Nancy, set out for Michilimackinac. Guided by Robert Livingstone, one of the traders from St. Joseph Island who had assisted in the capture of Michilimackinac, Worsley and his men made their way around Lake Huron. By this time the American vessels were in position off the Detour, the channel from Lake Huron into the St. Mary's River. Worsley beached the boats, hid the provisions, and he and his men set out for Michilimackinac in the canoe. After passing close enough to the enemy vessels to ascertain that they were two schooner rigged gun boats of the largest class, he reached Michilimackinac 31 August and immediately proposed making an attack on the ships. The following day four large boats were fitted out for the expedition, two of them with field pieces in their bows. That evening the four boats set out from Michilimackinac, one manned by sailors, the others by fifty men of "the brave Newfoundland Regt. (who are familiar with this kind of service)" under Lieutenants Bulger, Armstrong, and Radenhurst, the whole commanded by Lieutenant Worsley. After travelling all night they reached

the vicinity of the Detour at seven the next morning. The force remained concealed all that day. At six in the evening they set out to row the six miles to the enemy vessel. Having left the Indians to the rear, they reached her about nine and were within a hundred yards of the ship before her crew noticed them. Receiving no answer when they hailed the approaching boats, the Americans opened fire. Lieutenant Worsley and Lieutenant Armstrong, attacking on the starboard side, and Lieutenant Bulger and Lieutenant Radenhurst on the port, soon boarded and captured the vessel. She proved to be the Tigress, commanded by Sailing Master Champlain, with a crew of thirty and mounting a long 24 pounder. From the men of the Tigress the British learned that the other schooner was anchored about fifteen miles off. Having sent the prisoners under guard to Michilimackinac they settled in to wait for the other vessel. On the afternoon of the fifth she was sighted and Bulger ordered the soldiers to keep out of sight. That evening she anchored about two miles off. At daybreak the cable was slipped and the Tigress glided silently toward the other vessel. By the time she was discovered it was too late. After a brisk fight the British captured the second American vessel, the Scorpion, commanded by Lieutenant Turner, USN, with a crew of thirty-two and carrying a long 24 and a long 12 pounder. Lieutenant Worsley returned in



I Maranguine or Encampm<sup>t</sup>. Douce. Nibish Rap.

June 27. /20



- |                            |                 |                            |               |                         |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Mr. Thompson's Marquee   | 4 Mr. Gibbs.    | 7 Dining Lodge. Jarpaulin. | 10 Servants   | 13. 14 Canadian Boatmen |
| 2 Mr. Grey's Bell Tent     | 5               | 8 Store tent               | 11 Sick Tent  | 15 Confiance Schooner.  |
| 3 Mr. Pomairville. (Stew?) | 6 Lieut. Grant. | 9 Provision Tent.          | 12 Dr. Bigsby |                         |

12 "I Maranguine or Encampm<sup>t</sup>. Douce." This shows the encampment of the party surveying the American-Canadian border. The vessel in the background, the Confiance, is one of those captured from the Americans off St. Joseph Island in September 1814. Sketch by J.J. Bigsby from The Shoe and Canoe (London: Chapman and Hall, 1850).

triumph to Michilimackinac with the blockading force, and the vessels were soon taken into British service as the Confiance and the Surprise and put to use transporting provisions from Nottawasaga to Michilimackinac.<sup>8</sup>

Having regained control of Lake Huron McDouall turned his efforts toward strengthening the posts under his command in order to be able to face any further American attacks. Provisions and other supplies such as Indian presents and clothing were being forwarded to Michilimackinac, but the quantities were never as great as McDouall requested. In September 1814 a company of the 81st Regiment and a small party of the Royal Artillery, along with several canoe loads of provisions, left Lachine on their way to Michilimackinac by way of the Ottawa River. During the winter McDouall kept his troops busy working on the defences of Michilimackinac. One of their tasks was the construction of tanks for water in case they could not find a spring which could be protected from the fort. A new bastion was built in Fort Michilimackinac and Fort George was greatly improved. Bomb proof stores and magazines were built into the hillside near the entrance of Fort George. McDouall felt confident in his ability to face a renewed American attack.<sup>9</sup>

## THE TREATY OF GHENT

While McDouall was busy at Michilimackinac preparing for the attack he expected in the spring of 1815, in Europe British and American negotiators were meeting in an effort to end the war. The British government had hoped that with the defeat of Napoleon's armies and his exile to Elba sufficient troops could be sent to North America to put a speedy and triumphant end to the war there. However, as the European situation became threatening, British negotiators became more willing to meet the American terms for peace. On 24 December 1814 the Treaty of Ghent was signed. As usual the news of the treaty was slow in reaching the people most affected by it. In late March, McDouall received word from headquarters that according to an American newspaper peace had been signed. McDouall was inclined to believe that this report was true though he felt that, if a treaty along the lines stated in the newspaper account had been signed, it would require a great deal of management to bring the Indians to accept it.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the reported terms of peace were correct. Though the British had

conquered and held the Mississippi Valley north of the Rock River the British negotiators seem not to have known of this or not to have realized the importance of this area for the fur traders and for the Indians. To the Indians in particular who had been promised so much the treaty was a betrayal. By the terms of the Treaty of Ghent there was to be a mutual restoration of all occupied territory with a joint commission set up to settle questions concerning the boundary.

The official notification of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent was very slow in reaching Michilimackinac. Before leaving York on his way to Quebec to succeed Prevost, Sir Gordon Drummond, who commanded the forces in Upper Canada, had made arrangements to send to McDouall the official notice of the peace and a copy of the terms of the Treaty of Ghent. Due to the slowness of the courier this dispatch, sent from York the 11th of March, did not reach McDouall until two months later. On 28 March the Deputy Adjutant General, writing from Kingston, sent McDouall instructions for the choosing of a new post and for the reduction of his garrison. The duplicate of this dispatch reached McDouall on 1 May and was the first official notice he received that a peace treaty had been signed. It was not till later in the month that McDouall received a copy of the treaty and was able to study its terms. Upon receiving instructions to

deliver the fort at Michilimackinac to the Americans, once he had prepared temporary accommodation for the troops and stores which he would have to remove from the island, McDouall paid a brief visit to St. Joseph Island to inspect the remains of the post there. He then began to make preparations to inform the various Indian tribes that the war was over. Members of the Indian Department were sent to the various bands and McDouall and McKay, now Indian Department Superintendent for Michilimackinac, went to L'Arbre Croche to smoke the peace pipe with the Ottawas.<sup>2</sup>

At Prairie du Chien, Bulger received his first news of the end of the war and the signing of the peace treaty from a letter sent to him by Governor Clark. Bulger received this letter in mid April and immediately endeavoured to recall the war parties which he had sent out against St. Louis. In late April, though he had not yet received official notification of the signing of the peace treaty, McDouall wrote to inform Bulger that he was fairly certain that Bulger's garrison would have to be withdrawn. As he received more information about the peace treaty, McDouall wrote again to Bulger to inform him of the situation. McDouall's interpretation of the treaty was that, as the Indians were to be restored to the footing they were on prior to the war, the Indian country should be evacuated by both sides. Bulger was to evacuate Fort McKay and, if

possible, hand over the guns taken with that post to the nearest American authorities. Rather than send the guns down to St. Louis as he had at first intended, Bulger decided that it would be safer to carry them to Michilimackinac with him, where they could be handed over to whatever American officer was appointed to take over that post. According to McDouall's instructions, the Michigan Fencibles were to return with Bulger to Michilimackinac, with the exception of those men who had previously been in the service of the United States and who were unwilling to return to Michilimackinac. These latter might be discharged at Fort McKay or Green Bay with a gratuity of thirty days extra pay. The Mississippi Volunteers, who also formed part of the garrison at Fort McKay, were to be discharged at the various places where they had been enlisted. Before leaving Prairie du Chien, Bulger distributed all the presents in his possession to the nearby Indians. He then destroyed the fort and returned to Michilimackinac.<sup>3</sup>

The first article of the Treaty of Ghent, ending the war, stipulated that all territory, places, and possessions taken by either party from the other would be restored without delay. This provision meant that McDouall should hand over Michilimackinac as quickly as possible, and the vessel bringing him the first official news of the peace also carried a letter from Colonel Butler, the American

officer commanding at Detroit, proposing 20 May as the date for the transfer of the post. Before giving up Michilimackinac McDouall wanted to have accommodation for his troops and storehouses for his supplies. The easiest solution to this problem seemed to be to repair those buildings still standing on St. Joseph Island, but he informed Colonel Butler that, considering the destruction of the fort itself, and the dilapidated state of the buildings which remained on the island, it would probably be the middle of July before he would be able to move the garrison. By the middle of May he was able to report to headquarters that the buildings on St. Joseph Island would soon be ready to receive the garrison and stores if necessary. Repairs were progressing rapidly and he was planning to make use of the dwelling house and storehouses of the South West Company, which were in comparatively good shape. As the buildings were made ready, stores and provisions were being sent to St. Joseph Island. There were, however, factors involved in the question of setting a date for the handing over of Michilimackinac to the Americans, other than the comparatively simple one of providing shelter for the troops and supplies. The Indians, whom McDouall had earlier called on to assist him in the defence of the fort, were flocking to the island, and he felt it essential that they should be well fed and clothed and a generous assortment of presents distributed to them before the British left the island.

Meanwhile, Sir Gordon Drummond, who had succeeded Prevost in the command of the troops, had found on his arrival in Quebec a letter from Prevost recommending that the transfer of Michilimackinac be delayed until specific instructions on the subject could be received from the government in London. William McGillivray and John Richardson of the North West Company wrote to Drummond expressing the fear that the transfer of Michilimackinac to the Americans would result in the loss of the government's influence over the Indians, along with the trade which centred on Michilimackinac. They put forward a complicated argument for not surrendering Michilimackinac at that time. In essence, they said that Michilimackinac ought to be retained until the boundary was settled, since the sixth article of the Treaty of Ghent stated that a boundary commission was to decide on which side of the boundary the islands within the rivers, lakes and water communications belonged. If this could not be done they suggested that the British withdrawal from the island be made conditional on the Americans agreeing not to occupy the island until the commissioners had reached a decision. In particular they hoped that no customs officer would exercise any jurisdiction there during this period. Although Drummond did not feel that Michilimackinac could be considered one of the islands in dispute, yet he considered the interests of



the North West Company to be very closely linked with those of the Indian tribes friendly to Great Britain, and consequently closely blended with the interests of the Canadas and of the Empire. He, therefore, wrote to McDouall suggesting a delay in the surrender of Michilimackinac, and instructing him not to permit the establishment of customs houses or to allow any American customs officer to act in the island as long as the British occupied it. This dispatch was entrusted to the North West Company to transmit. McDouall had already realised the effect that American control of Michilimackinac might have on the Indian trade. It was his belief that the Americans would seek to prevent as much as a grain of powder from reaching the Western Indians, and he hoped to retain the post until the traders for the Mississippi had passed the island on their way to their wintering grounds.<sup>4</sup>

The Americans, unhappy about the delay in the transfer of Michilimackinac, began to press the British to evacuate it. They offered to transport the British troops and stores from Michilimackinac to Malden, and instructed the officer in command at Detroit not to give up the post of Malden until the day Michilimackinac was handed over. The news from Europe suggested the possibility that most of the British troops might have to be withdrawn from North America, while a general order issued from the Adjutant

General's office in Washington ordered that the wartime establishment of the army be maintained. Drummond ordered McDouall to evacuate Michilimackinac immediately. Informing the British minister in Washington of this he stated:

Nothing in my opinion can have been more open and candid than the line of conduct pursued by me. For having learned that Ratification of the Treaty had been exchanged between Great Britain and the United States, I instantly evinced my desire to comply with its Terms, by ordering the restitution of those Places within my Command and only requesting a trifling delay with regard to a far distant Post (Michilimackinac) in consequence of the want of cover for our Troops and Stores to be removed from thence.

This latter circumstance not meeting the views of the American Government I instantly gave the most pointed orders for its immediate evacuation directing that its Garrison should be encamped, or halted, in any manner however inconvenient or detrimental to their health, rather than cause the slightest difference of opinion between the two Governments.<sup>5</sup>

These noble sentiments were of course intended for the eyes of the American government. On 18 July McDouall handed over

the post of Michilimackinac to Colonel Butle This was very close to the time he had originally suggested to Butler.

As has already been suggested, a major concern of senior British officers in Canada was the attitude of the Indians who, having supported the British during the war, had as usual been almost completely ignored by the peacemakers. Many of the Indians, disturbed by the rumours of peace, became even more upset when they learned the terms of the treaty. In council with McDouall the Indians recalled the destruction of their ancestors by General Wayne almost under the eyes of a British fort, and expressed the feeling that they had once again been betrayed. The fur traders too were worried about the effect the treaty would have on the Indians. William McGillivray felt that much careful management would be needed to reconcile them to it, and suggested to Sir Gordon Drummond that a larger supply of presents than usual should be sent to Michilimackinac, and that this should be done as quickly as possible. Drummond did not need this hint, for he was already aware of the problem. Instructions were sent to Colonel Claus to send a large supply of presents to Michilimackinac by way of Nottawasaga. When McDouall's reports of the large number of Indians arriving at Michilimackinac were received, a further supply of presents was sent up from Lower Canada with Lieutenant Colonel McKay. As soon as the presents arrived,



they were distributed and the Indians sent back to their homes.<sup>6</sup>

After he had handed over Michilimackinac to the Americans, McDouall moved his garrison to St. Joseph Island. David Wingfield, a naval officer who served on the Great Lakes, described Fort St. Joseph as he saw it in May 1815:

The Americans had entirely destroyed the fort, if it was ever worthy of such a name, the barracks and several of the houses, and but two or three of those which were left were tenantable, as the Lake had risen three feet above its usual height, and the lower part was covered with water; at this time there were no inhabitants.<sup>7</sup>

By the time the garrison moved there, the buildings whose walls were still standing had been repaired sufficiently to provide a temporary shelter for the troops and stores, but McDouall did not propose to remain there long. Three days after he left Michilimackinac he was already at Drummond Island making plans for the construction of a new fort and by early August he had moved the troops to Drummond Island, leaving only a small detachment on St. Joseph Island to protect the stores there.<sup>8</sup>

Though most of the troops were moved to Drummond Island to build the new post, the Indian Department and most of the stores remained on St. Joseph Island for some time. The

Indian Department was still extremely busy looking after all the visiting Indians and ensuring that they were not dissatisfied when they left. On 4 August Mrs. John Askin Jr. reported that her husband had clothed 1500 Indians since he had arrived at St. Joseph Island. Presents had to be given to these Indians, with all the necessary ceremonies. Once this was over a survey was completed of the various stores which were then gradually transferred to Drummond Island.<sup>9</sup>

## FORT ST. JOSEPH AFTER THE WAR

When it became apparent that Michilimackinac would once more be handed over to the Americans, the question of the best site for a British post had once again to be decided. Almost as soon as the terms of the peace treaty were known, instructions were sent to McDouall to choose a site for a new post to replace Michilimackinac. With the need to be ready to evacuate Michilimackinac as soon as possible, McDouall's chief efforts were directed toward providing temporary cover for the troops and supplies on St. Joseph Island, but he did take time to consider the question of a site for a new post. After studying the matter he came to the conclusion that the large island close to the Detour (the passage from Lake Huron into the St. Mary's River), which had the rare advantage of possessing a good harbour, would be the best site. The one problem he foresaw with this island was that the boundary commission might decide it was on the American side of the border. If that happened, any post which the British had established on the island would then have to be handed over to the Americans. This,

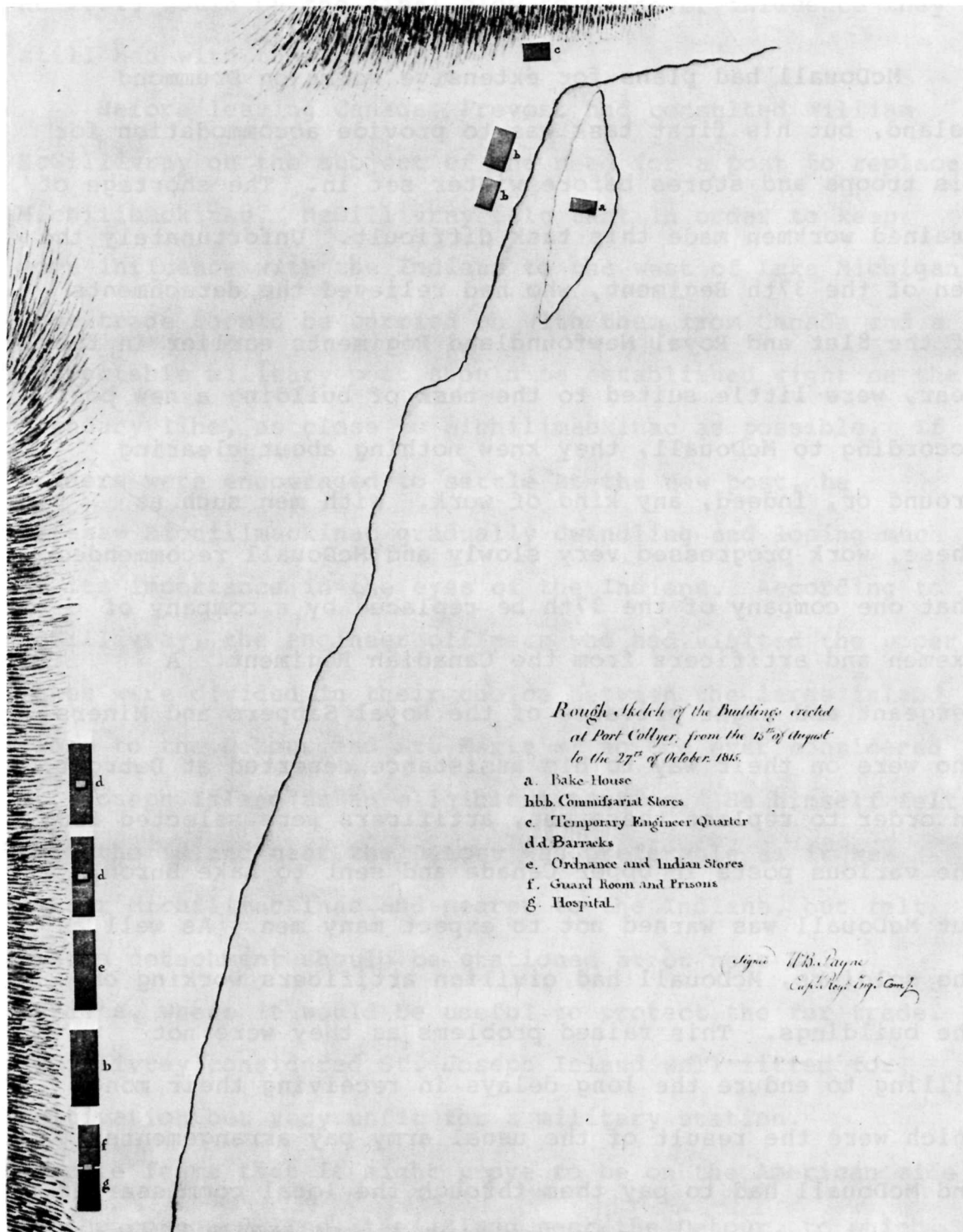
he felt, would be the final blow to whatever influence they still had with the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving Canada, Prevost had consulted William McGillivray on the subject of the need for a post to replace Michilimackinac. McGillivray felt that in order to keep some influence with the Indians to the west of Lake Michigan some trade should be carried on with them from Canada and a respectable military post should be established right on the boundary line, as close to Michilimackinac as possible. If traders were encouraged to settle at the new post, he foresaw Michilimackinac gradually dwindling and losing much of its importance in the eyes of the Indians. According to McGillivray, the engineer officers who had visited the upper lakes were divided in their choice between the large island close to the Detour and St. Marie's; no one ever considered St. Joseph Island as an eligible situation. He himself felt that the island near the Detour was preferable as it was nearer Michilimackinac and nearer to the Indians, but felt that a detachment should be stationed at or near St. Marie's, where it would be useful to protect the fur trade. McGillivray considered St. Joseph Island well fitted for cultivation but very unfit for a military station.<sup>2</sup> Despite fears that it might prove to be on the American side of the boundary line, the island near the Detour, to which the name Drummond Island was given, was chosen as the site for the new military post.



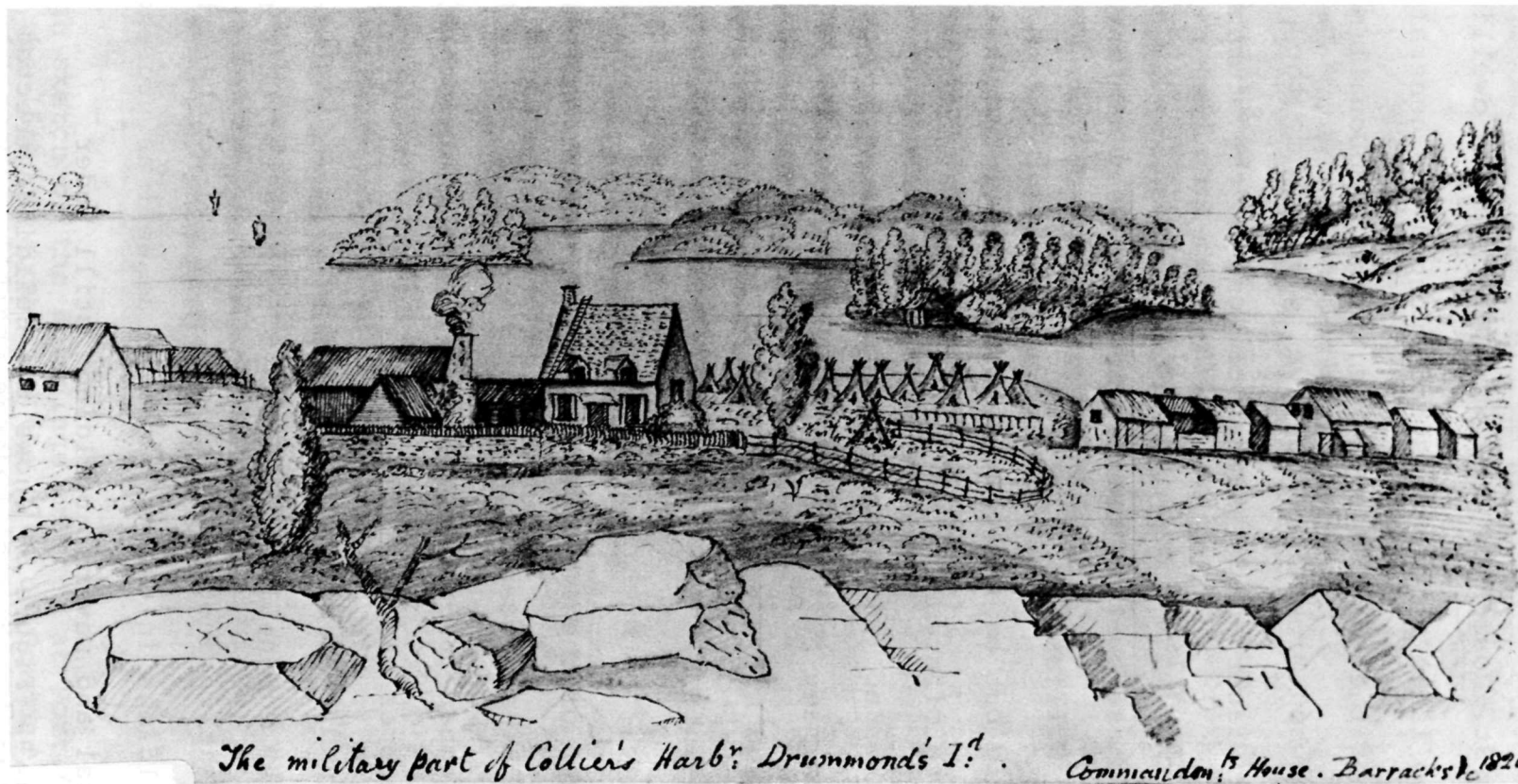
McDouall had plans for extensive works on Drummond Island, but his first task was to provide accommodation for his troops and stores before winter set in. The shortage of trained workmen made this task difficult. Unfortunately the men of the 37th Regiment, who had relieved the detachments of the 81st and Royal Newfoundland Regiments earlier in the year, were little suited to the task of building a new post. According to McDouall, they knew nothing about clearing ground or, indeed, any kind of work. With men such as these, work progressed very slowly and McDouall recommended that one company of the 37th be replaced by a company of axemen and artificers from the Canadian Regiment. A sergeant and eight privates of the Royal Sappers and Miners who were on their way to his assistance deserted at Detroit. In order to replace these men, artificers were selected from the various posts in Upper Canada and sent to Lake Huron, but McDouall was warned not to expect many men. As well as the soldiers, McDouall had civilian artificers working on the buildings. This raised problems as they were not willing to endure the long delays in receiving their money which were the result of the usual army pay arrangements, and McDouall had to pay them through the local commissariat officer.<sup>3</sup>

McDouall's first concern was for storehouses to protect the provisions and other supplies. The South West Company's



14 "Rough sketch of the Buildings erected at Port Collyer from the 15th of August to the 27th of October, 1815." This shows the buildings erected in such a hurry in 1815 in order to house the troops and stores before the onset of winter. At least one of these buildings had been moved from St. Joseph Island. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

buildings on St. Joseph Island, which included a dwelling house and two large storehouses had escaped the general destruction of the buildings on the island. McDouall made use of these when Michilimackinac was given up to the Americans and later in the summer had one of the storehouses moved to Drummond Island. Eventually the government agreed to purchase these buildings from the South West Company. According to William McGillivray the three buildings had cost £1200 to build but as the company foresaw no future need of them they were offered to the government for £600, and the purchase was made. In later years references were made to North West Company buildings moved from St. Joseph Island to Drummond Island but these would appear to be the South West Company buildings referred to above. They were the buildings which the Michilimackinac Company had erected on the point east of the fort, when it was unable to ship goods to Michilimachinac because of the American trade embargo. By late September 1815 McDouall reported that almost all the troops and stores had been moved from St. Joseph Island to Drummond Island. He felt that he was very well off for storehouses at the new post and hoped to have the troops under cover within another fortnight. By mid-October there were two buildings in use as barracks as well as storehouses and a hospital and several buildings still under construction.<sup>4</sup> (Figure 14 shows the buildings erected between August and October, 1815.)



- 15 "The military part of Collier's Harb.: Drummond's Id.: Commandant's House. Barracks, 1820." The commanding officer's house in the centre is probably the house which McDouall bought and had moved from St. Joseph Island. Sketch by Bigsby from The Shoe and Canoe.

Accommodation for the troops was provided in the barracks but officers and civilians had to provide their own houses. McDouall purchased and removed a house from St. Joseph Island and put it up on Drummond Island with the help of the Engineer Department. (He later received £80 from the government for this house). Other officers did the same; indeed this was the only way they could ensure spending the winter in a house rather than a tent. Once it became apparent that Drummond Island was to be the site for the new post, several traders approached McDouall with requests for permission to build houses near the fort. McDouall, anxious to encourage settlement, granted lots on condition that well-finished houses of certain dimensions be built on them during the next year. Some of the traders to whom McDouall assigned lots must have begun work right away, either erecting new buildings or moving old ones from St. Joseph Island, as John Askin Jr. reported in late October that there were already a greater number of buildings on Drummond Island than there had been on St. Joseph Island. According to a list forwarded to Head Quarters by McDouall in 1816 there were fifteen lots occupied, laid out along two streets. Some of the occupants were traders and others were officials of various government departments.<sup>5</sup>

Even after McDouall at last handed over Michilimackinac there were continued American complaints about British

activities in the area. These centred mainly around charges that the British Indian Department had urged the Indians to continue hostilities against the Americans after the signing of the peace treaty. A formal protest was made by the American government to the British minister in Washington and McDouall was ordered to hold a court of inquiry to investigate these allegations. In early October 1815 a court of inquiry was held at Fort Drummond. The first charge investigated was against Joseph Cadotte of the Indian Department, who was alleged to have offered the Indians money for the scalps of two Americans, Chandonnet and Kinzie, and to have told the Indians that the peace was only an artifice. According to the evidence given, Chandonnet and Kinzie had been employed in the British Indian Department but had gone over to the Americans and been involved in the capture of the British fur trading post on the St. Joseph River, and Cadotte had offered a reward if they were brought to him as prisoners. Cadotte had also gathered a band of Indian warriors for the defence of Michilimackinac, but this had been before official news of the peace had arrived. The major charge was that British agents had stimulated the Indians to continue hostilities after the peace. To refute this various persons testified to the steps taken by the British to ensure that the Indians knew of the signing of the peace treaty and kept the peace.

Particular pains had been taken to pacify the Indians of the Mississippi. When news of the peace had reached Prairie du Chien a general council of the Indians was held at which the wampum belt was turned from red to blue as a symbol of peace and the pipe of peace was handed around to all the chiefs. Some Fox Indians arrived with the news that a party of Sauk Indians had left the Rock River to go to war against the Americans. As soon as the council was over these Indians were sent to overtake the war party and inform them of the peace, and a member of the Indian Department was sent to the Sauk village with the peace pipe. Unfortunately the war party could not be overtaken and were engaged in a fight with the Americans on 24 May. This was probably the last action of the war. When the British left Prairie du Chien, all the members of the Indian Department returned to Michilimackinac except two interpreters who remained at Prairie du Chien because their families were there. In order to make certain that the Indians were contented and would observe the peace, Captain Anderson, now a member of the Indian Department, went back to the Mississippi in July with a large assortment of presents to meet with the Indians. He reported that the Indians were determined to abide by the peace as long as the Americans did the same and did not try to build forts on Indians lands. Because of continued American complaints about the behaviour of the



Indians, instructions were sent to McDouall to send William McKay to the Mississippi to meet with the Indians. Since Anderson had already gone on a similar mission, McDouall merely asked Major Morgan, the American commanding officer at Michilimackinac, if he thought it necessary for McKay to speak to the Indians. As Morgan considered enough had been done to ensure that the Indians kept the peace McKay did not go. The conclusion reached by the court of inquiry was that the American charges against the British of stirring up the Indians to hostilities were without any foundation. McDouall considered that the real purpose of the American charges was to give some pretext for a war against the Indians of the Mississippi.<sup>6</sup>

By the fall of 1815 St. Joseph Island was practically deserted. A small detachment was still stationed there to look after the powder, which was stored in the magazine there, and the garrison cattle, which were pastured there. In the late fall of 1815 a carpenter was sent to the island to repair the house which the men occupied and at the same time two stoves were sent for their use. Lieutenant Colonel Durnford's report on a tour of inspection in the summer of 1816 mentions only the old magazine, which contained a good deal of ammunition. Durnford recommended that this ammunition should be removed from St. Joseph Island because of the poor condition of the magazine and the distance





J. J. B. del.

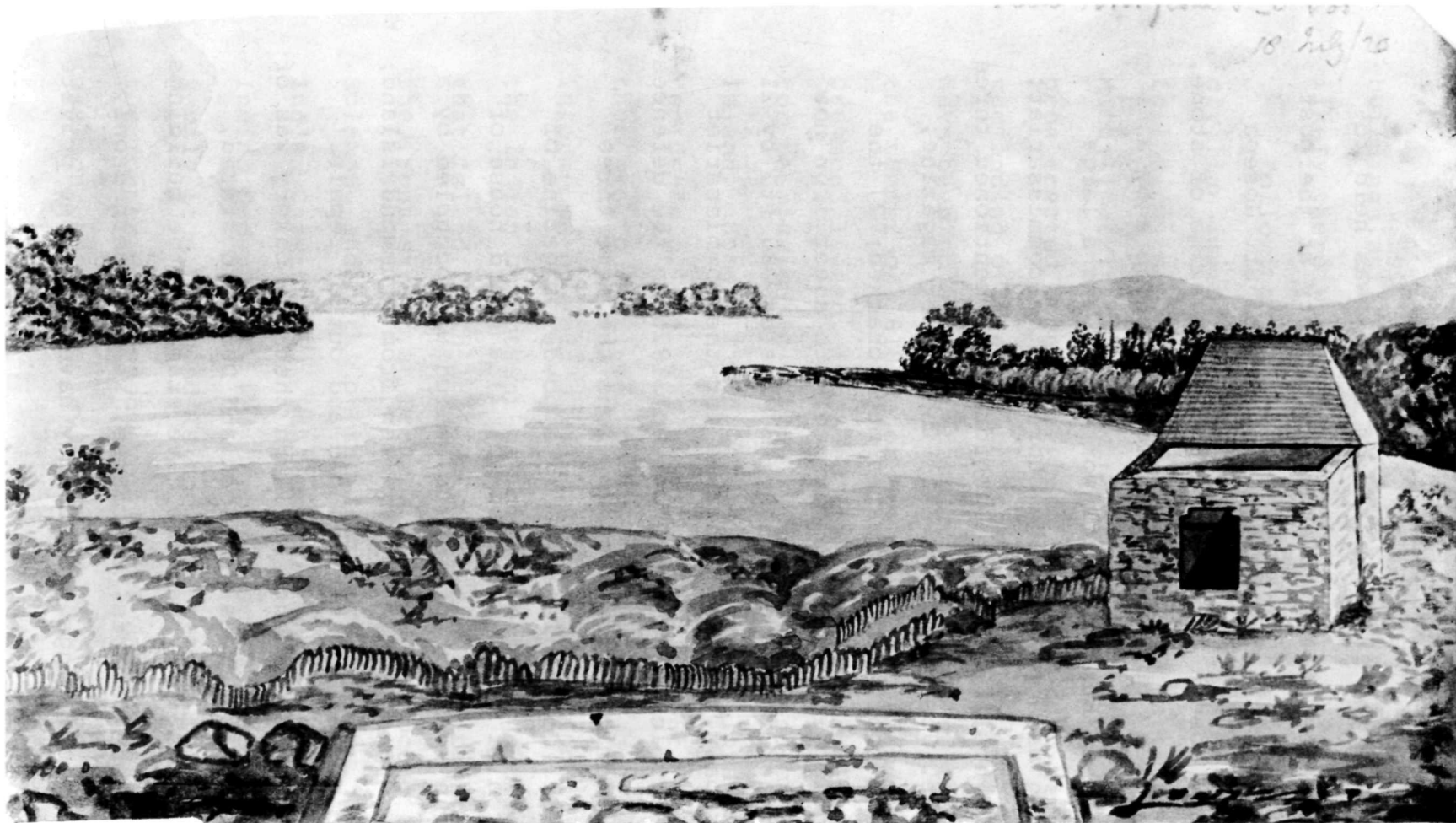
R. Young sc.

*Confiance Harbour at S. E. Point of St. Joseph.  
Copper Mines of N. Mainland in the distance.*

- 16 "Confiance Harbour at S.E. Point of St. Joseph." This is also by Bigsby from The Shoe and Canoe.

between it and the main post which made it necessary to station a detachment there to guard it.

Major Howard, commanding at Drummond Island, reported in 1818 that because the dwelling house on St. Joseph Island, which the government had purchased in 1815, was situated where the guard could not protect it from the depredations of voyageurs, Indians and inhabitants, it had been stripped of doors, windows, ceiling and part of the flooring. He suggested that the shell be removed to Drummond Island. This suggestion was eventually acted upon, as can be seen by an undated report on government buildings by Lieutenant J.E. Portlock, RE. Portlock listed three buildings on St. Joseph Island: 1) the magazine, a stone building with a shingled roof, the ceiling of which was much cracked; 2) the bakery, a brick building with a good oven, formerly roofed with sheet iron, but now covered with bark, which was used as a barrack by the guard left at St. Joseph Island to protect the magazine; 3) a storehouse, similar to one at Drummond Island (the one which had been moved from St. Joseph Island in 1815), which was used as a cattle barn and hay loft. The roof of this storehouse had suffered and props had been placed against the walls to secure them from falling, but the floors were good. Portlock also mentioned that the dwelling house which had been bought along with the storehouses had been brought to Drummond Island in 1820, but not erected.



17 "View N.W. from I. St. Joseph." In this sketch one can see the remains of the powder magazine, the foundations of the blockhouse and the palisade lines. From Bigsby's Shoe and Canoe.

In the summer of 1823 a board of survey was held to determine the value of the government property at the post of Drummond Island, including the property on St. Joseph Island. At St. Joseph it listed a powder magazine of stone, worth £15, a bakery of stone, occupied as quarters by a detachment of the 76th Regiment, worth £15, and a large wooden building used as a forage store by the commissariat, worth £60. In his 1823 report Durnford also mentioned three buildings at St. Joseph Island: 1) the powder magazine, with a shingled roof, and the walls much cracked; 2) the bakery, a small brick building covered with sheet iron now used as a barrack for a detachment; 3) a store 80 ft. by 21 ft., in bad repair, used as a stable for the commissariat cattle. The Carmichael Smyth Report of 1825 on the defences of the North American provinces mentions the same three buildings at St. Joseph Island: 1) a powder magazine of stone, the arch of which was cracked; 2) a guard house of stone, with the roof out of repair, which was occupied by a detachment of one corporal and six men from Drummond Island; 3) a large barn used for cattle, old and out of repair.<sup>7</sup> From archaeological evidence we learn that the bakery was of stone rather than brick as Portlock and Durnford stated, which suggests that they may not have examined the buildings themselves. These reports, of course, were concerned only with government buildings. There may have been some private

buildings still standing on St. Joseph Island, but it is not likely there were many, or that these were habitable.

Following the capture of Michilimackinac in 1812 the civilian inhabitants had left St. Joseph Island, either following the troops and the Indian Department to Michilimackinac or leaving the area. Their buildings had been erected upon lots which they had been permitted by the commanding officer of the post to occupy, but there seem to have been no actual grants or purchases of this land. In the summer of 1818 Major Howard, the commanding officer at Drummond Island, reported that several people had applied for permission to settle or cultivate land on St. Joseph Island. Some claimed to have purchased lots from former residents of the settlement around Fort St. Joseph. Among them was "one Mr. Solomon a merchant of this place, who informs me he paid a valuable consideration to Mr. Askin of the Indian Department at Amherstburg for a tract of land on that Island." In 1816 McDouall had reported that Lot 1 on the front street at Drummond Island was occupied by Mr. Solomon, and Lot 1 on the rear street by Mr. Solomon of the Indian Department. William Solomon, an interpreter with the Indian Department, was one of those who moved with his family from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene at the time the former was handed over to the Americans. Descendants of his son Henry were later living on St. Joseph Island.

- 18 "Rough Sketch showing the Situation of all the Buildings at Drummond Island exclusive of the Town." This shows the buildings which were on the site in 1823. (Public Archives of Canada.)





However, in 1818 Major Howard did not admit any claims to land on St. Joseph Island, though he did consider that it would be of benefit to his garrison if there were one or two families cultivating land and raising cattle there. He felt that the land in the neighbourhood of the old fort should be reserved since it was needed by the military to provide food for the garrison cattle. The cattle for the garrison at Drummond Island had always been pastured near the ruins of Fort St. Joseph as there was no pasturage for them on Drummond Island. When meat was needed the cattle were brought over to the fort and slaughtered. On one occasion when the cattle which were to provide the garrison's winter supply of meat were being brought across the ice from St. Joseph Island several broke through the ice and one was lost. When Dr. John J. Bigsby, the secretary to the British section of the boundary commission, visited the island in the early 1820's he found it deserted except for an Indian widow and her daughter who inhabited a small clearing near the southwest cape of the island. In 1824 William McKay applied on behalf of former members of the Michigan Fencibles for a grand of land either on the St. Clair River or on the Island of St. Joseph, but no land seems to have been granted on St. Joseph Island.<sup>8</sup>

As can be seen from the plans which were drawn up it had been originally intended to build extensive



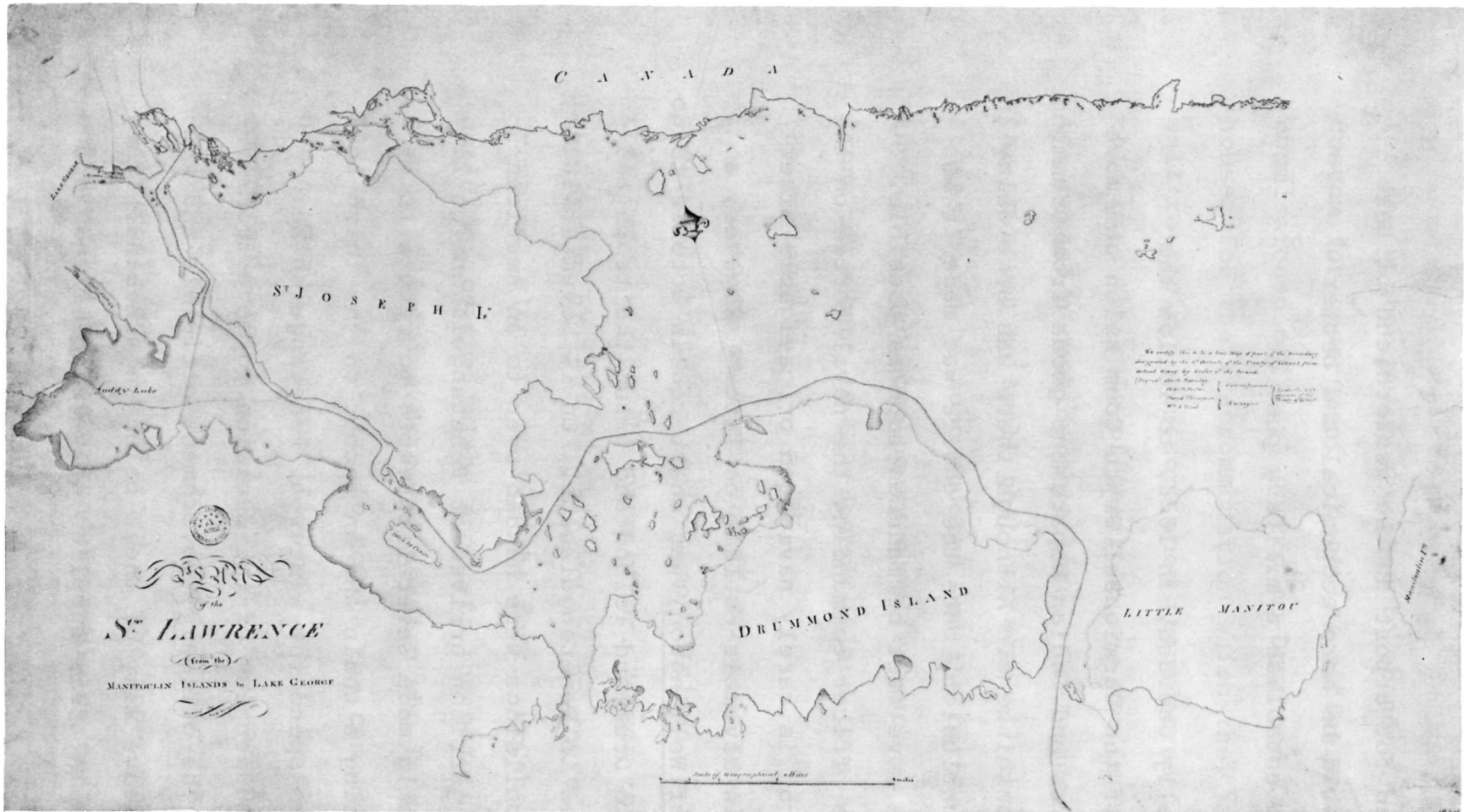
fortifications on Drummond Island, with at least one large blockhouse and possibly others. These plans were never carried into effect. First the usual post war efforts to cut government spending set in. For the first time in over twenty years England could look forward to a long spell of peace and no one wanted to spend money on keeping large overseas military establishments. As well, there were still doubts about the status of Drummond Island. By the end of 1822 it was known that Drummond Island had been allotted to the Americans by the commissioners appointed to determine the boundary line, but it was not until the fall of 1828 that orders were given for the British troops to leave the island. In the meantime, however, no money could be spent for fortifications on the island or even for more than the most essential repairs to the buildings already there. Timber had been prepared for a blockhouse, but was left to rot on the ground. Durnford in 1816 had recommended that a powder magazine be built so that the ammunition could be removed from St. Joseph Island, but this was put off too long and seems never to have been done.

When the time came to consider an alternative to the post on Drummond Island, the whole question of maintaining a post so far west was reconsidered. In 1822 the Earl of Dalhousie suggested that the former North West Company buildings at the falls of St. Mary's might be used for a new

- 19 "Plan of the Post on the Island of St. Joseph in Lake Huron." This and the preceding figure were drawn to accompany Lieutenant Colonel Durnford's 1823 report on fortifications in Canada. This plan seems to have been copied from the same source as the 1800 plan (see Figure 7). This plan poses certain problems. It shows gun platforms which seem never to have been built, while not showing the kitchens, which were built. (Public Archives of Canada.)



post. Negotiations were begun with the Hudson's Bay Company, who owned the buildings, and a price agreed upon, but the actual purchase of the buildings was held in abeyance until a decision on the entire question of British fortifications in North America, which was under review, had been reached. A commission under Major General Sir James Carmichael Smyth reported to the Duke of Wellington, Master General of the Ordnance, in the fall of 1825. The commission studied three places as possible replacements for Drummond Island, St. Mary's, Portlock Harbour, and St. Joseph Island. The chief objections to St. Mary's were that it would be difficult to supply because of the many rapids, shoals and rocks in the St. Mary's River, and that it was dominated by an American fort on the opposite shore; Portlock Harbour was also difficult to supply and surrounded by bleak and uninhabitable country; St. Joseph Island was well-timbered, was so situated as to be able to interrupt American communications with Sault Ste. Marie in case of war, and was the only situation in the area suitable for keeping up friendly relations with the Indians, which would be the only reason for maintaining so remote a post. However, the commissioners felt that many of the Indians who visited Drummond Island could as easily go to Amherstburg, and those for whom this would be inconvenient would not object going to Penetanguishene. Therefore, they felt that



20 Part of the St. Lawrence from the Manitoulin Islands to Lake George. This map shows the boundary as agreed to after the War of 1812. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

there was no need for a post at the western end of Lake Huron, but it would be more economical and better strategically to establish a military post at Penetanguishene.<sup>9</sup>

It was finally decided, in 1828, to follow the recommendation of the Carmichael Smyth Commission and move the troops, stores and Indian Department goods from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene. Although there was some delay in reaching this conclusion, once the choice was made it was decided that the move must be made as soon as possible. According to the officer commanding the naval forces on the Lakes, "Lake Huron is rarely navigated or navigable after the first week in November--seldom as late." However, a brig, the Duke of Wellington, was chartered in October to go from Fort Erie to Drummond Island and bring the troops and government stores to Penetanguishene. On 14 November 1828 the government buildings were handed over to an American officer and the garrison arrived at Penetanguishene on 21 November. The brig made several attempts to return to Amherstburg, losing a chain and an anchor on the third one, but was forced to spend the winter at Penetanguishene. Because of the suddenness of the decision to move from Drummond Island the officers, government officials and men were forced to leave many of their belongings behind. They had already laid in their supplies of vegetables and food

for the winter which they had to abandon. It had been the custom for government officials, officers and often non-commissioned officers posted to Drummond Island to purchase houses for their accommodation which they could expect to sell to their successors when transferred from the post. In this case the sale of their houses was impossible and this too caused a considerable loss. The vessel chartered for the move was so small that not even all the government stores could be accommodated and the cattle, the forage for the winter and some heavy supplies such as shovels and dog irons were sent to St. Joseph Island to await transport in the spring.<sup>10</sup>

Although an American officer took possession of the government buildings on Drummond Island in November 1828, they were left in the care of Mr. Rawson for the winter. In the spring of 1829 Captain McCabe journeyed from Mackinac to Drummond Island to survey the fort. McCabe examined the buildings on the island and left the government property in charge of Antoine Mere, a Canadian who intended to remain on the island. According to McCabe the commanding officer's house was in good condition and would be easily made comfortable for a small family. Most of the government buildings were in fair to bad condition. A village of about forty dwelling houses stood at the upper end of the bay, but only three families intended remaining on the island. About

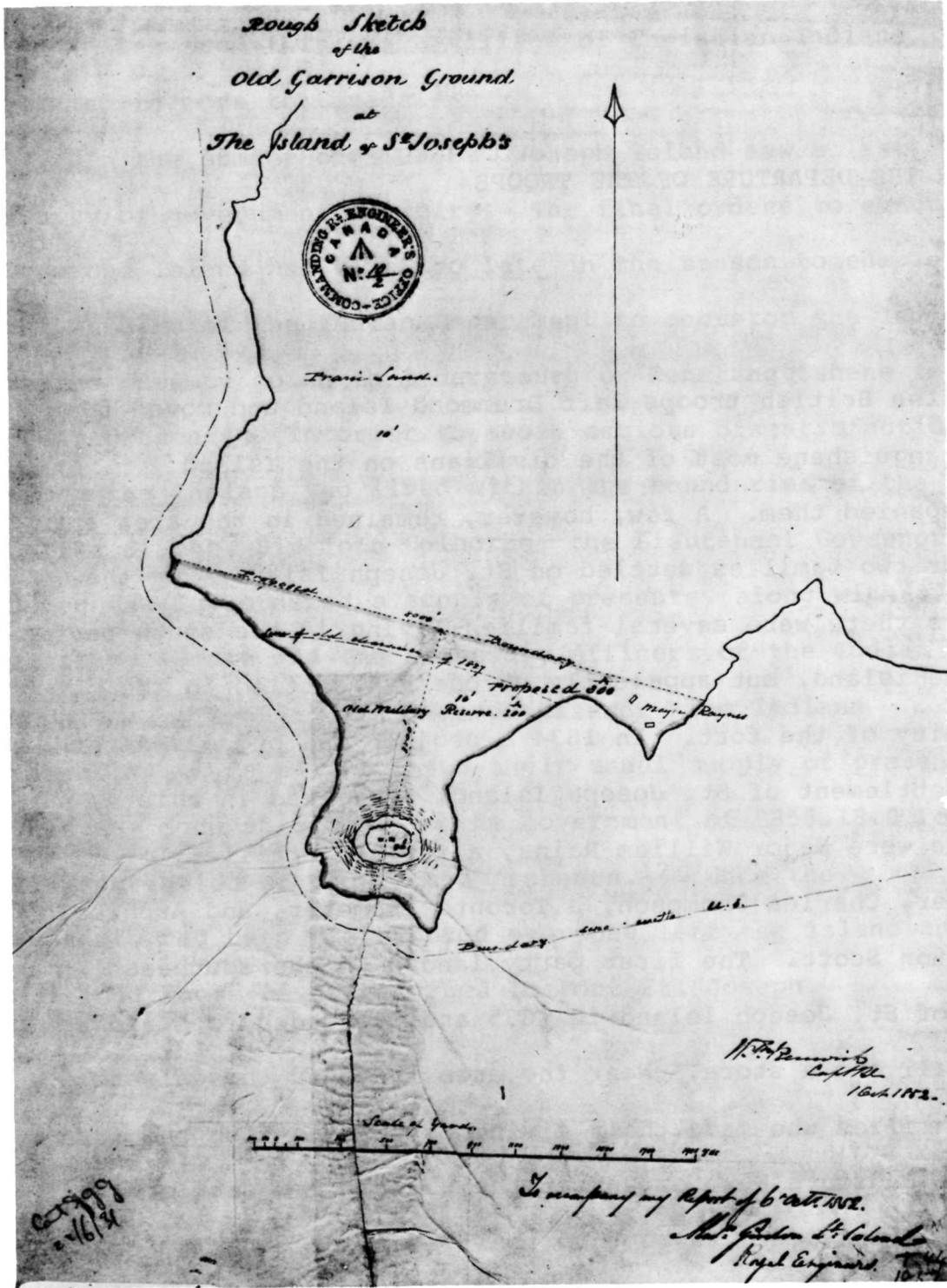
five miles from this was a village of Christian Indians, who planned to move to Canada.<sup>11</sup>

In the summer of 1829 St. Joseph Island saw a last flurry of government activity. The final orders to evacuate Drummond Island had come too late in the season to enable the members of the Indian Department to accustom the Indians to the idea of going to Amherstburg or Penetanguishene for their presents. In order to avoid serious dissatisfaction among the Indians who lived within the boundaries of the United States, Sir John Colborne, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, ordered a supply of presents, along with a military escort and the necessary officers of the Indian Department, sent to St. Joseph Island. The Indians assembled there and received their usual supply of presents. This was done at a cost to the government of £355.18.0 for transportation of people and presents.<sup>12</sup> Once the presents had been distributed everyone left the island and British troops never returned to Fort St. Joseph.



#### AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE TROOPS

When the British troops left Drummond Island and moved to Penetanguishene most of the civilians on the island accompanied them. A few, however, remained in the area and one or two families settled on St. Joseph Island. By the 1830's there were several families living in the south part of the island, but apparently no one had settled in the vicinity of the fort. In 1834 a project was organized for the settlement of St. Joseph Island. Involved in this scheme were Major William Rains, a retired artillery officer, Charles Thompson, a Toronto promoter, and Archibald Hamilton Scott. The first party landed on the southeast part of St. Joseph Island in 1835 and proceeded to build a saw mill and a store. Near the area they had chosen were a few families who made their living by selling fish and furs to the Hudson's Bay Company at the Sault. Few settlers could be persuaded to come to the island and after a few years Major Rains retired from active participation in the colonization project. Rains and his family moved to a point west of the settlement, which he named Hentlan, and where he

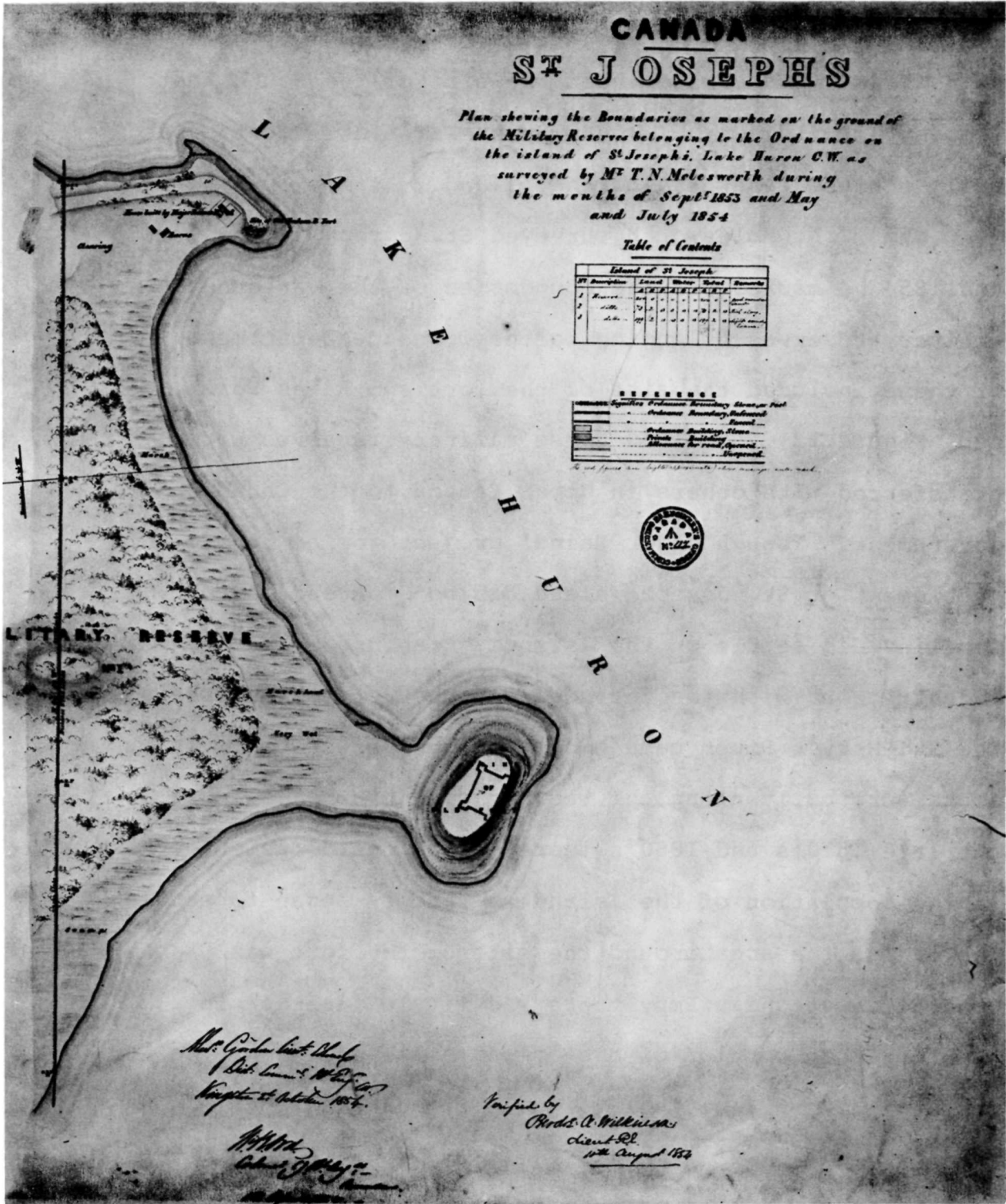


21 "Rough Sketch of the Old Garrison Ground at the Island of St. Josephs", 1852. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

built a house. This point, which later became known as Rains Point, had earlier been the site of the South West Company's buildings. In 1849 Rains left this location and built a house elsewhere on the island.

When T.N. Molesworth surveyed St. Joseph Island in 1853 and 1854 he marked off the boundaries of the various military reserves belonging to the Ordnance Department. One of these included the site of the fort and Rains Point (see map, Figure 22). In 1856 these military reserves were transferred with others in Upper Canada to the Canadian government. Though Major Rains' project for an organized settlement of St. Joseph Island did not succeed, a few families did settle on the island. Fishing became the main industry, but with the increasing number of steam vessels on the St. Mary's River came a demand for cordwood and various docks were built along the western side of the island. In the late 1870's and 1880's there was a considerable increase in the population of the island as farmers began to settle there. As the area around the site of the fort was generally wet and swampy there was little interest in settling that portion of the island. By the end of the century, however, most of the good timber had disappeared.<sup>2</sup>

In 1922 a request for permission to cut timber on one of the military reserves on St. Joseph Island stirred up



22 Part of a map showing the boundaries of the military reserves on St. Joseph Island, 1854. This map shows a hill inland from the ruins of the fort which may have been the one chosen by Bryce in 1796 for the site of the fort. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

interest in Fort St. Joseph. While it later appeared that this request concerned a different military reserve than the one the fort was on, the attention of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board had been directed to the fort and it was suggested that the area around the fort be reserved until a decision could be reached on any commemoration of the site. A suggested text for a plaque was prepared but no further action was taken. Meanwhile, local interest was aroused in Fort St. Joseph. In May 1923 the Sault Ste. Marie Daily Star reported that the Sault Ste. Marie Historical Society was planning a trip to Fort St. Joseph. The trip actually took place the following year and after seeing the ruins of the fort the group made some suggestions for repairs which should be made. Money was allotted by the federal government in the spring of 1926 for work at Fort St. Joseph and in the summer work was done on repairing the masonry at the fort. In the fall of 1926 the land around the site of the fort was transferred to the control of the Canadian National Parks Branch. In 1928 a tablet commemorating the history of Fort St. Joseph was erected and unveiled. Also at that time a caretaker was appointed for the site though his duties were very slight. In the late 1930's more repairs were made to the stone work.

After World War II there was renewed local interest in Fort St. Joseph with queries from the local M.P. and

- 23 Plan of Fort St. Joseph done in 1925 by J.W. LeB. Ross. This map shows the remains of various buildings of the fort and the village around it. The large standing chimney appears on this plan. Only one redan is shown. Flowers and the remains of an old road are indicated. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)





articles in the Sault Daily Star calling for steps to be taken to preserve the fort. The first step taken in this direction was the construction of a road to the site to improve its accessibility. Later a parking lot and a circular drive through the ruins were built, and picnic tables and fireplaces were installed. In 1948 the Sault Ste. Marie militia regiment held a dedication ceremony at the site. There was also local interest in the cemetery near the fort and in 1954 a cairn and plaque were erected to mark this site. In the summers of 1963 and 1964 archaeological investigations of Fort St. Joseph were carried out by teams from the Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, under a contract with the National and Historic Parks Branch. Various buildings of the fort were excavated, the lines of the palisades were located and the area around the fort was surveyed. The ordnance and naval reserves adjoining the site of Fort St. Joseph had for a time been set aside as a bird sanctuary, but in 1973 both these reserves were transferred to the National and Historic Parks Branch, providing ample area for development of the site. Further archaeological investigations have been carried out to examine in detail the ruins of various buildings on the site. The above ground ruins are being stabilized and facilities for visitors are now being provided off the site of the fort.





24 East face of the chimney showing the restoration work in 1926. (From NHS picture files.)

The ruins of Fort St. Joseph to-day remind us of an important part of Canada's past. They are the visible symbols not only of military glory, but of a way of life. We can see the signs of dwelling houses and storehouses as well as the ruins and foundations of military buildings. The isolation of Fort St. Joseph created an interdependence between military and civilians which is reflected in the buildings. This isolation can still be sensed when one stands within the confines of the fort.

Endnotes

The French Presence on St. Joseph Island

- 1 The maps referred to in this survey were found at the Public Archives of Canada, the Chicago Historical Society, the Newberry Library in Chicago and the Wisconsin State Historical Society. The 1632 Champlain map was published in The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest by Louise Phelps Kellogg (New York: Cooper Square Publishers Inc., 1968) and the Dollier and Galinée map in the Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, Vol. 4 (1903).
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- 4 Ontario Archives. Simcoe Papers, Envelope 49, Extract of a letter from Lieutenant Foster to Major Doyle, St. Joseph Island, 5 June 1796.

- 5 Jesuits. Letters from Missions (North America), The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, ed. Reuben G. Thwaites (Cleveland: Burrows Bros., 1896-1901), Vol. 50, p. 263.
- 6 François Dollier de Casson and René De Bréhant de Galinée, "Narrative and Map," ed. James H. Coyne, Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, Vol. 4 (1903) pp. 69-71.
- 7 Ida Johnson, The Michigan Fur Trade (Grand Rapids: Black Letter Press, 1971), pp. 69-71.

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- 3 Kellogg, op. cit., p. 437.
- 4 Innis, op. cit., pp. 111-112.

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- 10 Innis, op. cit., p. 194.
- 11 Allen, op. cit., p. 21.

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- 2 Innis, op. cit. p. 180.
- 3 Kellogg, The British Regime, pp. 156-157, 175.
- 4 PAC, MG21, Haldimand Papers, Add. Mass. 21757, ff. 318-321, Brehem to Sinclair, 17 April 1780.

- 5 Documents Relating to the North West Company, ed. William Stewart Wallace (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1934), p. 9; Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Journals and Letters, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 4-7, 76-79.
- 6 Johnson, op. cit., p. 88; Gordon Charles Davidson, The North West Company (Berkley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1918), University of California Publications in History, Volume 7, p. 21.
- 7 Documents Relating to the North West Company, p. 9; Kellogg, The British Regime, p. 197.
- 8 PAC, MG21, Haldimand Papers, Add. Mass. 21735, ff. 591, Benjamin Frobisher to Major Mathews, 14 Oct. 1784.
- 9 Innis, op. cit., pp. 184, 222.
- 10 PAC, MG21, Haldimand Papers, Add. Mss. 21758, ff. 157-159, Board of Inquiry at Michilimackinac, 20 Sept. 1782.
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- 7 Ibid., Add. Mss. 21723, ff. 87-88, Haldimand to Robertson, 6 May 1784.
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- 6 PAC, MG23, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 23, pp. 247-248, Estimate of expenses of services at the Island of St. Joseph, 24 April 1799; PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1207, pp. 295-296, Green to Drummond, 22 April 1799.
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- 8 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 512, pp. 54-55, Gother Mann to Green, 8 May 1800, *ibid.*, pp. 77-80, Drummond to Green, 22 July 1800.
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Fort St. Joseph: A Structural History  
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1978

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ABSTRACT

The first military buildings on St. Joseph Island were temporary huts built by the troops sent to the island in the summer of 1796. In 1797 work began on a blockhouse, which was ready for occupation in the fall of 1798. By 1799 a guardhouse and a kitchen and bakehouse had been built. During the summer of 1799 the task of enclosing the military buildings with picketing was begun. By the fall of 1800 the post was enclosed by picketing and a powder magazine had been built. In the summer of 1804 the blockhouse was weatherboarded and covered with sheet iron and a stone powder magazine and a new bakehouse and kitchens were built, though because of a shortage of materials, work on these buildings was not completed until the following year. By 1812 when war broke out with the United States the fort was not in a condition to repel a determined attack. Fort St. Joseph was abandoned after the British capture of Michilimakinac and was burned in 1814 by an American force sent to attack Michilimackinac. Most of the work on Fort St. Joseph was done by military labour, though civilian artificers were also used. Most of the building materials had to be imported.

## Introduction

In order to interpret the history of Fort St. Joseph it is important to know what the fort was like. Unfortunately, information about the structural details of Fort St. Joseph is scarce. There are only three contemporary plans showing the fort (see Figs. 2, 3 and 4). They are part of a set of plans prepared in Quebec in 1800 for the Duke of Kent, who was at the time Commander in Chief in British North America. One plan shows the location of the fort on the peninsula, one shows the general layout of the fort and the third is a plan of the blockhouse showing very little detail and nothing of the other buildings. A watercolour by Edward Walsh, surgeon of the 49th Regiment, done in 1804 (see Fig. 5), shows the outside appearance of the fort and the village around it as seen from the northeast. The only building within the fort which can be seen is the blockhouse, which is not shown in detail. The painting was done at about the time the powder magazine was being built but nothing of this is shown. There are available some descriptions of the various buildings but again very little detail is given. There also exist estimates listing the material which would be required to build the blockhouse, the old bakehouse and kitchen, the temporary powder magazine, the guardhouse and the palisades. In some cases these give a brief description of the building to be erected. None of the wooden buildings of the fort or of the little settlement outside the palisades have survived. All that remain are some



foundations and the ruins of two stone buildings, the powder magazine and the bakehouse. The purpose of this paper is to gather together what information we have about the buildings of the fort, who built them, what materials they used and how they were built.

Most of the military buildings on St. Joseph Island were of squared log construction on stone foundations. According to archaeological evidence the foundations for the blockhouse were more carefully constructed than those of the later buildings, with more regular stones, better fitted together. The rougher construction of the later foundations may have been due to difficulty in finding suitable rocks. The powder magazine and the new bakery were built of stone.

## History of the Construction

The first buildings built by British troops on St. Joseph Island were huts erected to provide temporary accommodation for the troops sent to the island in the summer of 1796. In order to protect these buildings from sudden attack by Indians they were enclosed by pickets early the following spring. During the winter of 1796-1797 plans were made for the construction of a permanent post on St. Joseph Island. It was decided that a blockhouse should be built to house both troops and stores, and instructions were sent to Captain Drummond, the commanding officer at Fort St. Joseph, to begin to prepare materials for construction of this building. By 23 June 1797, when Lieutenant Lacey arrived to take charge of the work, the site for the blockhouse had been cleared and a quantity of square timber had been prepared. Lacey and his men set to work on the blockhouse at once, but by late summer it was apparent that it would not be habitable that winter. Included with the blockhouse in the estimate prepared in April 1797 was a building housing a kitchen and bakehouse, which, however, was not begun until the following year.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the winter of 1797-98 the troops on St. Joseph Island, still living in their temporary quarters, worked to prepare more materials for the work to be done the following summer. At Quebec, once Lacey's report on his progress at Fort St. Joseph had been received, plans were made for this work. Estimates were drawn up for building a

wharf, a guardhouse and a temporary powder magazine, enclosing the works with strong picketing and clearing away the wood around the blockhouse as well as repairing the building occupied by the troops and completing the work authorized the previous year.<sup>2</sup> Charge of the work was given to Lieutenant George Landmann, RE. By the winter of 1798-99 the troops were able to occupy the blockhouse, though considerable work remained to be done on the inside of the building. Landmann left the post in November but work continued under the direction of one of the infantry officers at the site. By the spring of 1799 the guardhouse was nearly finished except for the chimney, while the kitchen and bakehouse needed only floors and partitions.<sup>3</sup>

In April of 1799 an estimate for various works on St. Joseph Island was approved. It included enclosing the post with picketing and building four raised gun platforms. The picketing was to be about 400 yards in circumference and was to be doubled below the ribband with loopholes. Landmann, who was to be in charge of the work again, was ordered to give priority to enclosing the post, while construction of the Indian Department buildings, which had been planned for that year, was to be postponed.<sup>4</sup> By the time Landmann left Fort St. Joseph in the fall, the post was still not completely enclosed and the wharf was not finished. Other work done in the summer and fall of 1799 included building a blacksmith shop and a magazine. During the following year work continued on the post. By November 1800 the post was enclosed by picketing and the guardhouse, bakehouse and powder magazine were all completed, though as these buildings and the blockhouse had all been constructed of green wood they needed to be weatherboarded.<sup>5</sup>

In the summer of 1802 Captain R.H. Bruyères of the Royal Engineers visited Fort St. Joseph as part of a tour of

inspection of the fortifications in Upper Canada (see Appendix J). He noted that the palisades were in good repair but there was only one redan, none of the gun platforms had been built and the loopholes were useless as there was no banquette inside the palisades. The blockhouse, still in need of weatherboarding, gave little protection from wind, rain or snow, and the cedar shingle roof was a fire hazard. The guardhouse and a storehouse were in good condition though in need of weatherboarding. The wharf was still not completed and Bruyères recommended that it be reduced to a boat wharf as its location was unsuitable for it was liable to a very heavy surf and the water was very shallow. The powder was stored in a temporary magazine composed of a few logs with earth on the sides. The most pressing need at the post was for kitchens for officers and men and a new bakehouse to replace the old one which had burned to the ground the previous winter. A powder magazine was also essential. In addition, Bruyères recommended building officers' quarters and buildings for the Indian Department.<sup>6</sup>

It was not until the spring of 1804 that an engineer arrived at Fort St. Joseph to carry out the work recommended by Bruyères. By that time there had been two fires in the blockhouse, one early in 1803 and one early in 1804, both involving a beam under the hearth of a fireplace. Estimates had been prepared for building a powder magazine and some of the materials had been prepared for the planned construction. By mid-August a bakehouse and oven and a men's kitchen had been built, the men's barracks were lathed and the blockhouse roof was covered with sheet iron and painted. Work had been begun on the powder magazine and a start had been made on weatherboarding the blockhouse.<sup>7</sup> By October, when the engineer and artificers left St. Joseph Island, most,

but not all, of the work which had been ordered was completed. The magazine floor and door were not finished, the guardhouse was not weatherboarded, and the officers' kitchen had only a frame, roof and chimney. The major reason for non-completion of the work was a lack of sufficient materials through some error in forwarding them to St. Joseph Island.<sup>8</sup> By the summer of 1805 the necessary material had arrived and the works were completed.

No further major work was done on Fort St. Joseph before the War of 1812. By 1806 there was still no means of firing through the loopholes, and no gun platforms. The roof of the blockhouse was in such bad condition that it let in the rain as fast as it fell. That summer the master carpenter from Amherstburg was sent to St. Joseph Island, along with some civil and military artificers, to carry out repairs on the blockhouse.<sup>9</sup> In the summer of 1810 an engineer was sent to Fort St. Joseph to examine the state of the buildings and decide what repairs were necessary. An assistant commissary having been appointed to the post, the engineer's first task on arriving there was to decide on the most economical means of supplying him with sufficient quarters. The only place which seemed suitable was a small building inside the fort which Bruyères had described as a workshop and engineer's store.<sup>10</sup> Steps were taken to convert it into quarters for the commissary and it was probably at this time that a chimney was constructed in the building.

By 1812, despite the repairs carried out in 1806 and 1810, Fort St. Joseph was not in a condition to repel a determined attack. In October 1811, a gust of wind had blown down some of the picketing. It was propped up again, but all of the pickets were in a very decayed condition and very uneven in height.<sup>11</sup> When war with the United States

broke out, the only way for the garrison at Fort St. Joseph to secure their position was to attack the Americans at Michilimackinac before the Americans attacked them. The British attack was successful and after the surrender of Michilimackinac, 17 July 1812, Fort St. Joseph was virtually abandoned. In 1814, when an American expedition on its way to attack Michilimackinac stopped at Fort St. Joseph, they burnt all the wooden buildings of the fort.

## Labourers and Materials

Most of the construction work on the buildings at Fort St. Joseph was done by military labour but skilled workmen, both military and civilian, had to be brought in from outside. The work done in 1796, clearing land and building huts, was done by the soldiers who were stationed on the island. In 1797 when Lieutenant Lacey went to St. Joseph Island to begin construction of the blockhouse he brought with him six civilian artificers. An allowance of half a pint of rum per day was authorised for these artificers, and in consideration of the difficulties to which they were exposed while working on St. Joseph Island this allowance was extended to the military artificers.<sup>1</sup> When plans were being made in Quebec for the work to be done at Fort St. Joseph in 1798 instructions were given to the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Volunteers, to provide two masons, including, if possible, one John Dizell, who was reputed to be a good bricklayer.<sup>2</sup> Paylists for work done on St. Joseph Island in 1799 indicate that probably forty or more civilian carpenters were employed on the various works on St. Joseph Island along with military carpenters and blacksmiths and the usual military labourers. Many of these men had been hired from Amherstburg, some had come from Montreal and a few at least seem to have resided on the island, as two civilian carpenters were employed building a magazine during the winter. When an engineer was sent to St. Joseph Island in 1804 to superintend the work, it was necessary to send

with him several military artificers. Some of these men seem originally to have gone from York to Fort George to carry out works ordered there, then continued on to Amherstburg and Fort St. Joseph.<sup>3</sup> This progression was due to a lack of skilled workmen among the soldiers stationed at the various posts. In 1806, to ensure completing the repairs ordered carried out at Fort St. Joseph, the master carpenter from Amherstburg, who was in charge of the works, brought civilian as well as military artificers with him to St. Joseph Island.<sup>4</sup>

Although some of the material for the buildings on St. Joseph Island was obtained on the island, much of it had to be brought in. According to Bruyères, building stone could be obtained from an island near the fort and sand was available on the spot. Lime could also be prepared at the site. In the fall of 1798 the Royal Engineers' office in Quebec prepared a list of material which should be accumulated at St. Joseph Island for work to be done the following year. This list included various sizes of logs, planks, boards, stone, lime and brick, though some doubt was expressed as to whether some of the thinner planks and boards and the bricks might not have to be sent from Amherstburg.<sup>5</sup> There was a saw pit near the fort.<sup>6</sup> In general bricks seem to have been sent from Amherstburg. Although there was a blacksmith at the fort, ironwork such as hinges and latches seems to have been sent ready made. Glass was always a problem as the breakage rate in transit was extremely high. An examination of boxes of window glass at Amherstburg in the summer of 1798 showed in one box 88 out of 226 panes were whole and in another box all 138 panes were broken.<sup>7</sup> Estimates for materials needed for work at Fort St. Joseph always showed large amounts of glass in order to cover expected breakage. Difficulties in obtaining



materials at Fort St. Joseph were increased by a tendency among commanding officers at Amherstburg to remove supplies which they required from shipments intended for Fort St. Joseph.

## The Buildings

### The Early Huts

The first buildings which British troops erected on St. Joseph Island were huts which were built in the summer of 1796. Dorchester had given orders that the troops sent to St. Joseph Island were to build themselves huts similar to those used by the traders at their wintering grounds. Lieutenant Foster reported that his men had made comfortable huts for themselves but gave no further description. No estimate for the materials needed to build the huts has been found; presumably they were built mainly of materials available on the island and erected as quickly as possible. Landmann in his Adventures and Recollections describes the hut which had been built by Lieutenant Lacey, and which he occupied while supervising construction of the permanent post:

My hut was about twenty feet square, formed of logs in the usual way, but had no chimney; this defect was remedied by a wide space paved in the middle for the fire-place, and a hole two feet square in the roof to let out the smoke--for there was no ceiling and no boarded floor, but it could boast of one window with oiled paper, a tolerably good substitute for glass.<sup>1</sup>

The huts which had been built in 1796 were probably similar to this one. These huts were probably about three quarters

of a mile west of the present site of the fort, on the west shore of St. Joseph Island, facing Lime Island.

### THE BLOCKHOUSE

In April 1797 an estimate for the construction of a blockhouse on St. Joseph Island was approved. According to Bruyères' report of 1802 (see Appendix J) the blockhouse at Fort St. Joseph was a framed two storey building, the upper storey being 100 ft. long, 30 ft. wide and 10 ft. high, and the lower storey 96 ft. long, 26 ft. wide, and 11 ft. high. It was built of logs and roofed with cedar shingles, and was reported to be so open that the rain and snow entered every part of it. The lower floor contained four rooms; one for ordnance stores, one for provisions and commissary's stores, one for Indian Department stores, and one for regimental stores, all very crowded. The upper floor had two rooms for soldiers' quarters and four rooms for officers.

Very little information is available about the actual construction of the blockhouse. There is a surviving plan dated 1800 of a blockhouse erected at Niagara, Amherstburg and Fort St. Joseph (Fig. 4). This shows the layout of the two floors and the front elevation, but does not give any construction details or tell us how closely this plan was followed in the construction of the blockhouse on St. Joseph's Island. The 1804 picture by Walsh (Fig. 5) gives an impression of one side of the top storey and shows the placement of windows and chimneys, but once again is lacking in detail. According to the estimate for the construction of the blockhouse which was approved in April 1797, (see Appendix C), the lower storey was to be 97 ft. long, 27 ft. wide, to stand on a stone foundation, and to hold stores; the upper storey was to be 100 ft. long, 30 ft. wide,

projecting 18 in. all around over the lower one, and to serve as quarters for officers and about 50 men. The sills were to be of oak, maple or pine 9 in. by 12 in., the log work of pine or maple 10 to 15 in. deep and 8 in. thick. Twenty pieces of cedar or hemlock 29 ft. long, 15 in. in diameter, hewn on one side were to be used for sleepers, 20 pieces of pine or cedar 32 ft. long, 12 in. by 14 in. for the projecting beams and 20 pieces of pine or cedar 32 ft. long, 12 in. by 8 in. for upper beams. For the rafters 36 pieces of pine 25 ft. long, 8 in. by 5 in. at bottom, and 6 in. by 5 in. at the top were to be used, and 10 pieces of pine 17 ft. long, 8 in. by 5 in. for the collar beams. The purlines, small rafters and partitions were to be of pine 4½ in. by 4½ in. The covering and floor for the second storey were to be of inch boards, the stairs and undercovering of the second floor of inch and half boards. For the ground floor, two inch plank was to be used, and half inch boards were to be used for lining the partitions for the officers' quarters. Ten thousand bricks, 16 toises of stone, 300 bushels of lime, 12 pounds of glue, and 50 loads of sand were to be provided. The amount of stone called for is considerably greater than that for the large blockhouse at Fort George, supposedly built to the same plan, which argues a much deeper foundation for the one on St. Joseph Island. Archaeological evidence shows a stone foundation 2.3 ft. wide and now standing 1.34 to 2.34 ft. high, resting on a footing 1.8 to 2.4 ft. high and a little over 3 ft. wide. Five hundred panes of glass 7½ in. by 8½ in. were to be sent, probably including a considerable allowance for breakage. There were to be seven stock locks, seven latches and catches, and seven pairs of hook and strap hinges, and 36 pairs of small hook and strap hinges for window shutters. There were also to be four pairs HL hinges for doors and three knob locks and four pairs HL hinges for cupboards with four cupboard locks, these presumably being for the officers quarters. Other requirements included shingles, spikes, nails, linseed oil and shutter bolts.

A plan exists for the blockhouse on the Island of St. Joseph (Fig. 4). As this plan, according to the title on it, is of the large blockhouses at Fort George and Amherstburg as well, a brief comparison of the estimates for these blockhouses might be useful (see Appendices A and B). According to the estimates the lower storeys of the blockhouses at Fort George and Amherstburg were to be 96 ft. by 26 ft., whereas the one at St. Joseph Island was to be 97 ft. by 27 ft. For all three the upper storey was to be 100 ft. by 30 ft. The estimates for the amounts of materials needed to build the blockhouses at Fort George and Amherstburg are identical; in most cases a larger quantity of material was called for at Fort St. Joseph. The sleepers for the blockhouse at Fort St. Joseph were to be one foot longer; the rafters were to be longer and there were to be no hip rafters. A much larger amount of stone was called for and one more of most types of fittings for doors. The estimate for the Fort St. Joseph blockhouse also called for hinges and bolts for shutters, which were not mentioned in the other two estimates. While it appears that the large blockhouses at Fort George and Amherstburg were very similar, the one at Fort St. Joseph, although supposedly built to the same plan, was somewhat different.

Although there is no indication in the plan of the blockhouse or the estimate for its construction of any vertical uprights it seems logical to assume that they were used. The immense difficulties involved in procuring, transporting and handling logs of 96 or 100 feet in length would seem to have forced the use of shorter logs. In the reconstruction of the Fort George blockhouse a "scarf joint" was used to join the logs but this would not be as strong a construction as one using a series of upright supports at regular intervals, which would support the weight of the

upper storey and the roof. There is proof of the use of vertical supports during the same time period for the Indian Council Room at Amherstburg.<sup>2</sup>

In late 1796 and early 1797 the troops started to clear land for the permanent buildings on St. Joseph's Island. In the summer of 1797 Lieutenant Thomas Lacey, RE, was sent to the island with several civil artificers to build a blockhouse there. Some square timber had already been prepared by the troops before his arrival. The work was not completed the first summer and the following year Lieutenant Landmann was sent to direct the work. Two masons were requested from the first Battalion of the Royal Canadian Volunteers, one of them to be John Dizell, a brick layer.<sup>3</sup> During the summer 1798 sufficient work was done on the blockhouse that by late fall the troops were able to move into it, though considerable work remained to be done on the inside. Because construction of the blockhouse was carried out with as little delay as possible, much of the timber used was unseasoned, with the result that cracks began to appear in the building causing considerable discomfort to all who were lodged in it. One officer recalled that in his first winter at the fort, the winter of 1802-03, though he had a stove and a large fire in the chimney it was so cold that sometimes the ink froze on his pen and he often found snow on his bed curtains.<sup>4</sup> Recommendations were frequently made that the blockhouse should be weatherboarded, and this was finally done in 1804-05.

Another problem with the fabric of the blockhouse was the fact that beams ran directly underneath the hearth; this resulted in fires in the winters of 1803 and 1804. In both cases the beam was cut out.<sup>5</sup>

The cedar shingles used for the roof of the blockhouse created another fire hazard. In the summer of 1804 the roof was covered with sheet iron and painted. The work on the roof was not too well done as within two years there were complaints that the rain poured into officers' and men's quarters as fast as it fell.<sup>6</sup> The master carpenter was sent from Amherstburg to carry out repairs on the blockhouse in the late summer of 1806 and these must have been fairly well done as in the fall of 1811 the blockhouse was described as being generally in good repair.<sup>7</sup>

The upper storey of the blockhouse was used for quarters for officers and men. There were two barrack rooms for soldiers, supposed to hold about fifty men. According to the 1800 plan there were three rooms for officers' quarters, one of which had no chimney. A report on the state of the buildings in 1801 stated that there were only three rooms for officers, but Bruyères in 1802 mentioned four rooms, all used by the Commanding Officer. In 1806 the Commanding Officer stated that only two rooms in the officers' part had chimneys, the rest being uninhabitable in winter. In 1811 Captain Roberts mentioned that in the officers' barracks a partition dividing a long narrow closet had been removed.<sup>8</sup> Possibly this partition was put up and taken down at the whim of the various commanding officers, thus accounting for the divergence in the number of rooms reported in the officers' quarters.

The barrack accommodation in the blockhouse was not very comfortable for officers or men. Stoves were needed to supplement the heat from the fireplaces even after the upper storey was weatherboarded. The partitions between the rooms on the upper floor were apparently not very thick. Landmann recalled that the hospital mate, David Brown, who arrived in 1799, had the smallest room allotted to him. Brown was

usually drunk and the partition was so thin that the subaltern who occupied the adjoining room could hear every word of his drunken soliloquies.<sup>9</sup> When the blockhouse was built the barracks were not plastered. This was done in the summer of 1804, but as there was no hair for the ceiling of the officers' rooms the plaster had to be put on without. As a result it fell down repeatedly in various places and the Commanding Officer finally had it all taken down.<sup>10</sup> In 1806 the master carpenter from Amherstburg was sent to make various repairs at Fort St. Joseph including building a wooden ceiling for the officers' quarters, but by the time he arrived the Commanding Officer had had it plastered at his own expense and this ceiling was left in place.<sup>11</sup> It had been originally intended that the blockhouses in Upper Canada would be fitted for the use of hammocks, but this was apparently never completely done. Once the troops moved into the blockhouse at Fort St. Joseph they built berths for themselves, but by 1806 these were totally useless.<sup>12</sup>

Much of the time the officer's quarters in the blockhouse were occupied only by the Commanding Officer, the other officers preferring to find accommodation outside the fort whenever that was possible. Sometimes lodging money was granted to these officers and sometimes it was refused.

The lower storey of the blockhouse was used for storage. The plan shows one large room for ordnance stores and a small store room at one end for the troops, but Bruyères mentioned four storerooms, for ordnance stores, provision stores, regimental stores, and Indian Department stores. According to the plan there were two doors along the front of the building opening into the store room and one door at each end giving access to the stairways leading to the upper storey. On the lower floor there were four



windows, and on the upper floor fourteen. The estimates provided for fittings for shutters for all the windows.

The blockhouse was burned when the Americans destroyed the fort in July 1814.

### The Bakehouse and Kitchen

The first estimate for the buildings on the Island of St. Joseph included provision for a kitchen and bakehouse adjoining, to be under one roof (see Appendix E). Each was to be 18 ft. square, making a building 36 ft. long by 18 ft. wide. It was to be 10 ft. high and on a stone foundation. No plan has been located for this building but its location is indicated in the 1800 plan of the fort. It was 30 ft. from the blockhouse. Archaeological findings indicate a foundation  $37\frac{1}{2}$  ft. by 20 ft. with a 10 by 10 ft. extension at the northeast end. The bakehouse was to be built of pine or maple logs 8 to 12 in. deep and 6 in. thick. Pine or cedar 8 in. by 6 in. was to be used for the sills and plate. Ten pieces of cedar 18 ft. long, 8 to 11 in. in diameter were to be provided for sleepers, 12 pieces of pine 18 ft. long and 8 by 6 in. for the beams, and 24 pieces of pine 15 ft. long and 6 by 5 in. for rafters. Also needed for the woodwork were pine scantling  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. square, one and a half inch boards and inch boards. The estimate provided for the use of nine thousand bricks, four toises of stone, 150 bushels of lime and 20 loads of sand. Because the building was to be used as a bakehouse and kitchen a large amount of iron was needed for the fittings --four pieces of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inch flat bar iron, 12 sheets of iron, and one hundredweight of bar iron. There were to be two stock

locks, two latches and catches and two pairs of strong HL hinges for the doors. For the windows there were to be provided 100 panes of glass,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in., four shutter bolts and eight pairs of small hook and strap hinges. Presumably each part of the building had its own entrance door and two windows. The bakehouse was built during the summer of 1798 by Lieutenant Landmann; after his departure the troops finished the floor and partitions.

The kitchen part of this building was used as the Commanding Officer's kitchen and it appears that his servant slept there. Underneath this kitchen was a small cellar in which vegetables could be stored. In January 1802 the bakehouse and kitchen caught fire and burned to the ground. The Commanding Officer built a temporary shed over the oven so that the troops might have some use of it.<sup>1</sup>

### The Guardhouse

Another building which Lieutenant Landmann was ordered to erect at Fort St. Joseph was a guardhouse. By March 1799 Captain Drummond reported that the guardhouse and blackholes were nearly finished except for the chimneys.<sup>1</sup> In November 1800 Captain Drummond recommended that the guardhouse be weatherboarded.

According to Bruyères' report of 1802, the guardhouse was a good building 30 feet long, 15 feet wide, 8 feet high, containing guardrooms for officers and men and three solitary cells for blackholes. It still needed weatherboarding.<sup>2</sup>

The estimate approved in January 1798 called for a guardhouse of log work on a stone foundation (see Appendix F). Twenty-four pieces of pine 34 ft. long, 8 by 10 in. and 24 pieces 18 ft. long were to be used for the log work.

There were to be six pieces of hemlock 18 ft. long, 8 in. by 10 in. for the sleepers and six pieces of pine 18 ft. long, 6 in. by 9 in. for the beams. For the rafters 16 pieces of cedar or pine 12 ft. long, 8½ in. by 4½ in. at one end and 6 in. by 4 in. at the other were to be provided. Four hundred inch boards were called for for covering and weatherboarding. The estimate also included 50 two inch pine planks, seven toises of stone, three thousand bricks, 30 barrels of lime, two pairs hook and strap hinges, two stock locks, one bar of flat iron, shingles and nails.

Although the estimate included material for weatherboarding, this was not installed until the summer of 1805. The original intention apparently was to build a chimney for the guardhouse, but it seems that this was not done. The Commanding Officer at the post reported in the fall of 1811 that a stovepipe passed directly through the roof of the guardhouse, which on one occasion had narrowly escaped burning.<sup>3</sup> Archaeological investigations have not disclosed any evidence of chimneys in the guardhouse. The guardhouse was destroyed along with the rest of the wooden buildings at the fort in July 1814.

### The Wooden Powder Magazine

Among the buildings included in the estimate approved in January 1798 was a temporary magazine (see Appendix G). For this building there were to be provided 1800 running feet of pine 8 in. by 8 in., six pieces of hemlock 14 ft. long and 1 ft. in diameter, 20 pieces of hemlock 16 ft. long 12 in. square, 30 one and a half inch boards, 100 inch boards, one stock lock, one padlock, two pairs HL hinges, nails, and screws.

The powder magazine was not, as originally intended, built in the summer of 1798 because there was too much other work to be done then. By March 1799 the timber for it was ready to haul out of the woods.<sup>1</sup> Pay lists for 1799 indicate that work was being done on the magazine during the fall of 1799, including shingling it.<sup>2</sup> In November of that year Captain Drummond suggested that the magazine, along with the blockhouse, bakehouse and guardhouse should be weatherboarded.<sup>3</sup>

The estimate and early references to the blockhouse indicate a log structure with two doors and a shingled roof. Later references to the powder magazine seem to indicate a more primitive structure. At the time of the fire in the bakehouse in January 1802 the commanding officer, Lieutenant Cowell, described the magazine as a "very bad root house covered over with boards and placed very near the Grand Blockhouse."<sup>4</sup> According to Bruyères in 1802 the powder was lodged "under a few logs placed to form a kind of temporary cover, with Earth on the sides in a very unsecure and improper situation."<sup>5</sup> It is possible that the original powder magazine was converted to other uses and the flimsy structure described by Lieutenant Cowell and Captain Bruyères was erected between 1800 and 1802. In 1802 Bruyères described a building which he referred to as a workshop and engineer's storehouse which may have been the original powder magazine. It was a building 30 ft. long, 15 ft. wide and 8 ft. high, divided into two apartments.

### The Palisades

Lieutenant Landmann's major task in the summer of 1799 was to enclose the post with picketing. As this was considered so urgent at the time that it should supersede any other work under the engineer's direction, the construction of

buildings for the Indian Department had to be postponed.<sup>1</sup> The task of enclosing the post took longer than was originally expected. The workmen first had to dig a ditch for the pickets. Because of the rocky and uneven nature of the ground a great deal of time was spent removing large rocks and levelling the situation, thus increasing the expense of the task and delaying its completion. In offering an explanation for the heavy expense of erecting the palisades Landmann reported the following winter that the northeast bastion had been so much lower than the others that he had been obliged to raise the bottom of the pickets from six to seven feet. The northwest bastion had been six or seven feet too high and had been lowered and the east curtain had been too high in the middle and had had to be levelled.<sup>2</sup> By the summer of 1800, when there were still 413 feet of the post unenclosed, the Commanding Officer at the post had the work completed by his men.<sup>3</sup> The 1800 plan of the fort (Fig. 3) has an inset showing a "section through the picketing" but this was probably more an illustration of what picketing should be than a drawing of what was actually done at Fort St. Joseph.

According to the estimates for the defensive works, the pickets were to be of cedar, 12 to 13 feet long. The picketing was to be doubled below the ribband and to be provided with loopholes and a banquette. There were also to be provided three pairs of large hook and strap hinges, four pairs of ordinary hook and strap hinges, four strong padlocks and one bar of iron. The ribband was to be of 8 in. by 5 in. maple, hemlock or pine. An estimate was also drawn up for building four gun platforms.

Bruyères reported in 1802 that the stockade was complete, in good repair, and well finished. The redan on the south side was complete but that proposed for the north side had only been traced and was not really necessary. None of the gun platforms had been built. Although the

timber was ready for building them, Bruyères felt that only those for the south west and south east bastions need be built. Despite the time spent by Landmann in levelling the site, more was required and several large stones should be removed. No banquette had been formed inside the palisade and no ditch outside, so the loopholes were virtually useless. Estimates were prepared for this work.<sup>4</sup>

The work on the fort carried out in the summers of 1804 and 1805 does not seem to have included any repairs to the pickets, as the Commanding Officer reported in July 1806 that the loopholes were of no use as they were above what a man could reach and there were no platforms.<sup>5</sup>

The condition of the picketing deteriorated over the years and by 1811 it was very badly decayed. A gust of wind that autumn blew a great deal of it down. The Commanding Officer had it propped up but unfortunately it was very uneven in height, ranging from 9 ft. 8 in. to 13 ft.<sup>6</sup> Among the work ordered to be done in Upper Canada in 1812 was the repair of the palisades at Fort St. Joseph.<sup>7</sup> The pickets were destroyed in the fire of July 1814.

### The New Bakehouse

After the destruction of the bakehouse and kitchen by fire in 1802 there was a pressing need for a new bakehouse. The old oven was covered over with some form of shed so that it could be used to bake bread but there were complaints from commanding officers that good flour was unavoidably being turned into unpalatable and perhaps unwholesome bread because of the lack of a good bakehouse. In his 1802 report Bruyères had recommended building a bakehouse of masonry

outside the fort near the wharf but it was not built until 1804. Bruyères recommended that the bakehouse be 16 ft. long, 14 ft. wide and 8 ft. high with an oven 10 ft. square. No estimate has been located for this building.

In Lt. Col. E.W. Durnford's report on the fortifications in Canada in 1823 he stated that among the buildings remaining at St. Joseph Island was a small brick building covered with sheet iron formerly a bakehouse and used as a barrack for the soldiers stationed on the island.<sup>1</sup> The plan which accompanied this report included a building outside the lines of the palisades and near the wharf; it is probably the new bakehouse (see Fig. 7). Parts of the walls of the bakehouse are still standing. These walls are of grey limestone and were preserved to some extent by remortaring during the 1920s. The bakery seems to be made up of three sections: a main room, an attached oven on the southeast wall and a projection on the outside of the northeast wall which may have been added at the time the building served as a barrack.<sup>2</sup>

### The Stone Powder Magazine

Bruyères recommended in 1802 that a powder magazine should be built 30 ft. long by 15 ft. wide, the side walls to be 8 ft. high above the set off and 2 ft. thick. The foundation was to be 2 ft. below and 1 ft. above the ground, 2½ ft. thick, making a set off for the flooring joists of 6 in. within the building. The ceiling was to be made fireproof and the roof covered with sheet iron. This building was to be divided into two apartments, one 17 ft. long, to be an ordnance store room, and one 12 ft. long, for a magazine,

with a 1 ft. thick partition between. The magazine was to be placed in the northeast bastion of the fort.

Early in 1804 an estimate was approved to build an ordnance store room and powder magazine at Fort St. Joseph to be 35 ft. long and 21 ft. wide.<sup>1</sup> Work was begun on it that summer and by fall it was completed except for the flooring and door work, which could not be finished that year, mainly because the copper locks, hinges, etc. had not arrived from Québec.<sup>2</sup> By the following summer the copper work had arrived and the magazine was completed.

Having been built of stone the powder magazine escaped destruction by fire in July 1814, although there is evidence of some burning inside the building. As there was no powder magazine on Drummond Island the ammunition for the fort there was stored in the powder magazine at Fort St. Joseph from 1815 until the troops moved to Penetanguishene in 1828. In an undated report on the remaining military buildings on St. Joseph Island, probably written in 1821, Lieutenant Portlock, RE, described the magazine as a stone building with a shingled roof with the ceiling much cracked. The Carmichael Smyth Report of 1825 mentioned a magazine of stone at Fort St. Joseph with the arch much cracked. In Lt. Col. E.W. Durnford's report on fortifications in 1823 he stated that there was at St. Joseph Island a small powder magazine with the roof shingled and the walls much cracked, otherwise in tolerable repair.<sup>3</sup> In 1926 the magazine walls were repointed by the Sault Ste. Marie Historical Society.

Some investigation of the powder magazine was done in 1964, and in 1974 a complete archaeological study of it was made. The powder magazine is 21.5 ft. wide and 35.7 ft. long and is divided into two rooms. Its walls were built of limestone slabs and some cobbles and boulders held together



with mortar. The exterior walls are 2.0 ft. thick, except for the north wall which is 2.5 ft. thick as is the interior wall. The south room has interior dimensions of 17.5 ft. from east to west and 16.2 ft. from north to south. It probably served as an ordnance storeroom. Two horizontal recesses extend around the walls of this room; these were used to hold nailing strips to which boards or planks for the inner wall could be attached. A doorway was situated in the west wall of the south room, and an opening which may have been either a vent or a window in the south wall. The north room was 17.5 ft. from east to west and 12.5 ft. from north to south. It had a vaulted brick ceiling curving from north to south and was used to store powder. As in the south room there were two horizontal recesses in the walls extending around the room, and a door in the west wall.<sup>4</sup> There appears to have been a fire in the powder magazine after it was abandoned in 1828. It was probably then that the arch and the north wall of the north room collapsed.<sup>5</sup> The remaining walls of the magazine, standing from 0.55 ft. to 10.9 ft. above the footing, have been stabilized.

### The Storehouse

The 1823 plan of Fort St. Joseph (see Fig. 7) shows a building to the northwest of the water gate which is identified as a storehouse. In 1802 Bruyères described a "Store house 30 feet long, 15 feet wide, 8 feet high made use of for a Workshop and Engineers Store, divided into two Apartments." There is no record of when this building was constructed. It may originally have been the temporary powder magazine which was built in 1799. Bruyères suggested

that this building might be converted into an Indian Department storehouse, or, if a chimney were built and the inside of the building plastered, it might be used as officers' quarters or as barracks for 20 men. Apparently it was weatherboarded in the summer of 1805.

In the spring of 1810 Sentlow Rawson was appointed Assistant Commissary and Assistant Barrack Master at Fort St. Joseph. The Commanding Officer, being asked to take the most economical means for providing sufficient quarters for Rawson, decided that the building known as a workshop, but which as far as he knew had never been used as such, would be the best place.<sup>1</sup> Steps were therefore taken to make the building comfortable. At some time, probably in 1810, a chimney was constructed in this building, as evidenced by the remains of its foundation which still exist. The building was destroyed with the others in July 1814.

### The Kitchens

Bruyères also recommended the construction of a building 30 ft. long, 15 ft. wide, and 8 ft. high, divided into two apartments with a chimney between, to serve as a kitchen for the men. A similar building was to be built as a kitchen for the use of the officers.

In the summer of 1804 a men's kitchen was built.<sup>1</sup> Later in the season an officers' kitchen was begun, but, owing to the lack of materials, could not be completed until the following year.<sup>2</sup>

To the northwest of the ruins of the building which has been identified as the storehouse stands another set of ruins which were investigated during the summer of 1977.

These appear to be the remains of a building 30 ft. by 15 ft. The foundation was not substantial but the chimney, which was in the centre of the building, had a very substantial fireplace base and hearth. It is probable that this was one of the kitchens, possibly the men's. The large chimney which is still standing on the grounds of the fort may be on the site of the other kitchen.

Appendix A. Estimate - Large Blockhouse at Fort George<sup>1</sup>

To build a Blockhouse on the High Ground behind Navy Hall, to have two Stories, the lower one to be 96 feet long and 26 feet wide, to stand on a stone foundation, and to hold Ordnance Stores. The Upper Storey to be 100 ft. long & 30 feet wide projecting 2 feet all round over the lower one, & to serve as Quarters for Officers & about fifty Men.

Carpenters work -- £255:17:6  
Masons\_\_\_\_\_do. -- 31:12:6  
Labourers\_\_\_do. -- 12: 0:0  
Smith's\_\_\_\_\_do. -- 8:12:6  
Glaziers\_\_\_\_\_do. -- 2: 6:0

310:8:6

Materials

two hundred & seventy feet run <sup>g</sup> . Pine 9 in. by 12	Cills
five thousand four hundred ft. run <sup>g</sup> . pine 10 in. to 15 in. in depth & 8 in. thick	Log work
twenty pieces of Cedar or Hemlock 28 ft. long 13 in. diam. hewed on One side	Sleepers
twenty pieces pine 32 feet long 12 in. by 14 in.	Projecting Beams
twenty pieces do. 32 ft. long by 12 by 8	Upper tye Beams
twenty pieces of Pine 20 feet long 8 by 5 at one end 6 by 5 at the other.	Rafters

four pieces pine 25 feet long 9 by 5 at  
one end & 6 by 5 the other

Nine pieces pine 17 feet long 8 in. by  
5 in.,

seventeen hundred feet run<sup>9</sup> Pine 4½  
in. by 4½ in.

two thousand Nine hundred & twenty inch  
Boards

five hundred and fifty 1½ inch Boards

four hundred and sixty 2 inch Plank  
two hundred ½ inch Boards

Eight thousand Bricks

ten toises of stone

twelve thousand 20<sup>d</sup> Nails

Nine thousand 30<sup>d</sup> Nails

two thousand seven hundred & sixty 40<sup>d</sup>  
Nails

twelve hundred 10<sup>d</sup> Nails

four hundred & eighty Panes of Glass 7½  
by 8½

forty two pounds of putty

three hundred weight of Iron

Hip Rafters  
Collar Beams

Purlines  
small Rafters  
Partitions etc.

upper covering  
to 2<sup>d</sup> floor  
Upper floor,  
Partitions,  
Necessaries etc.  
under Cov<sup>9</sup> to  
2<sup>d</sup> floor Stairs  
etc.

Ground floor  
lining Partitions  
of Officers  
Quarters etc.

Hooks, Hinges,  
Chimney Bars  
Hooks for  
Hammocks etc.

one hundred & twelve Barrels Lime  
six stock Locks  
six Latches & Catches  
six pair of Hook & strap Hinges  
three pair of HL Hinges  
three pair of H Cupboard Hinges  
three Iron rimmed Brass Knob Locks  
three Cupboard Locks  
Fifty Loads of sand

Appendix B. Estimate - Large Blockhouse at Amherstburg.<sup>1</sup>

To build a Blockhouse on the high Ground opposite the North End of the Isle au Bois Blanc, to have two Stories, the lower one to be 96 feet long and 26 feet wide, to stand on a Stone Foundation and to hold Ordnance Stores: the Upper Story to be 100 feet long and 30 feet wide projecting two feet all round over the lower one; and to serve as Quarters for Officers and about Fifty men.

Carpenters Work	--	£305:18:9
Masons _____ Do.	--	37:16:3
Labourers ___ do.	--	12:
Smith's _____ do.	--	10: 6:3
Glaziers _____ do.	--	<u>2:15:0</u>

368:16:3

Materials

two hundred & seventy feet run <sup>g</sup> of Pine 9 in. by 12 in.	Cills
Five thousand four hundred feet run <sup>g</sup> Pine 10 in. to 15 in. in depth & 8 inches thick	Log work
twenty pieces of Cedar or Hemlock 28 ft. long 13 in. Diameter hewn on one Side	Sleepers
Twenty pieces Pine each 32 feet long 12 in. by 14 in.	Projecting Beams

Twenty pieces D <sup>o</sup> _____ 32 feet long 12 by 8	Upper Beams
Twenty pieces D <sup>o</sup> each 20 feet long 8 in. by 5 in. at Bottom 6 by 5 at Top	Rafters
Four pieces of Pine each 25 feet long 9 in. by 5 in. at Bottom 6 by 5 at Top	Hip Rafters
Nine pieces pine each 17 feet long 8 by 5	Collar Beams
Seventeen hundred feet run <sup>9</sup> Pine 4½ by 4½	Purlines, small rafters, partitions etc.
Two thousand nine hundred & Twenty Inch Boards	Upper covering to 2 <sup>d</sup> floor, Upper floor Partitions, Necessaries etc.
Five hundred & fifty 1½ Inch Boards	Under Covering to 2 <sup>d</sup> Floor, stairs etc.
Four hundred & Sixty 2 Inch Plank	Ground floor
Eight Thousand Bricks	
Two hundred ½ Inch Boards	Lining Parti- tions of Offi- cers Quarters, etc.
Ten Toise of Stone	
Twelve thousand 20 <sup>d</sup> Nails	
Nine thousand 30 <sup>d</sup> _____ D <sup>o</sup>	
Two thousand seven hundred & Sixty 40 <sup>d</sup> Nails	
Twelve hundred 10 <sup>d</sup> Nails	
Four hundred & Eighty panes of Glass 7½ by 8½	
Forty two pounds of Putty	
Three hundred Weight of Iron	



One hundred & twelve Barrels Lime  
Six Stock Locks  
Six Latches & Catches  
Six pairs of Hook & Strap Hinges  
Three pairs of HL Hinges  
Three pairs of H Hinges for Cupboards  
Three Iron Rimmed Brass Knob Locks  
Three Cupboard Locks  
Fifty Loads of Sand

Appendix C. Estimate - Blockhouse at Fort St. Joseph.<sup>1</sup>  
Quebec 7th April, 1797

Estimate of the Expence of services hereunder mentioned proposed to be performed on the south extremity of the Island of St. Joseph near the Isle a la Crosse at the entrance of the Straights from Lake Huron leading to the Falls of St. Mary - Viz,-

To build a Block House to have two Stories, the lower one to be 97 feet long & 27 feet wide, to stand on a stone foundation, and to hold Stores; the upper story to be 100 feet long and 30 feet wide projecting eighteen inches all round over the lower one; and to serve as Quarters for Officers & about fifty men

Carpenters Work including extra time of six Artificers from Montreal going and returning	£485. 7.0
Masons work	42.10.0
Labourers do.	22.10.0
Smiths do.	12.15.0
Glaziers do.	<u>3. 8.0</u>
	£566.10.0

Materials

two hundred & seventy four feet run <sup>g</sup> Oak maple or pine 9 in. by 12 in.	Cills
five thousand five hundred feet run <sup>g</sup> . Pine or maple 10 in. to 15 in. deep & 8 in. thick.	Log Work

twenty pieces Cedar or Hemlock 29 feet long 12 Inches Diam. hewn on one side	Sleepers
twenty pieces pine or straight Cedar 32 feet long 12 in. by 14 in.	Projecting Beams
twenty pieces of pine or straight Cedar 32 feet long 12 by 8 inches	Upper Beams
thirty six pieces pine 25 feet long 8 by 5 at bottom and 6 by 5 at top	Rafters
ten pieces pine 17 feet long 8 by 5 inches	Collar Beams
Two thousand feet runing pine 4½ by 4½ inches	Purlines, small Rafters, Partitions
Three thousand Inch Boards	Upper Cov9 to second floor, upper floor or ceiling, parti- tions, neces- saries etc. under covering to second floor, stairs etc.
six hundred 1½ Inch Boards,	Ground floor etc. lining Partitions Officers Quarters etc.
five hundred 2 Inch Plank	
two hundred ½ inch Boards	
ten thousand Bricks	
sixteen toises of stone	
three hundred bushels of Lime	
twelve pounds of Glue	
fifty loads of sand	
One hundred 7 inch spikes	
three thousand shingles	
seven thousand shingle nails	
three thousand 40 <sup>d</sup> nails	

Ten thousand 30<sup>d</sup> nails  
fifteen thousand 20<sup>d</sup> nails  
three thousand 10<sup>d</sup> nails  
five hundred panes of Glass 7½ by 8½  
forty five pounds of putty  
three hundred weight of Iron

Hooks Chimney  
Bars etc.

seven stock locks  
seven latches & catches  
seven pairs of hook & strap hinges  
thirty six pairs small do. for window shutters  
four pairs HL Hinges for doors  
four pairs of HL Hinges for cupboards  
Three Iron Rimmed Brass Knob Locks  
four Cupboard Locks  
One hundred Bushels of Charcoal  
two Gallons of Linseed Oil  
Eighteen Shutter Bolts

Appendix D. Comparison of Dimensions Given for the Blockhouses

	St. Joseph's	Fort George	Amherstburg
Archaeologist's findings	98 ft. by 28 ft.		
Bruyères report			
upper storey	100 ft. by 30 ft. by 10 ft.	100 ft. by 30 ft. by 9 ft.	100 ft. by 30 ft.
lower storey	96 ft. by 26 ft. by 11 ft.	96 ft. by 26 ft. by 12 ft.	96 ft. by 26 ft.
Estimates			
upper storey	100 ft. by 30 ft.	100 ft. by 30 ft.	100 ft. by 30 ft.
lower storey	97 ft. by 27 ft.	96 ft. by 26 ft.	96 ft. by 26 ft.
1800 plan of large blockhouse			
upper storey	100 ft. by 30 ft.		
lower storey	97 ft. by 27 ft.		

Appendix E. Estimate - Bakehouse and Kitchen.<sup>1</sup>

To build a Kitchen and Bakehouse adjoining each 18 feet square under one Roof making the whole Building 36 feet long by 18 feet wide, & 10 feet high on stone foundation.

Carpenters work	£63.15.0
Brick Layers or Masons do.	21. 5.0
Smiths do.	2.11.0
Labourers do.	3.10.0
Glaziers do.	<u>1. 4.0</u>
	92.5.0

Materials

two hundred & sixteen feet run <sup>g</sup> . pine or Cedar 8 by 6 in.	cills & plate
twelve hundred feet running Pine or Maple 8 to 12 inches deep and six inches thick	Log work
ten pieces of Cedar 18 feet long 8 in. to 11 in. in diam. hewed one side	Sleepers
twelve pieces pine 18 feet long 8 by 6 inches	tie Beams
twenty four pieces Pine 15 feet long 6 by 5 inches	Rafters
two hundred feet running pine scantling 4½ 4½	
eighty 1½ Inch Boards	
six hundred inch Boards	
nine thousand Bricks	

four toises of stone  
One hundred & fifty Bushels of Lime  
twenty loads of sand  
four pieces  $2\frac{1}{2}$  Inch flat Bar Iron  
twelve sheets of Iron  
one hundred weight of Bar Iron  
five thousand shingles  
Eleven thousand shingle nails  
two thousand 30<sup>d</sup> nails  
four thousand 20<sup>d</sup> nails  
two thousand 10<sup>d</sup> nails  
One hundred panes of Glass  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  each  
twelve pounds of putty  
two stock locks  
two pair of strong HL Hinges  
eight pairs of small Hool & strap Hinges  
two latches & Catches  
four shutter Bolts.

Appendix F. Estimate - Guardhouse.<sup>1</sup>

Quebec, 23 January 1798

To build a Guard House of Log Work on a stone foundation

Carpenters Work	£52:15:0
Masons do.	37:10:0
Labourers do.	5:12:6
Smiths do.	:18:0
Glaziers do.	<u>:12:6</u>
	97:8:0

Materials

twenty four pieces pine 34 feet long 8 by 10 in.	Log work
twenty four do 18 feet long 8 by 10 in.	Log work
six pieces Hemlock 18 feet long 8 by 10 in.	Sleepers
Six pieces pine 18 feet long 6 by 9	Beams
sixteen pieces cedar or pine 12 feet long 8½ by 4½ at one end 6 by 4 at the other	Rafters
four hundred Inch Boards	Covering & Weather Boarding
eight thousand shingles	
sixteen thousand shingle Nails	
three thousand 30 <sup>d</sup> Nails	
two thousand 20 <sup>d</sup> Nails	
two pair Hook & Strap Hinges	
two stock locks	
One Bar of flat Iron	
Seven toises of Stone	



three thousand of Bricks

thirty Barrels of Lime

twenty four days of a pair of Horses

fifty 2 Inch Pine plank

Appendix G. Estimate - Temporary Magazine.<sup>1</sup>

Quebec, 23 January 1798

To build a temporary Magazine

Carpenters Work	£20:0:0	
Labourers do.	<u>10:0:0</u>	
		30:0:0

Materials

eighteen hundred feet run<sup>g</sup> Pine 8 in.  
by 8 in.

Six pieces Hemlock 14 feet long 1 foot diam.

twenty pieces Hemlock 16 feet long 12 inches  
square

thirty 1½ inch Boards

One hundred inch Boards

two hundred 20<sup>d</sup> Nails

One stock lock

One strong padlock

two pair HL Hinges

four doz. inch screws.

Appendix H. Estimate - Palisades.<sup>1</sup>

Quebec 23 January 1798

Estimate of the Expense of the undermentioned necessary services proposed to be performed at the New Post on the Island of St. Joseph on Lake Huron Viz.

To enclose the Buildings with a strong Picketing as a security against any Insult from Indians etc., and to clear the Wood round the Blockhouse -

Carpenters & Axe Men	£30: 0:0
Labourers Work	20: 0:0
Blacksmiths do.	<u>1:10:0</u>
	£51:10:0

Materials

Eighteen hundred Cedar Pickets  
Twenty 3 inch pine plank  
three pair large Hook & Strap Hinges  
four pair smaller do.  
four strong Padlocks  
One flat Bar of Iron  
fifty seven inch spikes.

Appendix I. Supplementary Estimate.<sup>1</sup>

Quebec 20 April 1799

Estimate of the Expense of the undermentioned services proposed to be performed on the Island of St. Joseph on Lake Huron Viz. -

To a further sum necessary for compleating the works ordered last year, more particularly for inclosing the Post with a substantial Picketting about 400 yards in circumference, to be doubled below the Ribband, with loop holes, Banquette etc.

Carpenters, Axe Men & Labourers work £215:5:0

Materials: Exclusive of what was allowed in Estimate 23<sup>d</sup> JanY 1798.

Two thousand four hundred Pickets 12 to 13 ft. long

Two hundred & fifty feet round Oak for treenails

Two hundred & fifty 7 inch spikes

two thousand feet runing Maple Hemlock or Pine

8 by 5 for Ribband

To erect four raised Platforms for Guns to Fire over the Picketing.

Carpenters & Labourers Work £102:0:0

Materials

fifty pieces of Cedar or Hemlock 26 feet

long 12 in. diam. hewed in one side for Sleepers

Twenty four pieces of pine 26 feet long 10 in.

by 12 in.

Upper Beams

Ninety six pieces do. 8 feet do. 10 by 10 Posts

Sixty pieces do. 11 feet do. 10 by 10 Braces

two thousand eight hundred Sup<sup>l</sup> feet 2½ inch

Oak plank

four hundred feet Sup<sup>l</sup> of 2 inch pine Plank Steps

Sixty feet of round Oak

for Treenails

four hundred 7 inch Spikes

NB If any species of Timber here mentioned cannot easily be procured, some other the nearest in quality should be substituted.

Appendix J. Extracts from the report of Captain R.H.  
Bruyères, RE, 12 Sept. 1802.<sup>1</sup>

Fort George

...The Center Blockhouse is 100 feet long 30 feet wide 9 feet high in the Upper Floor, contains four rooms for Officers' Quarters at present occupied by One Captain and One Subaltern and two rooms for Soldiers' Quarters will contain 80 men in a crowded state, 68 with convenience. The ground floor is 96 feet long, 26 feet wide, 12 feet high, contains one large room filled with Ordnance stores and two small rooms for Regimental Stores. These Stores are in a very improper situation in case of Fire. It would be adviseable to convert the whole of the Building into Quarters for Soldiers, and to erect a separate Building for Ordnance Stores. It would then contain 200 men with ease.

Amherstburg

The Roof of the large Blockhouse No. 1 within the Fort will require to be shingled. It is at present only covered with Boards very defective and admits the Rain. It will also be necessary to paint the Weatherboarding to preserve it.

There are not sufficient Quarters to lodge Troops at this post. I should recommend to convert the whole or the greatest part of this Blockhouse into Men's Quarters to be fitted with double Births on the new Construction. The upper part is 100 feet long, 30 feet wide, contains at present 4 rooms occupied by the Commanding Officer, Two

rooms Soldiers' Quarters for 60 men, one Room Sergt. Major and Qr. Mr. Sergeant. The lower part is 96 feet long, 26 feet wide, contains at present two rooms occupied by the Commanding Officer, two rooms by the Adjutant, two rooms and a kitchen made use of by the Mess, and one room for Ordnance Stores.

### Saint Joseph's

The Stockade of the Fort is complete, in good repair and well finished. The Redan on the South side is complete, that proposed for the north side is only traced, no part of these picketts are put up, neither does it appear necessary that this work should be done, none of the platforms for guns intended to be placed in each of the Bastions are either framed or fixed, but the Timber is on the spot for this service. I should recommend only to finish those intended for the South West and South East Bastions, as they will be fully sufficient for the nature of the work. 4 6 pdrs. are on the spot, part of the iron work for the carriages etc. is wanting viz: 3 Cap square keys 2 chains for keys 5 Linch pins 1 Axletree ring 12 Hind Trucks 12 Fore Trucks 1 Wood Bed for 6 pdr. Carriage.

The terreplein and Parade within the Fort and Redan require to be properly levelled and regulated and a number of large Stones to be removed from within the works.

The Banquette requires to be formed round all the Stockade of the Fort in order to fire through the Loop holes.

A small Ditch round the exterior part of the Fort required to be completed agreeable to the original plan, to clear and give sufficient height to the Loop holes of the picketts, which are now much encumbered with loose earth and large Stones.

The Block house in the centre of the Fort is an excellent framed Building, but will soon be destroyed unless it is weatherboarded to preserve it besides the Logs are so open, the weather penetrates in every part of it, that the Troops suffer very much from the Cold. The side walls of the upper Floor require to be Lathed and plastered in the inside, and the Rooms of the officers' Quarters to be Ceiled. Above the upper plate of the Roof should be Beam filled to prevent the Rain and Snow beating in. The Shingles of the roof are made of dry Cedar very dangerous in case of Fire, should be painted or covered with any cheap composition, that might answer the purpose to secure it as much as possible. The upper part of this Building is 100 feet long 30 feet wide 10 feet high, contains 2 Rooms Soldiers Quarters for 60 Men and 4 Rooms for Officers Quarters occupied at present by the Commanding Officer. The lower part is 96 feet long 26 feet wide 11 feet high contains 1 Store room for Ordnance Stores, 1 ditto Provision & Commissary's Stores, 1 ditto Stores Indian Department, 1 ditto Regimental Stores, all in a very crowded state there not being sufficient Room.

The Guardhouse is a good Building 30 feet long 15 feet wide 8 feet high contains Guardrooms for officers and men and 3 Solitary Cells for Black holes. It requires to be weatherboarded and painted to preserve the Building.

A Storehouse 30 feet long 15 feet wide 8 feet high made use of for a Workshop and Engineers Store, divided into two Apartments is a very good Building, requires to be Weatherboarded and painted, and to be underpinned with masonry. It may be converted for a Store for the Indian Department, or by building a Chymney and plastering the inside would either make an officers Quarter or contain 5 double Births for 20 men.



Two lengths of the Wharf 18 feet each are compleated and one length framed, and ready to put in the water, owing to the small depth of water off this point, being only 6 feet to a considerable distance from the Shore, and the very exposed situation liable to a very heavy surf. I should recommend not to continue this Wharf for Vessels but to reduce it for a Boat Wharf, which is more essentially necessary, and will save considerable expence.

A Detached Building to serve as a Kitchen for the men is much required. I should recommend to erect one to be 30 feet long 15 feet wide 8 feet high divided into 2 Apartments with a Chymney between. The Building to be framed and Weatherboarded.

A similar Building is also absolutely necessary to serve as Kitchens for the use of the officers.

Additional Quarters for officers are much required within the Fort, all the officers belonging to the post except the Commanding Officer are lodged in Hutts belonging to merchants on the water side, who will require and claim their Buildings next spring. It is proposed to erect 2 Buildings for this purpose, each 35 feet long, 18 feet wide with a double Chymney and partition to each.

The powder for the post is lodged under a few logs placed to form a kind of temporary cover, with Earth on the sides in a very insecure and improper situation. A magazine is essentially required, to be built of masonry. It is proposed to erect one to be 30 feet in length 15 feet wide in the clear, the side walls to be 8 feet high above the set off, and 2 feet thick. The foundation to be 2 feet below and 1 foot above ground, 2 ft. 6 in. thick making a set off for the flooring Joists of 6 in. within the Building. The Ceiling to be made Fire proof and the Roof covered with Sheet Iron. The Building to be divided into two Apartments

the first 17 feet long to serve for an Ordnance Store-room. The 2<sup>d</sup> 12 feet for a magazine. The partition to be one foot thick. To place it in the North East Bastion of the Fort.

The Bake house was burnt in the winter and is entirely destroyed except the Oven which is much damaged. I propose that a new Bake house and Oven be built of masonry and placed out of the Fort, near the Wharf for the conveniency of Water. The Oven part to be 10 feet square from out to out. The Bakehouse to be 16 feet long 14 feet wide in the clear, 8 feet high the walls 1 ft. 6 in. thick.

A Centry Box is required also a small Travelling Magazine to lodge powder for firing the Swivels to salute the Indian Flags. Two Ladders of 30 feet and four of 24 feet long each are wanted for use of the Barracks. There is a large Flagstaff on the spot which requires to be fixed. Two Batteaux are wanted for the use of the post. The Boats they have are nearly unserviceable. I shall recommend to have them built on the spot.

An Indian Council House and a House for the Storekeeper of the Indian Department are reported to be necessary.

There is sufficient quantity of Timber provided and laying scattered along the shore to compleat all the Buildings at present recommended, also for platforms and Wharf, that no expence will be incurred for this Article. The Plank and Boards may be sawn from the Saw Logs, on the spot. A large proportion of Tools & Materials are in Store. Lime Stone can be burned on the spot.

Building Stone must be brought from an Island opposite the Fort at the rate of a Battoe load for a days work for six men.

Sand is on the spot.

## Endnotes

### History of the Construction

1. Canada. Public Archives (hereafter referred to as PAC), RG8, C Series, Vol. 250, pp. 560-563, Drummond to Green, 29 June 1797; PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 21, pp. 283-286, Estimate of expense of services proposed at the Island of St. Joseph, 7 April 1797.
2. PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 22, pp. 122-124.
3. PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 252, pp. 50-53, Drummond to Green, 21 March 1799,
4. PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 23, pp. 247-248, Estimate of expenses at St. Joseph Island, 24 April 1799; PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1207, pp. 295-296, Green to Drummond, 22 April 1799.
5. PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 253, pp. 244-250a, Drummond to Green, Nov. 1800.
6. PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 383, pp. 18-21.
7. Ibid., pp. 192-193, Gustavus Nicolls to Green, 18 Aug. 1804.
8. PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 254, pp. 239-240, Clerk to Green, 28 Oct. 1804.
9. PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 384, pp. 133-134, Capt. Adam Muir to Green, 7 June 1806; *ibid*, pp. 142-142b, Lt. Col. Jasper Grant to Green, 26 Aug. 1806.
10. PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 102, pp. 80-82, Captain Thomas Sherrard to Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, Military Secretary, 7 Aug. 1810.
11. Ibid., Vol. 514, pp. 238-240, Capt. Charles Roberts to Capt. Thomas Evans, Military Secretary, 24 Oct. 1811.

Labourers and Materials

- 1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 17, p. 250, Green to Craigie, 15 April 1797.
- 2 Ibid., Vol. 18, pp. 243-244, Green to Lieutenant Colonel de Longueuil, 26 April 1798.
- 3 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1211, p. 205, Green to Brock, 5 Oct. 1803.
- 4 Ibid., Vol. 384, pp. 142-142b, Grant to Green, 26 Aug. 1806.
- 5 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 23, p. 15.
- 6 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 252, pp. 50-53, Drummond to Green, 21 March 1799.
- 7 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 723, pp. 163-164.

The Buildings

The Early Huts

- 1 George Thomas Landmann, Adventures and Recollections of Colonel Landmann (London: Colburn and Co., 1852), Vol. 1, p. 314.

The Blockhouse

- 1 Ellen R. Lee, The 1974 Archaeological Investigation of Fort St. Joseph, Ontario, Manuscript Report Series No. 181 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1976), pp. 23-25.
- 2 Yvon Desloges, Structural History of Fort George, Manuscript Report Series No. 189 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1977), p. 46.
- 3 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1207, p. 82, Green to Lt. Col. A. McDonell, 26 April 1798.

- 4 PAC, MG19, F 10, Walsh Papers, reminiscences of life at Fort St. Joseph, probably by Captain Clerk.
- 5 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 513, p. 24, Clerk to Green, 18 February 1803; *ibid.*, Vol. 1216, pp. 380-381, Green to Gother Mann, 26 Feb. 1804.
- 6 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 384, pp. 133-134, Muir to Green, 7 June 1806.
- 7 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 514, pp. 238-240, Roberts to Evans, 24 Oct. 1811.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Landmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 91-92.
- 10 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 254, pp. 234-240, Clerk to Green, 28 Oct. 1804.
- 11 *Ibid.*, Vol. 514, pp. 63-65, Campbell to Green, 28 Sept. 1806.
- 12 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 383, pp. 1-3, Gother Mann to Green; *ibid.*, Vol. 384, pp. 140-141, Major Alexander Campbell to Green, 22 Aug. 1806.

#### The Bakehouse and Kitchen

- 1 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 512, pp. 190-192, Lt. Robert Cowell to Green, 10 Feb. 1802.

#### The Guardhouse

- 1 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 252, pp. 50-53, Drummond to Green, 21 March 1799.
- 2 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 383, p. 19.
- 3 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 514, pp. 238-240, Roberts to Evans, 24 Oct. 1811.

The Wooden Powder Magazine

- 1 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 252, pp. 50-53, Drummond to Green, 21 March 1799.
- 2 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1150, pp. 50-65.
- 3 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 253, pp. 244-250a, Drummond to Green, Nov. 1804.
- 4 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 512, pp. 190-192, Cowell to Green, 10 Feb. 1802.
- 5 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 383, p. 20.

The Palisades

- 1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 26, pp. 65-66, Green to Drummond, 22 April 1799.
- 2 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 321, pp. 239-240, Landmann to Gother Mann, 8 Jan. 1800.
- 3 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 512, pp. 77-80, Drummond to Green, 22 July 1800.
- 4 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 383, pp., 18-19.
- 5 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 384, pp. 133-134, Muir to Green, 7 June 1806.
- 6 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 514, pp. 238-240, Roberts to Evans, 24 Oct. 1811.
- 7 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1218, pp. 148-149, Freer to Bruyères, 3 Feb. 1812.

The New Bakehouse

- 1 PAC, RG8, II, Vol. 80, p. 21.
- 2 J.N. Emerson, H.E. Devereux and M.J. Ashworth, "A Study of Fort St. Joseph", History and Archaeology/Histoire et archéologie, 14 (1977), p. 114.

The Stone Powder Magazine

- 1 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1211, pp. 356-357, Green to Clerk, 17 Feb. 1804.
- 2 Ibid., Vol. 254, pp. 239-240, Clerk to Green, 28 Oct. 1804; *ibid.*, Vol. 383, p. 253, Nicolls to Green, 4 Nov. 1804.
- 3 PAC, RG8, II, Vol. 80, p. 21.
- 4 Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-54.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

The Storehouse

- 1 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 102, pp. 80-82, Captain Sherrard to Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, Military Secretary, 7 Aug. 1810.

The Kitchens

- 1 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 383, pp. 192-194, Gustavus Nicolls to Green, 18 Aug. 1804.
- 2 PAC, RG8, II, Vol. 80, p. 21.

Appendix A. Estimate - Large Blockhouse at Fort George

- 1 Ontario Archives, Simcoe Papers, Envelope 45.

Appendix B. Estimate - Large Blockhouse at Amherstburg

- 1 Ontario Archives, Simcoe Papers, Envelope 45.

Appendix C. Estimate - Blockhouse at Fort St. Joseph

1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 21,  
pp. 283-284.

Appendix E. Estimate - Bakehouse and Kitchen

1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Vol. 21, pp. 285-  
286.

Appendix F. Estimate - Guardhouse

1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 22,  
p. 123.

Appendix G. Estimate - Temporary Magazine

1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 22,  
pp. 123-124.

Appendix H. Estimate - Palisades

1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 22,  
p. 122.

Appendix I. Supplementary Estimate

1 PAC, MG23, G II 17, Prescott Papers, Series 1, Vol. 23,  
pp. 247-248.

Appendix J. Extracts from the Report of Captain R.H.  
Bruyères, RE, 12 Sept. 1802.

1 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 383, pp. 4-21.



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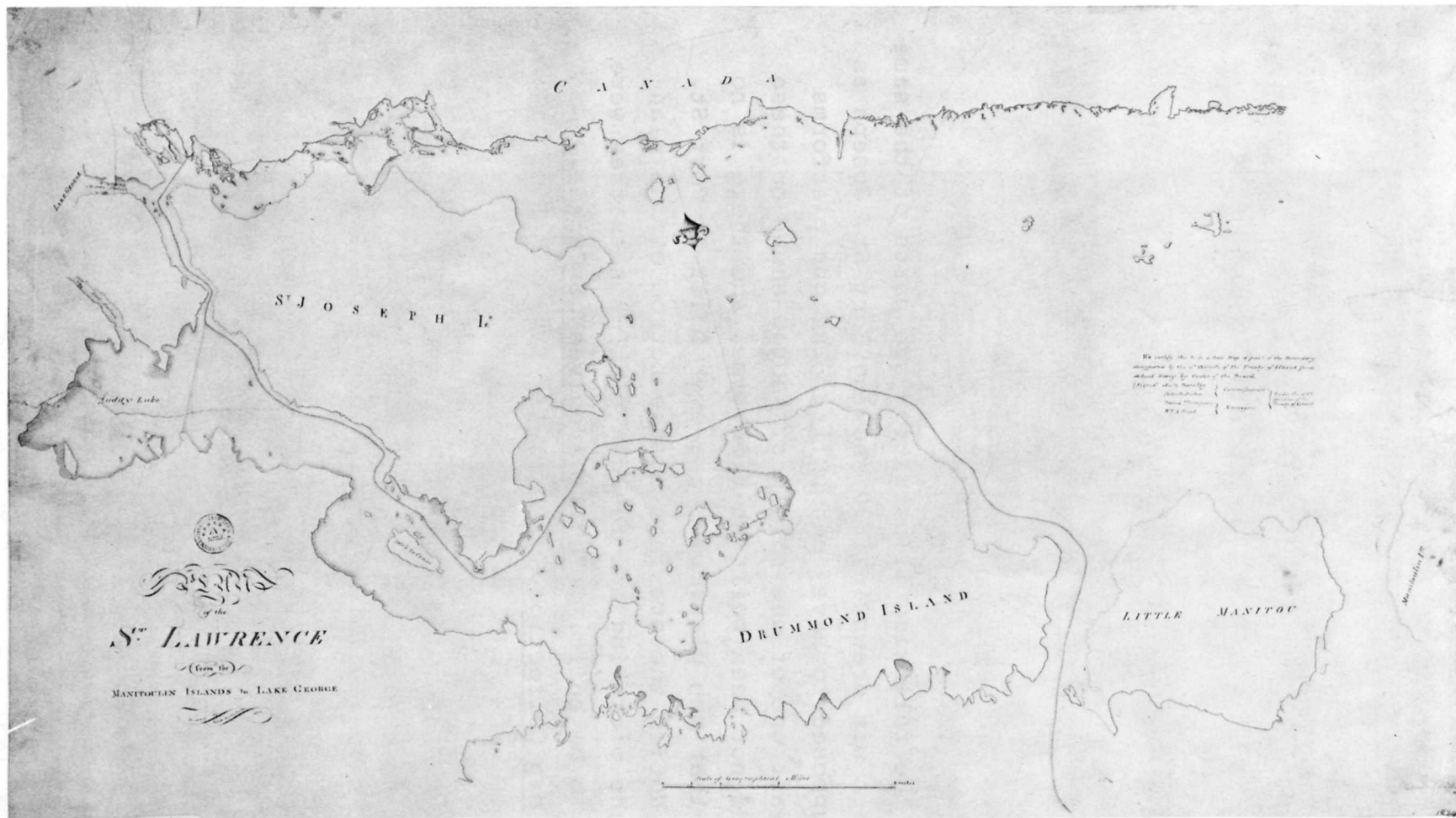
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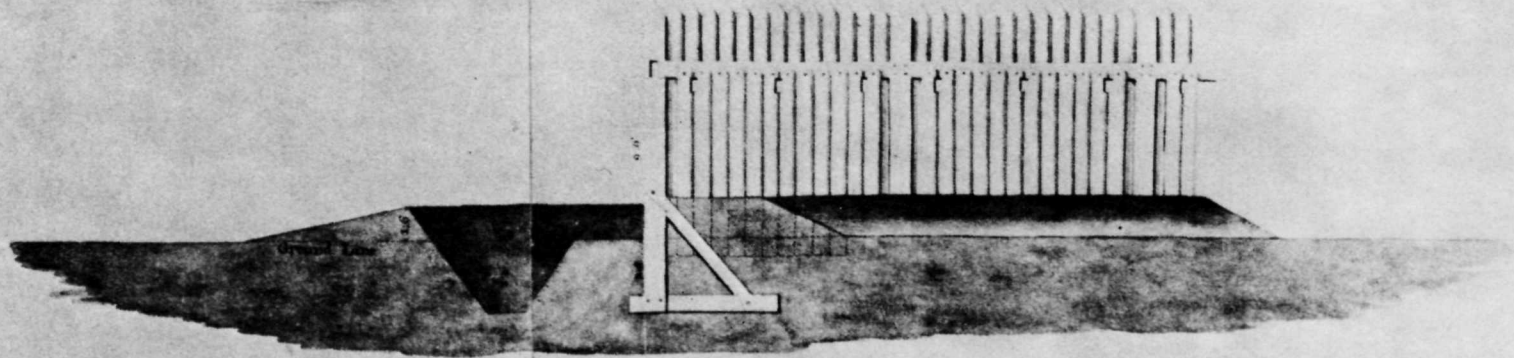
The Log Cabin Myth. A Study of the Early Dwellings of the English Colonists in North America. Ed. and intro. Samuel Eliot Morrison, Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass., 1967.

- 1 Map showing the location of the fort. This map was drawn to show the boundary as decided upon after the War of 1812. To the right is Manitoulin Island, to the left the St. Mary's River. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

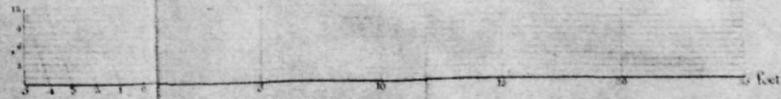


2 This and the following illustration are parts of the same plan, which was drawn in 1800 showing Fort St. Joseph as it was supposed to have been built. The gun platforms and at least one of the ravelins, though shown on these plans, had not been built at this time, and there is no evidence that gun platforms were ever built at Fort St. Joseph. Notice the drawings at the bottom of the plan showing the picketing and the gun platforms as they were supposed to be built. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

Section through the Picketing



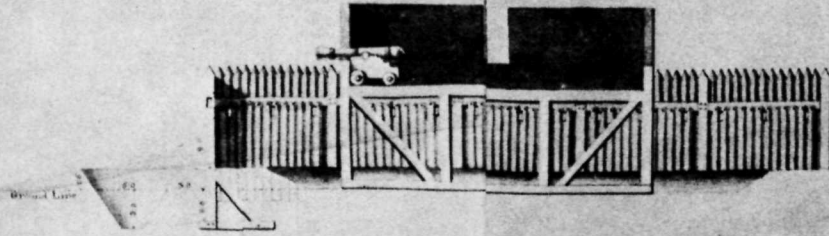
Scale 4 Feet to an Inch



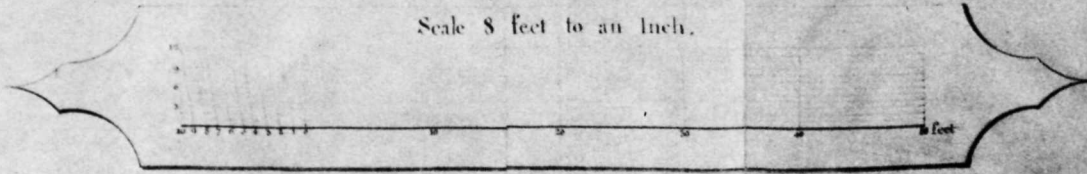
T. J. J.  
1800

3 See Figure 2.

Section through the Platform



Scale 8 feet to an Inch.

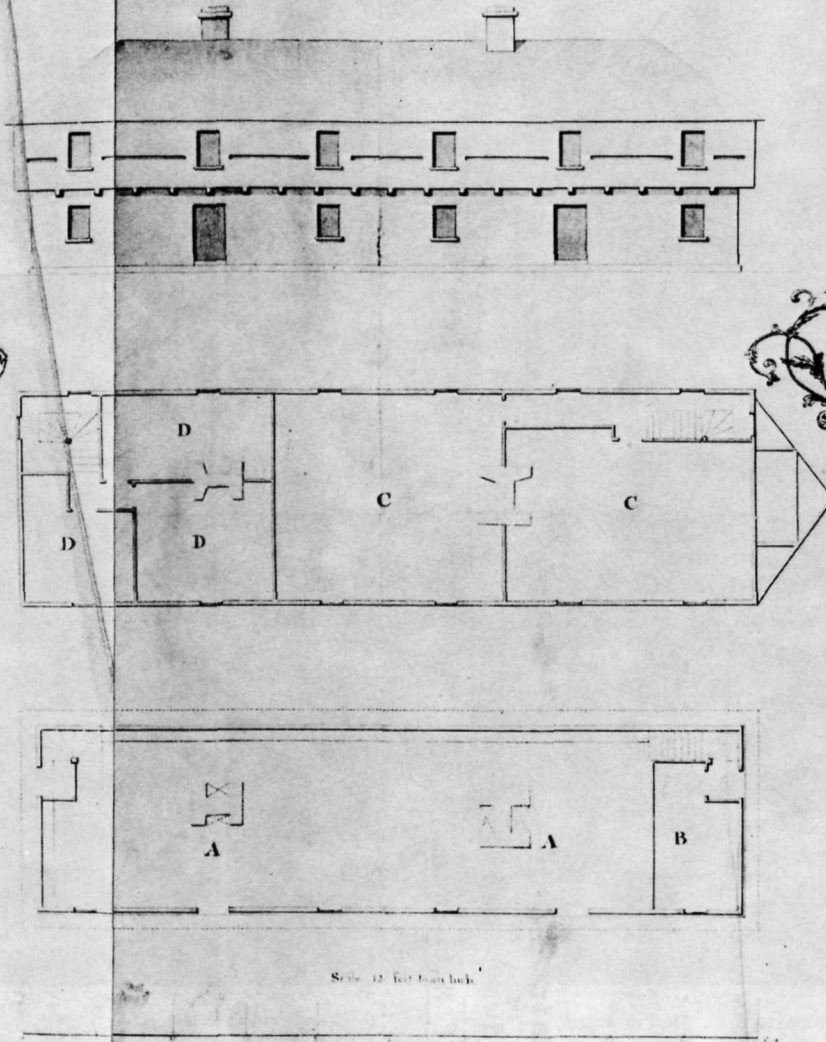




- 4 Plan of the blockhouse. This plan, also drawn in 1800, shows the blockhouse as it was supposed to have been built at Fort George, Amherstburg and Fort St. Joseph. The Fort St. Joseph blockhouse differed in several respects from the one shown in the plan. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

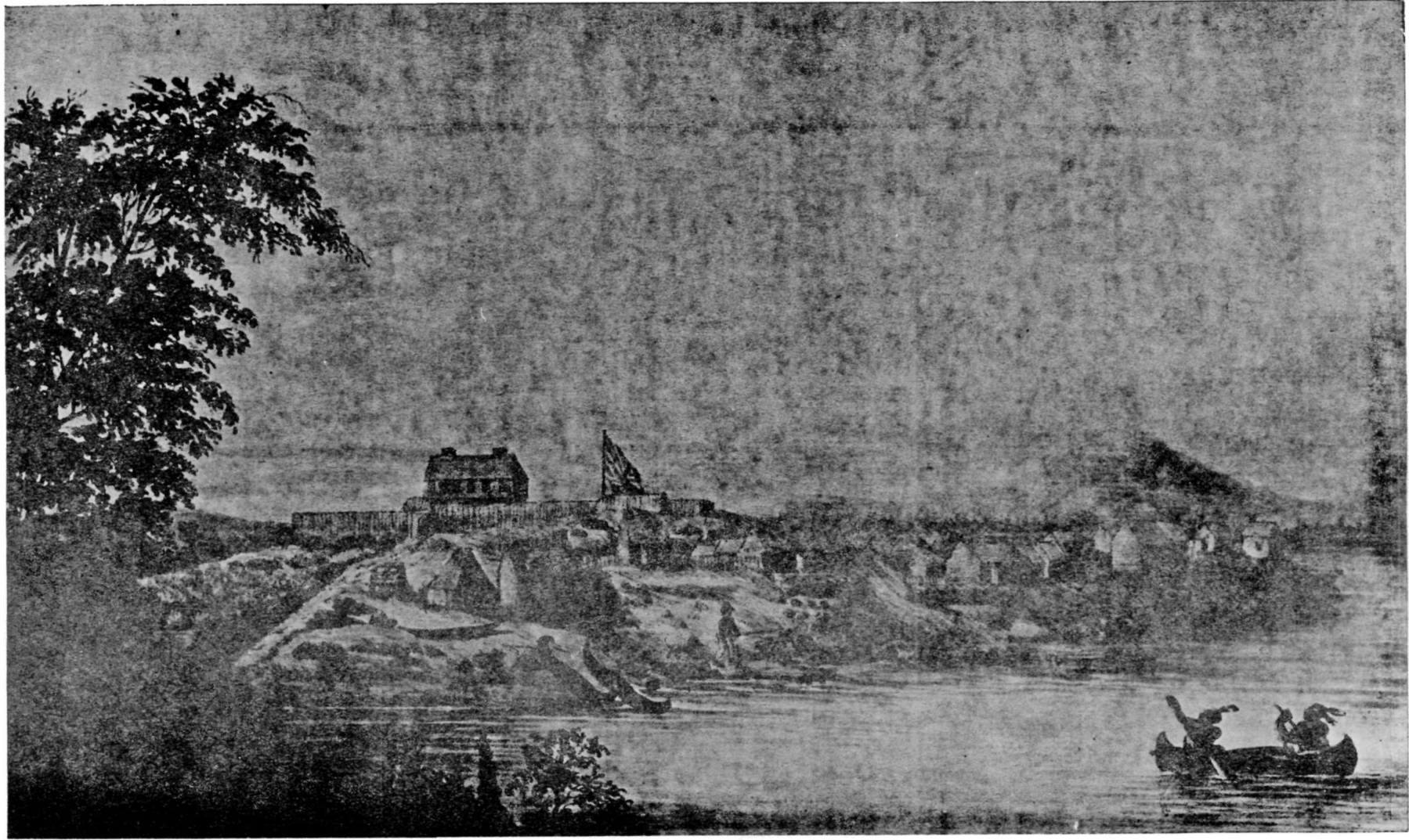
Plan  
 and  
 ELEVATION  
 of an Ordnance Storehouse and  
 Blockhouse erected at  
 FORT GEORGE, AMHERSTBURG  
 1756  
 N. JOSEPH  
 1756  
 Drawn by the Engineer Drawing Room under the Direction of the Major General

Gauthier Manoir  
 Col. Command. Artillery



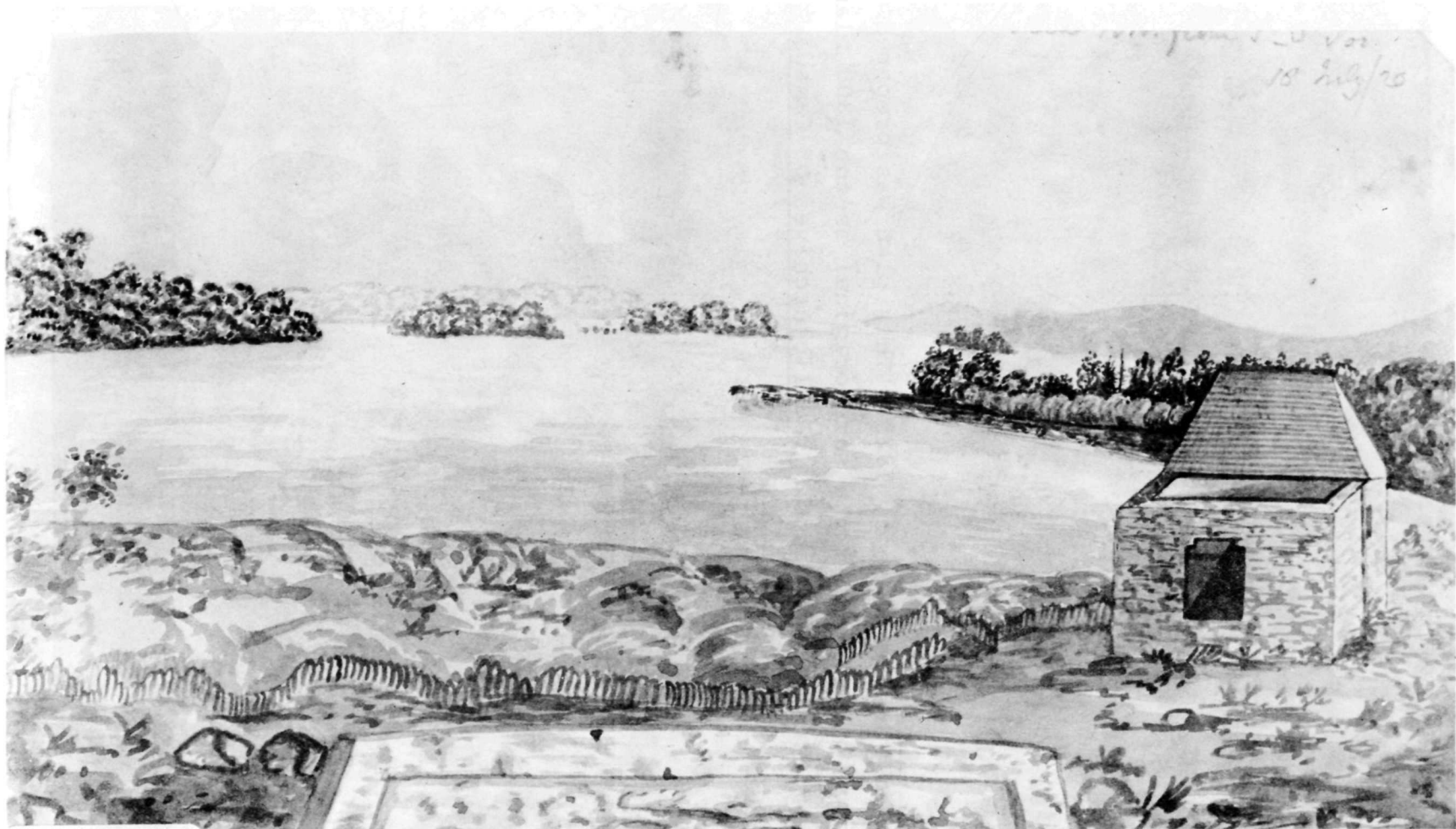
References  
 AA. For Ordnance Stores  
 B. Small Store Room for Troops  
 C.C. Rooms for Soldiers  
 D.D. Rooms for Officers

- 5 Painting of Fort St. Joseph in 1804 done by Lieutenant Edward Walsh. (William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.)



1864  
1864  
1864  
1864

- 6 "View N.W. from I. St. Joseph, 18 July 1820" by J.J. Bigsby. In this picture can be seen the stone powder magazine and part of the palisade line. (Public Archives of Canada.)



- 7 Plan of Fort St. Joseph, 1823. This plan was prepared in Quebec, probably from the same original as the 1800 plan, and omits some buildings. (Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)

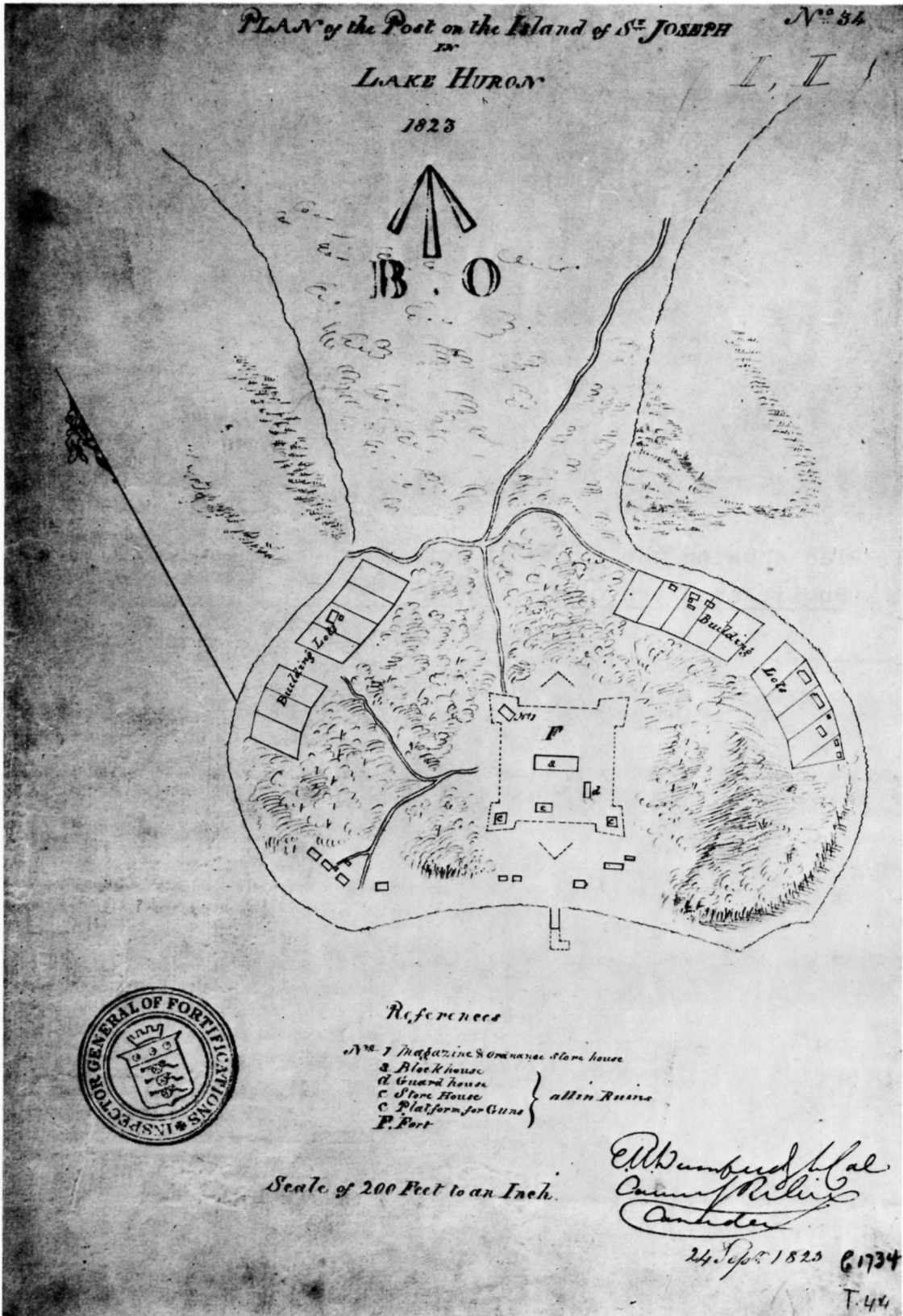


PLAN of the Post on the Island of S<sup>t</sup>. JOSEPH

N<sup>o</sup> 34

LAKE HURON

1823



References

- A<sup>o</sup> 1 Magazine & Ordnance store house
  - B Block house
  - C Guard house
  - D Store house
  - E Platform for Guns
  - F Fort
- } all in Ruins



Scale of 200 Feet to an Inch.

*Edmund Hal*  
*Comdr. R. I. C.*  
*Amherst*

24. Sept. 1823 C. 1734

T. 44



- 8 Plan showing the ruins of Fort St. Joseph in 1925.  
(Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection.)



