

Unknown

Unnamed

Forgotten



# The River Raisin

American

# DEAD

Shawna Lynn Mazur

Special History Study, River Raisin National Battlefield Park,  
Michigan

*Paula Chapp*



*The Battle's o'er, the din is past!  
Night's mantle on the field is cast....*

*....Sound is his Sleep on Erie's wave  
Or Raisin's waters are his grave.*

## **Unknown, Unnamed, Forgotten The River Raisin American Dead**

**A Special History Study, River Raisin National Battlefield Park,  
Michigan**



*This book is dedicated to those that perished at the Battles of the River Raisin*

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*The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this Special History Study are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service.*

*Cover Image: "Sunrise at the River Raisin" by Patrick Doherty, Courtesy of River Raisin National Battlefield Park  
Poem Extract: "A Night View of the Battle of Raisin" by William Orlando Butler, written on the battlefield January 22, 1813  
Title Extract: "Unknown, Unnamed and Forgotten" from Clarence M. Burton's book, The City of Detroit, Michigan, 1922  
Inside Image: "Kentucky Monument" postcard, Courtesy of the Monroe County Library System*

# **Unknown, Unnamed and Forgotten... The River Raisin American Dead**

**A Special History Study, River Raisin National Battlefield Park,  
Michigan**

**SCOTT BENTLEY** Digitally signed by SCOTT  
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Regional Director, Midwest Region

Date

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## **About the Author**

Shawna Lynn Mazur was born and has lived in Monroe all her life. In fact, she grew up on the battlefield. Like many residents she did not know about the battles until her son, at that time twelve years old, asked her to take him to the visitor center, which was run by the Monroe County Historical Museums at the time.

It was only a matter of weeks when they both signed up to be volunteers in 2006. In 2007, Shawna was hired by the Monroe County Historical Museums. Having a Bachelor's Degree in History and Literature, she was thrilled to be employed in her field. Shawna's love of history, research, and writing, led her to write numerous articles for the Museum's newsletter. She also had an article published in Michigan History Magazine and the Little Big Horn Associates newsletter, as well as the local newspaper. She also researched and ran the Museum's popular Lantern Tours program for four years. She has edited a number of other author's books as well.

When the National Park Service took over the battlefield, she was fortunate enough to be hired as a Ranger. She contributed to growing the Park and developing some of the Park's interpretive programs, publications and curriculums. Having worked for the River Raisin National Battlefield Park for twelve years, she is currently the Administrative Assistant as well as retaining the position of Ranger. This is her first book for the National Park Service. She wrote the book *Hidden History of Monroe County, Michigan* which was published by Arcadia's The History Press in October 2022. She also wrote *Lost Towns of Monroe County, Michigan* published in September 2024 by Arcadia's The History Press.

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## Preface

What is the purpose of a Special History Study on the American Dead of the River Raisin?

On March 30, 2009, Public Law 111-11 established that River Raisin National Battlefield Park could consist of lands "*relating to the Battles of the River Raisin on January 18 and 22, 1813, or the aftermath of the battles*" in Monroe and Wayne Counties in Southeast Michigan. In November of 2009, the National Park Service published the *River Raisin National Battlefield Study and Boundary Assessment*. The 2009 study identified "*the need for additional research to definitively identify historic locations or tribal settlements in the area*" that require "*preserving*" or "*interpreting*" in accordance with the Park's Enabling Legislation. The Park's 2016 Land Protection Plan states "*Other areas not identified in this plan should be evaluate as additional primary documents or extant resources become known.*" The Land Protection Plan calls for "*further research*" to identify areas in the two counties that relate to the battles and their Aftermath.

In 2019 the River Raisin National Battlefield Park's newly published Historic Resource Study, *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground: The River Raisin, The War of 1812, and the Course of North American History, A Historic Resource Study of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, Michigan*, recommended additional studies to fully understand and interpret the historical associations of the people and landscapes related to the Battles of the River Raisin and their Aftermath.

*Unknown, Unnamed, Forgotten: The River Raisin American Dead*, is a Special History Study that addresses one aspect of that recommendation, and thus tiers off the Historic Resource Study. This Special Study seeks to increase the National Park Service's understanding of the people and the areas related to the Americans who died in the battles. It fills an interpretive role in detailing what happened to the Euro-American casualties from the conflicts, identifies areas that should be considered for preservation, and identified the need for additional research to explore the extent of Native-American



casualties from the battles and what happened to the Native Warriors who perished during the conflicts. This Study has been completed in accordance with National Park Service (NPS) Management Policies and chapter two of the NPS Directors Order 28 as a supplement to the Park's 2019 Historic Resource Study. It synthesizes publicly available information into a narrative that can be referenced for interpretation and public interest.

Detroit's renowned historian Clarence Burton said *"In the downtown districts of today we walk over the remains of past generations. How many human beings still lie buried, unknown and forgotten in our city's streets!"*<sup>1</sup>

One of the questions people often ask when learning about a battle is what happened to those that were left behind. That indeed can be a very complicated question. Most often it depends upon the circumstances of the battle. Did the soldiers have time to locate and bury their dead at least temporarily? If not, the residents of the settlement would usually take up the task.

In the Battles of the River Raisin fought January 1813 as part of the War of 1812 campaign, neither of the above was really an option.

The American soldiers would not be allowed to bury their dead, nor would the River Raisin settlers. The reason for this was the previous actions between the Kentucky troops and the Native Nations. The Native Americans and the Kentuckians had a long complicated history that went back to the American Revolution. Previous battles and treatment of the dead by the Kentuckians, including in the Battle of the River Raisin on January 18, 1813, certainly had an impact on the Native Warriors actions and decisions in the rest of the battle. We shall examine this further in chapter one. Thus, the American dead lay out on the fields of battle for days and months. Consequently, wild animals scattered the remains over a large area. Even temporary burials nine months later would not remain intact and were being discovered over a century later.

The outcome of the Battles of the River Raisin resulted in an overwhelming victory for the British and their Native Confederation allies. Most of the American dead were comprised of soldiers from Kentucky. Whenever bodies were found they were usually always attributed to being Kentucky soldiers with good reason. The Kentuckians made up most of the American troops -- The Volunteer Militia and the 17<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry regiment were all from Kentucky. The 19<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry were Ohioans, they may have sustained a few casualties, but all the records for that regiment were lost. The British and

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<sup>1</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1435.

Canadian soldiers, and Native Warriors that fought against the Americans in the battles were “supposedly” able to recover their dead. But by the time we get to the end of the narrative, we might question this -- especially when it comes to the Native Warriors, but we also need to keep in mind, that the Great Lakes area has a long Native American history prior to Euro-American contact.

So far, we have not been able to identify any records concerning the fate of the Native Warriors killed in the battles. Additional research is needed to uncover any written or oral histories associated with what happened to their remains. Considering this, our focus thus far will be to trace what happened to the remains of the American soldiers who perished in the battles.

In setting out to solve the mystery of the remains of the River Raisin soldiers, a very long complicated, convoluted and contradictory story emerged from the ashes. Considering the American bodies laid out so long on the fields of battle and were sporadically buried in trenches and were reinterred over and over multiple times, it is not surprising. The mystery of the River Raisin dead has been superficial at best, but in the course of this study new information has been uncovered that will help clarify that mystery. The mystery related to what happened to Native Warriors however remains to a large extent.

Great care has been given to telling the tale chronologically, but at points we will veer away from this to prevent confusion. No work is truly unbiased, but we will try to remain objective by examining all the sides and rely on the most historically accurate evidence available. We will see however, that many of the historical accounts do contain biases especially when considering the physical features of Indigenous people, which are not based on any anthropological findings. Since there are so many contradictions, we will delve into all the possibilities, and there are many.

Let us start our excavation by traveling back over 200 years to some of the most devastating and influential battles of the War of 1812 to discover the fate of the Americans that were left behind. We will work our way back to the present, as we uncover the incredible, unbelievable story of the American remains of the River Raisin. And together we will finally be able to uncover a portion of the mystery of the centuries old question, “Where are the lost soldiers of the Battles of the River Raisin?”

## Introduction

Just after the turn of the century in 1901, on a spring day in April, a man under the employ of Frenchtown Township resident Peter Suzore, was digging a post hole on Peter's property by North Dixie Highway and Sandy Creek. He was horrified when what looked like a human skull suddenly appeared through the grains of dirt. He was so rattled that he refused to dig any further. The family, intrigued however, excavated farther down and discovered the bones of a complete skeleton. Once they were satisfied they had revealed all the remains, they decided to cover them back up and leave them where they lay, except for the skull.<sup>1</sup>

Did the family know of the horrific events that happened at Sandy Creek almost a century before during the Battles of the River Raisin and the War of 1812? Unexpected discoveries of human remains have jolted the community into reexamining and remembering the events of January 1813. The past keeps resurfacing and reminding us that we do not live in a vacuum and the cost of war has been a steep price to pay. That sentiment speaks volumes to those of the state of Kentucky, whose 650 volunteer militia soldiers became casualties over just three days in January long ago. Just how many made it back to their home state of Kentucky? How many more still lay in the soil of a foreign state? Let us go back over two centuries ago and examine the unbelievable story of the American soldiers that were left behind.

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<sup>1</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, April 11 1901.





*River Raisin National Battlefield Park Annual January Commemoration in cooperation with the City of Monroe, Michigan*



*River Raisin National Battlefield Park Visitor Center  
Photos Courtesy of River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

## Chapter One

### “Remember the Raisin”



*River Raisin National Battlefield Park  
Courtesy of Author*

To understand the plight of the soldiers we must first start by looking at a synopsis of the battles that took place in Monroe, Michigan, then known as the *Rivière au Raisin* and later Frenchtown.

The Battles of the River Raisin fought January 18, 22, and an incident that would be afterwards called “the Massacre,” (by the Americans) on January 23, 1813, proved to be among the worst of the entire war for the Americans. One out of every five American soldiers killed during the War of 1812, died at the River Raisin. Out of roughly 934 Americans that fought, about 300-400 were killed, fifty-eight or so wounded, 500-600 captured and only thirty-three that escaped death or capture. The battles were unequivocally a Native American and British victory. The British losses were much less at about twenty-four killed, 158 wounded. The Native Warriors appeared to have



suffered even fewer losses with reports indicating that only thirteen were killed and fifty-four wounded. However, oral and written records related to the Native Warriors casualties are difficult to find. While for the U.S. this battle was the greatest defeat during the entire war, it was the high tide for Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh's Confederation of Native Nations and their British allies.

It all started after the United States declared War on Great Britain, General William Hull invaded Canada from Detroit, two battles ensued to reach the River Raisin to reinforce efforts to hold Detroit, but General Hull ultimately surrendered the Michigan Territory on August 16, 1812. The French-Canadian community along the River Raisin were included in that surrender. The citizens were under constant harassment and surveillance by the Canadian Militia and their Native Nation allies. The settlement was looted, and the local militia stockade was burned to the ground. The citizens were threatened with their lives if they even showed the slightest resistance.

Hearing of a new army heading north from Kentucky under General James Winchester, the citizens sent couriers to the Maumee Rapids to beg for help in liberating the captive settlement. General Winchester relented and sent a detachment of Kentucky Volunteer Militia to the River Raisin on January 18, 1813. A force of roughly 650 soldiers, plus 100 local militia members and citizens of River Raisin, faced off against sixty-three or so Canadian Militia and 200 Native Warriors. With the numbers on their side, the Americans handily won the battle on January 18. But the retaliatory battle on January 22, was an entirely different story.



*"Battle of the River Raisin" by Tim Kurtz  
Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

Rumors abounded throughout the settlement of a counterattack being imminent. General James Winchester was not convinced and thought he had more time to prepare for the counterattack. On January 22, he still had the bulk of the ammunition stores sitting at his headquarters,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile across the river from his troops at Francios Navarre's house. Unfortunately for him, the rumors were true and just before dawn on January 22, the British and the Native Confederation launched their counterattack.



*"Frenchtown Bound" by Fran Maedel*  
Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park

The 650 or so Kentucky Volunteer Militia were encamped in the yards of the villagers behind puncheon fences, which proved to be a good barrier for defense. Approximately 250 regular army soldiers, composed of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry, were encamped about 300-400 yards to the right in an open field with no breastworks for protection. They were like sitting ducks ready to be picked off.

Just before daybreak on January 22, one of the few American sentries out that morning heard some noise, upon investigation he was stunned to see the British were coming. He responded by quickly firing off his musket and managed to hit the lead grenadier. By this time, the volunteer Kentuckians were preparing for the onslaught. The British launched their attack in full force with around 595 Regulars and Canadian Militia, plus 800+ Native Warriors. *"This was one of the largest and most diverse assemblages of*



*American Indian warriors in the entire war.*”<sup>2</sup> On the right flank the U.S. infantry were scrambling as they quickly found themselves surrounded by many Native Warriors along with their Canadian Essex militia allies. The men put up a fight as best they could, but about 200 reinforcements had to be called in from the left to try and help hold the lines.



*“Behind the Picket” by Catherine Rehbein  
Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

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<sup>2</sup> Spence, Mark David. *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground: The River Raisin, The War of 1812, and the Course of North American History. A Historic Resource Study of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, Michigan*. Omaha: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 2019, p.231.



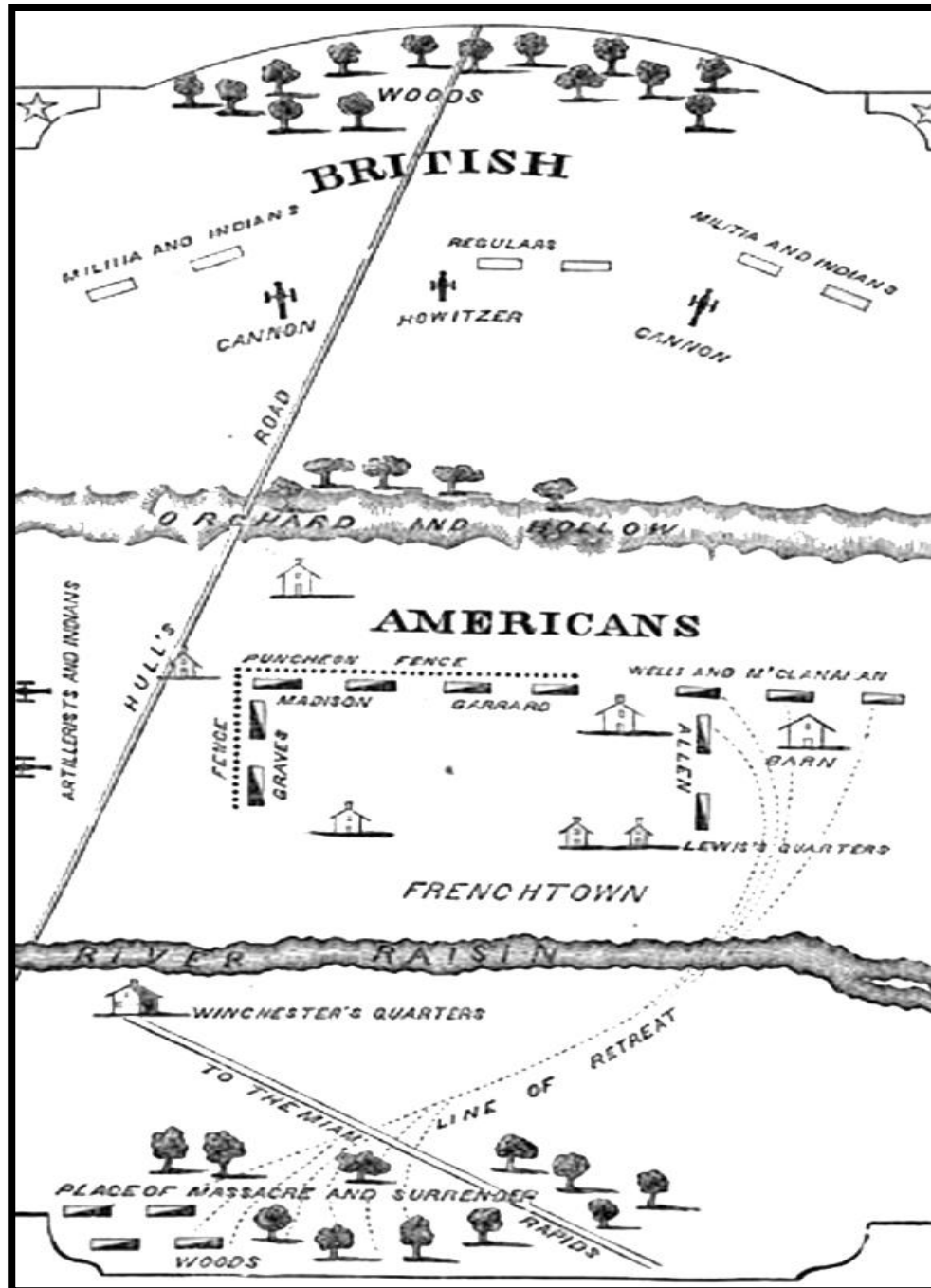


Figure 1.1: "Boestler Map of the Battle of the River Raisin." This is from a sketch sent to Colonel William H. Winder by Lieutenant Colonel Boerstler, in a letter dated "Buffalo, 17th February, 1818. I send you a hasty sketch of the situation of the troops at Frenchtown."

*Lossing, Benson J. Pictorial Fieldbook of War of 1812: or, illustrations, by pen and pencil, of the history, biography, scenery, relics, and traditions of the last war for American Independence. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1868.*



General Winchester's Headquarters, Colonel Francois Navarre home  
*"First Log Cabin Built Along the River Raisin"* by Irene Kuehnlein  
 Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park

Meanwhile back at his headquarters in Francois Navarre's house, General Winchester did not realize the battle had commenced until he heard the cannon fire. He frantically grabbed Francois' horse in an effort to get to his men, but by the time he got there, they were already desperately fleeing across the frozen river. He tried to rally them to take a stand, but chaos ensued. In the end, the right flank fell within twenty minutes. About 400 soldiers, a few officers, and General Winchester were caught up in the retreat. Fleeing along Hull's Road to the south, most were caught relatively quickly.

*Their efforts to make a final stand, flee, or bargain for their lives usually ended with the same fatal result. Native Warriors were not in a position to safely hold many prisoners, nor were they disposed to spare the lives of men who would kill them at the first chance. Moreover, they were expected to atone for the deaths and destruction their communities had suffered over the past few months and years at the hands of people with whom many had been in conflict for generations. This sentiment was particularly acute among the Bode'wadmi [Pottawatomie] and Myaamia [Miami] whose villages had been attacked just a month before—perhaps by some of the very same men that were now running, fighting, and begging for their lives. In short, the Kentuckians and the U.S. regulars... were in the hands of the 'ancient enemy' they sought to destroy—and wished to destroy them. Most were killed outright, which accounts for the high death toll and relatively low number of wounded and captured from*

this part of the battle.<sup>3</sup>



*"A view of Winchester in North America - dedicated to Mr. President Mad I Son!!"  
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Cartoon Prints, British*

A few officers and General Winchester made it about three miles only to be surrounded. The General was stripped, mocked, and taken to Colonel Henry Proctor, who convinced

him to recommend  
surrender to the rest of  
the army or face the  
consequences.



*"No Gift of a Grave" by  
Catherine Rehbein*

*Courtesy of the River Raisin  
National Battlefield Park*

<sup>3</sup> Spence, Mark David. *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground*. p.236.

The Kentucky Volunteer Militia in the fenced area in the center of the line, actually held their own and managed to repel frontal assaults by the British 41<sup>st</sup> Regiment-of-foot three times.<sup>4</sup> When a white flag suddenly appeared, they thought the British were surrendering. Imagine their surprise when they read Winchester's letter recommending they throw down their arms and give up. Those men who could walk, along with General Winchester, were marched off to Fort Amherstburg in Malden, Canada<sup>5</sup>. The soldiers who were too injured to make the march were left behind in the homes of River Raisin and promised sleighs to take them out the next morning.

On the morning of January 23, it was not the sleighs that came back, but the Native Warriors. The incident that morning has since been referred to by some as the "River Raisin Massacre" by the American's. The seriously wounded were killed or left in the houses to perish as they were set afire. Others were taken prisoner by the Native Warriors and brought to Detroit where they were ransomed. And still a few others were adopted into the tribes. The events of January 23 went on to feed American war-time propaganda and led to the rallying cry "Remember the Raisin."

The bad blood between the Kentuckians, whom the Native Nations called the Long Knives, and the Ingenious peoples actually goes back to the Revolutionary War. Moreover, recent attacks by the Long Knives on the Potawatomi and Miami villages just a few months earlier and the treatment of the Kentuckians to the dead Confederacy Warriors after the battle on January 18, attributed to the incident that morning.<sup>6</sup>

At a council meeting with the British in 1813, Odawa war chief Blackbird expressed,

*Last year at Chicago and St. Joseph's the Big Knives....did not allow our dead to rest. They dug up their graves, and the bones of our ancestors were thrown away and we could never find them to return them to the ground....If the Big Knives, after they kill people of our color, leave them without hacking them to pieces, we will follow their example. They have themselves to blame. The way they treat our killed, and the remains of those that are in their graves in the west, makes our people mad when they meet the Big Knives. Whenever they get any of our people into their hands, they cut them like meat into small pieces....They ought to show us a better example. We do not disturb their dead.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Au, Dennis. *War on the Raisin*. Monroe: Monroe County Historical Commission, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> According to Ralph Naveaux, Although American accounts often used the two names interchangeably, the names were technically reversed from what they are today. That is, Fort Amherstburg was located at Malden. After the British retreated from the area in the fall of 1813, the Americans rebuilt and reoccupied the fort, officially naming it Fort Malden. The town was then called Amherstburg, as it is today.

<sup>6</sup> Spence, Mark David. *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground*. p.244.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/articles/burial-practices.htm>



The actions of the Native Warriors on January 23 “*was directly tied to recent violations of Native moral codes.*”<sup>8</sup> On January 30, 1815, John Strachan wrote a long letter to Thomas Jefferson in which he makes a mention of this: “*The American troops under General Winchester killed an Indian in a skirmish near the River Au Raisin, on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1813, and tore him literal[l]y into pieces, which so exasperated the Indians that they refused burial to the Americans killed on the 22d.*”<sup>9</sup> Because of this treatment on January 18, the Native Warriors were not able to recover some of their dead left in pieces in the woods north of the battlefield.<sup>10</sup> “*Traces of blood were also found along the paths taken by retreating American Indians.*”<sup>11</sup>



“*Massacre of the American prisoners, at French-town, on the River Raisin, by the savages under the command of the British Genl. Proctor, January 23<sup>d</sup>, 1813*”  
 Courtesy of William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan

The tables were turned on January 23, the actions of the Native Warriors served as a warning to the inhabitants of the River Raisin as well as any reinforcing American troops. “*This was primarily about affecting the afterlife of the vanquished. Habitants were*

<sup>8</sup> Spence, Mark David. *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground.* p.246.

<sup>9</sup> Naveaux, Ralph. *Invaded on All Sides: The Story of Michigan's Greatest Battlefield Scene of Engagements at Frenchtown and the River Raisin in the War of 1812.* Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 2008, p.243; Letter written from John Strachan to Thomas Jefferson, January 30 1815: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-08-02-0184>.

<sup>10</sup> River Raisin NBP archives, Ralph Naveaux Collection, from random references compiled June 6 22 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Spence, Mark David. *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground.* p.229.

*threatened against burying the bodies so that the violated corpses remained in the open to be picked over and scattered by animals, without the rites of burial and the ceremonies that would bring peace to the dead or their communities”<sup>12</sup>*

*“1968 Georgetown, KY marker”*

*Courtesy of Dennis Au*

At that time the commander of the American forces in the Old Northwest, General William Henry Harrison, considered the Battle of the River Raisin a “national calamity.” Later when he became President of the United States, he declared it a monumental disaster.



The Americans had their chance to exact revenge at the Battle of the Thames in the fall of 1813. When the American forces were starting to falter, “Remember the Raisin” was uttered for the first time and became a rallying cry for future entanglements of the War and a propaganda vehicle to entice more Americans to join the war effort. Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh was killed at the Thames, and the Confederation was dealt a death blow. President Harrison’s grave marker sums it up for the Americans, carved into the granite are the words, “Avenger of the River Raisin.”

Unfortunately for the Native Nations however, the Battles of the River Raisin just reinforced the notion that they were a force to be reckoned with and definitely an impediment to manifest destiny. “The magnitude of U.S. losses on the River Raisin was not a strike against the war effort, but an affirmation of the need to fulfill Thomas Jefferson’s vow that, ‘In war, they [the Natives] will kill some of us; we shall destroy all of them.’”<sup>13</sup> Native American relocation in the Northwest Territory started much earlier than even the Cherokee Trail of Tears and is still being reckoned with today.

<sup>12</sup> Spence, Mark David. *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground*. p.245.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.240-1.



## Chapter Two

### The Aftermath



*"Unguarded Overture" by Catherine Rehbein*

*Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

There were approximately 300 or so bodies left strewn on the battlefield north and south of the River Raisin. Areas south extended to roughly Plum Creek, and to the north bodies lay along the trail to Detroit; these were prisoners killed by the British and Native Warriors.

Since the battle on January 18 was an American victory, the first burials of the casualties we hear about concern the bodies of Kentuckians buried January 19, only one day after the battle. A hundred soldiers were given the task of gathering the stripped and scalped corpses and burying them in a mass grave.

Joseph Clark of Frankfort, Kentucky, who was one of those burying the dead, said *"All the men 13 in number were...brought to the village and decently buried,"*<sup>14</sup> The Native Nations possibly left ten to fifteen dead on the field as well, of which the Kentuckians mutilated while gathering their dead.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Clift, G. Glenn. *Remember the Raisin!* Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1961, pp.56-7.

<sup>15</sup> Naveaux, Ralph. *Captain Hart's Jawbone: A Study of the Disposition of the American Dead from the Battle of the River Raisin.* Monroe, MI: Monroe County Historical Commission, 1993, p.3.

The battle on January 22-23 was an entirely different story than the battle of January 18, with the Native Confederation and their British allies scoring a huge victory. The soldiers left alive were marched off to Fort Amherstburg the same day. The British promised to return on January 23, to gather the bodies of the Americans but that never happened.



*"Frenchtown Ribbon Farms" by Mary Calloway  
Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

As we discussed in chapter one, the citizens of River Raisin were also not allowed to bury the dead, because the bodies lying about served as a warning to others that might come into the area. Overall, the Native Americans denying burial of the soldiers *"was primarily about affecting the afterlives of the vanquished."*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Spence, Mark David. *Native Ground, Middle Ground, Battle Ground*. p.245.



Thus the *Habitants* were faced with corpses lying all over the trailways, in their yards, on their doorsteps, and even in their houses, some of which were burned down. They had to find creative ways to hide the bodies of their loved ones, friends, etc. until they had time to bury them. This could only be done under the cover of darkness and some of the methods used for a makeshift grave were hollow trees, storage pits, cellars, chimneys and the like.

After the battles, Gabriel Godfroy Jr. gathered the bodies left in his house and buried them in a trench along the river, according to Elizabeth Ann Godfroy in 1843.<sup>17</sup>

Kentuckian Elias Darnell became a prisoner of the Native Warriors on January 23, and as he was being lead north, he observed: *“The road was, for miles, strewed with mangled bodies; and all of them were left like those slain in battle on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, for the birds and the beasts to tear into pieces and devour.”*<sup>18</sup>

*Extract from the report of Ensign Isaac L. Baker, agent for the prisoners taken after the battle of Frenchtown, January 22d, 1813, to Brigadier General Winchester, dated British Niagara, February 26, 1813:*

*The dead of our army are still denied the rights of sepulture. At the time I left Sandwich, I was told the hogs were eating them. A gentleman told me he had seen them running about with skulls, arms, legs and other parts of the human system in their mouths. The French people on the Raisin buried Captains Hart, Woolfolk and some others, but it was more than their lives were worth to have been caught paying this last customed tribute to mortality.*

*I several times agitated the subject of burying the dead, when in company with the British officers, but they always answered, that the Indians would not suffer it.*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Naveaux. *Captain Hart's Jawbone*, p.5.

<sup>18</sup> Darnell, Elias. *Journal*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Company, 1854.

<sup>19</sup> Baker, Isaac L., February 26 1813, *Barbarities of the Enemy, Exposed in a Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives, and the Documents accompanying said Report*. Troy: Francis Adancourt, 1813, p.135.

No. XXIX.

*I certify, that the bodies of the Americans killed at the battle of la Rivière aux Raisins, of the 22d of January last, remained unburied, and that I have seen the hogs and dogs eating them.*

*The hogs appeared to be rendered mad by so profuse a diet of Christian flesh.*

*I saw the houses of Mr. Jerome and Mr. Godfroy on fire, and have heard that there were prisoners in them.*

*The inhabitants did not dare to bury the dead, on account of the Indians. The inhabitants have been threatened by the Indians, if they did not take up arms against the Americans.*

ALEXIS LABAIDE  
Michigan, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1813.<sup>20</sup>

Francis Delye (Deloeuil) was seven years old when he accompanied his father to the battlefield to help gather the dead. Francis' father was a blacksmith on the River Raisin and served in the War of 1812. At ninety-nine years and having a very vivid memory, Francis recalled what it was like that day: "*It was the most horrible sight I ever saw, and even I should live another 100 years, I do not think I would see its equal....In gullies along the river the dead lay fifteen high. In certain spots the blood was three feet deep.*" He also related that he went back a little later with a group of young boys to jeer at the English as they passed by. Suddenly an English captain fired into the group actually hitting him in the eye, leaving him with only one eye the rest of his life. Incidentally he placed the incidents on January 23, 1813. But the British were not present that day, so the date must have been January 22.<sup>21</sup>

Even a year later in 1814, Samuel Brown visited the battlefield and said, "*The bones of our countrymen were still bleaching in the air.*"<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Labadie, Alexis, February 6 1813, *Barbarities of the Enemy, Exposed in a Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives, and the Documents accompanying said Report*. Troy: Francis Adancourt, 1813, p.131.

<sup>21</sup> "Saw the River Raisin Massacre: Francis Delye, Venerable Resident of Monroe, Has Distinct recollection of that Bloody Event," *Detroit Free Press*, February 23 1905, DFP-PQ.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, Samuel R. *The Campaigns of the Northwestern Army*. Philadelphia: Griggs & Dickinsons, 1815, p.149.

## Chapter Three

### Captain Hart?

Although we are not going to chronicle what happened to each individual soldier, we are going to visit the story of the well-known Captain Nathaniel Gray Smith Hart who was Captain of the Lexington Light Infantry, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Regiment. He was brother-in-law to the famous Kentucky Senator - Henry Clay. Hart's story serves as a good microcosm of the whole story of the remains, and we will revisit his saga later as well.

Captain Hart was wounded in the battle on January 22, 1813 in the ankle or leg. He was too injured to make the march to Malden after the battle and was one of the Kentuckians left at River Raisin under the care of Doctor John Todd, who incidentally was Mary Todd Lincoln's uncle.

Author and historian Ralph Naveaux found numerous differing accounts of what happened to Hart on January 23, given by several eyewitnesses. Although we are not going to look at each and every one of them, we are going to look at a few. What is important to note is where he was killed, whether it was on Hulls Road to Detroit, or in the area of the battlefield. We also need to pay attention to where he was buried. Even though these details might seem trivial at first, they will in fact prove to be very important.

First let us set the scene. Dr. Gustavus Miller Bower, surgeon's mate of the 5<sup>th</sup> Kentucky regiment, was present in the house where Captain Hart was recuperating on January 22. Bower said he observed British Captain Matthew Elliott talking with Hart. Hart introduced Elliott to him as an old schoolmate. Elliott told Hart he would send a sleigh for him the next day and he would be taken to Malden and the best of Amherstburg would be at his command. After midnight a man by the name of Megs came in and said he overheard the Native Warriors saying everyone was to be killed the next morning. Turns out he was right. On the morning of January 23, the last Bower saw of Hart was on his horse telling a Native American that he would pay him to take him to Malden.<sup>23</sup>

Private Albert Ammerman was being marched off towards Brownstown, about a half a mile from the River Raisin, when he saw two Native Americans arguing over \$100 that Captain Hart had given one of them to escort him to Malden. The argument got heated and the Native Warriors threatened to shoot each other. And just as quick as the argument escalated, it cooled down and they both lowered their rifles and turned back towards Hart.

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<sup>23</sup> Bower, Gustavus M. April 24 1813, *Barbarities of the Enemy, Exposed in a Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives, and the Documents accompanying said Report*. Troy: Francis Adancourt, 1813, pp.139-141.

Suddenly they grabbed Hart and pulled him off his horse, knocked him down with a war club, scalped, tomahawked and stripped him leaving him on the ground.<sup>24</sup>

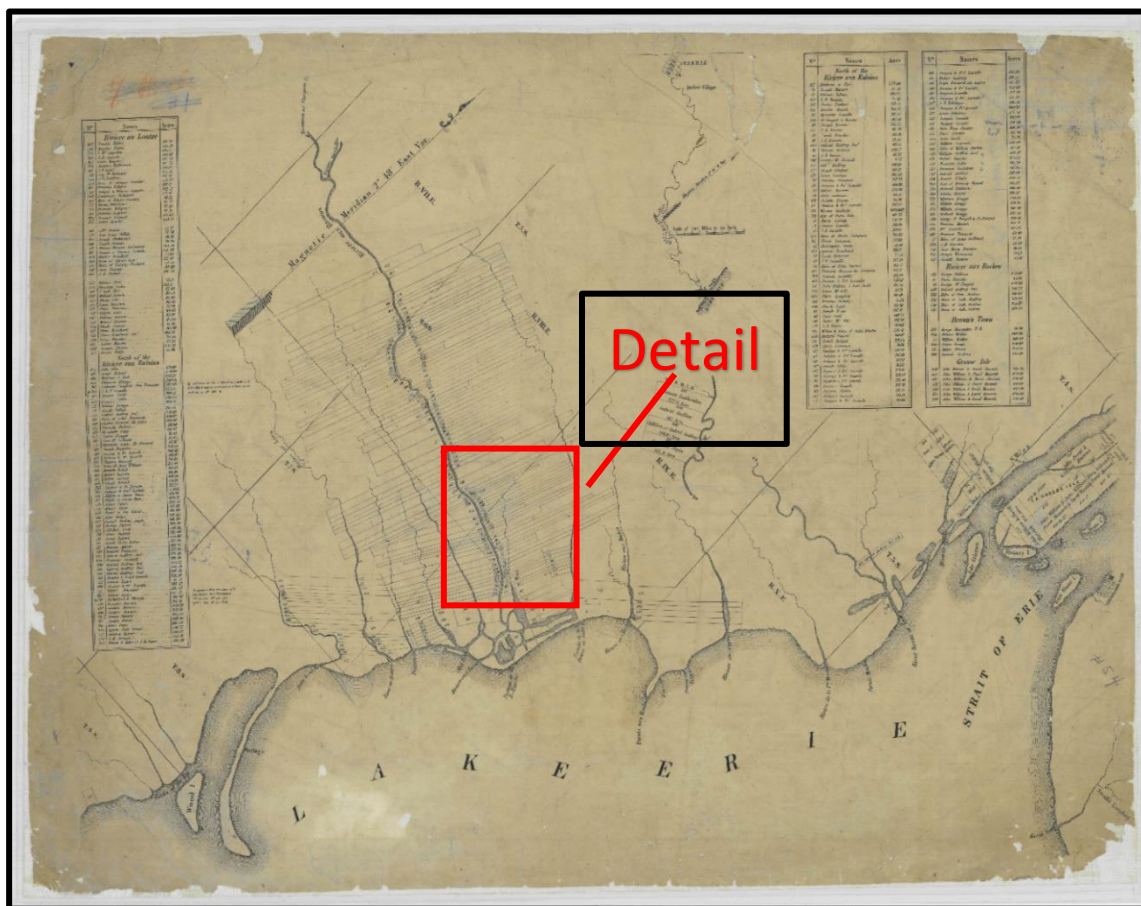
In his book, *Invaded on All Sides*, Ralph Naveaux relates yet another account that says resident Medard Couture offered a Potawatomi by the name of Osamed, \$100 to escort Hart safely to Detroit. Osamed gave Hart a blanket and some socks and put him on his own horse as his prisoner and they headed off north. When Hart was next seen, there were two Native Warriors fighting over him, a Potawatomi and a Wyandot. Just like the first account, they argued then turned their attention back to Hart. Then suddenly the Wyandot shot Hart in the chest. He was knocked off his horse with a war club, tomahawked, scalped, stripped and left lying in the road. Under the cover of darkness Couture and another resident, Charles Chovin, took up the body of Hart and laid it at the base of a tree where the roots had formed a hollow out. They covered it with bark and hoped to bury the body better when the opportunity arose.<sup>25</sup>

These accounts are almost exactly alike. In all of them, Hart is heading north along the Hull Road, but there is no mention of what happened to the body or if it was ever buried properly or not. Let us examine the following accounts - which are much different.

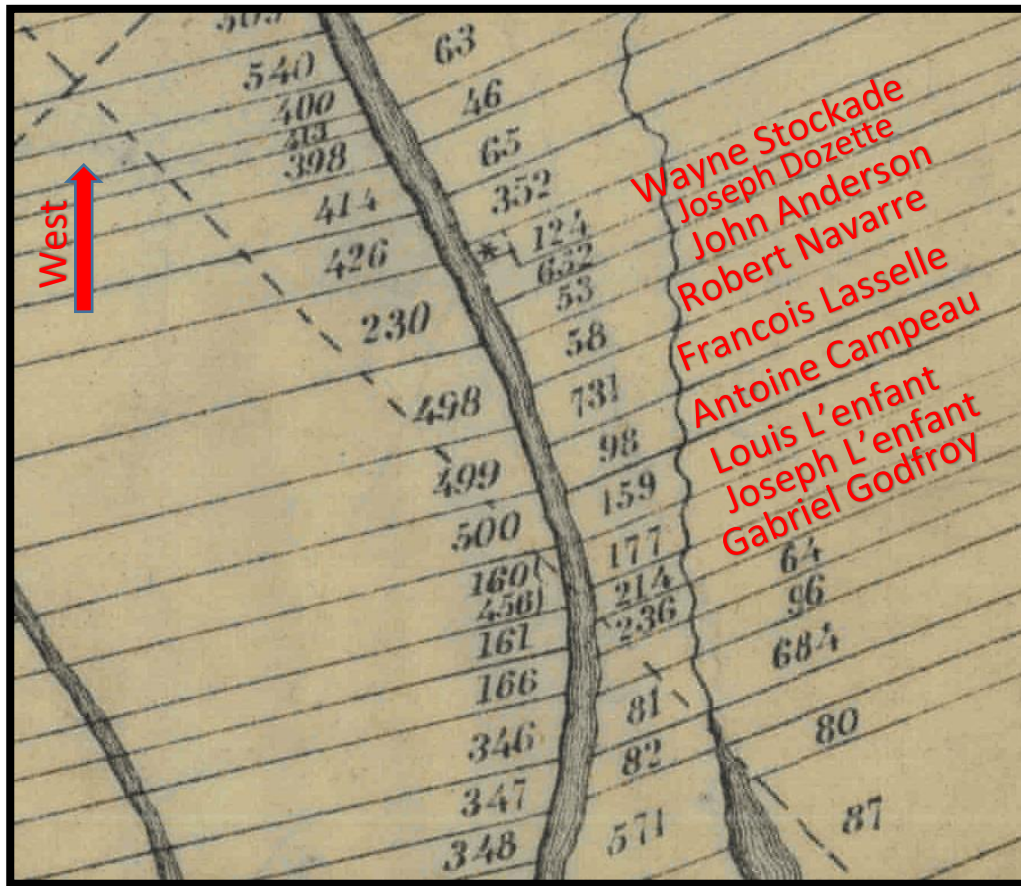
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<sup>24</sup> Ammerman, Albert, April 21 1813, *Barbarities of the Enemy, Exposed in a Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives, and the Documents accompanying said Report*. Troy: Francis Adancourt, 1813, pp.148-50.

<sup>25</sup> Naveaux. *Invaded on All Sides*. pp.230-1,244. Note, Chovin is also referred to as Shovin.



**Figure 3.1: “Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory, As Surveyed by Aaron Greeley, Surveyor, in 1810.”** This map details property claims on the River Raisin. *Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan*



**Figure 3.2: Detail of “Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory, As Surveyed by Aaron Greeley, Surveyor, in 1810.”** This map details property claims on the River Raisin.  
*Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan*

In the 1818 narrative of Philip Lecuyer, Hart was taken prisoner by a Potawatomi who planned to escort him to Malden. Hart mounted his horse, and the Native Warrior led him westerly up the river. At Antoine Campeau’s house, the Warrior went in and motioned for him to continue. Hart continued to Francois Lasselle’s house and entreated him to save him, but Lasselle said he could not, because five Delaware’s have taken possession of his house. He should go to his brother Jacques’ instead.

Unfortunately for Hart, he never made it that far. The very next house was full of Native Americans and as soon as they caught sight of him, one shot him in the chest and another tomahawked and scalped him. His body laid on that spot for two days, until finally under

the cover of darkness, Captain Hubert LaCroix, Lasselle and Chovin scoped out a suitable resting place for Hart and placed his remains in a grave.<sup>26</sup>

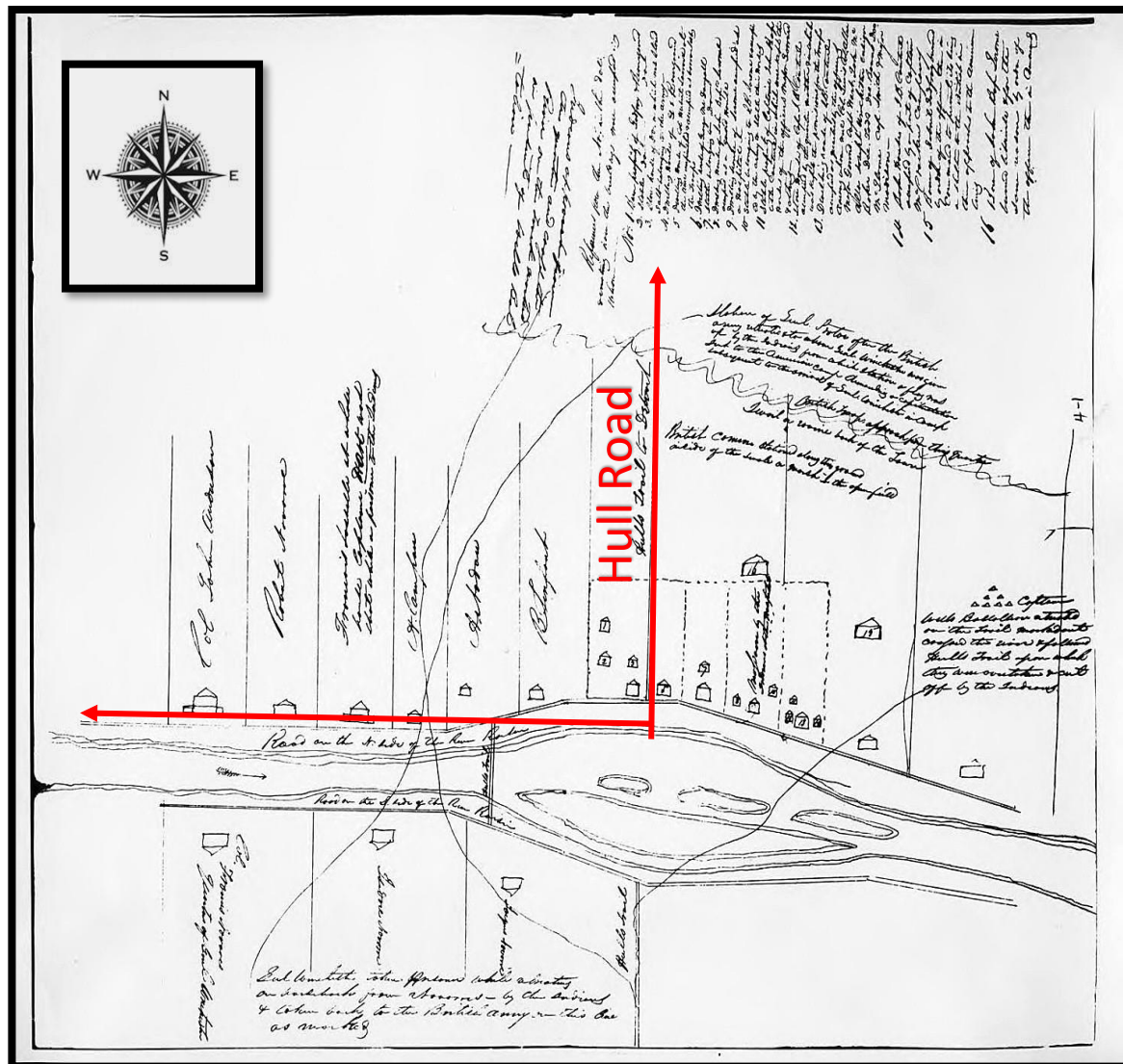
Local resident and battle participant Laurent Durocher had a little different take on the story. He says Hart was taken prisoner by a Potawatomi, who later claimed he intended to save the captain from harm. In any case the story starts out the same until Hart reaches Lasselle's house, here he was once again taken over by the Potawatomi, and they continued down the road. When they ran into the five Native Americans at the next house, the Warriors yelled for the Potawatomi to come in. When he left Captain Hart to head in, one of the Delawares suddenly shot Hart in the chest. Another Delaware ran out tomahawked, scalped, and stripped him leaving him in the road. The Potawatomi guide was furious and threatened to kill the shooter, but the others stopped him. That night Ruland, and some others, put the body in a potato pit and covered it up until the following night. The next night, Chovin, Campau and St. Cosme dug a grave on Robert Navarre's farm and placed a carpet over the body and buried it.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> "Miscellaneous Documents: P. Lecuyer." *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*. Vol. VIII, Lansing: Thorp & Godfrey, 1886, pp.646-47.

<sup>27</sup> "Judge Durocher's Narrative of Captain Hart's Massacre," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*, Vol. VIII, pp.644-46; *The Observer*, July 22 1950.





**Figure 3.3: Detail from “Original map drawn by Colonel John Anderson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Territorial Militia in 1813.”**

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

Both of these narratives are very similar with only a few details separating them. Both have Hart getting buried somewhere in the vicinity of where he fell, westerly up the river. If he was buried at the Navarre farm that is even a little further west. Thus, as Ralph Naveaux pointed out in his article entitled *Captain Hart's Jawbone*, there are two possibilities here. Hart was buried either north of the battlefield, or to the west of it. Yet our purpose is not to give a definitive answer as to which account is correct, but to consider if any of them were.

On January 23, local resident Antoine Boulard, saw a soldier killed in front of his house. The soldier had been taken prisoner and placed on a horse because of his wound, but



soon after he was shot by a Native Warrior, then another Warrior struck him with a sabre, scalped and stripped him and his body left on the road. His body lay on the road for two days and was partially eaten by wild hogs. Boulard, Lasselle, LaCroix, Chovin and Louis Lajoie finally recovered the body under the cover of darkness and managed to carry it into a field by the woods, but left it unburied for fear of the Native Americans.<sup>28</sup>

Louis Bernard dit Lajoie corroborates Boulard's story but gives a few more details saying there were six to eight Warriors by the house. Also, when they removed the body to the field, they covered it with branches.<sup>29</sup>

Ensign Isaac Baker said this soldier was wounded in two places and took up respite in one of the houses. But on January 23, was dragged away to Lasselle's house. The soldier offered \$1000 to anyone who would rescue him. Lasselle directed him to his brother's house, but the soldier did not make it there, he was shot in the head by another Native Warrior.<sup>30</sup>

So, in looking at these accounts about a soldier, we can see they are eerily similar to the ones about Hart when he was taken in a westerly direction. But there is a big problem here – these accounts are not referring to Captain Hart, but General Winchester's secretary, Captain John Woolfolk.

Sometime after the battles, a man from Lexington, Kentucky showed up at the River Raisin inquiring about the remains of Captain Hart. He was led to the grave on Robert Navarre's farm. The man, who was a friend of Hart's, dug up the grave exposing a skeleton. He proceeded to remove the lower jawbone and then reburied the remains.<sup>31</sup>

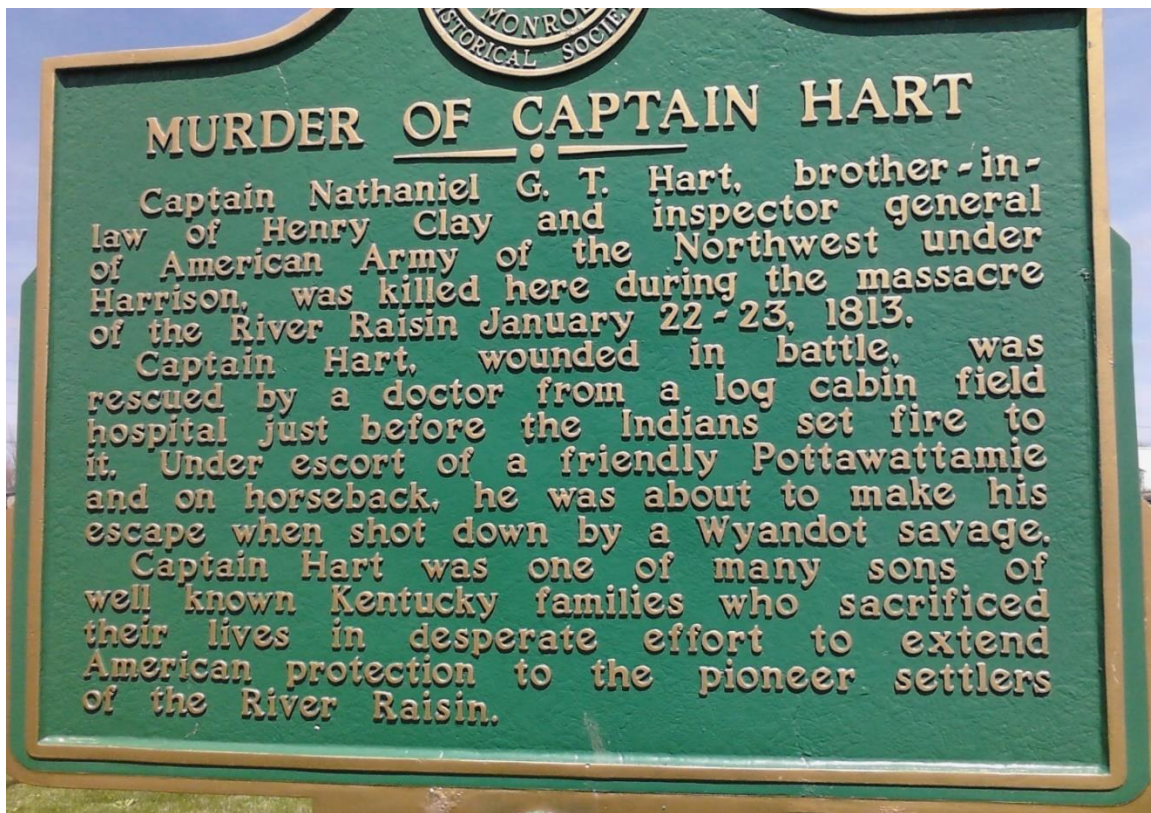
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<sup>28</sup> Boulard, Antoine, February 5 1813, *Barbarities of the Enemy, Exposed in a Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives, and the Documents accompanying said Report*. Troy: Francis Adancourt, 1813, p.129-30.

<sup>29</sup> Lajoie, Louis, February 5 1813, *Barbarities of the Enemy, Exposed in a Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives, and the Documents accompanying said Report*. Troy: Francis Adancourt, 1813, p.130.

<sup>30</sup> Baker. *Barbarities of the Enemy*. 1813, p.135.

<sup>31</sup> Naveaux. *Captain Hart's Jawbone*. p.1.



*"Murder of Captain Hart" Historical Marker, Monroe  
Courtesy of Rusty Davis*

In the 1950's historical markers were put up in Monroe to commemorate the battles and mark the spots of certain events, including the death of Captain Hart. Then around 1987, author and historian Dennis Au was asked to create a War of 1812 historical marker tour. Seven to eight new markers were created, including one for Woolfolk. But when researching the accounts for Woolfolk, Dennis Au discovered the discrepancies between the accounts and reasoned that Ammerman's account of what happened to Captain Hart was more logical than the local's accounts, because he was from Kentucky and knew Captain Hart, whereas the locals did not. Considering this, Dennis concluded that the locals confused the two men.<sup>32</sup>

Previously the marker for Hart was put at the 431 East Elm Avenue, which is west of the battlefield. But because of Dennis' discovery and going by Ammerman's account, it was moved north to where Carter Lumber is today at 850 North Dixie Highway. The new one created for Woolfolk was put in its place at Elm Avenue.

Thus, if it was Woolfolk killed on Elm, then it would follow he was the one buried on Navarre's farm. In that case, the jawbone belongs to him and not Hart, or it could be someone else's entirely. But we must remember that the locals believe they have the location of Captain Hart's body at 431 Elm Avenue, this is very important as we shall see a few chapters from now.

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<sup>32</sup> Dennis Au attributed more accuracy to Ammerman's statement because it was written on April 21, 1813, whereas Durocher's account was dated from 1858.



*"Death of Capt. Woolfolk" Historical Marker, Monroe  
Courtesy of Author*



## Chapter Four

### The French *Habitants*



*"They Kept Running" by Catherine Rehbein  
Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

Let us look at what happened to the local *habitants* of the River Raisin in the battles, and what ultimately happened to their remains. There were no women or children killed in the battles, although many were present, but there were some male *habitants* that were not so lucky. After the battle on January 18, some Native Americans were passing through Sandy Creek, a settlement of about sixteen farms north of the River Raisin. There they encountered *habitant* Jean-Baptiste Solo, who shouted out to them asking them if they were running away from the "*Big Knives*"? (Kentuckians). One answered back with a gun shot that mortally wounded Solo. He staggered to the house of his father-in-law, Rene' LeBeau. The Native Americans followed and ended up killing Rene' as well. Rene's two youngest children made a break for it - running two and a half miles all the way to the River Raisin. Just as dawn broke, they met up with their older brother

Etienne, who also fled. The local residents formed a rescue party to get everyone out of Sandy Creek, including the bodies of Lebeau and Solo. They took the bodies by sleigh to the rectory building at St. Antoine's Catholic Church, three miles west of the battlefield, where burial preparations were made for internment on January 21.<sup>33</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Couture, captain in the local militia, and his son Medard, found themselves getting caught up in the retreat on January 22. Jean Baptiste ended up getting killed in the crossfire of bullets. As soon as he was able, Medard ran back to get his father's body. He carried it a half mile back to their house and hid it in a straw stack, planning to bury it as soon as night fell. It would take until 1823, for a proper burial at St. Antoine's however.<sup>34</sup>

Another *habitant*, Henri Shovin Jr. (Chovin) was killed on January 22 and his body lay in the road the entire day. After night fall Henri Shovin and Medard Couture retrieved it and placed it in Shovin's cellar. Eventually Henri Jr. was buried at St. Antoine's.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Naveaux. *Invasion on All Sides*, pp.128-9.

<sup>34</sup> Naveaux. *Invasion on All Sides*. p.170.

<sup>35</sup> Naveaux. *Invasion on All Sides*. p.243.



St. Antoine's was the predecessor to modern day St. Mary's Catholic Church of Monroe (Elm Avenue and Monroe Street) St. Antoine's was the first organized church at Rivière au Raisin, founded on October 15, 1788, by the French-Canadian settlers and the Catholic Archdiocese of Quebec. It was located on North Custer Road (today) and had a cemetery. The cemetery was first used in 1795.

*"St. Antoine's"*  
*Courtesy of Author*

As we have seen local victims of the battle, Lebeau, Solo, Couture and Shovin Jr., were buried there. By 1821, the cemetery was already filled to capacity. Unfortunately, burials were continued by bringing in dirt and establishing a second layer of ground over the first burials, thus burying people on top each other. Finally, in 1829 the cemetery was abandoned. The property was eventually sold and became farmland for almost a century.



On May 22, 1959 a granite monument with a cut out cross in the middle was dedicated to mark the site of the first church. In the 1980s Dennis Au used historical records to document the general location of the cemetery and proceeded to have it registered as an archeological site.

Yet, it seems the community forgot about the cemetery over the years, because in 1999 everyone was shocked when construction of a subdivision on North Custer Road turned up not only dirt, but a number of graves. The developer then hired Midwest Environmental Consultants, Inc. to assess just what the impact might be. Archeologist William Rutter and Dr. G. Michael Pratt worked to expose the human coffin burials. Turns out many of the graves were actually disturbed beforehand as remnants of coffins turned up with skeletal material on them. Some graves were less than two feet deep, and the human remains had evidence of plow scars. All in all, 45 burials were discovered before it was over, but it was thought there could possibly be up to 500. Through the efforts of the newly formed Friends of St. Antoine non-profit group, and the county and city of Monroe, the land was purchased where the cemetery was, and the graves were once again covered over in a public ceremony. The following year a new memorial was placed on the cemetery grounds.<sup>36</sup>

“St. Antoine’s”  
Courtesy of Author



<sup>36</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/20mr229/st-antoine-parish-1788-1845>; Rutter, William E. *An Archaeological Investigation of Lots 1 and 2 Riverside Estate Plat: Part of the former St. Antoine's Catholic Church Cemetery, City of Monroe, Monroe County Michigan*. Dearborn: Midwest Environmental Consultants, Inc., 2000; Au, Dennis M. *Maps and Archaeology: The French Colonial Settlement Pattern to the River Raisin Community in Southeastern Michigan*. Monroe: Monroe County Historical Commission 1991, Addenda 2012-13; Tucker, Patrick M. "Saint Anthony's Parish on the River Raisin, 1788-1845: The Recovery of Monroe's Lost Pioneer Cemetery." *Catholic Cemetery*, Vol. 56, number 8, August 2017, pp.21-25.



## Chapter Five

### First Mass Interments

As we have previously seen, the soldiers were left where they lay or scattered about by wild animals. It was not until June 1813, six months after the battle, that a detachment under Colonel Richard Mentor Johnson's Regiment of Mounted Infantry attempted to gather a few of the scattered remains into a mass grave.

Also, on the way to the Battle of the Thames on September 27<sup>th</sup>, Johnson's regiment stopped once again to hastily bury some of the bodies that had been re-exposed. Captain Robert B. McAfee wrote of the experience:

*On the second day [September 27] they reached the river Raisin. Frenchtown was generally abandoned, only a few French families remaining in it. The fine orchards of peach and apple trees were loaded with excellent fruit. The bones of the massacred Kentuckians were scattered over the plains for three miles on this side of the river. The detachment which had visited that place under Colonel Johnson in June, had collected and buried a great many of them, but they were now torn up and scattered over the fields again. The sight had a powerful effect on the feelings of the men. The wounds inflicted by that barbarous transaction were again torn open. The bleaching bones still appealed to heaven, and called on Kentucky to avenge this outrage on humanity. We had heard the scene described before – we now witnessed it, in these impressive memorials. The feelings they excited cannot be described by me – but they will never be forgotten – nor while there is a recording angel in heaven, or a historian upon earth, will the tragedy of the river Raisin be suffered to sink into oblivion. Future generations will often ponder on this fatal field of blood, and the future inhabitants of Frenchtown will long point out to the curious traveler, the garden where the intrepid Madison for several hours maintained the unequal contest of four to one, and repulsed the bloody Proctor in every charge. Yonder is the wood, where the gallant Allen fell! Here the accomplished Hart and Woodfolk [sic Woolfolk] were butchered! There the brave Hickman was tomahawked and thrown into the flames! That is the spot where the lofty Simpson breathed his last! And a little further Doctors Montgomery, Davis, and M'Ilvain [sic], amiable in their manners and profound in science, fell in youth and left the sick to mourn their loss. The gallant Meade fell on the bank in battle, but his magnanimous Lieutenant Graves, was reserved for massacre; for a*

*massacre perpetrated by savages under the influence of British – a nation impiously styled ‘the bulwark of our religion.’<sup>37</sup>*

Author Glen Clift speculates that each time Johnson buried the bodies he was simply reburying those originally buried after the battle on January 19, because the Native Americans kept opening the graves and scattering the remains.<sup>38</sup>

Civil War Confederate Colonel Bennett Young, in a speech at the dedication of the Kentucky monument on September 1, 1904, retold the story of the visit to the River Raisin:

*As they approached this place they saw the bones of their massacred brothers scattered over the plains for three miles south of the river. Ninety days before Col Johnson had set a detachment to the battlefield which had collected and buried remains of many who had fallen on the fatal field. These interments, however, had been hasty, and the graves had been opened and bones scattered afresh over the land. This awful sight produced a tremendous effect on the hearts of the men....an Indian guide had taken them to the spot where Simpson had been put to death. His extraordinary height, six and a half feet, enabled his friends to identify his remains, and they were given honorable sepulture.<sup>39</sup>*

Local resident Colonel John Anderson was with Johnson’s regiment at the River Raisin and said,

*It was distressing to see the once flourishing and rich settlement abandoned by man and beast, the streets grown over with wild weeds and grass. When we came back to the fatal spot where those brave men was burned alive, every countenance was clothed in sorrow to see the bones amongst the ashes. One scalaton [sic] lay at the door step of I. B. Gearome’s late house...<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>37</sup> McAfee, Robert B. September 27 1813, *History of the Late War in the Western Country*. Bowling Green: O, Historical Publications Company, 1919, pp.408-9.

<sup>38</sup> Clift. *Remember the Raisin!* p.103.

<sup>39</sup> “River Raisin Massacre and Dedication of Monuments.” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*. Vol. 35, Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford, 1907, p.217.

<sup>40</sup> “A Short History of the Life of John Anderson,” *Michigan Historical Collections: John Anderson Papers* at the Monroe County Museum System Archives.



*"Battle of the Thames and the death of Tecumseh, by the Kentucky mounted volunteers led by Colonel Richard M. Johnson, 5th Oct. 1813," by William Emmons, circa 1792  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division*

After the victorious Battle of the Thames, the Americans under Governor Isaac Shelby managed to inter sixty-five bodies in a common grave when they stopped at the River Raisin. Colonel Simral wrote of the event of October 15, 1813 in his journal: *"We passed the River Raisin where the memorable defeat of Winchester took place. Great number of human skulls and bones were laid in different directions."*<sup>41</sup>

Major William Twigg wrote the *Frankfort Argus* newspaper on October 22, 1813 recounting that day:

*On the 15<sup>th</sup> we passed the river Raisin—over the field of battle at that place a scene was presented that will long be affecting to the sensibility of the Kentuckians—the unburied bones of our countrymen were everywhere to be seen! By the direction of our governor, Colonel Simral undertook the melancholy duty of interring the remains! By him and some others of the army, the remains of 65 were collected and buried in the best manner our*

<sup>41</sup> Quinsberry, A. C. *Kentucky in the War of 1812*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1969, p.106.

*situation would permit, with the customary honors of war. It is some consolation to think that they were buried by the hands that had first, in some degree, revenged their death.*<sup>42</sup>

Years after this, Captain William Church of Frankfort, Kentucky, claimed that he helped bury some of the soldiers that lay exposed, after he returned from the Battle of the Thames. He also said that he and his men gathered up sixteen soldiers and placed their remains in bags, mounted their horses, and carried the bags back home to Frankfort, Kentucky. Once they arrived in Kentucky, they buried them in a mass grave in the cemetery on Thorn Hill, the only cemetery there at the time. No marker was erected to mark the site, however. It is not known if they are still there, or if they were ever moved.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Clift. *Remember the Raisin!* pp.102-3; Collins, Richard H. *History of Kentucky*. Reprint, Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1966, p.3. Says the date was October 15.

<sup>43</sup> Trowbridge, John. M. *Remember the Raisin: In Search of the River Raisin Remains*. Frankfort: National Guard, 2004, updated 2013, p.3.

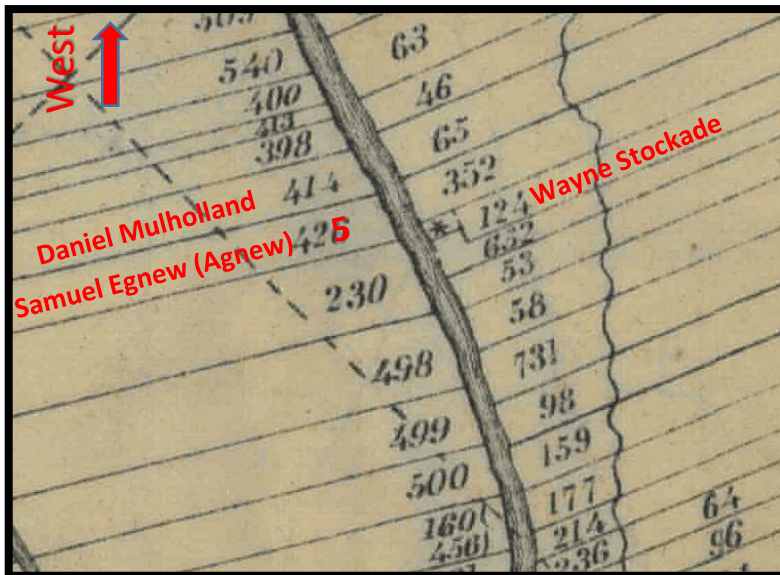
## Chapter Six

### Monroe's First Protestant Cemeteries

Around 1815, new River Raisin resident, War of 1812 veteran Captain Luther Harvey spent his 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday in unusual way - gathering bones from around the south side of the river, along with some other residents. They gathered enough to fill a large box and proceeded to bury them in a “*lot on Monroe Street.*”<sup>44</sup>

The phrase “*lot on Monroe Street*” has caused a lot of confusion. In fact, there were two cemeteries on Monroe Street and it is not entirely clear when one stopped being used and one started being used. It would appear that this is not a big issue, but throughout two centuries it certainly has proven to be, especially when we are considering the remains of the soldiers.

The first cemetery (which was largely forgotten over time) goes by the name of the Protestant Cemetery, District of Erie Protestant Cemetery, and Old Downtown Cemetery, and was established in 1810. It was located between Front and First Streets and bounded by Monroe Street to the east. The name “District of Erie” comes from Governor Hull who established the district in 1805. On July 14, 1817 Monroe county was established and shortly thereafter the City of Monroe on September 4, 1817.



**Figure 6.1: Detail of “Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory, As Surveyed by Aaron Greeley, Surveyor in 1810.”** This map details property claims on the River Raisin.

*Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan*

<sup>44</sup> Hubbard, Bela. “Memoir of Luther Harvey,” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*, Vol. 1, Lansing: W.S. George & Co., 1873, p.413.



Let us look at how this cemetery came to be. Samuel Egnew (Agnew) and Daniel Mulhollen (Samuel's son-in-law) came to the River Raisin in 1806 and in 1808. They purchased farmland at \$6 per acre that laid between Monroe and Smith Streets, bounded by the river and extending south to Plum Creek (basically comprising the first ward of the city of Monroe). The men then split the land into two parcels for themselves.<sup>45</sup> Samuel's plot contained 117.32 acres and was private claim #425,<sup>46</sup> although it was listed as plot #426 on Greely's 1810 map. Daniel's plot was #414, just west of Samuel's. Let us look at the excerpts taken from the American State Papers, detailing Samuel and Daniel's land claims in 1808:<sup>47, 48</sup>

**Samuel Egnew (Agnew):**

No. 425. SAMUEL EGNEW.—The board took into consideration the claim of Samuel Egnew to a tract of land, situate on the south side of river Raisins; and the notice by him filed this day was read in the words and figures following, to wit:

*To the Register of the Land Office at Detroit.*

DETROIT, December 3, 1808.

SIR: Please take notice that I claim title to a tract of land in the district of Detroit, situate, lying and heing on the south side of the river Raisins, containing, by estimation, — arpents, it being three and a half arpents in front by forty in depth, to the exception of a mill seat situate thereon, with about twelve acres of land claimed by Todd, Mc Gill. & Co., provided the said mill seat should be found thereon; this tract of three and a half arpents by forty is bounded in front by said river Raisins, in rear by unlocated lands, on the west by lands of Daniel Mulholand, and on the east by lands claimed by Colonel Anderson. I claim title by virtue of possession, occupancy, and improvements made thereon previous to 1796, and continued to this day.

SAMUEL EGNEW.

This tract contains, by estimation, — arpents, it being three and a half arpents in front by forty in depth,

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<sup>45</sup> Wing, Talcott E. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. New York: Munsell and Company, 1890, pp.40, 116-17, 120. (Please note Wing lists incorrect names on p.40, not Samuel Mulhollen or Jared Egnew)

<sup>46</sup> Davis, Rusty. Abstract of Title, property #425.

<sup>47</sup> "No. 425. Samuel Egnew, December 3, 1808," *American State Papers*, Series 8, Public Lands Vol. I, pp.401-2.

<sup>48</sup> "No. 414. Daniel Mulholand, December 3, 1808," *American State Papers*, Series 8, Public Lands Vol. I, p.399.

with an exception, as in the notice, bounded in front by river Raisins, in rear by unlocated lands, west by lands claimed by Daniel Mulholand, and east by lands claimed by Colonel John Anderson.

Whereupon, Michael Labadi was brought forward as a witness in behalf of the claimant, who, being duly sworn, deposed and said, that, previous to the 1st July, 1796, Louis Gaillard was in possession and occupancy of the premises, and continued so until he sold to John Askin, who sold to George Mc Dougall, as per deed recorded in the claim of Daniel Mulholand, who has purchased half of the whole tract of this claimant. The deponent further saith that the premises have been constantly cultivated: about twelve arpents are in cultivation.

And thereupon it doth appear to the commissioners that the claimant is entitled to the above described tract of land, and that he have a certificate thereof, which certificate shall be No. 425; and that he cause the same to be surveyed, and a plot of the survey, with the quantity of land therein contained, to be returned to the register of the land office at Detroit.

Daniel  
Mulholland  
(Mulholland):

81801 OF THE LAND OFFICE  
No. 414. DANIEL MULHOLLAND.—The board took into consideration the claim of Daniel Mulholland, as grantee of Samuel Egnew, to a tract of land, situate on the south side of river Raisins; and the notice filed this day was read in the words and figures following, to wit:

*To the Register of the Land Office at Detroit.*

DETROIT December 3, 1808.

SIR: Please take notice that I claim title to a tract of land in the district of Detroit, situate, lying, and being on the south side of river Raisins, containing, by estimation, one hundred and forty arpents, it being three and a half arpents in front by forty in depth; bounded in front by said river Raisins, in rear by unlocated lands, on the west by lands claimed by Jacques and Francois Lasselle, and on the east by lands of Samuel Egnew. I claim title to the aforesaid tract of land by virtue of possession, occupancy, and improvements made by me previous to 1796, or those from whom I derive title, which improvements have been continued to this day.

For DANIEL MULHOLLAND,  
SAMUEL EGNEW.

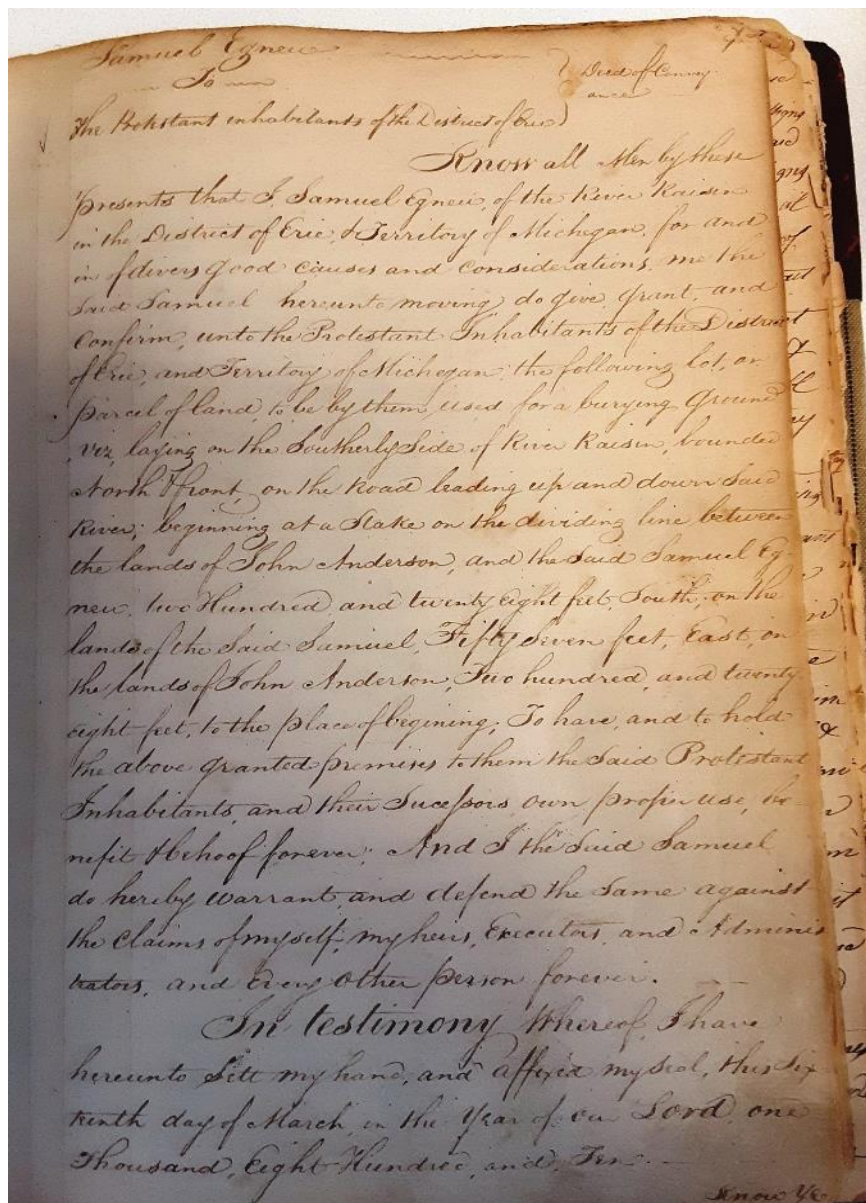
This tract contains, by estimation, one hundred and forty arpents, it being three and a half by forty, bounded in front by river Raisins, in rear by unlocated lands, west by lands of Jacques and Francois Lasselle, and east by lands of Samuel Egnew.

Whereupon Medard Labadi was brought forward as a witness in behalf of the claimant, who, being duly sworn, deposed and said, that, previous to the 1st July, 1796, Batiste Bourdeaux was in possession and occupancy of the premises, and continued so until he sold to Antoine Guy, who sold to George McDougall, who sold to Samuel Egnew, from whom the claimant has purchased, who has possessed and occupied the same to this day; about ten arpents are cultivated and enclosed.

The claimant, in support of his claim, exhibited two deeds in the words and figures following, to wit:

Just two years later

Samuel Agnew in 1810 gave the Protestant inhabitants of the District of Erie a quarter-acre burying ground. Among the first bodies buried there were those of the Kentucky veterans of the war of 1812. These later were exhumed and taken to Detroit and then to Kentucky. The downtown cemetery apparently was abandoned quickly, and Mr. Agnew and Daniel Mulhollen donated to the community a second plot which is now known as "Memorial Place." It is on S Monroe St. between W. Sixth and W. Seventh Sts.<sup>49</sup>



"Original 1810 Deed," Samuel Agnew donation of land for Monroe's first Protestant Cemetery

Courtesy of the Monroe County Deed's Office

Image courtesy of Rusty Davis

<sup>49</sup> "Graves Were Once Downtown," *The Monroe Evening News*, June 17 1960.

Copied from Book A-B-C- 1805-1818 page 70  
Monroe, Michigan County Court House

SAMUEL EGNEW

To  
The Protestant Inhabitants  
of the District of Erie

Deed of Conveyance

Know all men by these presents that I Samuel Egnew of the River Raisin in the District of Erie, Territory of Michigan, for and in of divers good causes and considerations, me the said Samuel Egnew hereunto moving, do give grant and confirm, unto the Protestant Inhabitants of the District of Erie and Territory of Michigan the following lot and parcel of land, To be by them used for a burying grounds viz, laying on the Southerly Side of River Raisin, bounded North and front on the road leading up and down said River, beginning at a Stake in the dividing line between the lands of John Anderson, and the said Samuel Egnew, two hundred and twenty eight feet, South on the lands of the said Samuel. Fifty seven feet, East, on the lands of John Andersen. Two hundred and twenty-eight feet to the place of beginning. To have and to hold the above granted premises, to them the said Protestant Inhabitants and their successors, own proper use benefit & behoof forever. And I the said Samuel do hereby warrant and defend the same against the claims of myself, my heirs, Executors & Administrators, and every other person forever.

In Testimony whereof I have hereunto sett my hand & affixed my seal, this sixteenth day of March, in the Year of our Lord, one Thousand, Eight Hundred and Ten.

Know Ye, that it is well understood that the grantees are immediately to erect a fence around the above granted premises, and to keep the same in good repair.

Signed  
Samuel Egnew

In presence of  
John Anderson  
Duncan Reed Signed

\*\*\*\*\*

Territory of Michigan  
District of Erie

Personally appeared before me the subscriber one of the Justices of the Peace in the said District of Erie; the within named Samuel Egnew, who acknowledges the within to be his own free & voluntary act & deed for the purposes therein contained.

Given under my hand at my Chamber, at the River Raisin, in the District and Territory aforesaid, this 16th day of March 1810.

Signed

John Anderson  
J.P.D.E.

Copied from original records by Edna Mulhollen Toburen, a Mulhollen and Agnew descendant. June 1958.



Monroe Historian Talcott Wing noted in 1890:

*At this time and for many years thereafter, the land between First and Front streets, and joining Monroe street on the west, was occupied as a burying ground, and a number of our citizens well remember the time when the bodies were exhumed and removed to the old cemetery between Sixth and Seventh streets, on the west side of Monroe street.*<sup>50</sup>

On the fifty-ninth anniversary of the battle, January 22, 1872, the *Monroe Democrat* reported that remains after the battle were buried “in a tract of ground, the site of which is believed to be near the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Monroe, on the west side of the latter, where the democrat office is located...” and the delegation “from Kentucky removed some, but a larger number were interred at that time in the old cemetery where they now lie and where it is proposed to erect a monument to their memory.”<sup>51</sup>

Apparently when the first cemetery was full the bodies were exhumed and a delegation from Kentucky “removed some, but a larger number were interred at that time” in what we know as Memorial Place today by the citizens of Monroe. The words “at that time” seem to imply the citizens were removing bodies when the delegation from Detroit was, in the year 1818. Not all of the bodies were removed however, as we will examine later in our study. Also, the delegation from Kentucky will be addressed in the next chapter.

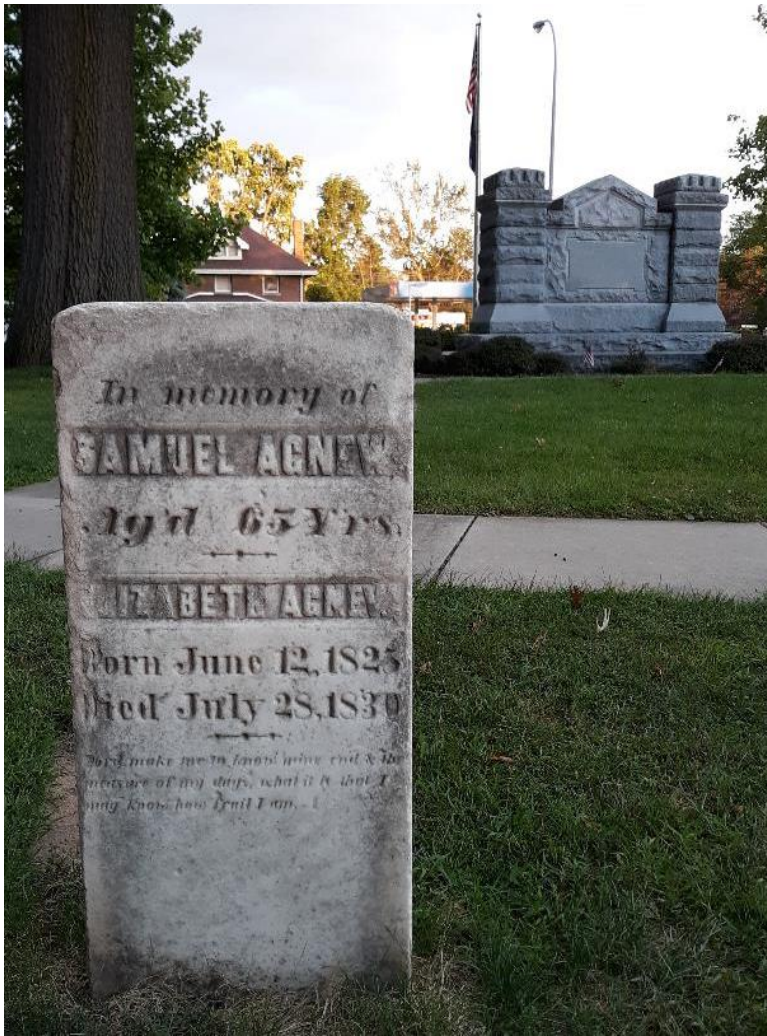
There were a lot of land exchanges in these early years concerning these lots.<sup>52</sup> We have the deed for the first cemetery in 1810, but no deed for the second cemetery has been located.

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<sup>50</sup> Wing. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. p.41.

<sup>51</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, January 22 1872, p.3.

<sup>52</sup> Davis, Abstract of Title, property #425.



*"Kentucky Memorial Place"  
Courtesy of Joseph Mazur*

Carrie Boyd, historian for the Nancy De Graff Toll Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, on April 12, 1932 in *Vital Records, Monroe County Michigan, Volume II*, wrote that Daniel Mulhollen Sr. appropriated the land between 1815-1820 for Memorial Place.<sup>53</sup>

Historian Russell E. Bidlack in his manuscript, *Monroe County History, 1780-1830*, writes that in 1826 a tax of \$100 was collected for "fencing the burying ground....Always called simply 'the burying ground,' this was the

*cemetery now known as Memorial Place, once a part of Daniel Mulhollen's farm. In 1815, or soon thereafter, Mulhollen had given this land to the village.*"<sup>54</sup>

In yet another article in *The Monroe Evening News* on July 8, 1966, Mrs. William L. Toburen of Monroe, says that around 1818-1820, Mr. Agnew and her great-great-grandfather, Daniel Mulhollen sold the land on South Monroe Street, near Sixth Street, to be used as a new cemetery.<sup>55</sup> Remarkably, the original deed showing Samuel Agnew's land donation for the 1810 cemetery, which is pictured on page 39, was provided in 1958 by Edna Mulhollen Toburen, descendant of Agnew and Mulhollen (Note the bottom of the deed). Also, Samuel was buried in the cemetery and Daniel Mulhollen had family members buried there.

<sup>53</sup> "Parade Will Pass Historical Sites," *The Monroe Evening News*, July 20 1962

<sup>54</sup> Bidlack, Russell E. *Monroe County History, 1780-1830*. Monroe: Monroe County Historical Commission, p.65.; Apparently up to 1828, the burial ground had been "unenclosed, except by bushes, and it had never been divided into lots. When a loved one died the family dug a grave wherever convenient without much regard for future space needs." p.65.

<sup>55</sup> "Bones May Be Remnant of Massacre," *The Monroe Evening News*, July 8 1966, p.1.

Historian Rusty Davis has a mortgage concerning private claim #425, where Thompson Maxwell and Colonel John Anderson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers bought some land from Samuel Egnew. The mortgage was dated August 28, 1817 and recorded on October 22, 1817 and says in part: *“to have and to hold all the aforesaid tracts except...one quarter of an acre where the Protestant Burying Ground now is.”*<sup>56</sup> This would have been the first Protestant Cemetery.

Interestingly enough, a letter to the editor regarding Memorial Place was published in the *Monroe Democrat* on February 28, 1901: *“An old warranty deed executed Oct. 3, 1817, by John Anderson and Thompson Maxwell and witnessed by Joseph Loranger and Daniel Mulhollen conveyed to Lewis Cass, governor of the territory of Michigan for the use of the county of Monroe and for the purpose of erecting thereon a protestant church and burying ground, containing 38,665 square feet.”*<sup>57</sup> This might be plausible in the sense that in the other deeds concerning these tracts in 1817-1818, John Anderson, Thompson Maxwell and Daniel Mulhollen were involved. Furthermore, this would be for a second burial ground in that the first Protestant one already exists. Yet, as seen above the accepted notion was that the land for Memorial Place was donated by Samuel Agnew and Daniel Mulhollen.

In 1901 there were numerous letters to the editor regarding the old cemetery on Seventh and Monroe Streets and what should be done with it (we will look at this in more detail in chapter 17). Part of the argument was just who owns the cemetery in the first place, the city or the county of Monroe. In a letter dated March 7, 1901, we learn, *“From an investigation, as far as it has proceeded, it would seem that the title to the old cemetery on the west side of Monroe Street is in the City of Monroe....The lot was deeded to the village president and trustees of the village of Monroe by Major Henry Smith in 1834 to be used as a burial lot.”*<sup>58</sup>

Fortunately, the deed was at the Monroe County Deeds Office, and it does confirm that a Smith H., and his wife Evera, turned over the land to the Village of Monroe, and it was signed November 6, 1834 (recorded on November 25). In effect the deed does support the letter to the editor, but the land was not donated by Major Smith he was paid the sum of \$100 for it. The deed mentions that the land donated is lot twenty and is separated from lot twenty-one by a twenty-five foot alley and is bound north by lot nineteen. There are other details yet, but due to aging they cannot be made out.

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<sup>56</sup> Davis, Abstract of Title, property #425. Colonel John Anderson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is not the same Colonel John Anderson that resided at the River Raisin and was in charge of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Michigan Militia.

<sup>57</sup> “Letter to the editor,” *Monroe Democrat*, February 28 1901, p.1.

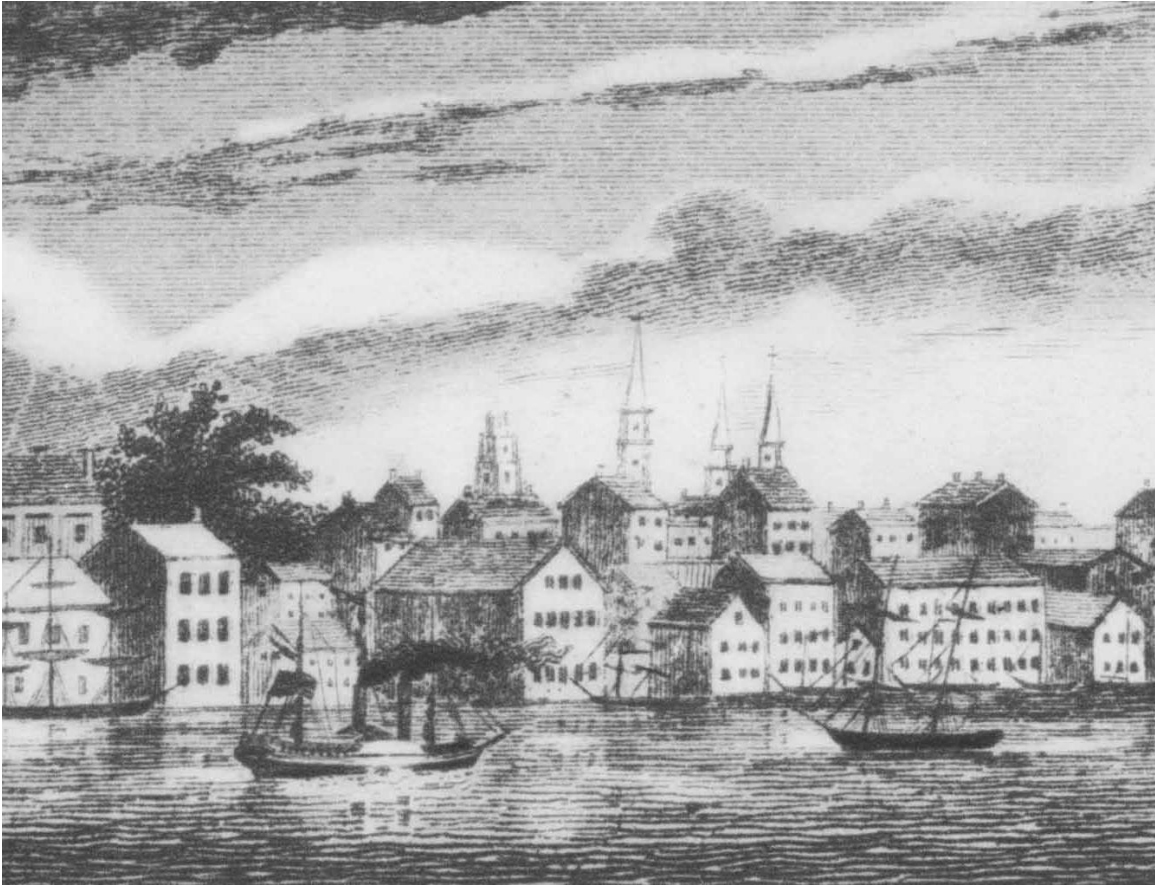
<sup>58</sup> *Monroe Democrat*. March 7 1901.





## Chapter Seven

### Off to Detroit's Protestant Cemetery



*"Detroit," circa 1837*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

1818 is a very significant year concerning the remains of the soldiers. There were not any more burials recorded, that we know of, since the burials on July 4, 1815 by Luther Harvey, and other citizens, in a cemetery proper until this year. All of the official burials after the battles were in mass graves on the battlefield.

On June 22, 1818 in Detroit, newly appointed Governor of Michigan, Lewis Cass, presided over a meeting and created a committee for the purpose of collecting and burying the battlefield dead at the River Raisin. So appropriately enough, on July 4, a company of men under Colonel John Anderson, of River Raisin, managed to collect a

large quantity of bones and skulls (“skulls showing evidence of being tomahawked”<sup>60</sup>) and buried them with ceremony in an old graveyard on the west side of Monroe Street – this was the cemetery at Front and First Streets.<sup>61</sup>

*The History of Franklin County* however, states that it was the sixty-five bodies buried by Governor Shelby’s men in October 1813 that were actually exhumed and reburied in the cemetery in 1818.<sup>62</sup> Also bodies hastily buried on the riverbank by resident Gabriel Godfroy, right after the battle, were said to be included in the bodies exhumed and reburied in the city.<sup>63</sup>

Whether they were the bones collected by Shelby’s men or not, we will never know. But what we do know is they did not rest in the Monroe Street cemetery long. Many contemporary historians, such as Talcott Wing, Glenn Clift, and Benson J. Lossing, note that the soldiers’ remains were taken to a Protestant cemetery in Detroit in the year 1818.



“Detroit”, undated

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

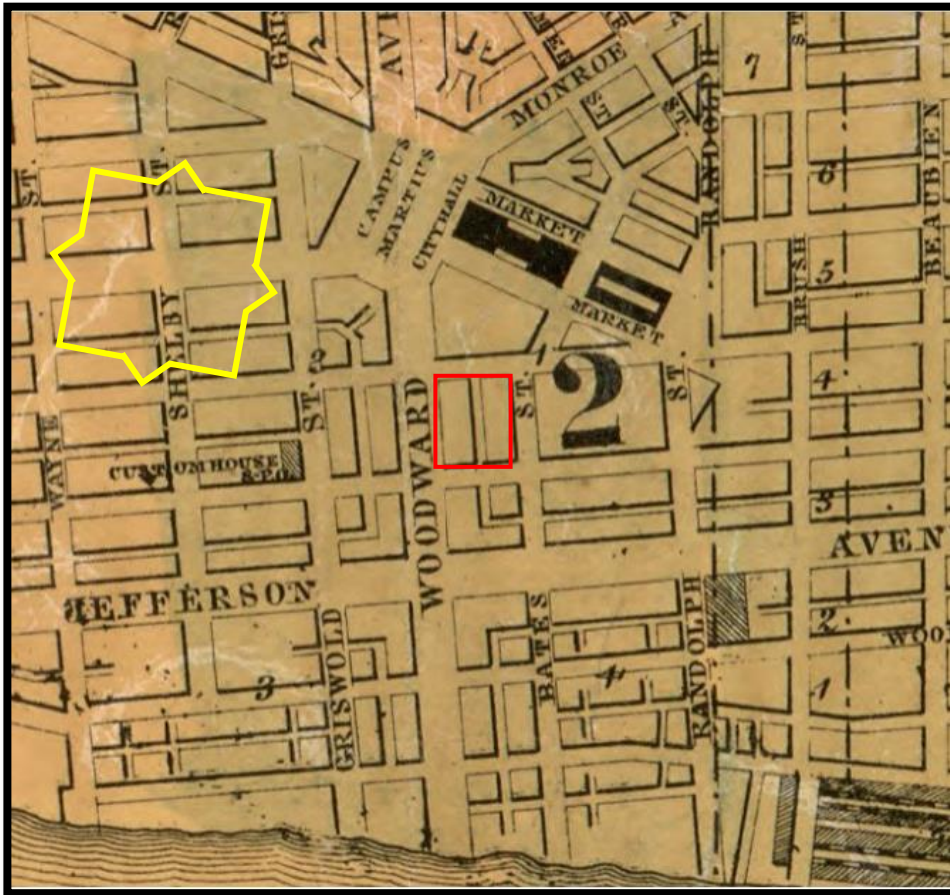
<sup>60</sup> Many of the remains we encounter will be reported as having tomahawked skulls, please note that in no case was that confirmed by an expert, but rather an observation by the persons reporting the findings.

<sup>61</sup> Wing. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. p.60.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, L. F. *The History of Franklin County, Ky.* Frankfort: Roberts Printing Co., 1912, p.59.

<sup>63</sup> Naveaux. *Captain Hart's Jawbone*

. p.5.



**Figure 7.1: Detail from “1860 Map of Wayne County, Michigan.”**  
 Showing location of the Protestant Cemetery in red and fort in yellow.

*Geil and Jones, Geil & Harley, Freed, Isaac G., Worley & Bracher.  
 Philadelphia: Geil, Harley & Siverd, 1860.  
 Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

The cemetery was at present day Woodward Avenue on the east side, between Larned, Congress, and Bates Streets. It had been in existence since 1760 for Protestant burials and was called the “English Burying Ground.”<sup>64</sup> In his 1921 souvenir booklet for the Detroit Savings Bank, author George Catlin says, “*There for many years the soldiers killed in conflict and soldiers and citizens who died of disease were buried.*”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Catlin, George B. and Earl W. De La Vergne. *The Story of Detroit*. Detroit: Detroit News, 1923, p.266.

<sup>65</sup> Catlin, George B. *A Brief History of Detroit in the Golden Days of '49*. Detroit: The Detroit Savings Bank, 1921, p.17.

How they came to be moved and why is also a very convoluted and contradictory story. But since it is of such importance, we will examine a few of these differing accounts in detail:

The first account is taken from the *Niles' Register* April, 18, 1818:

*A PIOUS ACT.—At a meeting of the inhabitants of the city of Detroit, and its vicinity, convened at the council-house in the said city, on Thursday, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 1818, pursuant to notice, his excellency LEWIS CASS was called to the chair, and JOHN R. WILLIAMS appointed secretary.*

*The following preamble and accompanying resolutions were then unanimously adopted:*

*Whereas the remains of capt HART, of the Kentucky volunteers, who was barbarously murdered by the Indians at the River Raisin, after distinguishing himself and being wounded in that memorable action, are those only which can be identified, and have never been properly buried—the citizens of Detroit, in behalf of the citizens of the territory of Michigan. Being desirous of manifesting their respect for his memory—therefore,*

*Resolved, That a committee of five persons be appointed to proceed to the River Raisin, collect and bring to this place the remains of captain HART, and cause the same to be interred in such manner and with such solemnities as the nature of the occasion and the distinguished career and services of the deceased may justify.*

*Resolved, That Philip Lecuyer and Austin E. Wing, Charles Larned, Henry I. Hunt, and James McCloskey, esquires, be a committee for the purposes above mentioned.*

LEWIS CASS,

Ch'n

JOHN R. WILLIAMS, Sec'ry.

*Whereupon Philip Lecuyer and Austin E. Wing, esquires, in behalf of the committee, proceed to the river Raisin and procured the remains, pursuant to the above resolutions—*

*And, as a tribute of respect and gratitude the heroes of a state, who so valiantly fell victims to the savage barbarity, in aiding to relieve this territory from a calamitous and insupportable subjection, the citizen of*



*Michigan are requested to attend at the council-house in the city of Detroit, on Tuesday, the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, at three o'clock P.M. for the purpose of attending the remains of the late captain HART from thence to the place of interment.*

*The remains will be buried with military honors, and a funeral oration be delivered by C. LARNED, esq.*

Committee	P.	}	LECUYER,
	A. E.		WING,
	C.		LARNED,
	H. I.	}	HUNT,
	J. M'CLOSKEY		

*Detroit, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1818* <sup>66</sup>

There is no doubt that part of the purpose of reburial in Detroit is Captain Hart. The sentiment is that he never received a proper burial, nor did the other soldiers, and they thought it was time they did. Historian Robert Ross said,

*The bones of the Kentuckians who were slaughtered at the Raisin lay in the soil where they fell for six years. In 1818 Governor Cass had the remains brought to Detroit, where they were buried with military honors. It was an easy matter to identify them, for each one had the tell-tale cleft of the Indian tomahawk in the skull.*<sup>67</sup>

Notice that they state Hart's remains are the only ones that can be identified. One can imagine the reasoning behind this is that they believe they knew where he was buried, by Laselle's house, however we know different. Remember how we looked at Dennis Au's reasoning as to why this was probably not the case, and he ultimately had the historical marker moved to North Dixie Hwy. Thus, instead of retrieving Hart, they might have gotten Woolfolk, or even someone else, but most likely not Hart.

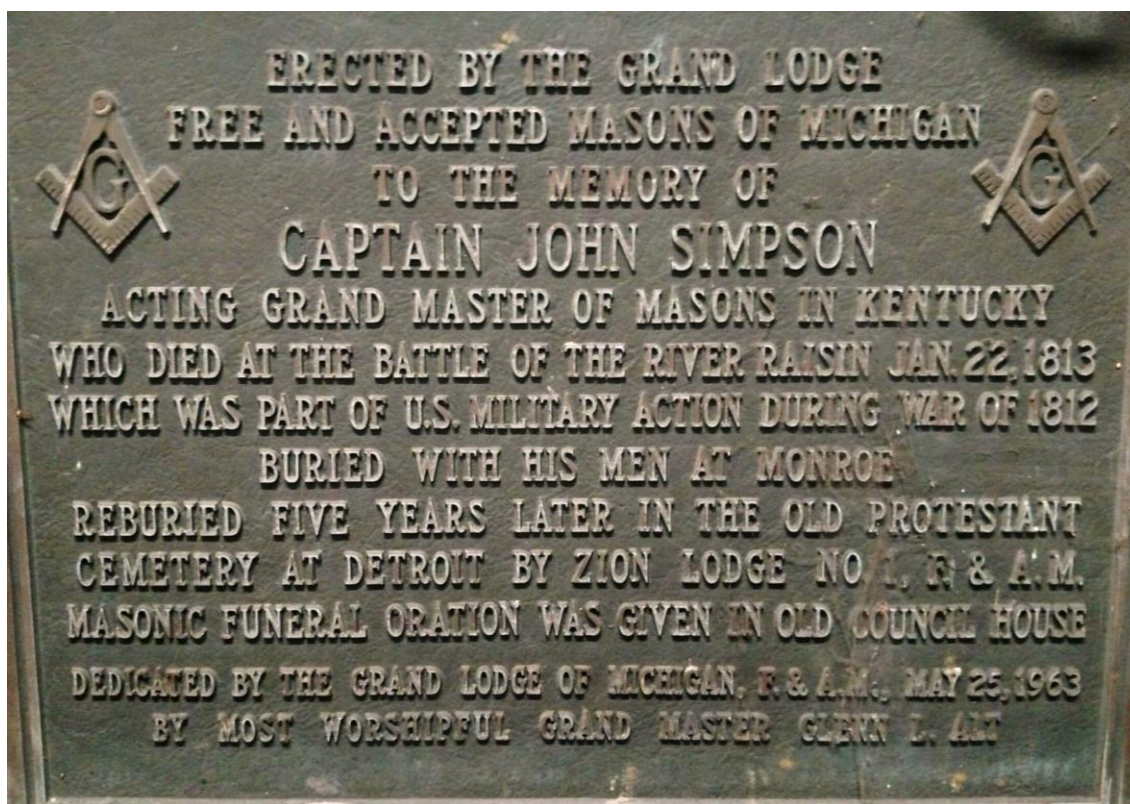
The second account states a meeting was held June 22, 1818, where it was decided to procure the remains of the soldiers who were killed on January 22, 1813 and bury them with proper honors in Detroit. Lewis Cass was chairman and Thomas Rowland secretary. The committee was composed of A.G. Whitney, William Brown, John Whipple, A. Dequindre, and James McCloskey. On August 8th, everyone assembled at the Detroit Council House and the procession was

<sup>66</sup> "Chronicle," *Niles' Weekly Register*. Vol.14, Baltimore: Franklin Press, April 18 1818, p.136.

<sup>67</sup> Ross, Robert B. and George B. Catlin. *Landmarks of Detroit: A History of the City*. Detroit: The Evening News Association, 1898, p.333.

commenced. The remains were enclosed in two boxes, but none of them were Identified except Captain John Simpson. Members of the Zion Lodge Masonic Order in Detroit also took part. The remains were interred with Masonic ceremonies in the Protestant burial ground.<sup>68</sup>

In this account, the details are quite different. The possible reason for Captain Simpson's identification was that he was very tall, 6'7". Simpson was Speaker of the House of Representatives in Kentucky and in 1812 was elected to the U.S. Congress, but he never had a chance to serve. He was killed in the Battle of January 22, during the retreat across the river on the right flank. He was Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Kentucky just before the war broke out. May 25, 1963, a memorial tablet was dedicated to him at the Monroe Masonic Temple. The next day one was dedicated at the Detroit Masonic Temple. The Masonic records say that his body was exhumed from Monroe and was reinterred at Detroit by the Zion Lodge 1 in a proper Masonic ceremony in the Protestant cemetery.<sup>69</sup>



*Courtesy of Rusty Davis*

<sup>68</sup> "The Dead of the War of 1812," *Detroit Daily Free Press*, August 13 1858, DFP-PQ.

<sup>69</sup> The Michigan Masonic Museum and Library archives, 233 East Fulton Street, Suite 10, Grand Rapids MI. 49503, in River Raisin NBP archives.

The third account states that on March 5, 1818, city residents met at the council house in Detroit. Lewis Cass was chairman and John R. Williams secretary. It was resolved to create a committee of five members to go to River Raisin and collect the remains of Captain Hart, who they feel deserves to be interred with military honors. Philip Lecuyer, Austin E. Wing, Charles Larned, Henry I. Hunt and James McCloskey were appointed. Wing and Lacuyer made the journey and brought the remains back to Detroit. Then on March 17, 1818 everyone assembled at the Council House, where the military ceremony commenced. Governor Cass and General Alexander Macomb were involved in the ceremony. The procession led to the Protestant burial grounds, where the remains were interred next to Major Holmes, Capt. Van Horne and Lieut. Jackson. *"The remains of Capt. Hart were first buried where he fell, by Cpts. Lacroix and Laselle."*<sup>70</sup>

Looking at this third account, we are not exactly sure if they got the remains out of the Monroe Street cemetery, or off the fields of battle. There is a lot in common with the first account including the date. The dates do not coincide with the second account though, which said June. Of particular importance is the line: *"The remains of Capt. Hart were first buried where he fell, by Cpts. Lacroix and Laselle."* Undoubtedly, they believed that he was killed by Laselle's house and that is where he was buried, just like in the first account. Another significant item from this account is that Hart, and the others, were interred at the Protestant burial grounds *"next to Major Holmes, Capt. Van Horne and Lieut. Jackson."* Just who are these men, and why is that significant?



On the top of Mackinaw Island lies Fort George, built in 1814 by the British to protect Fort Mackinaw from a U.S. attack. It was a small wooden fort but sat on the highest point of the island.

*Left: "Battlefield Mackinaw Island"*

*Below: "Fort Holmes," both circa 1880-1899*

<sup>70</sup> "The Dead of the War of 1812," *Detroit Daily Free Press*, August 13 1858, DFP-PQ.

Both Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection



The British were expecting an American attack and were not surprised when the Americans invaded the island on August 4, 1814. Soldiers scrambled ashore into the woods while the fleet covered their advancement with a cannonade. The soldiers managed to charge the breastworks and push the British back

temporarily, but the woods provided the Native Warriors, who were allied with the British, a good cover as well as allowing them to pick off the Americans.

Major Henry Holmes was caught out in the open and was blasted with five balls before he fell to his death. With no leaders left, the confused soldiers managed to retreat back to the safety of the boats, leaving behind many casualties, including Lieutenant Jackson and Captain Van Horne. The fort stayed in British hands until after the war. When it was back in American hands the name of the fort was changed to Fort Holmes.<sup>71</sup>

*The body of Major Holmes was transferred by schooner to Detroit and there buried on land belonging to what was known as 'The First Protestant Society,' near the corner of Larned Street and Woodward Avenue. In 1834, when excavating for the building of 'The First Protestant Church' the remains of Major Holmes were found with six cannon balls in the coffin. The balls were placed in the coffin for the purpose of sinking the body if in danger of being captured by the British while on its way to Detroit. The remains were placed in a box and buried in the Protestant cemetery near Gratiot, Beaubien and Antoine Streets.<sup>72</sup> [We will reexamine Holmes' grave in chapter nine].*

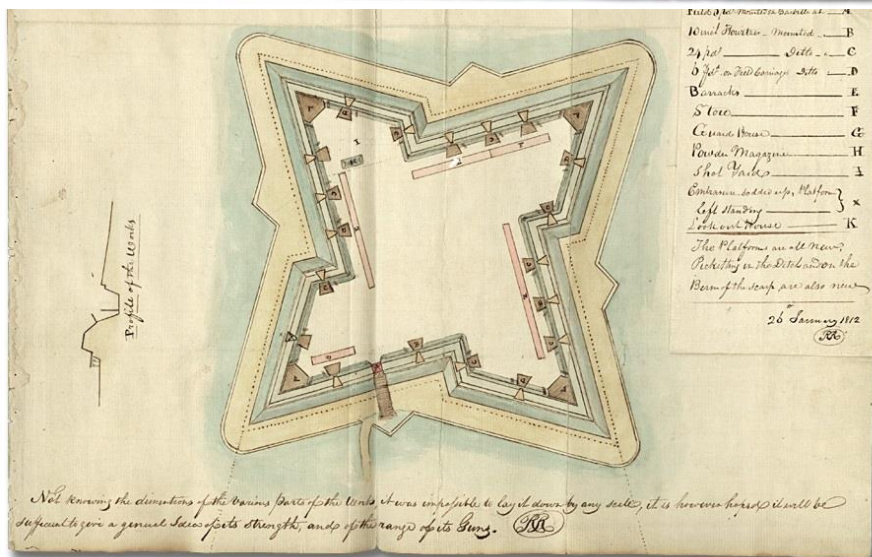
<sup>71</sup> Ross and Catlin. *Landmarks of Detroit: A History of the City*. p.350.

<sup>72</sup> "Old Fort Holmes." *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*. Vol. 38, Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford, 1912, p.87; Wood, Edwin Orin. *Historic Mackinac: the historical, picturesque and legendary features of Mackinac country*. Vol. I, New York: Macmillan, 1918, pp.313-14.



# Chapter Eight

## Off to Fort Shelby



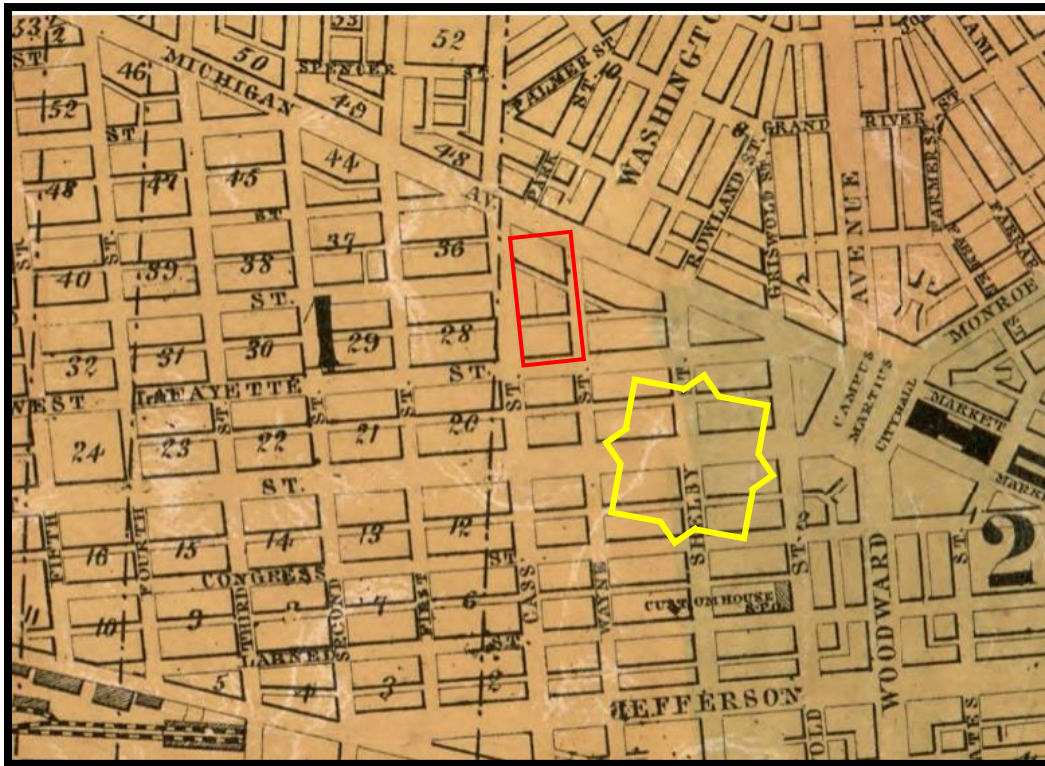
Top: "1812 Detroit Plan"

Courtesy of the Archives of Ontario

Left: "1812 drawing of Fort Lernoult"

Courtesy of the Archives of Ontario

In addition to the Protestant Cemetery, there was also a military cemetery located at Fort Shelby, the fort was also called the Military Reserve. The fort was very large, the center of which was located at the intersection of Fort and Shelby Streets. The military cemetery was bound by Michigan Ave to the north, LaFayette to the south, Wayne to the east, and Cass to the west.<sup>73</sup>

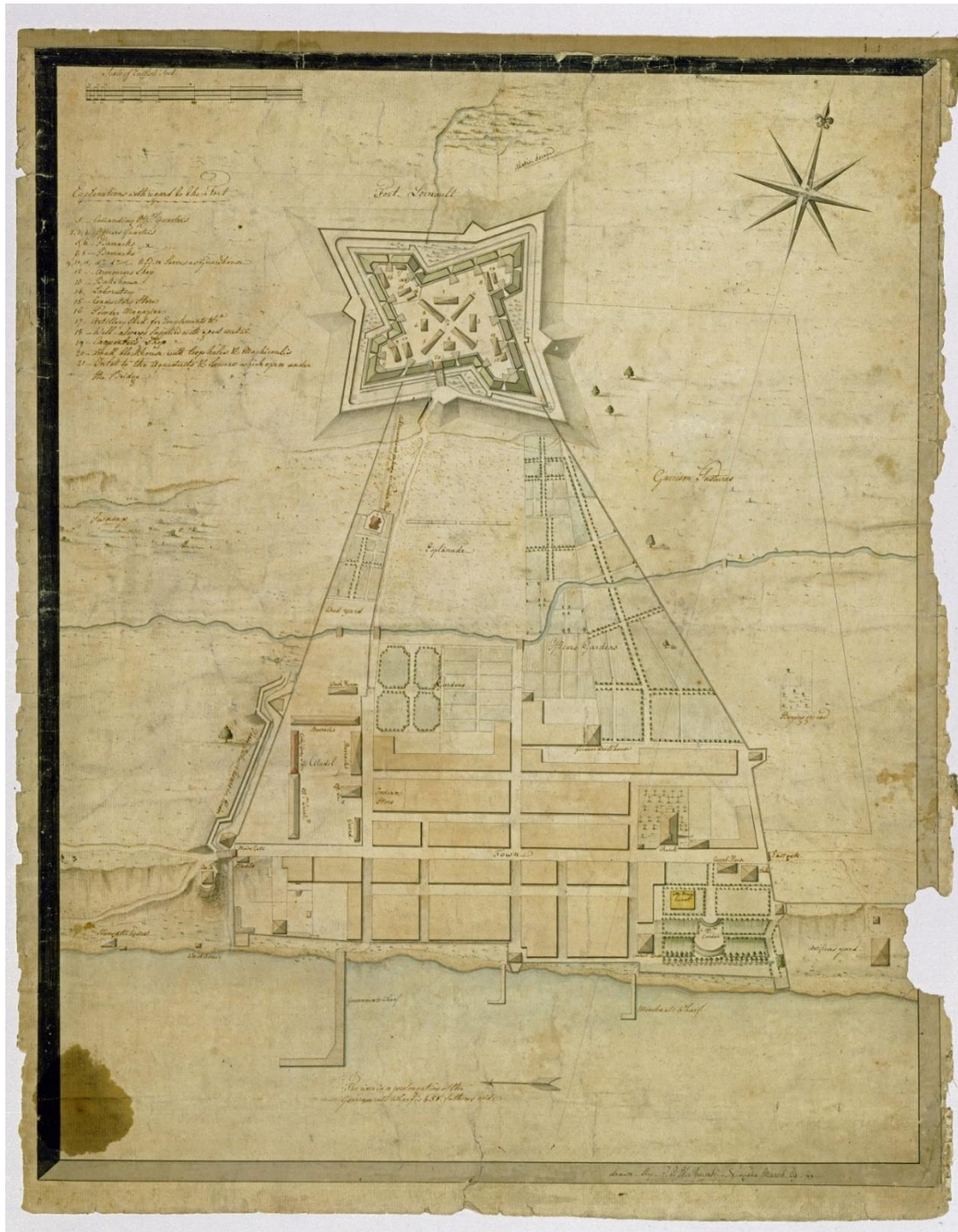


**Figure 8.1: Detail from “1860 Map of Wayne County, MI.”** Showing fort in yellow, military cemetery in red.

*Geil and Jones. Geil & Harley. Freed, Isaac G. Worley & Bracher.  
Philadelphia : Geil, Harley & Siverd, 1860.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<sup>73</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.425.

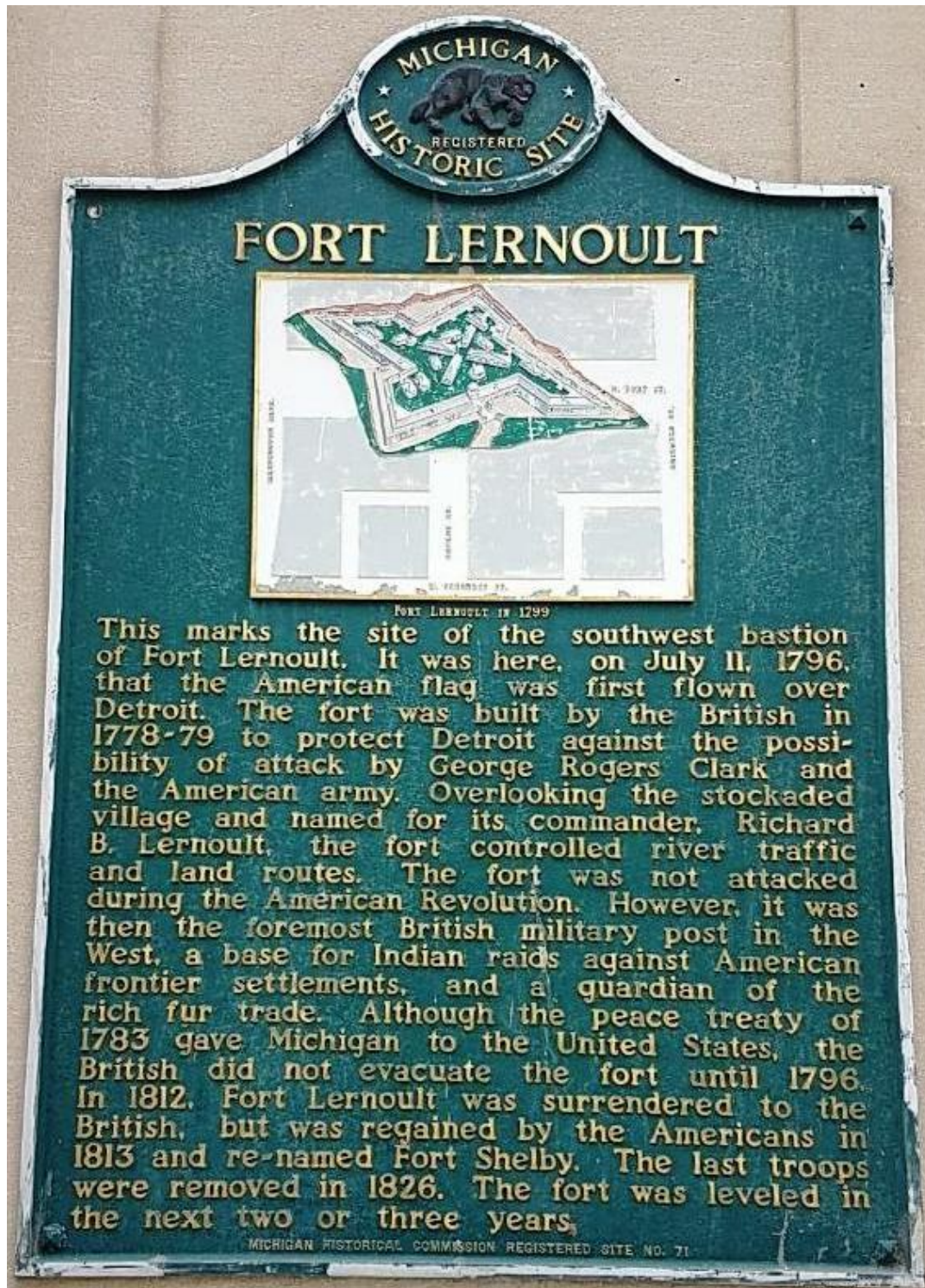




*"Plan of Fort Lernoult and the Town of Detroit"*  
 Courtesy of William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan



In its history Fort Shelby was also known as Fort Detroit and Fort Lernoult. The fort was bounded by Michigan on the north, Griswold on the east, West Congress on the south, and Cass on the west, with its center at the corner of West Fort and Shelby, in downtown Detroit. In 2014 a historical marker was erected to mark the location of the fort:



*Courtesy of Julia Davis*



The fort was the only structure that survived the Detroit fire of 1805. Just after the Battle of the Thames in the fall 1813, a force of 1100 men were sent as reinforcements to Fort Shelby. Cabins were erected to accommodate the soldiers on the north and western sides of the fort. That winter an epidemic, that resembled cholera, broke out among the northwestern army and roughly 700 soldiers perished at the fort. It was not until later when *“the nature of which was at first doubtful, but was finally determined to be a mild form of cholera.”*<sup>74</sup> The demand for coffins was so high, they could not be procured, and the dead were hastily thrown into a pit for fear of the disease. As it turns out one was almost buried alive. The bodies were buried on the northwestern section of the fort in a large area that saw soldiers interred in it from 1760 through 1830, known as the parade ground in 1823.<sup>75</sup> But Detroit Historian Robert Ross says a cemetery was “hastily improvised” on the north and west sides of the fort (or west of Woodward) for the victims, since there was no room at the English Burying Ground (Protestant cemetery).<sup>76</sup>

Detroit Historian Clarence M. Burton said there was no room for the victims at the English Burying Ground, aka Protestant Cemetery, in 1813-14. So then how were the River Raisin soldiers buried there in 1818? The contradictions continue....

Burton noted that *“When a soldier died, he was buried in a yard reserved for soldiers and the English civilians had a cemetery by themselves”*<sup>77</sup>

In talking about the English Burying Ground, or (Protestant Cemetery) George Catlin says,

*During the War of 1812 its capacity was overtaxed. In the battle at Frenchtown, now Monroe, in January, 1812, [sic, was 1813] and in the subsequent massacre of the wounded and prisoners, 397 Americans were killed. The bodies were buried on the ground, but years later they were exhumed and brought to Detroit and buried with military honors in a plat east of Fort Shelby and a few in the English burying ground.*<sup>78</sup>

So, Catlin agrees with Burton, that the cemetery was so crowded they could only put a few of the soldiers there and the rest were buried at Fort Shelby.

In his book, *The Story of Detroit*, Catlin says,

*The bones of the men who perished at River Raisin were buried at Frenchtown. In 1818, after Lewis Cass had become Governor, their remains were removed to Detroit, where they were buried with military*

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<sup>74</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1050.

<sup>75</sup> Farmer, Silas. *The History of Detroit and Michigan*. Detroit: S. Farmer & Company, 1884, p.284.

<sup>76</sup> Ross and Catlin. *Landmarks of Detroit: A History of the City*. p.456.

<sup>77</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1435.

<sup>78</sup> Catlin. *A Brief History of Detroit in the Golden Days of '49*. p.17.

*honors east of Fort Shelby. It was easy to identify the victims of the massacre, for the skull of each one had a round hole in the forehead where the point of an Indian tomahawk had been driven.*<sup>79</sup>

Interestingly enough in one account Catlin says a few of the bodies were interred at the Fort, but in another account, he implies they all were. Notice we do not hear anything in these accounts about Hart or Simpson like we heard previously in the Protestant cemetery burials. But we have heard before about the bones being identifiable by tomahawk markings.

An article appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* on January 15, 1933, which also implies all the remains were buried at the fort: *“The hundred brave Kentuckians were buried on the battlefield. In 1818, under the direction of Gen. Lewis Cass, their bodies were disinterred and brought to Detroit. They were buried to the east of Fort Shelby, at about the present intersection of Woodward Ave. and Larned St.”*<sup>80</sup>



*“Woodward Avenue, Detroit,” circa 1910-1913*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

In another account not only were a few, or a hundred, interred at the fort, but on June 6, 1926, *The Detroit News* reported how Fort Lernoult’s location was *“now occupied by the Moffat and Hammond Buildings and the adjacent street areas were set apart as a military cemetery. In this section there were only a few soldiers’ graves until 1818 when*

<sup>79</sup> Catlin and De La Vergne. *The Story of Detroit*. pp.161-62.

<sup>80</sup> “Michigan’s Bloodiest Episode is recalled on 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Massacre of the River Raisin,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 15 1933.

*the scattered remains of the 397 victims of the River Raisin massacre were brought here from Monroe for burial.”<sup>81</sup>*

The next two accounts we are going to examine are similar. Burton says,

*On the esplanade, or glacis, of the fort, near the location of the present Griswold Street and Moffat Building, the soldiers and sailors who had been killed in the battle of Lake Erie in 1813, and some of those who were killed at the River Raisin massacre in 1813, were buried. The occasion of the disinterment of the bodies at Put-in-Bay and their re-interment on the glacis of the fort in 1817 was an occasion of great pomp and ceremony in Detroit.<sup>82</sup>*

The other account states,

*An extensive cemetery, probably completely military, existed in the vicinity of Fort and Shelby and occupied a portion of the grounds of old Fort Shelby. No fewer than 700 soldiers were supposedly buried there in the winter of 1813-1814. Presumably most of these were victims of the River Raisin massacre. There is a record of the funeral of a Lieut. John Brooks, with a ‘long funeral procession,’ in this plot in 1817, and of his interment here.<sup>83</sup>*

So just who is this Lieutenant Brooks and why would he be by the River Raisin soldiers? During the Battle of Lake Erie on September 13, 1813, Oliver Hazard Perry’s flagship the U.S. brig *Lawrence* was succumbing to heavy cannon fire from the British. The attack was extremely horrendous raining shards of wood in the air. While Perry and John Brooks Jr., his young lieutenant in charge of the Marines, were strategizing, a cannonball struck Brooks in the hip, launching him clear across the ship. He was taken below deck where he succumbed to his torturous wound.

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<sup>81</sup> “Building 45 Stories High to Tower Over Detroit,” *Detroit News*, June 6 1926.

<sup>82</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1426.

<sup>83</sup> McKesson, Knight D. *A History of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association*. Lansing: Michigan Funeral Directors Association, 1960, pp.9-10. In River Raisin NBP, Ralph Naveaux collection.



*"Commodore Perry at the Battle of Lake Erie" / J.R. Chapin, F.F. Walker*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division*

By now the *Lawrence* was untenable and Perry had no choice but to abandon ship for a rowboat with

the only eighteen men left out of his original 124. Through a hailstorm of cannon, the little rowboat made it to the *Niagara*. Once Perry boarded the *Niagara* the wind suddenly changed, and he sailed right into the middle of the British line and was able to achieve an unprecedented victory firing from both sides of his ship into the lines, while avoiding getting hit himself. The entire British squadron was forced to surrender within twenty minutes. Perry penned his now famous announcement to General Harrison: *"We have met the enemy and they are ours. Two ships, two brigs, one schooner and a sloop."*<sup>84</sup>



*"The Battle of Lake Erie," circa 1893*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division*

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.battleoflakeerieart.com/battle.php>



John Brooks Jr.'s body was recovered, and he was buried at Put-in-Bay, along with the other sailors, until a committee decided he needed a service to reflect the high esteem to which he was held. Thus, it was determined to have him reinterred at Detroit.



"Victory monument," Put-In-Bay, Ohio

*Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection*

On October 7, 1817, officers of the 5<sup>th</sup> regiment of U.S. Infantry held a meeting at Fort Shelby at which Lieutenant Colonel Smith presided and Lieutenant Kirby was secretary. It was resolved to remove the remains of Brooks from Put-in-Bay to Detroit and have a proper military ceremony. The committee was comprised of Major Masston, Lieutenant Colonel Smith, Captain Fowler, Captain Whiting, Captain Glasdone and Dr. Day.<sup>85</sup>

Lieutenant Kirby and Surgeon's mate Russell took the schooner *Firefly*<sup>86</sup> to Put-in-Bay to retrieve Brook's body, they arrived back in Detroit on October 31<sup>st</sup>.<sup>87</sup> Apparently, there was a new burial area at Fort Shelby. The *Detroit Gazette* on November 7, 1817 published the event:

<sup>85</sup> "The Dead of the War of 1812," *Detroit Daily Free Press*, August 13 1858, DFP-PQ.

<sup>86</sup> The captain of the schooner *Firefly* was Luther Harvey, who we met in chapter 6. He gathered up the bones of the soldiers on the Fourth of July in 1815. See: Bidlack, Russell E. *Monroe County History, 1780-1830*. p.16.

<sup>87</sup> "Lines to a Hero," *Detroit Free Press*, 10-26-1890, p.14, DFP-PQ.

*Funeral of Lieut. John Brooks. — On Friday last the remains of Lieut. John Brooks, who fell in the battle on Lake Erie, were interred in the new burial-ground upon the glacis of Fort Shelby, within the Military Reserve of this city. The ceremony was attended with military honors suited to the rank of the deceased. The body was escorted by a military corps, and preceded by the Rev. Messrs. Montieth and Larned. The pall was supported by six lieutenants, with scarfs. Lieut.-Col. Smith, and the officers of the Fifth United States Regiment, followed as mourners, flanked by marshals. Then succeeded Major-Gen. Maccomb, Gov. Cass, and the civil, judicial, and municipal officers of the territory and city, citizens and strangers, and the non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the army. The funeral service was performed by the Rev. Mr. Larned. The procession was solemn and sublime.<sup>88</sup>*

Although there is no mention of an elaborate funeral procession taking the River Raisin soldiers to Fort Shelby, we do know that an elaborate ceremony did take place when they were taken to the Protestant Cemetery. Obviously, at that time the sentiment was the same for the Soldiers of Lake Erie, Mackinaw, and the River Raisin. They were all dug up and brought to Detroit on the same premise; that they deserved to be buried in a special place with all the military honors that they previously were denied.

So just what can we conclude about the River Raisin soldiers' reinternment in Detroit in 1818? We can say that they might have been buried in the Protestant Cemetery, or they might have been buried at Fort Shelby, or maybe even both. Can we say Simpson was identified? Perhaps. Can we say Hart was identified? Probably not. Can we say the River Raisin soldiers were identified? Maybe because of the tomahawk markings.

Basically, we need to go back to Monroe and reexamine if the remains were gotten from the battlefield, or the first graveyard on Monroe Street. We must question if they got them all, or just how many did they get, fifteen? Sixty-five? Perhaps we can answer more of these questions as we continue.

First, we have to conclude our journey in Detroit. Let us ask ourselves, "Did the soldiers just stay there in either cemetery or both and is that the end of the story?"

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<sup>88</sup> Brooks, Charles. *History of the town of Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts*. Boston: The Franklin Press, 1886, pp.182-3.

## Chapter Nine

### Demise of Detroit's Protestant Cemetery



*"Northeast corner of Woodward and Congress Streets, Detroit," circa 1891.*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

Time marches on and modernization cannot be held back indefinitely. The fate of the Protestant Cemetery was inevitable as Burton points out: *"They used, in common, the burial ground on the northeast corner of Woodward Avenue and Larned Street and as they began to occupy this land before streets were laid out, there can be no doubt that there were many burials within the lines of those streets that have never been disturbed and will be uncovered in the years yet to come."*<sup>89</sup>

In an article published in the *Detroit Free Press* October 12, 1865 entitled *"The Dust We Are"*, it was stated that at the corner of Randolph and Congress Streets, *"the dust of sixteen coffins, and the bones which alone remained of their contents, were exhumed"* when a basement was being dug for a large conservatory. There was no identification and

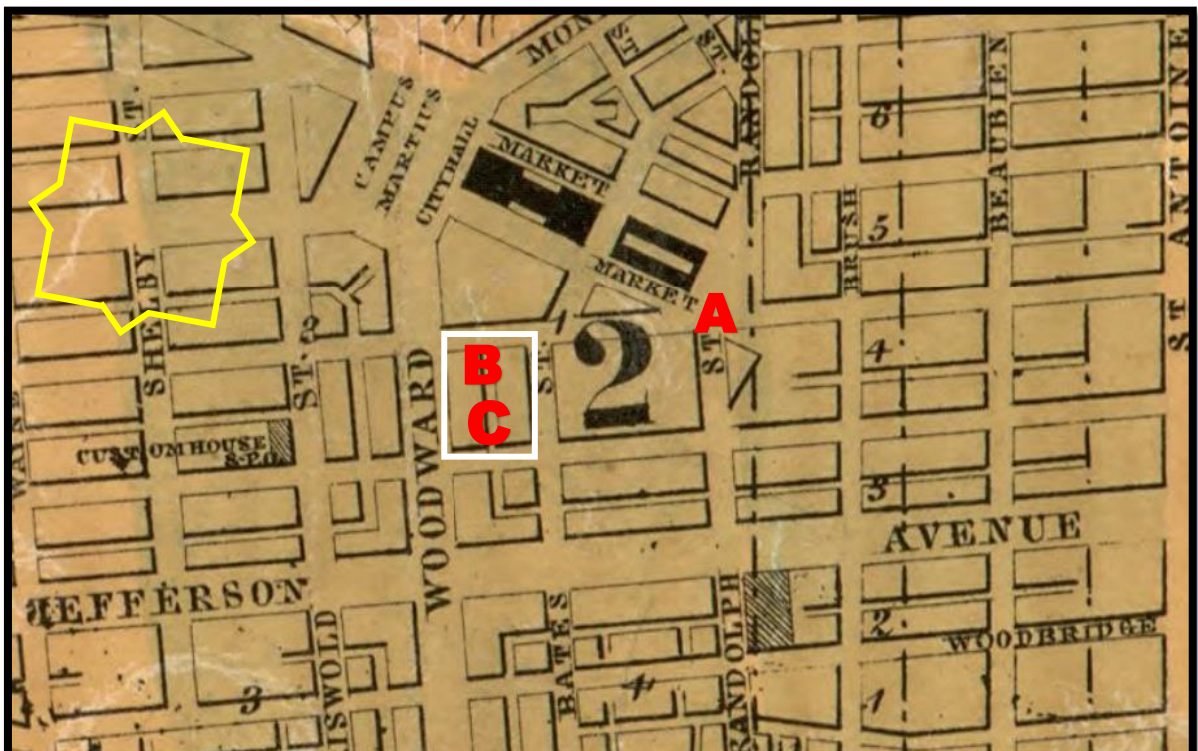
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<sup>89</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1425.

*“the dust of the entire number was cast into a single coffin and deposited in Mount Elliot Cemetery.”*<sup>90</sup>

On May 23, 1906, a box containing a skeleton was found at Woodward and Larned streets while excavation was being done for the Murphy Power Company. It was assumed the location was the old St Anne’s cemetery. (The article was incorrect however, instead of St. Anne’s, it was actually the site of the old Protestant cemetery.)<sup>91</sup>

Ross in referring to the Protestant Cemetery, noted that, *“Those who frequent the heart of the city of Detroit tread upon the dust of a forgotten population. Some of the remains*



**Figure 9.1: “Detail from 1860 Map of Wayne County, MI.”** Showing locations of Graves Found, Protestant cemetery in white and the fort in yellow.

- A. Oct. 16, 1865: 16 coffins
- B. Sept. 13, 1879: 2 skeletons
- C. May 23, 1906: 1 skeleton in a box + 1991 Investigation: 4 graves

*Geil and Jones, Geil & Harley, Freed, Isaac G., Worley & Bracher.  
Philadelphia : Geil, Harley & Siverd, 1860.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

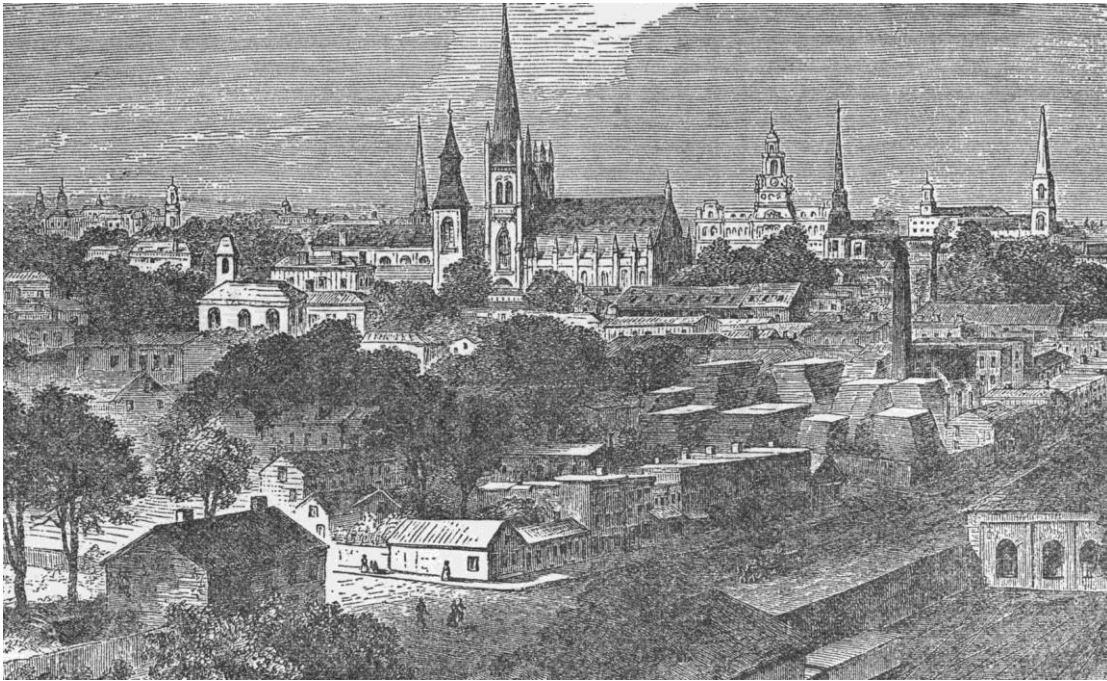
<sup>90</sup> “The Dust We Are,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 12 1865, p.1., DFP-PQ.

<sup>91</sup> “Human Skeleton is Unearthed in the Heart of the City,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 25 1906, DFP-PQ.



*were removed when the English cemetery was granted...to the First Protestant Society...and others were removed from their resting place by the builders of the churches, which were erected on that block between 1820 and 1830.”*<sup>92</sup>

Burials were allowed until 1827. After that, the graves were removed sporadically by friends or church groups. A notice was still being sent out by the board of trustees requesting removals all the way up to 1851.<sup>93</sup> But interestingly enough, by 1833 people became so agitated to get the graves moved to the new city cemetery, they took it upon themselves to do so and ultimately were charged with grave desecration.<sup>94</sup>



*Mid to late 1800's image of "Fort Street Presbyterian Church," built 1855, Detroit Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

On September 13, 1879, The Steam Supply Company uncovered two skeletons while laying pipes through the alley at Larned and Congress Streets. The skeletons consisted of one adult and one child. The bones lay undisturbed for over fifty years in ground that once was the Protestant burial ground.

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<sup>92</sup> Ross and Catlin. *Landmarks of Detroit: A History of the City*. pp.455-56.

<sup>93</sup> Farmer. *The History of Detroit and Michigan*. p.55.

<sup>94</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1428.

The reporter of the *Detroit Free Press* interviewed Alanson Sheley who said,

*That spot was an old burying ground fifty years ago, and a great many persons were buried there. In 1834 I built the First Presbyterian Church...and then we removed nearly all the remains in the old cemetery and buried them in the Russell street grounds. We did not remove those that lay as far east as where the alley now is. The remains of Major Holmes, killed at Mackinaw, were among those that were removed. There were several cannon balls in his coffin, placed there for the purpose of sinking the corpse if the English attacked the sloop on which the body was brought down from the Straits. In 1814 the citizens of Detroit sent a committee to Monroe to gather up the remains of those who were killed at the River Raisin massacre. The remains were placed in a box and buried in the old ground here. When we built the church[,] opened this box and examined a score [20+] or more of the skulls, every one of them showed where the tomahawk did its murderous work.<sup>95</sup>*

Remember the story of Holmes and the cannon balls in his coffin and the River Raisin soldiers with “tomahawked skulls” being buried right near Holmes? Indeed, this is compelling evidence. But just who is Alanson Sheley and can we trust his account? According to the *Legislative Biography, Library of Michigan*, Sheley was a legislator for two different terms: the twenty-fourth, 1867-1868 and the twenty-sixth from 1871-1872. He sat on numerous committees. He was born in 1809 and made his way to Detroit in 1831. Throughout his life he was a mason, builder, druggist, banker and merchant. But, more importantly for our purposes, his biographical sketch says, he “*helped with the transfer of the skeletal remains of Kentucky soldiers killed in the Battle of the River Raisin.*”<sup>96</sup>

Ross explains that the First Protestant Society was merged into the First Presbyterian Society in 1824. Only a few months later they were given a large piece of valuable real estate, a block on the east side of Woodward, between Congress and Larned. “*The ground granted for church purposes had been known as the English burying ground; and the dead were disturbed to make room for the temples of the quick.*” A small church was built there, but by 1834, it was considered too small and plain. They sold the church and removed it to make room for a much larger, fancier church “*built by Alanson Sheley, and was dedicated in 1835.*”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> “The River Raisin: It is Recalled by the Skeletons Exhumed by the Steam Supply Company Yesterday—The Old Woodward Avenue Cemetery,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 13 1879, DFP-PQ.

<sup>96</sup> Library of Michigan: Legislative Biography: [mdoe.state.mi.us/legislators/Legislator/LegislatorDetail/1935](http://mdoe.state.mi.us/legislators/Legislator/LegislatorDetail/1935)

<sup>97</sup> Ross and Catlin. *Landmarks of Detroit: A History of the City*. pp.525-26.

According to the Wayne County and Pioneer Society, when Sheley came to Detroit in 1831, he was principally a contractor and builder and in 1834 built the First Presbyterian church, on the corner of Woodward Avenue and Larned Street.<sup>98</sup> Detroit Historian Silas Farmer mentions Sheley in his chapter about Presbyterian churches, saying that Alanson Sheley was the contractor in the spring of 1834 for a church plan drawn up by Alonzo Merrill in 1831.<sup>99</sup>



*"Looking up Woodward Avenue, Detroit", circa 1926*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

Perhaps we have solved some of the mystery, but evidently Sheley's effort to exhume the bodies was not completely successful. In the same area on Woodward, a 1991 archeological study: *The One Detroit Center Development: Archaeological Investigations of Detroit's Protestant Burying Ground, circa 1780-1827*, revealed the following:

*This report details the evaluative testing and mitigation excavations conducted for redevelopment of the block at the northeast corner of Woodward Ave. and Larned Ave. In the late 18th c. and early 19th c. Extant buildings defined the interior of the block, and have impacted the majority of the cemetery. Excavations within the sidewalk, however, revealed four intact burials along the north side of Larned Ave. at Woodward Ave. This clearly indicates that Larned Ave. was widened at some point, covering a portion of the cemetery.<sup>100</sup>*

<sup>98</sup> Wayne County Historical and Pioneer Society, *Chronography of notable events in the history of the Northwest Territory and Wayne County*. Detroit: O.S. Gulley, Borman & Co., 1890, p.190.

<sup>99</sup> Farmer. *The History of Detroit and Michigan*. p.595.

<sup>100</sup> Demeter, Stephan, C., Norman J. Sauer, and Donald J. Weir, Commonwealth Cultural Resources

So, could the River Raisin soldiers still be under the streets of Detroit today? There is a possibility that they are; because we know not all the remains from the Protestant Cemetery were recovered by Sheley or anyone else. If they were all in one box, however, there would have been a better chance of their recovery. Having the tomahawk markings also gives them better odds. Yet, we must wonder what did the box look like? Was it like any other casket?

As Burton lamented in his 1925 book, *“It is a sad commentary on the spirit of the age that there is scarce a grave or gravestone left, or even a record of the present place of burial of those who died at Detroit a century ago. All, all, have disappeared!”*<sup>101</sup>

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Group, Inc., 1991 archaeological study: *The One Detroit Center Development: Archaeological Investigations of Detroit's Protestant Burying Ground, circa 1780-1827*.

<sup>101</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.52.



## Chapter Ten

### Demise of Fort Shelby

Just as with cemeteries, time marches on for forts as well, especially those located right in the center of the town.

In 1826, the dilapidated fort was now a desirable piece of real estate and the fort was sold to the city of Detroit and it was decided to raze it. In 1827 while excavating the fort the cemetery was graded up exposing the bodies. The street commissioner ordered that the exposed bodies be reinterred in the new city cemetery on Clinton Street. According to one account though, digging was halted and soldiers were left where they lay, apparently there was another cholera outbreak, and it was attributed to digging up the diseased bodies.<sup>102</sup>

Catlin explains:

*In 1825, when the government donated the Military Reserve, including old Fort Shelby and its embankments, to the city, the earth obtained by grading and leveling the fortifications was hauled down to the river and used to fill the shoal above the water level. This work brought to the surface again the soil that had been so thoroughly poisoned by the encampment of Harrison's army in the winter of 1813 and the workmen began to suffer from sickness. When an attempt was made to exhume the bodies of the soldiers who had died of the epidemic the disease broke out again in the town and Mayor H.J. Hunt was the first to die of it. Thereupon the work of exhumation was stopped and another cemetery was left under the streets of the city as that of old Ste. Anne's Church had been. In spite of all the subsequent excavations the remains of many of these soldiers still lie under the soil about Fort, Wayne and Cass streets.*<sup>103</sup>

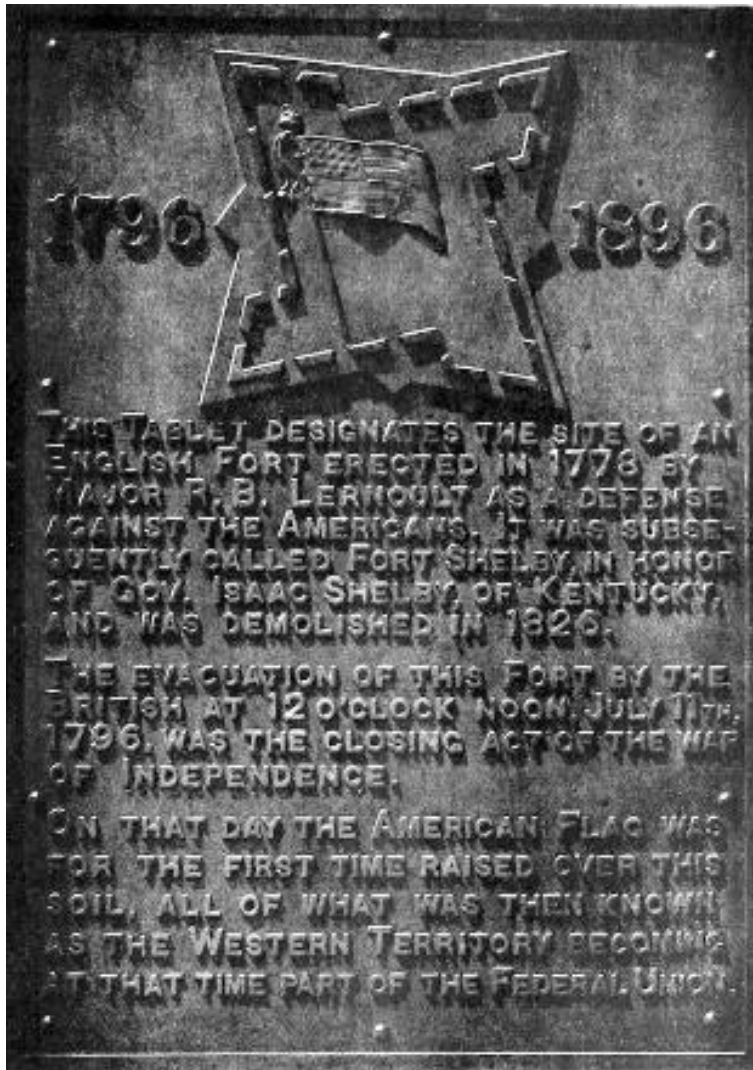
Catlin also says in his earlier book, *A Brief History of Detroit*, that when they tried to remove the bodies Mayor H. J. Hunt died and “*The work was abandoned and the bodies were left in the ground. For many years after every excavation in the street or on the building lots uncovered some of the bones of these soldiers.*”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> McKesson. *A History of the Michigan Funeral Directors Association*. pp.9-10.

<sup>103</sup> Catlin and De La Vergne. *The Story of Detroit*. p.235.

<sup>104</sup> Catlin. *A Brief History of Detroit in the Golden Days of '49*. p.18.



*Courtesy of Julia Davis*

*On May 27, 1826, the last of the garrison—two companies of infantry—which had been stationed at Fort Shelby left...and the military reserve was given to the City of Detroit by Congress. At the fort street entrance of the post office building is a bronze tablet, known as the 'Evacuation Day Tablet', atop of which is an outline design of the old fort, below which is the following inscription: 'This tablet designates*

*the site of an English fort erected in 1778 by Major RB Lernoult as a defense against the Americans. It was subsequently called Fort Shelby, in honor of Gov. Isaac Shelby, of Kentucky, and was demolished in 1826....'*<sup>105</sup>

It cost \$625 dollars to fill in the old ditch around the fort, and in May 1827, 6000 pickets, forming part of the fort and stockade, were sold from two to three dollars per hundred. During the following years up to 1834, the work was continued at an expense of over \$10,000. On May 16, 1827, a public auction of lots on the site of the old fort took place.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.862.

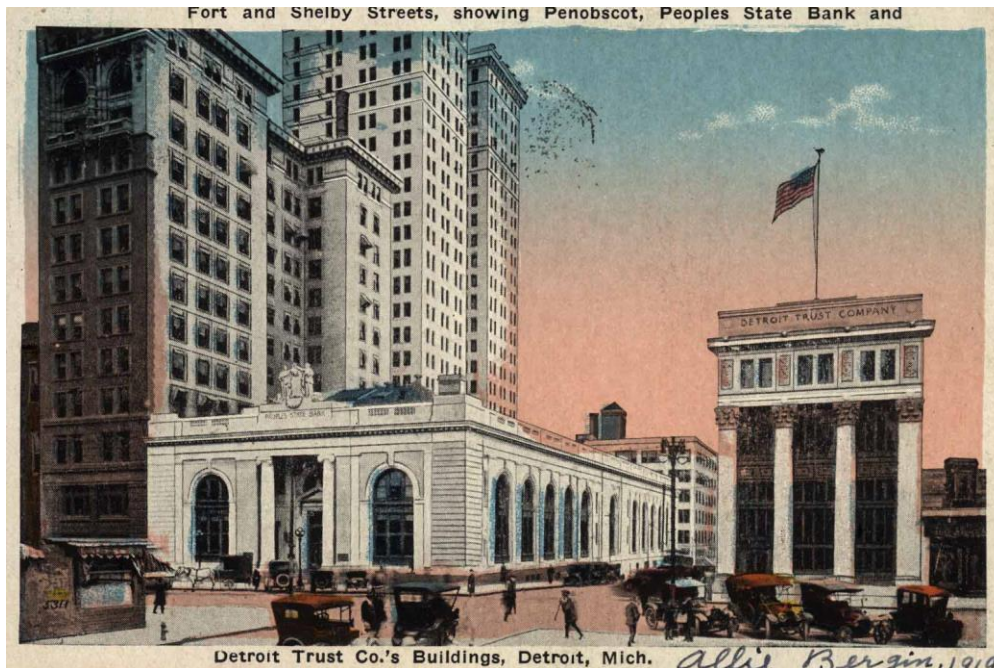
<sup>106</sup> Farmer. *The History of Detroit and Michigan*. pp.8, 36, 225.

Mrs. Samuel Zug of Detroit had a pretty vivid recollection of Fort Shelby and its demise:

*In the early spring of 1827, when an unusual number of people had been walking on the parapet, inquiring the reason, I was told that the next day they intended to begin to take it down. And sure enough, early on Monday appeared a gang of men...with picks and shovels....The leveling of the parapet was considered a great undertaking, and it was two or three years before it was entirely accomplished.*

*Much of the earth taken from the fort was used to fill up the bank of the river, which was in some parts very shallow, and no doubt occasioned the severe malarial fevers that prevailed at certain seasons, and from which cause many useful lives were sacrificed. Well do I remember the consternation that was created by the caving in of a portion of the earth, and one poor man, 'Old Kelly,' being buried under it, and the haste with which his fellow workmen labored to extricate him. But when it was done life was extinct.*

*It was several years later before the cantonment was all removed. Part of the buildings were torn down, and part detached and moved away, and no doubt some portions of them still stand in some parts of the city. Many persons remember the chimneys that stood, like monuments, after the wood that surrounded them was taken away.<sup>107</sup>*



Detroit,  
circa 1919  
postcard  
"Fort and  
Shelby  
Streets"  
Town &  
City  
Scenes,  
General  
Photograph  
Collection,  
RG 2018-  
82

Courtesy  
Archives of  
Michigan

<sup>107</sup> Zug, Mrs. Samuel. "Fort Shelby," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*, Vol. 1, pp.368-370.

For almost two centuries, evidence of the fort, and especially the graveyards, kept revealing themselves and how time has forgotten all those buried within. Burton laments:

*Old graves and human remains have also been uncovered as far down as Fort Street near Wayne and Cass. This soldiers' cemetery [Fort Shelby] was never formally vacated, but as the lands came to be used for business purposes or residences, the old graves were unceremoniously opened and the contents either thrown upon the dump heap and carted off, or, by gentler hands collected and conveyed to one of the city cemeteries, where they were laid in trenches—unknown, unnamed, forgotten.<sup>108</sup>*



*"Cass Avenue, Detroit," circa 1901-1910*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

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<sup>108</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1425.



In 1855, when Cass Street was being paved, many coffins were dug up, and excavations for cellars in that locality have frequently unearthed other older graves.<sup>109</sup>



"Cass Avenue, Detroit," circa 1917

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

On August 6, 1869, a body was exposed on Cass Street, and just a few days later twenty-one bodies were revealed, they were taken to Woodmere to be reinterred. Later, on August 25, more bodies were discovered under Cass Street, and yet *"these are only a few of the many that have been found there, some of them as far down as Fort Street."*<sup>110</sup>

June 14, 1881, the *Detroit Free Press* interviewed Colonel Ebenezer Sproat Sibley who was seven years old at the time of the surrender of Detroit. When asked if he remembered the Battle of Lake Erie, he said, *"I recall the fact of those slain in that engagement being brought here and reinterred. They were at first buried on one of the islands in Lake Erie, but subsequently dug up and brought here...and that they were buried near the fort."* The interviewer informed the Colonel that at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Cass Street, recently workers found the remains of nearly "a score" [twenty+] skeletons in a tight space. Perhaps these were those mariners? To which Sibley responded, *"I hardly think so. That would be near the rear of the fort, and my recollection is that they were buried*

<sup>109</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.52.

<sup>110</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. p.1434.

*on high ground to the east of the fort, but I may be mistaken, for my remembrance of the event is very indistinct.”<sup>111</sup>*

The above account should make us stand up and take notice. Remember the River Raisin soldiers were also said to be buried near John Brooks Jr. of the Battle of Lake Erie fame. Here’s another compelling account:



*“Griswold Street, Detroit,” postcard circa 1900-10.*



*“Southwest corner of Woodward Avenue and Fort Street, Detroit,” circa 1900.*

*Both: Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82*

*Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

<sup>111</sup> “Perry’s Victory: A few Facts Recalled That Are Not Generally Known, The Slain Brought to Detroit and Interred Near Fort Shelby,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 14 1881, DFP-PQ.

Seventeen years later in the newspaper on June 16, 1898, it was reported that workers digging at the corner of Griswold and Fort Streets uncovered bones six feet underground that appeared to have been in the ground for 100 years or more. The partial skull and bones had faint traces of wood around them, thus it was thought they had been buried in a wood coffin. There was also a wrought iron nail sunk deep into the thigh of the skeleton. When asked about the discovery Burton said,

*The remains were undoubtedly those of a man who had fought on Lake Erie. In 1813 the remains of thirty or forty men killed on our side in that fight were taken to Put-In-Bay and buried. They were unearthed four years later, and on September 30, 1817, were interred at or near the point where the bones of yesterday came to light. It was then the glacis, or outskirts, of the government grounds surrounding old Fort Shelby. The funeral service over the dead heroes was grand and impressive.*<sup>112</sup>

The report continued that it is believed the man was struck by a piece of wood caused by the explosion of a shell which ultimately cost him his life. Yet ironically the article continues saying, *“The bones were carted away by the contractor on the work and will be buried in an out-of-the-way place.”*<sup>113</sup>

Three days later, a letter to the editor appeared in the newspaper responding to the report that the bones were carted away by the contractor and will be buried in an out of the way place.

*“Griswold Street, Detroit,” circa 1916 postcard*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*



<sup>112</sup> “Skeletons Unearthed,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 16, 1898, p.2., DFP-PQ.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

The author, Noah W. Cheever, says that he trusts the expert Burton's opinion that these are a Battle of Lake Erie's heroic soldier's remains, but

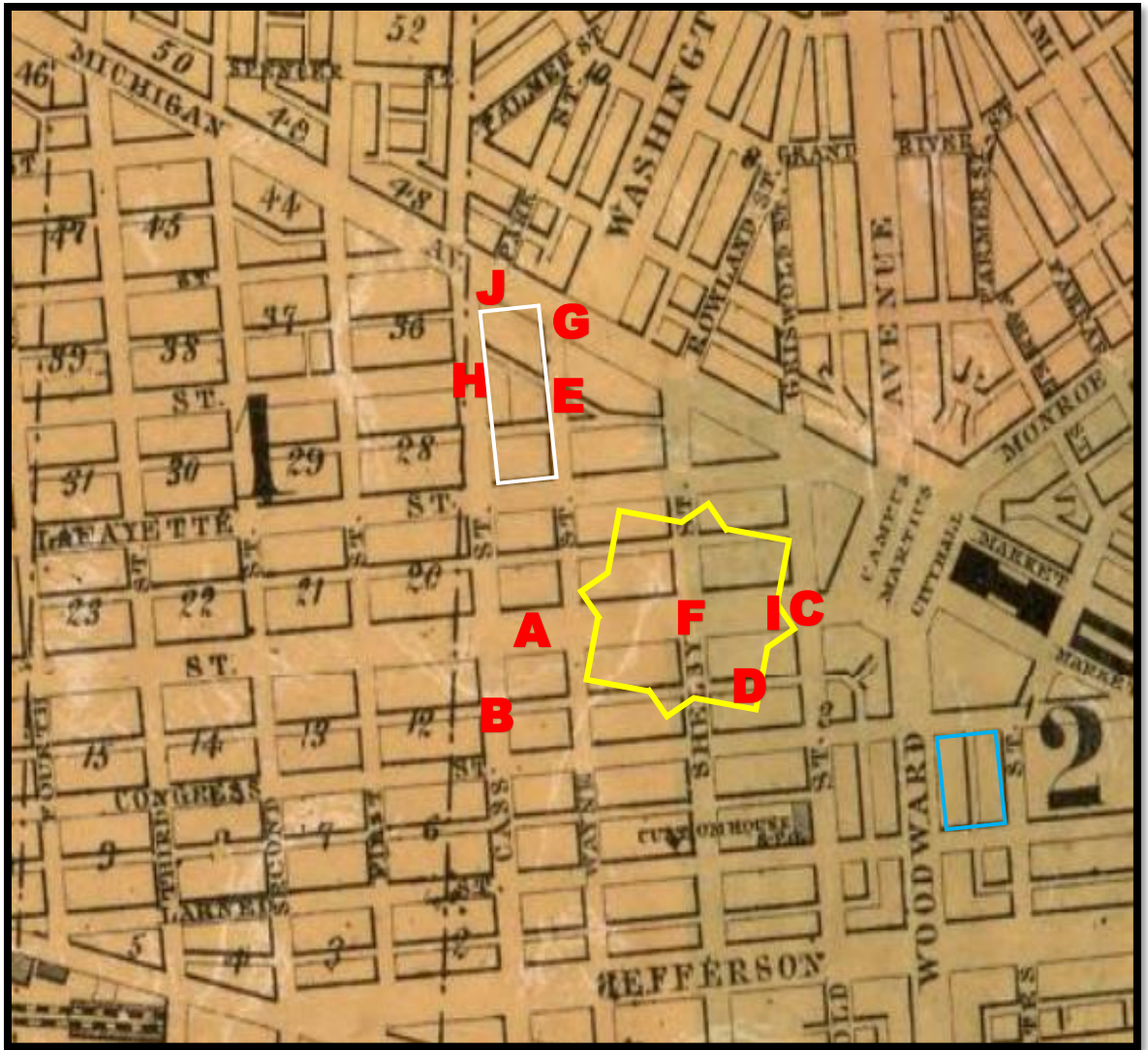
*I am somewhat surprised that the patriotic people of Detroit will allow the remains of this dead patriot to be thus disposed of....*

*As the evidence is quite conclusive that they are the remains of a man who gave his life to perpetuate and preserve our great republic and dedicate it to freedom for our common humanity, it would seem that a proper regard for the patriotism....should induce the public authorities to give a public and honored burial to those remains of the dead hero in some of the cemeteries at Detroit, and erect at the grave a proper headstone with an appropriate inscription therein.<sup>114</sup>*

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<sup>114</sup> "Entitled to Public and Honored Burial," *Detroit Free Press*, June 19 1898, p. A8, DFP-PQ.



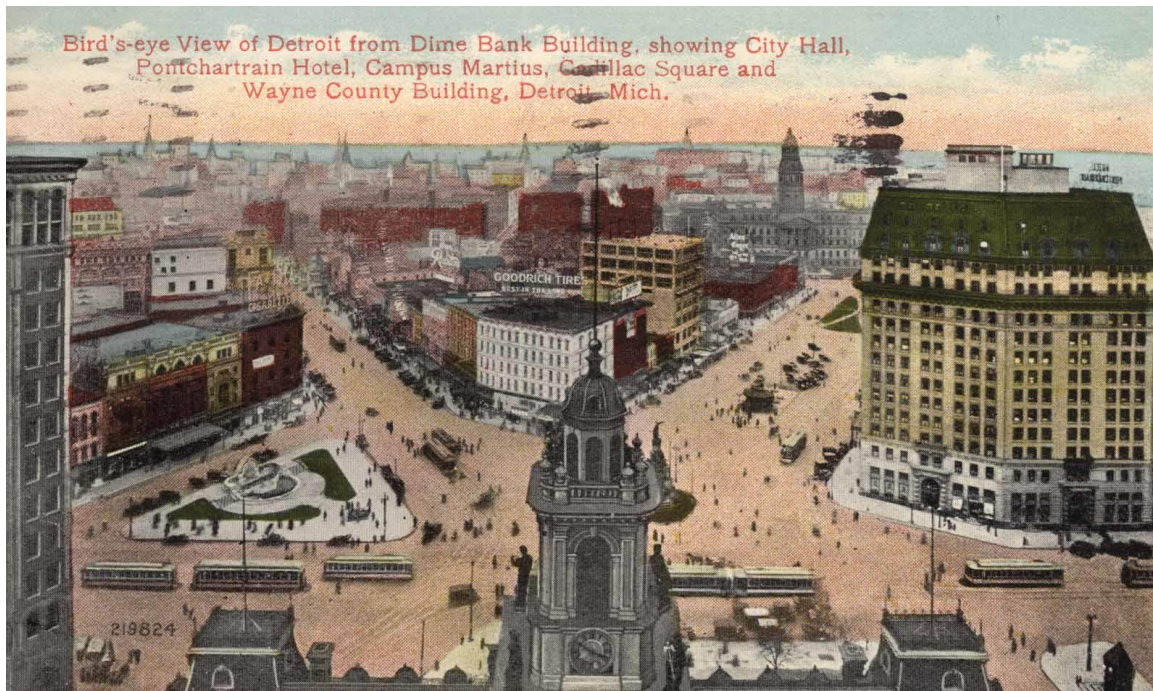


**Figure 10.1: “Detail from 1860 Map of Wayne County, MI.”** Showing locations of Graves found in red, fort in yellow, military cemetery in white and Protestant Cemetery in blue.

- |    |                 |   |
|----|-----------------|---|
| A. | 1855:           | Many Graves found, Soldiers cemetery on Fort St. near Wayne & Cass  |
| B. | Aug. 6, 1869:   | 1 body Cass St., 21 bodies + more on Cass as far as Fort St., approx. location  |
| C. | June 16, 1898:  | Lake Erie soldier? Glacis of fort area burial ground  |
| D. | May 11, 1904:   | Skull found in an alley, soldiers burial ground, approx. location   |
| E. | Aug. 27, 1905:  | Coffins found, skulls, bones, buttons, appears as military, approx. location  |
| F. | Sept. 20, 1908: | Many skulls, bones under barrels, center of fort + May 1962, fort dig reveals bone fragments                                      |
| G. | June 24, 1911:  | Coffin & remains found, approx. location  |
| H. | June 24, 1916:  | 2 skeletons, near/on Howard St. 14 soldiers’ coffins + 16 more found  |
| I. | 1919/1920:      | A few years before 1921, Center of Fort St. Kentucky soldiers found? No exact location.   |
| J. | June 14, 1881:  | 20+ skeletons found, mariners? Also July 25, 1984 and 1986-People Mover investigations reveal many remains in military graveyard. |

**Map above:** *Geil and Jones, Geil & Harley, Freed, Isaac G., Worley & Bracher. Geil, Philadelphia : Geil, Harley & Siverd, 1860.*  
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

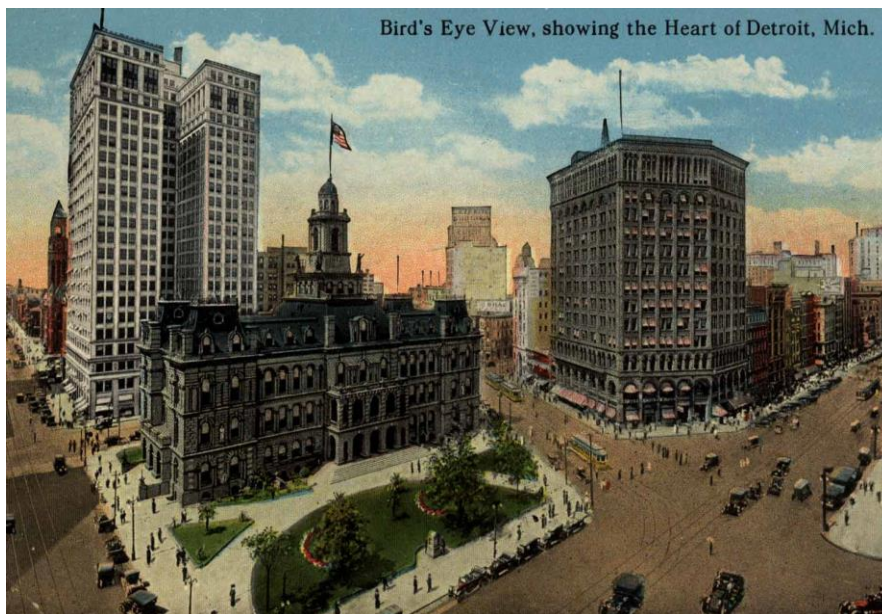




*"Bird's Eye View of Detroit," circa 1910-1915*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

On May 11, 1904, a *Detroit Free Press* article said a skull "undoubtedly that of a soldier of old fort Shelby" was found under the alley between Fort, Congress, Griswold, and Shelby Streets. According to Burton, the article continues, this was the spot of the fort that was used as a burial ground for the soldiers. The skull was examined by a doctor, and it is thought that the hole in the front part of it was caused by a Native American



arrow and that the soldier met his death previous to 1796.<sup>115</sup>

*"Bird's Eye View, Detroit" postcard circa 1916*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

<sup>115</sup> "Skull of a Soldier of the Garrison of old Fort Shelby?" *Detroit Free Press*, May 11 1904, DFP-PQ.

The *Detroit Free Press* reported on August 27, 1905, that while contractors were digging about two feet down in the vicinity of Wayne Street and Michigan Avenue, they uncovered human remains. But it was actually the nearby eagle-eyed messenger boys that quickly seized upon the objects revealed. Broken coffins, two skulls, scattered bones, brass U.S. buttons, and a military badge that said, “Boyd’s Battery” were uncovered. The article says, “*the dead were evidently from the old fort Shelby, buried on the fort cemetery that formally occupied the space that is now almost the heart of the city.*”<sup>116</sup>

Another report on September 20, 1908, said that while contractors were excavating at the site of the new post office addition, which is about the middle of where Fort Shelby stood, three barrels one on top of the other were unearthed, as well as a few skulls and several skeleton bones. The fort burial ground however was not located where the bones were discovered and just adds more questions to the mystery.<sup>117</sup>

Yet another skull was found, on June 24, 1911, by workmen excavating on Michigan Avenue. While digging a trench the workman’s spade crushed into a coffin revealing a blackened skull, and a few bones. The workers were so astonished and appalled at the same time; they refused to dig any further. The remains are believed to be those of a soldier from the old Fort Shelby burial grounds.

“Detroit,” circa  
1880-90

Town & City  
Scenes, General  
Photograph  
Collection, RG  
2018-82,  
Courtesy Archives  
of Michigan



<sup>116</sup> “Two Skulls Were Dug Up: Gruesome Find of Workmen on Wayne Street,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 27 1905, DFP-PQ.

<sup>117</sup> “Bone Mystery at the Post Office: Gruesome Find in Excavation Recalls the Days of Old Fort Shelby,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 20 1908, DFP-PQ.





*"Michigan Avenue by Lafayette and Howard Streets, Detroit," circa 1930*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

Referring to previous finds as well, Burton said, *"The soil is enriched with the bodies of countless men of war."*<sup>118</sup> Also on June 24<sup>th</sup>, but four years later in 1916, the *Detroit Free Press* reported that a second skeleton was found at Cass Street, near Howard Street. The previous week a skeleton had been found in only two foot of ground with no coffin. This second skeleton however was in a coffin about four feet down.<sup>119</sup>

*The Detroit Advertiser and Tribune* reported:

*One gentleman, residing near Howard street, discovered the remains of no less than 14 soldiers while excavating a cellar, and a citizen digging for the same purpose found on the opposite side of the street, some 15 or 16...In laying a drain through the street several years ago similar discoveries were made. The soldiers were often buried in regimental and frequently in cherry coffins. When exhumed the coffins have generally been found in an excellent state of preservation and the features of the corpses life-like and natural with but little indication of decay, but after a few minutes exposure to the air the bodies crumbled away.*<sup>120</sup>

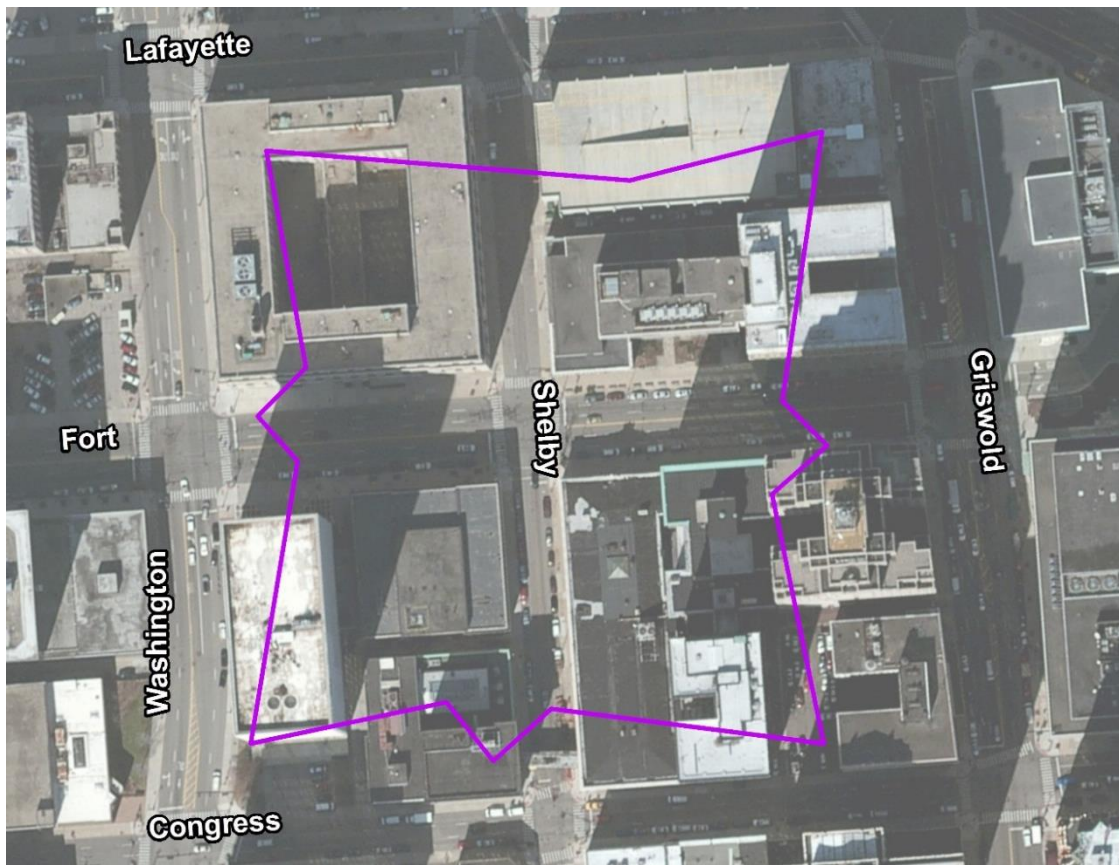
<sup>118</sup> "Skull Taken From Trench Reverts to Days of Fort Shelby: Spade Crunches Into a Coffin as Workmen Excavate on Michigan Avenue in Down Town Section," *Detroit Free Press*, June 24, 1911, DFP-PQ.

<sup>119</sup> "Second Skeleton Taken From Cass Avenue Site," *Detroit Free Press*, June 24 1916, DFP-PQ.

<sup>120</sup> Elliott-Bragg, Amy. *Hidden History of Detroit*. Charleston: The History Press, 2011, pp.94-5.

Catlin wrote in his book in 1921: “A number of times, the last time a few years ago, in the center of Fort Street, bodies of these Kentucky soldiers have been found and identified by the metal belt clasp and military buttons.”<sup>121</sup>

This is the first time we hear of any identifiable remains of the Kentucky soldiers, other than the tomahawk markings. Of course, Fort Street is where the fort was, and other soldier's bodies were uncovered. Thus, we are reminded once again that the graves were opened in 1827, and quickly closed up again when cholera reared its ugly head. Could the River Raisin soldiers still be under Fort Street today?



*Overlay of Fort Shelby on modern Detroit*  
*Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

In the fall of 1961, construction for the new Detroit Bank and Trust building uncovered a wooden post from the fort. In May 1962, the first official archeological investigations of Fort Lernoult (Shelby) were launched. Arnold Pilling of the Department of Anthropology, Wayne State University, conducted the research. He was able to uncover more information about the old fort's placement especially in relation to modern Detroit.

<sup>121</sup> Catlin. *A Brief History of Detroit in the golden days of '49*. p.17.

*“Among the artifacts which he unearthed were sections of palisades and pickets, iron and wooden nails, buttons, coins, and even human bone fragments.”*<sup>122</sup>

The *Detroit Free Press* reported in July 25, 1984, that the Commonwealth Associates of Jackson, led by Archeologist Stephan Demeter, was investigating an area at Michigan and Cass Streets in Detroit that is in the path of the People Mover project. They actually came upon the military graveyard of Fort Shelby. They thought that it might be the 500 American soldiers who died of Typhus in 1814 and were placed in shallow graves on the reservation.<sup>123</sup>

On January 31, 1986, more information was revealed about soldiers discovered by the archeological team, when the *Detroit Free Press* reported:

*Four veterans of the Ohio Militia, who helped wrest[le] Detroit from British occupation in September 1813, only to die during a cholera epidemic that decimated the city almost immediately afterward. The names of the four soldiers, whose remains were unearthed during construction of the downtown Detroit People Mover in 1984, are unknown. At least two of the four were buried in shrouds rather than coffins in an emergency cemetery near the current intersection of Michigan and Cass. None had military equipment or identification. One of them wore earrings, and all four had bad teeth.*<sup>124</sup>

The remains were discovered in July 1984, about three feet in the ground, when workers were building a maintenance facility for the People Mover at Michigan and Cass Streets. An archeological survey concluded that the remains had been disturbed before by previous construction and that many of the bones were removed then. Michigan State University examined the dental remains and determined the ages of the soldiers were between thirty and fifty years of age.<sup>125</sup>

In honor of Michigan’s Sesquicentennial and as a tribute to the soldiers, it was decided to have a full military ceremony to reinter the remains. On June 14, 1986, a military honor guard and many reenactors led horse drawn caissons that carried the remains, in four plain pine boxes draped in the American flag, from Historic Fort Wayne to Woodmere Cemetery, where the soldiers were buried in the military section.

A couple things we need to keep in mind about this were actually pointed out by the late Fort Wayne Curator William Phenix. In a June 13, 1986 *Detroit Free Press* interview, Phenix said the soldiers *“probably were from Ohio, as were most of the garrison in*

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<sup>122</sup> Mason, Philip P. *Detroit, Fort Lernoult, and the American Revolution*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964.

<sup>123</sup> “Bones in path of people mover help tell tale of early Detroit,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 25 1984, p.1., DFP-PQ.

<sup>124</sup> “Unknown soldiers: Tribute to honor heroes of city’s past,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 31 1986, p.1., DFP-PQ.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

1813.” And archeologists believe the soldiers died in one of the epidemics, and were buried in the military graveyard, but overlooked when the rest of the cemetery was moved.<sup>126</sup>

Now we know that only a few soldiers were removed because of the resurgence of the epidemic in 1827, and people blamed it on digging up the bodies, thus the digging was put to a halt. Although they might be soldiers from the epidemic, there is really no proof. Furthermore, we do not know they were from Ohio, since they had no identification on them.



Steve Demeter and Russ Henry in their hotel room with some of the artifacts they've dug up from a spot four feet below the surface at an intersection near the riverfront in downtown Detroit.

In 1987 another archeological investigation was led by C. Stephan Demeter and Donald J. Wier into the Downtown Detroit People Mover project (Central Automated Transit System or CATS).

The report documented the archeological investigation of thirty-eight support piers for the CATS project. While most of the piers were in existing rights-of-way, seven were examined and found to have archeological deposits. The Michigan Avenue Station contained early 19<sup>th</sup> century burials and building foundations.<sup>127</sup>

*Courtesy of the Detroit Free Press*<sup>128</sup>

<sup>126</sup> “Proper burial planned for 4 unsung soldiers,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 13 1986, p.12, DFP-PQ.

<sup>127</sup> Gilbert & Commonwealth, Inc. 1987. *Phase I Archaeological Literature Review, land Use History and Disturbance Assessment: Woodward Avenue: Light Rail Transit Project*. Detroit: by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration, City of Detroit, Department of Transportation, June 2011.

<sup>128</sup> “Diggers find hints of old ‘Day-twah,’” *Detroit Free Press*, July 31, 1983, Sec. A, p.1. DFP-PQ.



Let us go back to 1959 for a moment, there was a great historical debate over the details for a monument that was to go up to mark the story of the soldiers who perished at Fort Shelby. The *Detroit Free Press* said the debate reached all the way to Congress. The points being debated were:

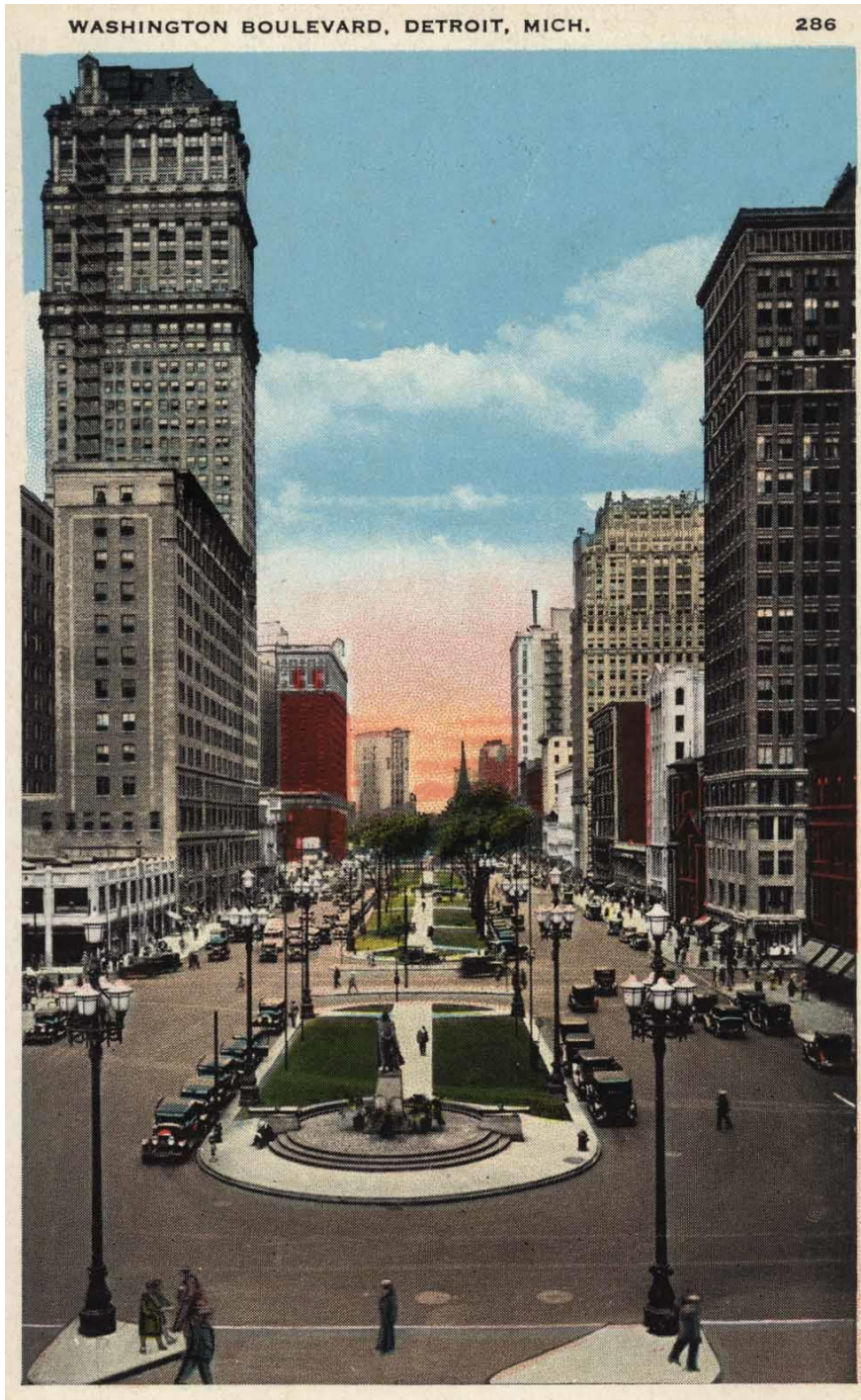
1. *Are 700 American soldiers buried near what is now the corner of Lafayette and Washington Boulevard?*
2. *Were they felled in a plague that swept the British garrison, or did they die in action with the British?*
3. *Were many of them really civilians sworn into the militia, so the army could legally give them food and shelter that hard winter of 1813-14?*<sup>129</sup>

The *Detroit Free Press* article said for a year historians puzzled over the details of the facts, but with a donor at hand ready to pay for the marker, Detroit Councilman Eugene Van Antwerp said, *“Be assured that something will be done to commemorate the sacrifice of American lives to regain possession of the Northwest Territories – whatever the number of those buried here and whether they fell through enemy action or disease.”*<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> “We’ll Honor 1812 Dead, Even if Facts are Vague,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 31 1959, p.23. DFP-PQ.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.



The placement was to be the little triangular park in the center of Washington, between Michigan and LaFayette, Van Antwerp said, *"That's about where a military cemetery was inside Fort Lernoult (later Fort Shelby), and it's only reasonable to assume that some heroes of the war were buried there."*

The article continues quoting Burton from 1922: *"The (burial) field was quite full and the long rows of graves can even now be ascertained by the excavations occasionally made in this quarter of the old town."*<sup>131</sup>

*"Washington Boulevard looking from Michigan Avenue, Detroit," postcard circa 1928-30  
Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

<sup>131</sup> *Detroit Free Press*, May 31 1959, p.23.

Curator at the Detroit Historical Museum, Daniel B. Reibel, was consulted and found that the Burton collection specified only 277 soldiers died of disease from November 1813 to May 1814. Reibel says he believes, *“another 250 men were killed in action and buried in downtown Detroit, but very few were slain here. Most were killed in nearby battles, such as the action at the River Raisin, near Monroe, the engagement at Mackinac Island, the Battle of Lake Erie. The bodies were later transported here for military funerals.”*<sup>132</sup>

It did take six more years however, before the marker was erected in 1964, and the text decided on was as follows:

*Hardship struck soon after American troops regained Detroit on Sept. 29, 1813, during the War of 1812. Soldiers' quarters were lacking, and food supplies became desperately short. Then a disease resembling cholera broke out among the soldiers. By Dec. 1, 1813, nearly 1,300 officers and men were sick. Medical supplies were almost gone. Conditions worsened, when coffins became unobtainable, many soldiers were buried in a common grave at this site. Some 700 may have died before the epidemic ran its course.*<sup>133</sup>

The *Detroit Free Press* and *The Monroe Evening News* covered the dedication of a new historical marker on May 30, 2019, that actually revisited the story of the People Mover discovery. The marker that had been there since 1964 was replaced by a shiny new marker that provided a little more information on the grave site on one side and a summary of the War of 1812 in Detroit on the other side. The United States Daughters of 1812, Historical Society of Michigan, and Jim McConnell of the Michigan War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission worked for a year to make the marker a reality.

The important aspect of this whole story is that Van Antwerp's choice of a spot in 1959 was corroborated by the finding of the cemetery in 1984 by the archeological investigation by Demeter and again by the CATS project in 1987. Thus, the new marker actually says, *“This grave site was identified in 1987 during the archaeological survey for the People Mover that found four burials associated with the War of 1812.”*<sup>134</sup>

After taking into account all the various reports of bones being found in and around Fort Shelby after so many years, it appears there is no doubt that the military cemetery was left pretty much intact. Not only that, but as we have seen the location of the cemetery corresponds to the remains found as well. We have also seen evidence that supports that some of the River Raisin soldiers could still be there, as could John Brooks Jr. Unfortunately, we will never know for sure, and we are left to wonder....

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<sup>132</sup> *Detroit Free Press*, May 31 1959, p.23.

<sup>133</sup> [www.detroit1701.org/Warof1812Dead.htm](http://www.detroit1701.org/Warof1812Dead.htm)

<sup>134</sup> “War of 1812 grave site receives historical marker” *The Monroe Evening News*, June 10 2019, p.3A.



*Negative of "Fort Shelby Hotel," Detroit, circa 1942  
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Farm Security Administration/Office of War  
Information Black-and-White Negatives.*



## Chapter Eleven

### Detroit - One Vast Cemetery



"St. Anne's Street," circa 1837 (current day Jefferson & Griswold Avenues), Detroit Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan

On June 4, 1905, the *Detroit Free Press* did a little series called "Detroit in Earlier Days" by historian Friend Palmer. Looking back, Mr. Palmer had this to say:

*I presume there is hardly a rod square of ground underlying the city from Beaubien street to First, and from the river back to Fort street and in the immediate vicinity of the latter, that does not contain the remains of a human being....Jefferson avenue in the immediate vicinity of where old St. Anne's church before the fire of 1805 must now contain the remains of many who were in the old church cemetery. I repeatedly saw workmen uncover coffins of those that had been buried there (for 105 years it was a burying ground). Detroit, I think, may be called one vast cemetery. When excavating for the foundations of buildings now occupying the old St. Anne's church square on Larned Street, many, many dead bodies were disturbed and scattered. Even Colonel Hamtramck's remains might have*

*met the fate of the rest if some kindly hand had not seen to it that they got safe sepulcher in Mt. Elliott cemetery.*<sup>135</sup>



*"St. Anne's Street," circa 1955 (current day Jefferson & Griswold Avenues), Detroit Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

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<sup>135</sup> "Detroit in Earlier Days," *Detroit Free Press*, June 4 1905, DFP-PQ.

Around 1827, The Protestant Burial grounds were “*now needed for the building of three Protestant churches and the Governor and Judges ordered the removal of the remains there interred to a new plat which was purchased on the farm of Antoine Beaubien, between the present lines of Clinton Street and Gratiot Avenue.*” Two and a half acres were purchased from Antione Beaubien for \$589.30 and the cemetery was to be called the Clinton Street Cemetery (today the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice near Greektown) and would be divided between the Protestants and Catholics.<sup>136</sup>

Catlin says, “*Bodies were removed from the English burying ground and from St. Anne’s second churchyard to the new cemetery which was bounded by Clinton and Gratiot, Beaubien and Hastings Streets.*”<sup>137</sup>

Most contemporary accounts from Monroe historians, like Talcott Wing and John McClelland Bulkley, contend the River Raisin soldiers were moved from the Protestant Cemetery in Detroit to the Clinton Street one in 1834. If we look back to the account of church builder Alanson Sheley, this would fit the timeline in that scenario. He claimed he found the remains in 1834 and moved them, along with Mackinaw’s Major Holmes, from the Protestant Cemetery to the city cemetery on Russell Street. But notice he said Russell Street not Clinton Street. We will look at both cemeteries in a moment. In any case, he said he recognized Holmes by the cannonballs in his casket and the River Raisin soldiers by their tomahawked skulls, plus there were twenty or so in a single box. But as we know from the accounts over the last two centuries, not all the bodies were removed out of that cemetery.

Silas Farmer’s account says that in 1834 the box containing the Kentuckian remains with “*all of the skulls showing the mark of the tomahawk*” was removed to the city cemetery on Clinton Street. Interestingly enough, he mentions a box and tomahawked skulls. So, he corroborates the story of Sheley, other than he does not agree it is the Russell Street Cemetery.<sup>138</sup>

If any of the River Raisin remains, or John Brooks Jr., were at Fort Shelby, there is much less of a chance that they made it to Clinton Street. Even though the street commissioner ordered the bodies to be excavated, just barely after the work began, it was halted because of the reemergence of cholera. There is also another problem with the timeline. The fort closed in 1827, and the remains were said to be removed in 1834.

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<sup>136</sup> Catlin and De La Vergne. *The Story of Detroit*. p.266.

<sup>137</sup> Catlin. *A Brief History of Detroit in the Golden Days of '49*. p.17.

<sup>138</sup> Farmer. *The History of Detroit and Michigan*. p.280.



*"Russell Street, Detroit," circa 1940-1950 (Russell Street Cemetery no longer exists)  
Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

The population of Detroit boomed between 1825 and 1835 and the Clinton Street Cemetery was already overflowing. The cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1834 congested the city graveyards to capacity. Thus in 1834, the Guoin Farm was also purchased by the city for \$2,010. This cemetery was called the Russell Street Cemetery (today Eastern Market). *"A portion of the front of this farm was laid off for immediate use and burials ceased to take place in the other cemeteries."*<sup>139</sup> Thus, according to this timeline, the soldier's remains probably would have been put in the Russell Street Cemetery as Sheley said, not the Clinton Street one, because it was already full.

Regardless, the River Raisin dead were not to remain in Detroit, or at least that was the intention. *"In 1849 a movement was started by Edward Brooks of Detroit for the removal of these remains of Kentuckians to their native soil. A delegation from Kentucky came to receive them and to conduct their removal."*<sup>140</sup>

Catlin states, *"In 1849 all that could be found were exhumed again and taken to Kentucky for final interment, most of them having been militiamen from Kentucky."*<sup>141</sup>

Ross' account is a little different: *"The remains of these brave men reposed in two Detroit cemeteries until 1849, when, by the instrumentality of Edward Brooks, a*

<sup>139</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. pp.1426-29.

<sup>140</sup> Catlin and De La Vergne. *The Story of Detroit*. pp.161-62.

<sup>141</sup> Catlin. *A Brief History of Detroit in the Golden Days of '49*. p.17.



*prominent Detroiter and collector of customs from 1841-1845, they were removed to the soil from whence they sprang.*"<sup>142</sup>

The *Detroit Free Press* put it a little different in their report: "In 1849, at the request of the people of Kentucky, the bodies were again moved and interred in their native soil, at Lexington, Ky."'<sup>143</sup> Another article in *The Detroit News* gives us more information about how they were identified:

*Scattered remains of the 397 victims of the River Raisin massacre were brought here from Monroe for burial. These remains were later removed in 1834 to the city cemetery between Clinton Street and Gratiot Avenue and again removed in 1849 to Frankfort, KY, because nearly all the victims were Kentuckians. Although their graves were unmarked, every victim of the massacre was easily identified by the mark of a tomahawk in the skull.*<sup>144</sup>

As we have seen there is nothing simple, and nothing can be taken for granted regarding this whole story of the bones. The Monroe and Kentucky historians do not agree with the 1849 date. They claim that in September 1834 they were dug up from Clinton Street Cemetery and entrusted to Colonel Edward Brooks of Detroit, a War of 1812 veteran and volunteer from Kentucky. They say Brooks returned the bones to their home in Frankfort Kentucky in 1834. How can this be? We are talking about a difference of fifteen years.<sup>145</sup>

Now, let us turn our attention to the fate of the cemeteries.

In 1849 Bishop Lefevre asked the council to prohibit further interments in the Catholic portion of the Clinton Park Cemetery (as it was now known) and on June 26<sup>th</sup> public notice was given of the discontinuance of all burials in that cemetery. Two years later Sheley, who purchased a portion of the old Woodward Avenue cemetery, gave notice that he intended to excavate the ground to erect new buildings. So, people were requested to remove remains of loved ones and friends.<sup>146</sup>

The Clinton Park Cemetery officially closed in 1855, and 1,892 graves were removed, most were reinterred in Woodmere and Elmwood cemeteries. Russell Street Cemetery closed in 1869 and 4,518 graves of mostly "paupers and the unclaimed dead" were removed with most going to the Connor Creek Cemetery, by I-94 and Connor Street. Anthropologist and author Karen Krepps said, the "Connor Creek Cemetery apparently

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<sup>142</sup> Ross and Catlin. *Landmarks of Detroit: A History of the City*. p.333.

<sup>143</sup> "Michigan's Bloodiest Episode is recalled on 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Massacre of the River Raisin," *Detroit Free Press*, January 15 1933.

<sup>144</sup> "Building 45 Stories High to Tower Over Detroit," *Detroit News*, June 6 1926.

<sup>145</sup> Johnson, L. F. *The History of Franklin County, Ky.* p.60; Clift. *Remember the Raisin!* p.103; Price, Samuel W. *The Old Masters of The Bluegrass*. Filson Club Publication No. 17, Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1902, pp.106-07.

<sup>146</sup> Burton. *The City of Detroit Michigan*. pp.1430-31.

*fell into oblivion.*” Not until 1950 was it identified as having been a cemetery site. Krepps said, “*Local residents recalled that five tennis courts were placed over the graves.*” Construction workers uncovered remains there in 1950 and 1958. Apparently, the removal from Russell Street was not very successful in the first place. Graves were discovered there in 1893, and again during the construction of the Fisher Freeway in 1967.<sup>147</sup>



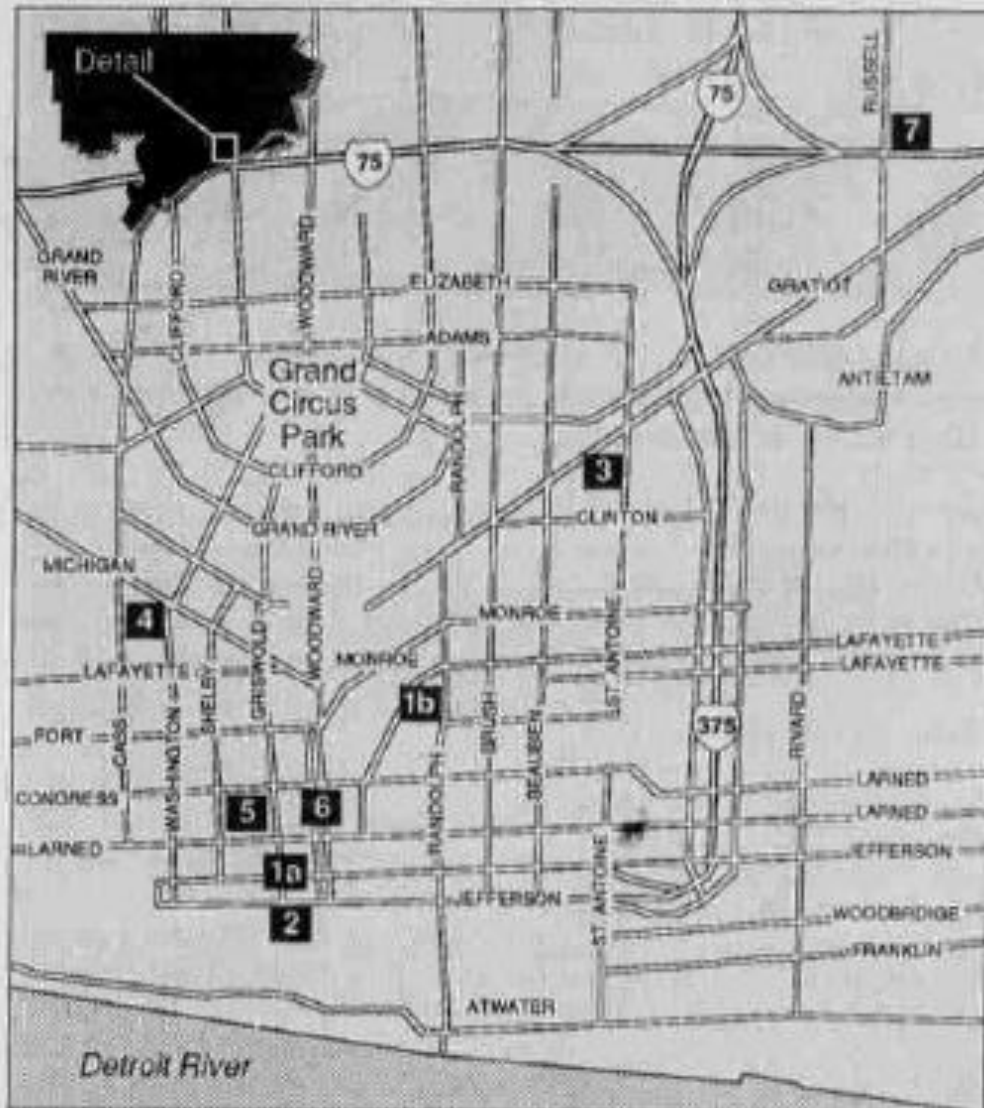
*“Penobscot Building, Detroit,” circa 1932*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*

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<sup>147</sup> “Grave Fate met many cemeteries of Yore,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 25 1988, pp.3A, 15A, DFP-PQ.

## What became of some Detroit cemeteries



Then

Now

1a. St. Anne cemeteries	.....	American Natural Resources Building
1b. St. Anne cemeteries	.....	bus terminal
2. British Garden Cemetery	.....	Hart Plaza
3. Clinton Park Cemetery	.....	Frank Murphy Hall of Justice
4. Ft. Lamoult Military Cemetery	.....	People Mover Station
5. Ft. Shelby Cemetery	.....	Penobscot Building
6. Protestant Cemetery	.....	Municipal parking lot
7. Russell Street Cemetery	.....	Eastern Market

SOURCES: Karen Krepps, "Historic Cemetery Survey of Wayne County Michigan"; Krepps, "Land Use History of Conner Creek Cemetery," and Clarence Burton, "The City of Detroit, Michigan, 1701-1922."

*Newspaper Clipping Courtesy of the Detroit Free Press (see note 143)*

“Grave fate met many cemeteries of yore,” was an article in the *Detroit Free Press* April 28, 1988, that revealed the fate of many of the old cemeteries:

*In past eras, graves have been dug up and moved wholesale, forgotten and paved over, accidentally jumbled by backhoes and shovels....Some of the city’s downtown landmarks – including Penobscot Building, the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice, part of Hart plaza, the American Natural Resources Building, and the Greyhound Bus Lines terminal – cover land that was cemeteries in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.*<sup>148</sup>

The newspaper consulted Wayne State Anthropologist, and author of “*Historic Cemetery Survey of Wayne County, Michigan*,” Karen Krepps. Speaking about many grave sites, she said, “There are no records in terms of whether they were ever removed. I think in a lot of cases they were just left in place.” Wooden grave markers deteriorate, and graves are impossible to find when trying to relocate a cemetery.<sup>149</sup> In 1955, the *Detroit Free Press* explained it thus:

*Detroiters who died in the 140 years of the City’s existence prior to the founding of Mt Elliott in 1841 were buried in nine cemeteries – all of which have been obliterated. Only a few hundred bodies were transferred to Mt. Elliott and its neighbor, Elmwood Cemetery.” A Protestant cemetery had been established...at Woodward and Larned, while military personnel of the fort were buried at Griswold and Woodbridge. By the turn of the century, all were filled to overflowing. The military moved to Lafayette and Wayne. The Protestants purchased two and a half acres of the Antoine Beaubien farm between Jefferson and Gratiot. Noting that the Protestants had moved their cemetery to Russell and Gratiot – only soon to be smack in the path of street expansion...*<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> “Grave Fate met many cemeteries of Yore,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 25 1988, pp.3A, 15A, DFP-PQ.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> “Old Cemeteries Dot Downton Detroit,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 20 1955, p.2-B., DFP-PQ.





*Negative of "In Elmwood Cemetery," Detroit, circa 1902  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company  
Collection*

So basically, if the River Raisin soldiers were moved to the Clinton or Russell Street cemeteries, some, or all, may or may not have ever made it out of there, whether it was 1834 or 1849. If they did not make it out, or a few still remained, they could be in Mt. Elliott, Woodmere, Elmwood, or Connor Creek cemeteries. They could even be somewhere under the streets of Detroit, or under the five tennis courts.



*"Detroit," circa 1925-27*

*Town & City Scenes, General Photograph Collection, RG 2018-82, Courtesy Archives of Michigan*



*Negative of "Grand Circus Park," Detroit, circa 1905 Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection*

## Chapter Twelve

### Entrusted to Colonel Brooks

As we have seen there is a discrepancy between when Colonel Edward Brooks actually took the bones to Kentucky in 1834 or 1849.

But there are two accounts that might possibly shed some light on this. The first one is Wing who says that along with the Clinton Street Cemetery remains, Brooks also took *“other skulls & bones collected in Monroe.”* He says the remains were returned to Kentucky in 1834. Once all the bones got to Kentucky they were received by an *“immense concourse of Kentuckians and deposited with appropriate ceremonies in the state cemetery of Kentucky.”* Inscribed on the boxes were the words *“Kentucky’s gallant dead January 1813.”*<sup>151</sup>

Farmer’s account says the remains were removed by Brooks in September 1849 *“who carried them, with other bones collected in Monroe county to Frankfort, Kentucky. He arrived there September 30<sup>th</sup> and the venerated remains were deposited with appropriate ceremony in the state cemetery of Kentucky.”*<sup>152</sup>

The part about Brooks carrying with him *“other bones collected in Monroe”* is what we need to focus on. These two historians are the only ones who mention this. So, we have to look at Monroe and see if there were any other bones collected during this specific time that were entrusted to Colonel Brooks...

Interestingly enough, the *Monroe Gazette* reported on August 28, 1838, that bones can still be seen scattered about bleaching in the sun. *“Though many of them were afterwards gathered by their friends and consigned to the tomb, still, many of their bones may yet be found, bleached by the alternate sunshine and storms, which have continued to beat upon them for the last quarter of a century.”* There are no other details other than the purpose of the article is to arouse the citizens to build a monument as a tribute of respect for those who lost their lives.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Wing. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. p.60.

<sup>152</sup> Farmer. *The History of Detroit and Michigan*. p.280.

<sup>153</sup> *Monroe Gazette*, August 28 1838.

But lo’ and behold look what turns up in 1848:



*“Monroe Street,” circa 1910*  
*Courtesy of Michael Huggins*

The *Monroe Advocate* published an article entitled “*A Place of Skulls [sic]*” telling how workmen discovered a mass grave while digging post holes for sunshades along Monroe Street for the Fourth of July celebration. Thirteen skulls showing evidence of tomahawk markings, along with other bones, were discovered in a mass grave. Elderly residents related a tale of two families, amounting to sixteen people, that died at the hands of the Native Americans in the same location and subsequently buried there.<sup>154</sup> It is more likely however, that these were soldiers’ bones that were buried in the first Protestant Cemetery located between Front and First Streets. Thus, if that is the case, once again not all the bodies were removed.

The *Monroe Commercial* was a little contradictory however:

*The bones of these brave men were found in a common grave, which was accidentally upturned while grading one of our streets. The fact of the skulls being all cloven with the tomahawk, induced the workmen to make inquiry; and an aged Frenchman—a survivor of the massacre—knew them as the bones of the unfortunate Kentuckians, remembering the spot where*

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<sup>154</sup> “A Place of Skulls,” *Monroe Advocate*, July, 1848.



*they were buried. Information was sent to Kentucky, and that State promptly took means for their removal. The charge was devolved upon Col. Brooks, a participant in, and survivor of, that unfortunate battle.*<sup>155</sup>

The same account is given in the *Military History of Kentucky*, except instead of a Frenchman, it says a Kentucky veteran of the battle identified the remains as belonging to his fellow Kentuckians, having remembered where they had been buried. Collins' *History of Kentucky*, however agrees with the *Monroe Commercial*, saying it was a Frenchman that identified the remains.<sup>156</sup>

On September 18, 1848, the *Detroit Free Press* noted that the common council of the City of Monroe held a special meeting on September 12, 1848, in which they determined to have the remains of the Kentuckians be sent home to their native state of Kentucky:

***PUBLIC RECEPTION  
of the  
REMAINS  
of  
Kentucky's Gallant Dead.***

*A short time since, in making some improvements on the spot where was enacted the bloody scene known as the "Massacre of the River Raisin," the remains of some twelve or fourteen Kentuckians, who had on that occasion fallen victims to the tomahawk and scalping knife, were dug up. Upon the fact coming to the knowledge of the public authorities of the city of Monroe, (Mich.,) a special meeting of the Common Council was convened, at which the following procedures were had:*

*Special meeting of the Common Council of the city of Monroe, at the office of the City Clerk, on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1848.*

*The object of the meeting being stated by the Mayor, the following preamble and resolutions were offered, and unanimously adopted:*

*Whereas, it has been recently discovered that the remains of a number of the brave and gallant Kentucky volunteers, who left their homes as volunteers in 1812, to protect and defend our then defenseless frontier, who were the first to fall beneath the tomahawk of the savage foe—*

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<sup>155</sup> *The Commercial*, April 24, 1872.

<sup>156</sup> McAfee, Robert B. *Military History of Kentucky*. Frankfort, KY: The State Journal, 1939, pp140-41; Collins. *History of Kentucky*. p.57.

*Therefore be it resolved, That we, the Mayor and Aldermen of the city of Monroe, do cause their remains to be taken from the place of common sepulcher, and placed in fitting receptacles.*

*Resolved, That we transmit their remains, after having rested for nearly thirty-six years in the soil which they came truly and nobly to defend, back to their own native state, that they may be placed beneath their own native soil.*

*Resolved, That we tender to Kentucky this feeling token of our respect, for their patriotic exertion in the cause of our country, and our sincere sympathy for what she suffered.*

*Resolved, That we place their remains in charge of, and request, Col. Edward Brooks, of Detroit, himself a volunteer from Kentucky, in the same war, on the frontier, to accept the honor, which we feel assured he will truly appreciate, to take back the remains of the gallant dead to the people of Kentucky.*

*Given under our hands, and the seal of said City, on the day and year aforesaid.*

*H. V. MAN, Mayor.*

*N. P. HASKELL,*

*LUTH. H. BARNES,*

*ISAAC LEWIS,*

*E. G. BINGHAM,*

*TALCOTT E. WING,*

*Aldermen.*

*J. R. Whipple, City Clerk.*<sup>157</sup>

So not only were bones discovered in 1848, but they were also entrusted to Brooks as well. Brooks wrote the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that the remains were entrusted to his care by the citizens of Monroe and he was to leave from Detroit for Kentucky soon:

*Having myself been a volunteer from Kentucky who served on this frontier with Col. Johnson, Gen. Hampton and Gen. Cass. My Munroe [sic] friends deemed it proper under the circumstances to confide the remains of these brave men to my special care.—They are now in my possession, and I deem it no less my duty than my earnest desire, that they should be conveyed to their native State; so much honored by their fall, for interment.*<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> "Article 5- No Title", *The Detroit Free Press*, September 18 1848, p.2, DFP-PQ.

<sup>158</sup> Trowbridge. *Remember the Raisin: In Search of the River Raisin Remains*. p.5.

On a side note, on September 28, 1848, the *Louisville Journal* published a letter from an anonymous writer, which calls into question Brooks reputation saying,

*These may be 'genuine bones', but I doubt it....[he has] led a most disreputable life of a gambler, and genteel—at card table and gaming places....He would not hesitate to operate with Indian bones, as quick as those of any other, if he thought he could tax the generosity of your next Legislature with an appropriation, out of courtesy of course to pay him for his trouble.*<sup>159</sup>

In either case, we might be on to something here. Brooks took the “other bones collected from Monroe” and added them to the Clinton Street Cemetery ones in Detroit and proceeded to take them to Kentucky as Wing and Farmer pointed out. Once again it is not that simple. The timeline is still off. Farmer says the year was 1849, but here we are talking about 1848. Wing’s is way off since he is referring to 1834. But it does not end there...

Apparently, they made their way from Monroe to Detroit fairly quickly, the *Detroit Free Press* article continued:

*The remains of Kentucky’s gallant dead-will be removed from the office of Dr. Scovel, on Jefferson Avenue, to the Steamboat Arrow on Monday afternoon the 18<sup>th</sup> [September 1848] inst., at precisely 5 o’clock. A general invitation is given all to attend, who are desirous of paying appropriate respect to those who fell in defense of our territory in the war of 1813[1812].*<sup>160</sup>

The *Monroe Commercial* reported on April 24, 1872:

*The bones were conveyed to the river shore, at Cincinnati, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1848, by an escort of Cincinnati firemen and placed in charge of the Kentucky committee, to whom their reception was assigned. They were contained in a wooden box, painted black, bearing the inscription: ‘Kentucky’s Gallant Dead, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1813, River Raisin, Michigan.’*<sup>161</sup>

The Mayor and Common Council of Covington called a special meeting on September 22, 1848 to adopt suitable measures to receive the relics. On September 29, they were escorted by a group of Cincinnati firemen. When they arrived in Covington, the remains were accepted with great fanfare: “A procession, solemn and imposing, was formed in Covington, and the long funeral train, as it passed through the streets, was witnessed by

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid. p.10.

<sup>160</sup> “Article 5- No Title”, *The Detroit Free Press*, September 18 1848, p.2, DFP-PQ.

<sup>161</sup> *The Commercial*, April 24, 1872.

*hundreds in gloomy silence. Although an age had intervened since those crumbling bones were animate—since those brave men had left their homes to die in their country's cause...*” They were placed in Linden Grove Baptist Cemetery, Covington in a vault, where they would stay temporarily until a suitable final resting place was arranged.<sup>162</sup>

Remember what Wing said, that once all the bones got to Kentucky they were received by an “*immense concourse of Kentuckians and deposited with appropriate ceremonies in the state cemetery of Kentucky.*” Inscribed on the boxes were the words “*Kentucky's gallant dead January 1813*”. Although he was referring to this in 1834, and the cemetery was not the state cemetery (it was not in existence yet), the inscription on the box is exactly the same.<sup>163</sup>

Farmer's account if you recall, says Brooks arrived September 30, 1849, in Kentucky, and the remains were also put in the state cemetery with appropriate ceremony. So, the month and day coincide, the year is off by one year.<sup>164</sup>

Collins history agrees with Farmer's saying that it was September 30, 1849, that Brooks arrived in Kentucky with the remains as well. Furthermore, he says the remains were placed in the state cemetery and were identifiable by the tomahawk markings on the skulls.<sup>165</sup>

There are too many coincidences here. Could it be safe to assume Brooks only made one trip to Kentucky with the Clinton (or Russell Street) remains? And he took along other bones collected in Monroe, which would more than likely have been those found in 1848? Or with the official state accounts referring to the date of 1848, might that be enough proof to show 1848 was indeed the year? Or could it simply be that Brooks made two trips to Kentucky, one for the 1848 remains found in Monroe? And one in 1849 with the 1818 remains?

Regardless in 1850, the Kentucky legislature adopted a resolution to move the remains to their final resting place in the State Cemetery at Frankfort. The state approved the act in 1851 and \$80 was appropriated for the purchase of six lots and the reinternment. Also, in 1850 an act was passed which paid Colonel Brooks \$105.50 for services rendered.<sup>166</sup>

But there is another discrepancy; in 1851 the *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* noted that the legislature had the governor of Kentucky, John L. Helm, buy six lots (lots 131-132, 143-144, 154-155) for \$600 in the Frankfort Cemetery for the remains.

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<sup>162</sup> Trowbridge. *Remember the Raisin: In Search of the River Raisin Remains.* pp.7,12.

<sup>163</sup> Wing. *History of Monroe County, Michigan.* p.60; Clift. *Remember the Raisin!* p.103; Price, Samuel W. *The Old Masters of The Bluegrass.* pp.106-7.

<sup>164</sup> Farmer. *The History of Detroit and Michigan.* p.280.

<sup>165</sup> Collins, Richard H. *History of Kentucky.* Reprint, Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1966, p.57.

<sup>166</sup> Clift. *Remember the Raisin!* p.105.



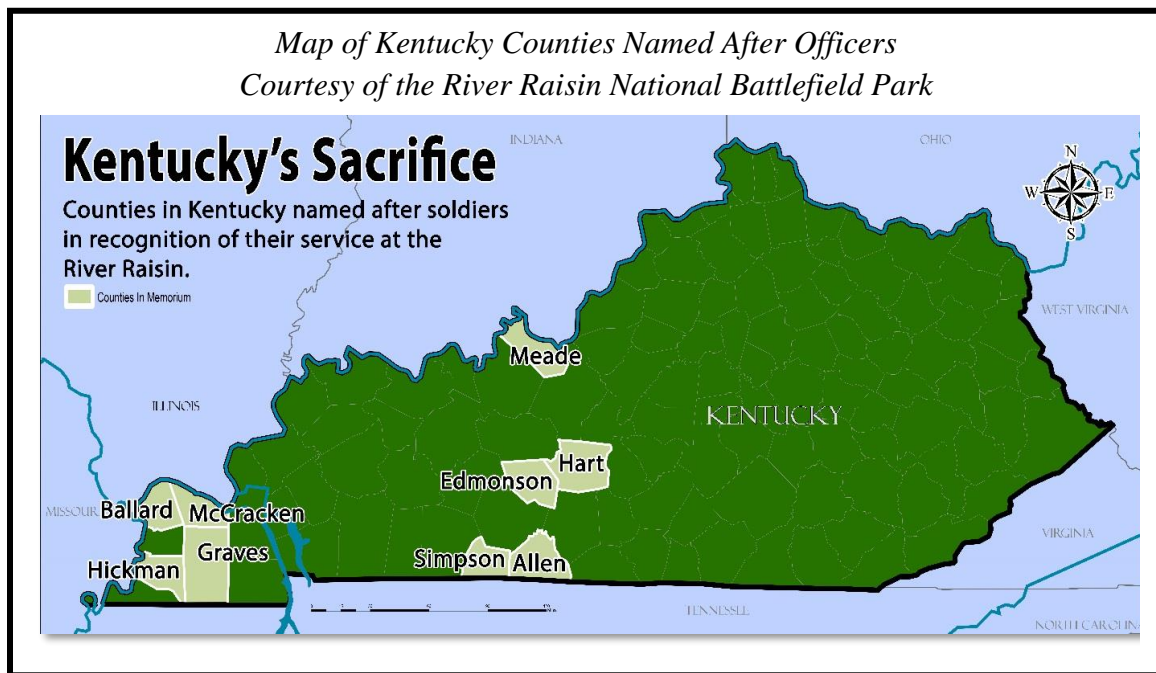
Also, an act in 1851 appropriated \$80 to bury the fifteen Kentuckians Brooks brought back in 1848 in the Frankfort Cemetery.<sup>167</sup>

Despite these discrepancies, it appears the remains were moved, but no particular date or location is known because in 1876 a fire destroyed all the cemetery records of the State Cemetery. Today the location of those remains is still a mystery.<sup>168</sup>

Kentucky Historian John Trowbridge lamented:

*We have no evidence as to the final disposition of these remains. Whether buried in Frankfort's old Thorn Hill Cemetery or on the Kentucky State Mound or in the State Burial Lot located in the Frankfort Cemetery, we are still unsure of the final resting place of these brave sons of Kentucky.*<sup>169</sup>

In 2004 and 2019, Kentucky archeologists with ground penetrating radar equipment tried to locate the lost remains of the Kentucky soldiers. Trowbridge reiterated, *"There have been historians who spent a lifetime trying to find out what happened to these remains....Basically they were just buried up here and forgotten about. They could be anywhere."*<sup>170</sup>



<sup>167</sup> *Register of Kentucky State Historical Society*. Frankfort: Frankfort Printing Co., 1910, chapter 10.

<sup>168</sup> Clift. *Remember the Raisin!* p.106.

<sup>169</sup> Trowbridge. *Remember the Raisin: In Search of the River Raisin Remains*. p.17.

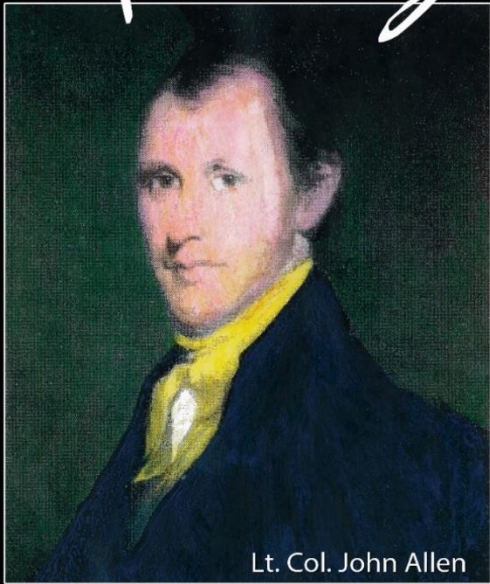
<sup>170</sup> "Kentucky cemetery may contain remains of soldiers killed in the Battle of the River Raisin," *The Monroe Evening News*, August 9 2004.

But somewhere along the line, Kentucky remembered her sons and named eight counties for the officers who lost their lives in the battles: Allen, Edmonson, Graves, Hart, Hickman, McCracken, Meade, and Simpson. They also named one county after the one officer who survived, Bland Ballard.


River Raisin National Battlefield Park

REMEMBERING

*Kentucky's Sacrifice*



Lt. Col. John Allen



Maj. Bland Ballard

*In recognition of their service at the River Raisin...*

200 years later we still remember and celebrate these brave men from Kentucky whose belief in freedom brought them to Frenchtown in 1813.  
The following Kentucky counties were named in their honor...

IN MEMORIUM

Allen County (after Lieutenant Colonel John Allen)  
Ballard County (after Major Bland Ballard)  
Edmonson County (after Captain John Edmonson)  
Graves County (after Major Benjamin Franklin Graves)  
Hart County (after Captain Nathaniel G. S. Hart)  
Hickman County (after Captain Paschal Hickman)  
McCracken County (after Captain Virgil McCracken)  
Meade County (after Captain James M. Meade)  
Simpson County (after Captain John Simpson)

Bicentennial 1813 - 2013 Monroe, MI

While the grave site of the Kentucky dead at the Frankfort Cemetery was never specifically marked, in 1850 the state erected a war memorial where they are listed among the honorees. The Battle of the River Raisin's twenty-two officer casualties are engraved on its façade. In 1987, a casualty panel was added in which the names of 300 Kentucky soldiers who died during the war are remembered. No non-commissioned officers or privates from the River Raisin are included on those panels, however.



*"Kentucky War Memorial," Frankfort, Kentucky  
Courtesy of John Trowbridge*





*"Kentucky War Memorial," Frankfort, Kentucky  
Courtesy of John Trowbridge*



## Chapter Thirteen

### Guardian of the Bones

Let us head back to Monroe now and see what has been turning up....



*“Front Street, looking west from Washington Street”  
Courtesy of Michael Huggins*

On October 4, 1860, the *Monroe Commercial* reported that while laying gas pipes workers

*Found in almost every street, skulls and bones of Indians, buried long since, when the City was uninhabited by whites. A skull in a good state of preservation, and some small human bones were taken up in Front Street, between Washington and Monroe. For upwards of forty years the citizens of Monroe have trod, unaware, over the decaying bones of these red men of the forest; and who can tell how many more of them lie smoldering away beneath us. It is supposed that the spot which the City stands, was once used by the Indians as a burial place.<sup>171</sup>*

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<sup>171</sup> “Exhuming the Ancients,” *Monroe Commercial*, October 4, 1860.

In the 1980s, while workers were replacing sidewalks, Dennis Au was able to conduct an archeological survey of the area where the first Protestant Cemetery was, and determined that it was a Native American occupation site ranging from 1,200 A.D. to 500 B.C.

In fact in the 1931 *Archaeological Atlas of Michigan*, the author, Wilbert Hinsdale, points out that there are nine Native American villages and five Native American burial grounds in Monroe County.<sup>172</sup> But, being a nomadic people, the Native Americans actually set up more of a camp than a village, and mostly in the wintertime. Nonetheless, this will not be the last we hear about possible Native American bones turning up.

In regard to the River Raisin soldiers, one of the most telling of the fate of the remains comes to light in 1860, when Joseph G. Navarre, son of Colonel Francois Navarre, the first settler on the River Raisin, writes battle veteran General Leslie Combs of Kentucky a very interesting letter:

*To Gen. Combs,*

*Dear Sir: Although I am a stranger to you, I presume you will take an interest in the matter which I purpose to lay before you.*

*I have for years been collecting together the bones of those brave Kentuckians who fell at Raisin on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1813, some three or four hundred in number. We now and then come across such as have been scattered by domestic and wild animals.*

*During the last month I was informed where a small body of them, (35 or 40) were headed in their retreat by a Wyandotte Indian on horseback, some three or four miles from the battle field and promised protection if they would surrender. On their return march they were met by some blood thirsty Pottowattamies and every one of them tomahawked and scalped. These facts have been handed down to us by the old settlers here and we do not doubt their truthfulness.*

*I have gathered up many relics of these unfortunate men, consisting of all the principal bones in the human frame, but mostly skulls, showing plainly the manner of their deaths. I found also a quantity of teeth and several buttons in a remarkable state of preservation. All of these, General, I have now in my possession.*

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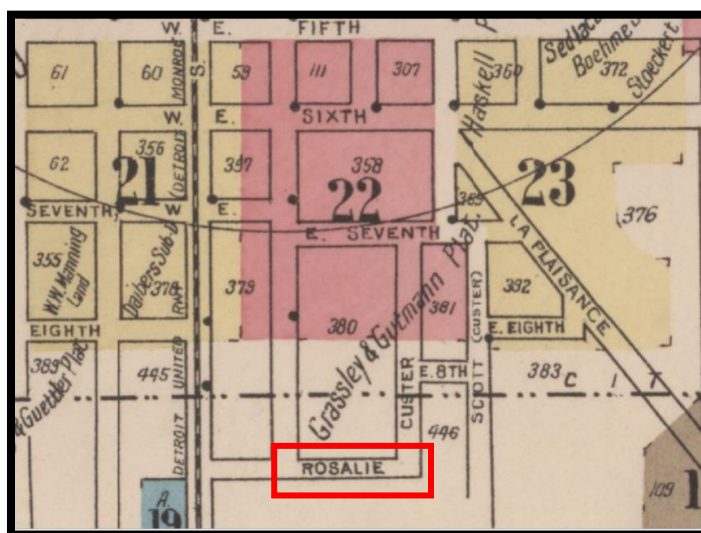
<sup>172</sup> Hinsdale, Wilbert, B. *Archaeological Atlas of Michigan*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1931, p.30.

*I enclose one tooth and button as witnesses of what I have stated. Now what disposition shall I make of them? I will act in accordance with your wishes. Shall I bury them in Michigan or have them transferred to the land of their fathers and mothers? If you wish me to accompany them to Lexington I will do so.*

*Monroe, Mich., April 5, 1860.<sup>173</sup>*



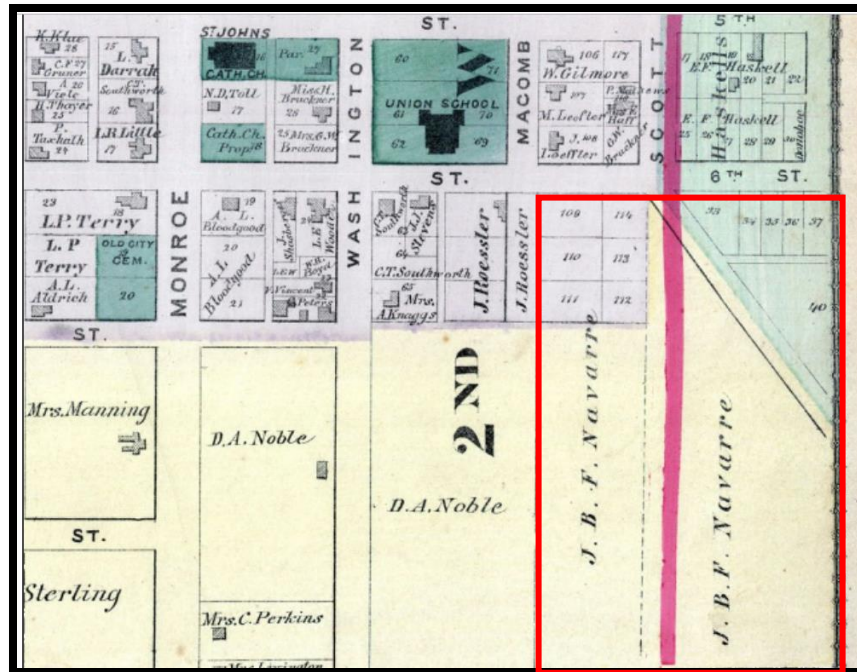
*“Joseph Navarre farm” on Rosalie Street (later renamed Jones Avenue). He built the house in 1838.  
Courtesy of the Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum System*



**Figure 13.1: “Map from Monroe, Monroe County, Michigan.” Shows Rosalie Street before renamed Jones Ave.**

*Sanborn Map Company, Nov. 1922  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<sup>173</sup> Trowbridge. *Remember the Raisin: In Search of the River Raisin Remains*. pp.15-16.



**Figure: 13.2: Detail from “County atlas of Monroe, Michigan / from recent and actual surveys and records under the superintendence of S. M. Bartlett for F. W. Beers.”**  
Showing Joseph Navarre property, 1876.

*Co Bartlett, S. M. and L. E. Neuman and Charles Hart.*  
*New York: F. W. Beers, 1876. Unity Atlas of Monroe, MI.*

Joseph had around 200 acres according to his granddaughter, Miss Edith Navarre daughter of Alexander Toussant Navarre. Colonel Francois, his father, followed the French custom to give each one of his sons a farm when they wed.<sup>174</sup> Joseph actually studied to be a priest in Kentucky for a while, but eventually ended up working in a law office in Detroit. He came back to the River Raisin to tend to his ill father and ended up settling the estate over the next few years. He was married twice, first to Eliza A. Martin, and after her death he married Jemma Knaggs.<sup>175</sup>

In any case, the first we hear of General Combs response to Joseph Navarre is in a Kentucky newspaper, which apparently published comments he had made at a gathering the previous week. The *Observer & Reporter* published the following article:

<sup>174</sup> Navarre, Edith. *Marion Child's Interviews 1956-1962*. Monroe County Library System, pp.20-23.

<sup>175</sup> Wing, Talcott E. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. p.358.



*The Dead of the River Raisin.*

*The suggestions of Gen. Combs in the following communication as to the disposition of the remains of the gallant Kentucky soldiers who fell in the battle of the River Raisin, strikes us as being not only highly patriotic but certainly the most just course that could be pursued in regard to them. The bones of the intrepid pioneer Boone were brought from Missouri that they might rest amid the scene of his youthful adventures, while those who bravely fell in the battles of Mexico were also recovered and brought back for honorable interment in their native Kentucky, and it would be no more than right to mete out the same justice, in a spirit of kindness, to the brave men who were cruelly massacred in defense of their country, on the bloody field of the Raisin.*

*The Governor will doubtless take the matter under consideration; and if so we are satisfied that Mr. Navarro will receive, in a short time, a satisfactory answer to his question—"What disposition shall I make of them?"*

*Lexington, April 3, 1860[sic]<sup>176</sup>*

General Combs responded to the article by writing a letter to the editor:

*Editor of the Observer & Reporter:*

*Dear Sir—You thought proper to notice in your paper my off hand address at the Court House last Saturday night, on behalf of the "Old Infantry" company, which traces back its history through many bloody battle fields, to 1783. I said, among other things, that after enduring all the severities of a winter campaign, in the northwestern wilderness, half clad, in linen tents, frequently without bread, and subsisting on hickory roots and poor beef, yet when the British and Indians were at hand, they never reported a man on the sick list, all were ever ready for action.—Sixty fell at Raisin in the glorious battle of the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, 1813, and the subsequent slaughter of the 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

*I take leave to give the extracts of a letter handed me the next day, from the Post Office, from Joseph G. Navarro [sic], Esq., a resident on that memorable scene of conflict. I think the State of Kentucky owes it to*

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<sup>176</sup>Trowbridge. *Remember the Raisin: In Search of the River Raisin Remains*. p.15. The article from "The Dead of the River Raisin," *Observer & Reporter*, Lexington, April 3 1860. Has an incorrect date on it.

*her own honor and past chivalry, to send for the bleaching bones of her children, and bury them at the Frankfort Cemetery alongside of those of her gallant soldiers who fell at Buena Vista in Mexico.*

*Very truly yours, &c.,*

*LESLIE COMBS<sup>177</sup>*

Even though Combs is in favor of bringing the remains back to Kentucky, he writes back to Joseph Navarre from Lexington, Kentucky on January 12, 1861, stating that since they last spoke by letter the “Old Infantry” has been reorganized and the new Captain is now Samuel McCullough to whom Joseph should address his inquiry in the future. So, on February 2, 1861, Joseph reaches out to Samuel with a lengthy letter. Some of which is as follows:

*The ‘articles or Relics’ are explicitly enumerated in my letter to Gen. L. Combs....To those I have added a few more during the last summer. They are contained in a regular Shape of Coffins made of Black-walnut wood well finished, and sets in an out case of White-wood. The Coffin is worthy of its purpose. The case is worthy of the inside Coffin and its contents....I must say to you however, that since I have ascertained your design of coming to reclaim them, I have added \$3 more toward ornamenting it to wit: gave three coats of Black paint, two coats of varnish; three handles on each side, worthy of the rest, so six men can bear it comfortably for some Distance. You now perceive I have not neglected any pains, (as regards the Relics).<sup>178</sup>*

Joseph goes on about the best route to get to Monroe and asks for McCullough to let him know if he would like him “to accompany the ‘Relics’ to their ‘Homes’ after an exile of 48 years...”<sup>179</sup>

Undoubtedly, Joseph was persistent on trying to get the relics back to their native land. It also seemed that General Combs was intent on the same thing. But, so far, no response from McCullough to Joseph Navarre has ever been found, thus it begs the question: Did these bones ever make it back to Kentucky or not? Read on and we shall see.

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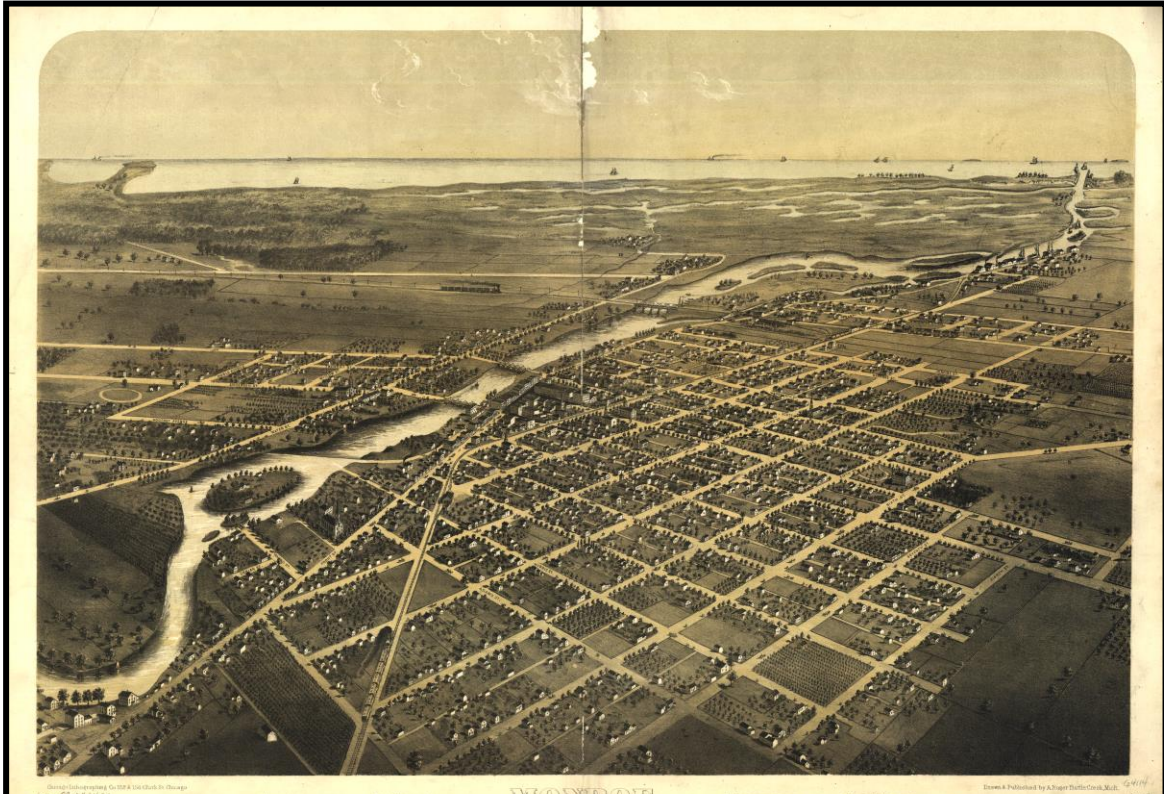
<sup>177</sup> Trowbridge. *Remember the Raisin: In Search of the River Raisin Remains*. p.15.

<sup>178</sup> “Letter to Joseph Navarre from Leslie Combs,” January 12, 1861 in the Navarre papers at the Monroe County Museum System archives; “Letter to Samuel McCullough from Joseph Navarre,” February 2, 1861 in the Navarre papers at the Monroe County Museum System archives.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Fourteen

### Decade of Discoveries



**Figure 14.1: “Bird’s Eye View of Monroe, Monroe Co., Michigan 1866.”**

Ruger, A.  
*Chicago, Chicago Lithographing Co. [1866],*  
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*  
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114m.pm003620>



**Figure 14.2: Detail from Monroe City #3, “County atlas of Monroe, Michigan / from recent and actual surveys and records under the superintendence of S. M. Bartlett for F. W. Beers.” Showing Erastus Kimberly property, 1876.**

*Co Bartlett, S. M. and L. E. Neuman and Charles Hart. New York: F. W. Beers, 1876. Unity Atlas of Monroe, MI.*

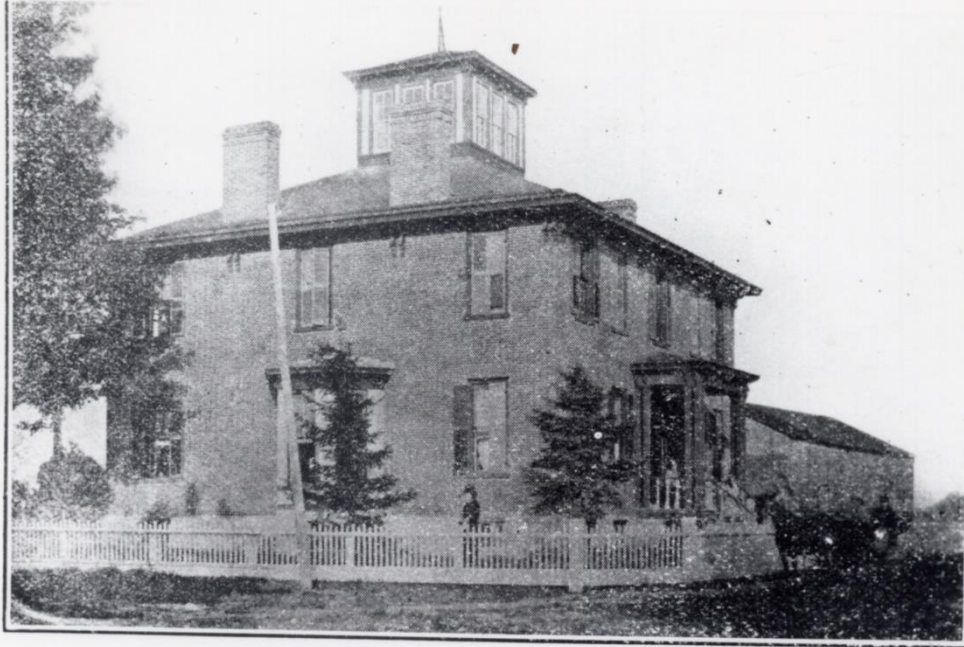
The *Monroe Commercial* reported on November 14, 1867, that local resident carriage maker Erastus Kimberly, while digging at his home on Elm Street by the north bank of the river just below the Railroad Bridge, uncovered 30 human skulls and many thigh bones. Six to eight skulls were found very close together making it appear as if this was a mass grave. Plus “*the skulls are evidently those of white men, as they lack the high cheek bones peculiar to the Indian. Many of them, however, were so far decomposed as to crumble to pieces upon being handled. As the slaughter reached its most terrible fury at or very near the point these excavations were made, there is little doubt, but the bones and skulls exhumed are the remains of Kentucky soldiers.*”<sup>180</sup>

Kimberly resided on what was Gabriel Godfroy’s property during the battles. As we have seen back in chapter two, after the battles, Gabriel Godfroy Jr. gathered the bodies left in his house and buried them in a trench along the river. Could it be possible these were the remains Kimberly found? In any case, they keep popping up....

Kimberly’s property was flanked by the I. E. Elgenfritz Nursery on the north side and LaFountain on the south side. LaFountain was the house built by Hubert LaCroix, local militia captain, after his home was burned in the Battles of the River Raisin, January 23, 1813. He was the only original homeowner to rebuild in the same area.

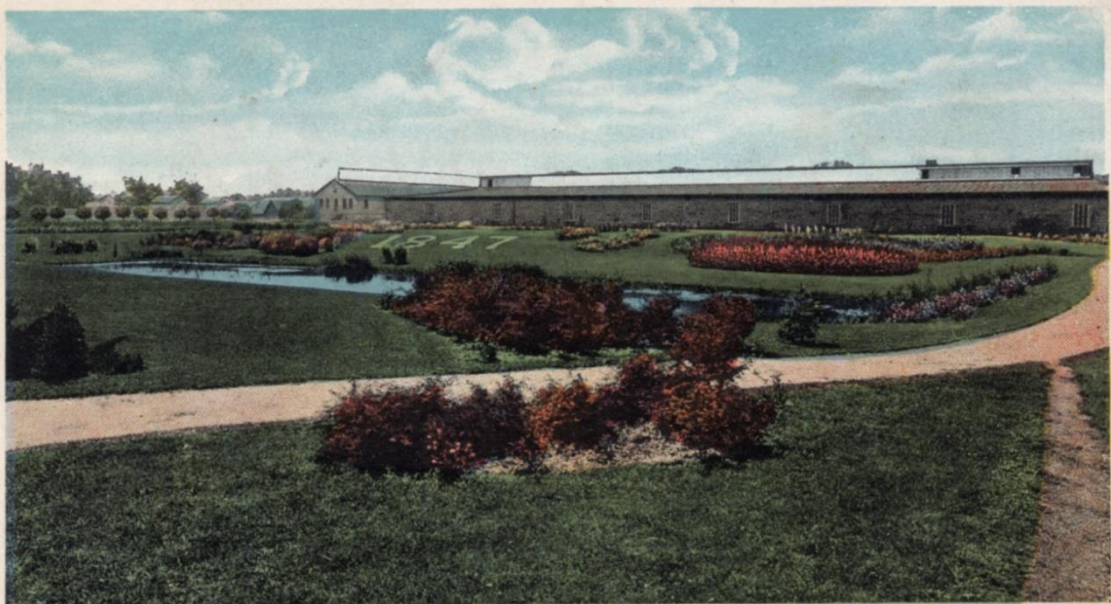
<sup>180</sup> “Relics of the Battle of the River Raisin,” *Monroe Commercial*, November 14 1867, p.3.





LA FOUNTAIN HOME, BUILT BY LA CROIX

*"LaFountain Home Built by LaCroix," undated postcard  
Courtesy of Michael Huggins*



One View of the Office Grounds and Storage Cellars of  
I. E. ELGENFRITZ' SONS CO., THE MONROE NURSERY, MONROE, MICH.  
The Oldest, Largest, and Most Complete Nursery in Michigan. Established 1847.

*"I. E. Elgenfritz Nursery," undated postcard  
Courtesy of Author*



*"Lakeshore & Michigan Southern Railway Bridge," looking north to Elm Avenue, Monroe, circa 1900  
Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum System*



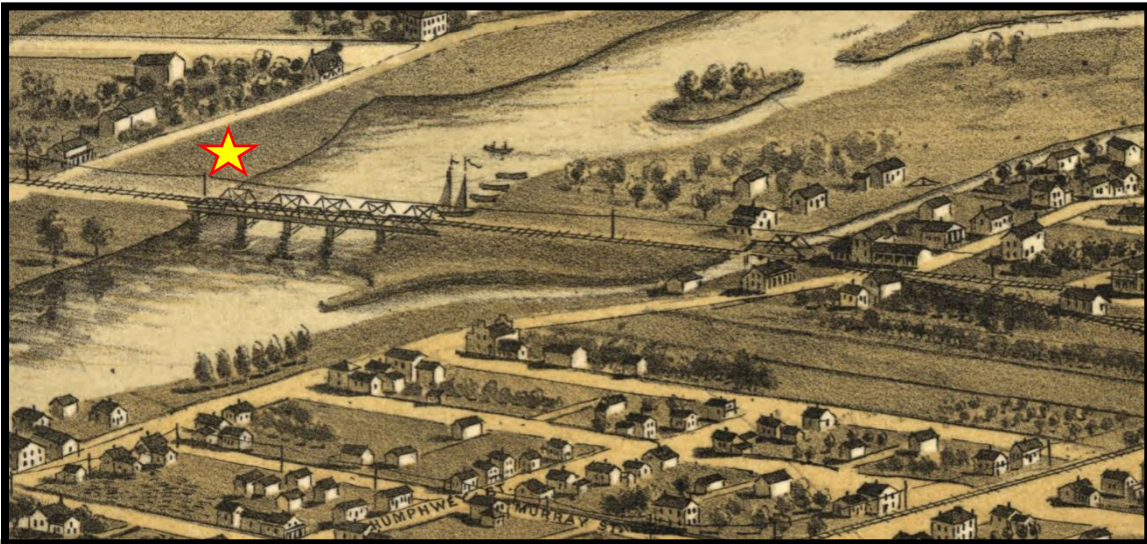
*"Elm Avenue," undated  
Courtesy of the Monroe County Library System*



The *Monroe Civic Reflector* reported on Sept 1, 1904, about a discovery made in 1869:

*For five years, scattered along the banks of the river and in the depths of the forest where they fell, the bones of the brave Kentuckians [lay] bleached, unburied. Then many were buried where their bones were found and the others, after several removals at last found rest in the capital of their native state, where they lie under a monument reciting their brave struggle and heroic death. But not all there. In 1869 the Michigan Southern railway decided to raise their bridge over the Raisin, and this rendered necessary a regrading of Elm Avenue. When the workmen with plow and scraper began to excavate upon the bank of the river they turned up a number of skeletons, whose cleft skulls bore mute testimony of the manner of death they died. And doubtless under the fertile fields stretching northward...are lying the remains of many others who fell...*<sup>181</sup>

Only two years separate these two discoveries. Furthermore, the bones were found in the same area. We have to consider that it is possible Erastus might have simply reburied the bones where he found them by the railroad bridge. Then two years later, the railroad discovered them yet again, when they raised the bridge and regraded Elm Avenue.



**Figure 14.3: “Bird’s Eye View of Monroe, Monroe Co., Michigan 1866.”** Star showing pit area found by Erastus Kimberly.

Ruger, A.  
Chicago, Chicago Lithographing Co. [1866],  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress  
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114m.pm003620>

<sup>181</sup> *The Monroe Civic Reflector*, September 1 1904, pp.3-4.

Unbelievably another two years later on February 25, 1871, more excavations in Monroe revealed another thirty skulls and various bones, according to two Kentucky authors. Author Glenn Clift alludes to the idea that these might be the bones that Governor Shelby and his soldiers buried after the Battle of the Thames; in any case he claims they were reburied in Memorial Place cemetery. However, author Richard Collins claims the bones were sent back to Kentucky.<sup>182</sup>

But what are the chances thirty skulls would have been found in 1867 and then more bones found in 1869, and then thirty skulls again in 1871? It seems the only way for that to happen is the same bones are being rediscovered. Perhaps Erastus reburied them, then the railroad found them and reburied them, and then they were discovered again in 1871. We have to question the 1871 finding all together because nothing was mentioned in the Monroe papers about thirty skulls being found in 1871. Surely this would have been big news, especially since the papers have reported throughout the years when just one skeleton was found. Could it be the Kentucky historians were confused somehow and were recounting the 1867 discovery?

Another year later, 1872, on Guyor's Island (House Island) another revelation was made. While laying railroad tracks to connect the railroad line from the city to Monroe Piers on Lake Erie, the Michigan Southern Railroad Company exhumed various quantities of bones, skulls, stone axes, arrow heads, copper utensils and other implements. Monroe Historian John Bulkley says that this was once a small village and the site of Potawatomi and Shawnee gatherings, and thus these are Native Nations artifacts.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Collins. *History of Kentucky*. p.212; Quinsberry. *Kentucky in the War of 1812*. p.24; McAfee. *Military History of Kentucky*. p.251.

<sup>183</sup> Bulkley, John McClelland. *History of Monroe County Michigan*. Vol. I. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913, p.126.





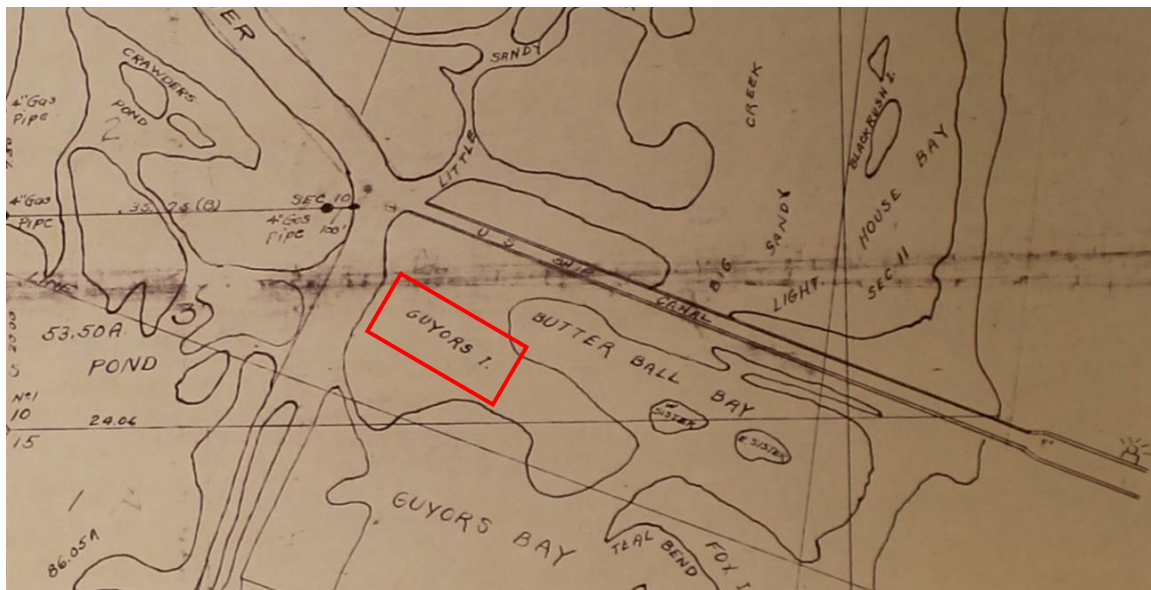
**Figure 14.4:** Detail from “Map of Michigan.” Showing House (Guyor’s) Island.

Lang, Geo. E.

Carleton, Mich. : Geo. E. Lang, [1901]

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4113m.la002097>



“Map of Monroe Marsh Club Area, showing Guyor’s Island,” circa 1931  
 Courtesy of the Monroe Archives of the Monroe County Museum System



*"View of Guyor's Island "(House Island) from the government canal  
Courtesy of the Monroe County Library System*



*"The Monroe Marsh Club" on Guyor's Island (House Island), circa 1900  
Courtesy of the Monroe County Library System*

## Chapter Fifteen

### Veterans Reunions

On June 1, 1871, Monroe resident Joseph Guyor had the following invitation published in the *Monroe Commercial* newspaper: “*The Soldiers of 1812 residing in this county are respectfully invited to a free dance and reunion, at my house on House Island (also known as Guyor’s Island)...on Thursday June 15th.*”<sup>184</sup> Surprisingly, no reunion or gathering had ever been thought of before, so the eighty-eight year old veteran of the Battles of the River Raisin decided it was time to have one. Roughly 100 veterans attended, and General George A. Custer “*rusticating in the Floral City*” for several weeks was invited to be the host.<sup>185</sup>

An outdoor banquet was enjoyed by all and gave the veterans an opportunity to reminisce about the past. A number of men recounted the horrors of the battle. After dinner, addresses were made by the mayor and many prominent Monroe citizens. According to Bulkley, “*It remained for General Custer to arouse the most enthusiasm as he rose to greet the men of the past generations, who welcomed him with warmest demonstrations of respect & admiration.*”<sup>186</sup> The General said “*he did not come prepared or expecting to address the assemblage, but could not forbear expressing his pleasure at being permitted to greet these old veterans and take them by the hand.*”<sup>187</sup> The Reunion was such a success that it was decided that day to have an official reunion the following year. After the celebration, the veterans gathered for a picture, in which they invited George and his father, Emanuel Custer, to join them.

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<sup>184</sup> “Attention Soldiers of 1812,” *Monroe Commercial*, June 1 1871.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Bulkley, John McClelland. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. p.127.

<sup>187</sup> “1812, Reunion of Veterans-Survivors of the River Raisin Massacre-Dinner, Toasts and Speeches,” *Monroe Commercial*, June 22 1871.



(Back row, left to right) John Beshear, John Claper, General Custer, Francis Lazarre, Jean de Chovin  
(middle row) Unidentified, George Younglove, John Buroff, David Van Pelt, Lewis Jacobs, Charles Haven,  
Henry Mason, Thomas Welphy, Joseph Guyor (front row) Peter Navarre, James Nadeau, Emanuel Custer,  
Robert Navarre, Joseph Forlke, Bronson French

*Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, originally from the Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum System*

1872 ushered in the Sixtieth Anniversary of the War of 1812. The *Monroe Commercial* started publishing information over a month in advance of the upcoming anniversary and reunion for the battles which was decided should be on July 4. “*It is designed to make the day a memorable one in the history of Monroe.*” Veteran survivors of the Battles of the River Raisin, as well as the War of 1812, plus pioneers of the River Raisin settlement, military companies, state officials and Kentucky and Ohio officials are all expected to be invited. “*It will be such a celebration as has never been witnessed in the City of Monroe.*” Committees were also formed for specific tasks in preparing for the event.<sup>188</sup>

Over the next several weeks, the *Monroe Commercial* reported more planning details about the reunion as they unfolded. On May 27, 1872 the committees reported on their progress at the citizen’s meeting. General Custer was not present, as evidenced by his sending a telegram to be read at the meeting for his Committee of Invitations. In the telegram, Custer said he would be seeing General Leslie Combs and that he would “*secure that venerable hero, and a large delegation from Kentucky*” to come.<sup>189</sup> On June

<sup>188</sup> “Grand Celebration. Re-union of Veterans of 1812-Perry’s Victory and Massacre of River Raisin, and Military Encampment! Monroe Patriotically Aroused!!” *Monroe Commercial*, May 15, 1872

<sup>189</sup> “Fourth of July-The meeting Monday evening,” *Monroe Commercial*, May 30, 1872.



5, it was confirmed that General Combs would be attending, as well as “a large number of his veterans to recount their exciting adventures on the River Raisin.”<sup>190</sup> “The Committee of Invitations had extended invitations to nearly every prominent public man in the country.”<sup>191</sup>

On May 30, 1872 the following article was published:

*After the battle of the River Raisin, in January 1813, a large grave was dug, in which was deposited a large number of the victims of the rapacious savages, which were scattered about in the woods, between the Raisin and Plum bank. Several cart loads, mostly Kentuckians, were thus gathered together, and deposited in a common grave. This grave is pointed out by old residents, in the Monroe Street burial ground. Those of our citizens who have friends buried there, are requested to meet there...to put the grounds in respectable order.*<sup>192</sup>

*The city will also put the old cemetery in order, and will designate the grave where 300 Kentuckians are buried, with appropriate emblem, so that the spot made [sic, may] be seen from the street by the procession of veterans and dignitaries.*<sup>193</sup> [It was decided that since] “from time to time the remains of the victims of the massacre have been found, which have been collected, but not been buried with the others in the cemetery it is thought proper to spend a portion of the ensuing day in visiting the battle ground and other localities connected with the stirring scenes of that time, and also in depositing such remains in the cemetery with appropriate solemn ceremonies.”<sup>194</sup>

The idea about spending part of the celebration interring remains, that had previously been found, is particularly interesting in that it has not been in any other reports or appeared anywhere else.

On the evening of July 3, General Custer arrived from the south by train with General Combs and the veterans from Kentucky and Ohio. Their arrival at the Monroe Junction was greeted by the Committee of Reception members, the Monroe Band and many other groups and organizations.<sup>195</sup>

The reunion proved to be a huge success with 150 veterans in attendance and 15,000-20,000 spectators for the formal anniversary. The battleground was once again reliving

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<sup>190</sup> “Fourth of July,” *Monroe Commercial*, June 6, 1872.

<sup>191</sup> Bulkley. *History of Monroe County Michigan*. p.129.

<sup>192</sup> “City and Country Items,” *Monroe Commercial*, May 30, 1872, p.3.

<sup>193</sup> “Programme for Fourth of July,” *Monroe Commercial*, June 27 1872, p.2

<sup>194</sup> “Arrangements for the Fourth,” *Monroe Commercial*, June 20 1872.

<sup>195</sup> Wing. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. p.82.

scenes of the past when the veterans took to the hallowed grounds and recounted the events that took place so long ago.<sup>196</sup>

A large procession was to commence downtown. *“As the procession passes the old Monroe Street Cemetery, where the Kentuckians who fell at the Battle of the River Raisin are buried, a dirge will be played, the flags drooped, and the soldiers with muskets will come to a shoulder, the Knights Templars will give the salute of their Order, and the other organizations and citizens will uncover.”*<sup>197</sup> Strangely enough, *“a dummy monument made of cloth was erected”* at the burial site (today Memorial Place).<sup>198</sup>

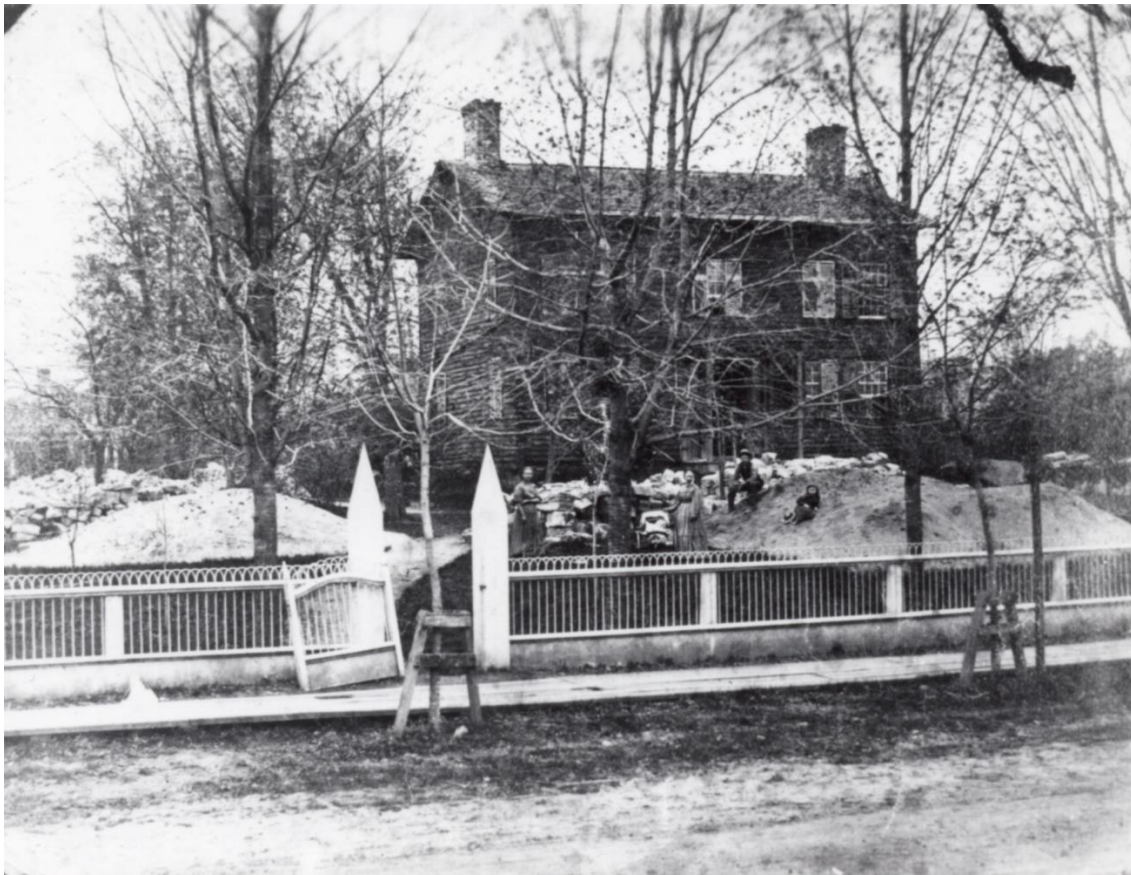


Postcard, "Monroe, Mich. Washington Street"  
Courtesy of the Monroe County Library System

<sup>196</sup> Bulkley. *History of Monroe County Michigan*. p.129.

<sup>197</sup> "Programme for Fourth of July," *Monroe Commercial*, June 27 1872, p.2.

<sup>198</sup> "Massacre at the River Raisin Last in State," *The Monroe Evening News*, January 23, 1948.



*"Francios Navarre Home" on Front Street before it was torn down in the 1860's  
Courtesy of Michael Huggins*

In "Noble Grove" on Washington Street, a grandstand was made out of the "*beams, planks and boards taken from the house of Colonel Francios Navarre,*" which during the battle General Winchester used as his headquarters.<sup>199</sup> A large number of distinguished dignitaries made passionate speeches with many speaking of the unforgotten horrors and events that unfolded over sixty years before.

General Leslie Combs was the featured speaker and taking the stand said,

*We have come by your special invitation, to join you in celebrating this glorious anniversary and at the same time to drop a tear on the graves of our brethren who, here, shed their blood in battles or were massacred by the Indians, in January 1813. Their bones long exposed to the weather and*

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<sup>199</sup> Bulkley. *History of Monroe County Michigan*. p.129.

*wild beasts were collected by you and your fathers, as soon as it could be done safely, and consigned to honorable graves.*<sup>200</sup>

Also, in the conclusion of his speech he noted, *“When you shall have erected a monument, as you propose to do, to the Kentuckians, whose dust remains in your midst, I hope some of us may be alive to come again among you.”*<sup>201</sup>

Monroe Mayor Honorable H. J. Redfield made the closing remarks saying, *“Remember the Raisin, and you and your dead in our care and keeping, we will build a monument.”*<sup>202</sup> General Custer was the master of ceremonies and did the roll call of the veterans, calling out their names and ages. As he pronounced each of their names, they stood to a thunderous applause.

An extravagant banquet followed with a number of toasts and responses. The evening drew to a close with a grand fireworks display, or at least it was supposed to be, *“but owing to an untoward accident the most and the best of them were destroyed. In sending off a revolving rocket, it discharged directly into the box containing the best pieces and these were thereby prematurely discharged and destroyed.”*<sup>203</sup>

Monies collected for the banquet would be *“appropriated towards the building of a monument over the remains of the soldiers who fell at the battle of the River Raisin.”*<sup>204</sup> It was decided to create the “River Raisin Monument Association” to plan the development of the monument.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> “Response by General Leslie Combs, 1862,” In River Raisin NBP archives, Ralph Naveaux collection.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> “River Raisin Heroes,” *Historical Collections Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*. Vol. 35, p.199.

<sup>203</sup> Wing. *History of Monroe County, Michigan*. p.89.

<sup>204</sup> “Programme for Fourth of July,” *Monroe Commercial*, June 27 1872, p.2.

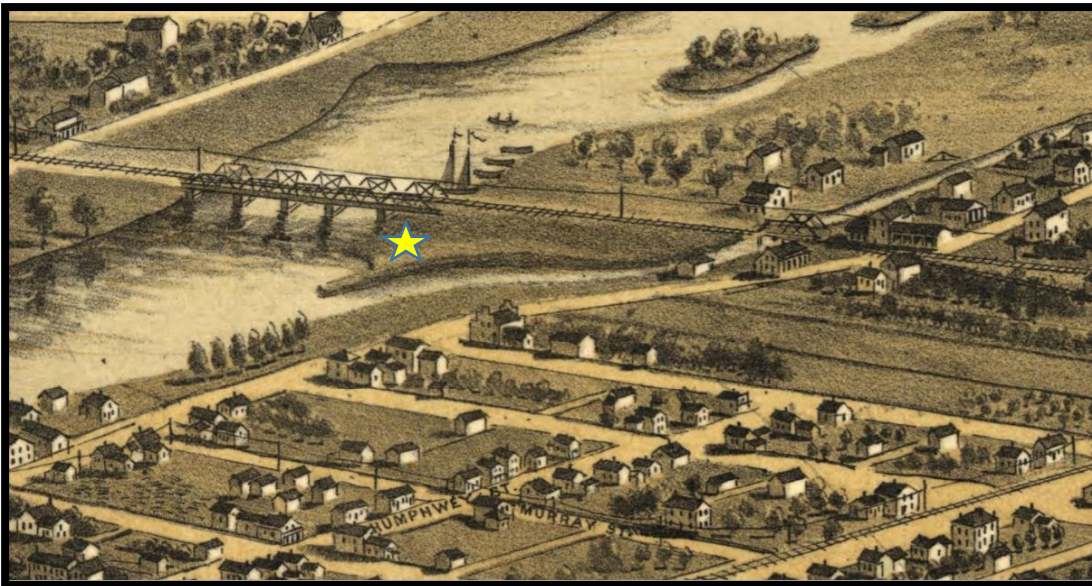
<sup>205</sup> “Monument Association,” *Monroe Commercial*, August 8 1872 p.3.



## Chapter Sixteen

### Turn of the Century Surprises

Even after almost a century, remains are still repeatedly turning up. The *Monroe Democrat* reported two different accounts of skeletons being discovered in 1894. On August 30, a badly decayed skeleton was found on the island west of the Lake Shore Railroad bridge while contractors were hauling away dirt.<sup>206</sup>



**Figure 16.1: Detail from “Bird’s Eye View of Monroe, Monroe Co., Michigan 1866.”** Star showing approximate area grave found by railroad bridge.

Ruger, A.

Chicago, Chicago Lithographing Co. [1866]

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/gmd/g4114m.pm003620>

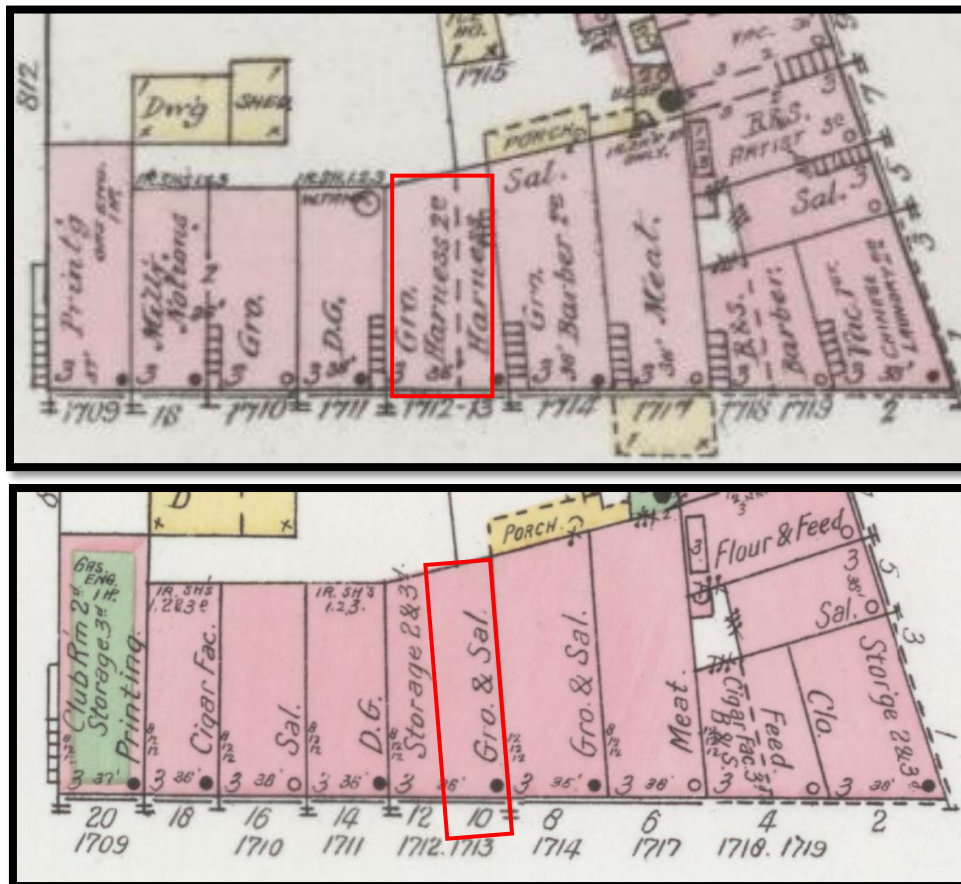
Also, on April 19, workers came across a skeleton while putting in curbs for the Kellie harness shop. The remains were thought to be those of a Native American.<sup>207</sup> Nathaniel A. Kellie ran the shop for twenty-eight years on the second floor of George Kronbach’s grocery and saloon.<sup>208</sup> Ironically just three years later on June 10, 1897, The *Monroe Democrat* reported that more Native American bones were found under the sidewalk in

<sup>206</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, August 30 1884.

<sup>207</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, April 19 1884.

<sup>208</sup> Nathaniel A. Kellie obituary, April 10, 1930. Courtesy of the Monroe County Museum System archives.

front of Kronbach's store at #10 Monroe Street.<sup>209</sup> George Kronbach ran the store for forty-seven years in the same place on Monroe Street, although the address changed to #44 when Monroe Street was reconfigured.<sup>210</sup> In September 1930, *The Monroe Evening News* reported that George was closing the store and that the “old building occupies burial ground used for soldiers of the massacre.”<sup>211</sup> Indeed, we now know this is correct, funny how they knew that in 1930, yet as time waned they forgot again.



**Figure 16.2: Detail from “Map from Monroe, Monroe County, Michigan.”** Shows George Kronbach and Nathan Kellie’s store location, in 1888 and then 1899. Location where graves were found.

*Sanborn Map Company, Dec 1888 & June 1899*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

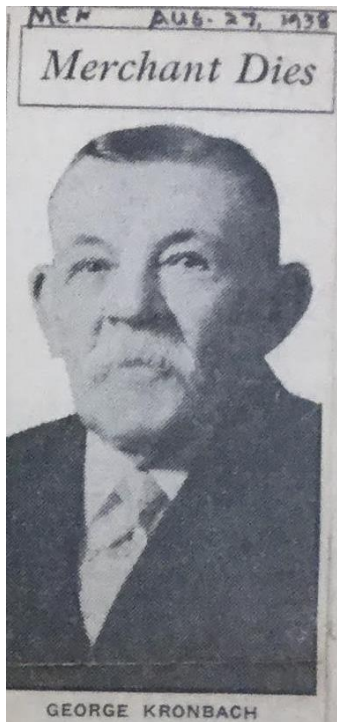
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151888>

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151899>

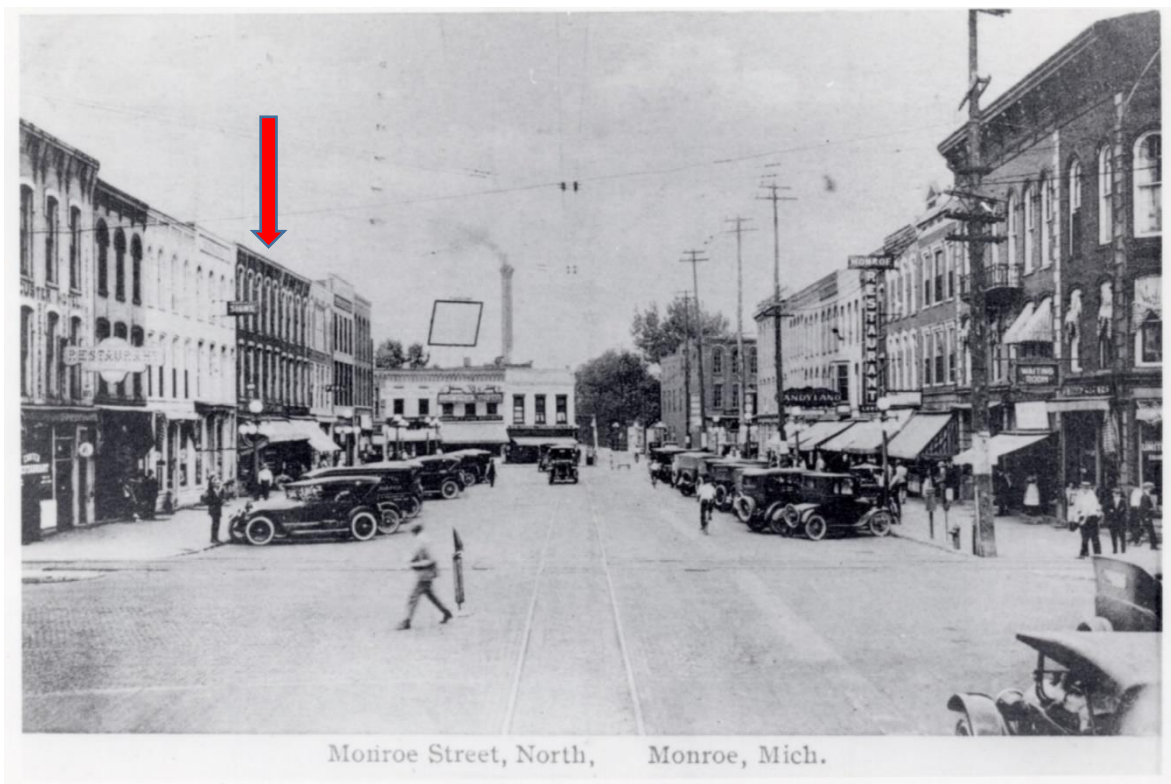
<sup>209</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, June 10 1897.

<sup>210</sup> George Kronbach obituary, August 27, 1938. Courtesy of the Monroe County Museum System archives.

<sup>211</sup> “George Kronbach to close store, old building occupies burial ground used for soldiers of the massacre.” *The Monroe Evening News*, Sept. 1930.



*George Kronbach  
Courtesy of Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County  
Museum System*



*"Monroe Street, North, Monroe, Mich.." circa 1920? (Kronbach Store)  
Courtesy of Michael Huggins*





*Modern day location of #44 South Monroe Street, Monroe (former Kronbach store)  
Courtesy of Author*

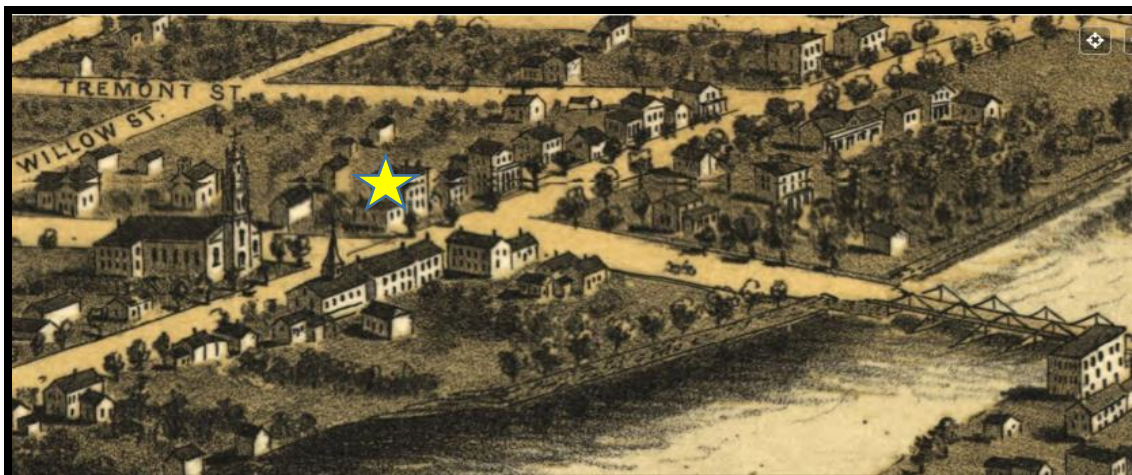
Three years later, September 20, 1900, contractors uncovered more possible Native American bones, about three-four skeletons worth, while excavating for the Detroit United Railway Company powerhouse near the site of the local militia Wayne Stockade (modern day Elm and Monroe Streets).<sup>212</sup> The bones were only two inches under the ground and crumbled easily. Flint was also found at the site and there was speculation that the remains could be prehistoric.<sup>213</sup> We will revisit this area later in our investigation.

From forgotten cemeteries to old Native American villages and burial grounds, obviously more than just soldiers are turning up here and there reminding us of a long-forgotten past.

<sup>212</sup> La Voy, Lambert M. *Bay Settlement of Monroe County, Michigan*. Monroe: Lambert La Voy, 1971, p.153.

<sup>213</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, September 20 1900.



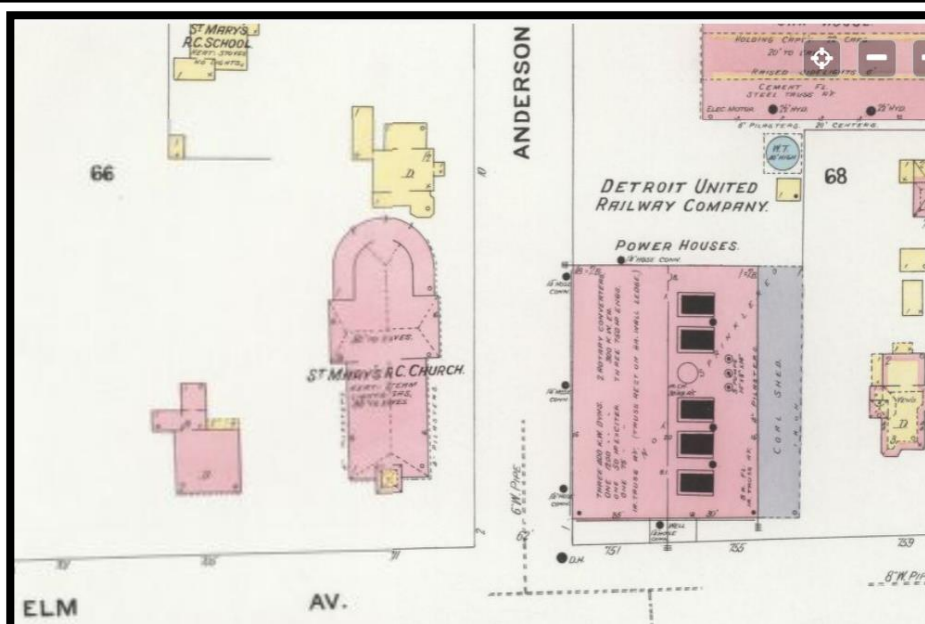


**Figure 16.3: Detail from “Bird’s Eye View of Monroe, Monroe Co., Michigan 1866.”** Star showing location of Wayne Stockade.

*Ruger, A. Chicago, Chicago Lithographing Co. [1866]*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114m.pm003620>



**Figure 16.4: Detail from “Map from Monroe, Monroe County, Michigan.”** Showing the D.U.R. power house and car barn on the old Wayne Stockade property.

*Sanborn Map Company, Sept. 1908*

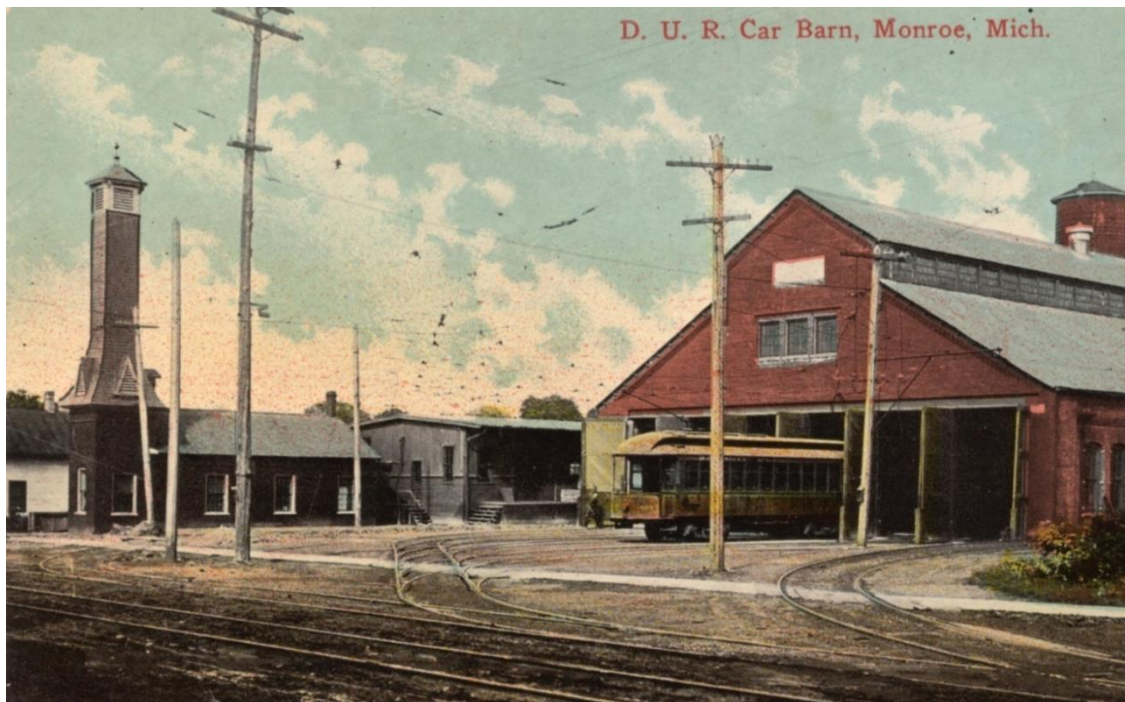
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151908>



*"Laying D.U.R. electric railway street car tracks on Monroe St. heading to Elm St. powerhouse," circa 1900*

*Courtesy of Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum System*



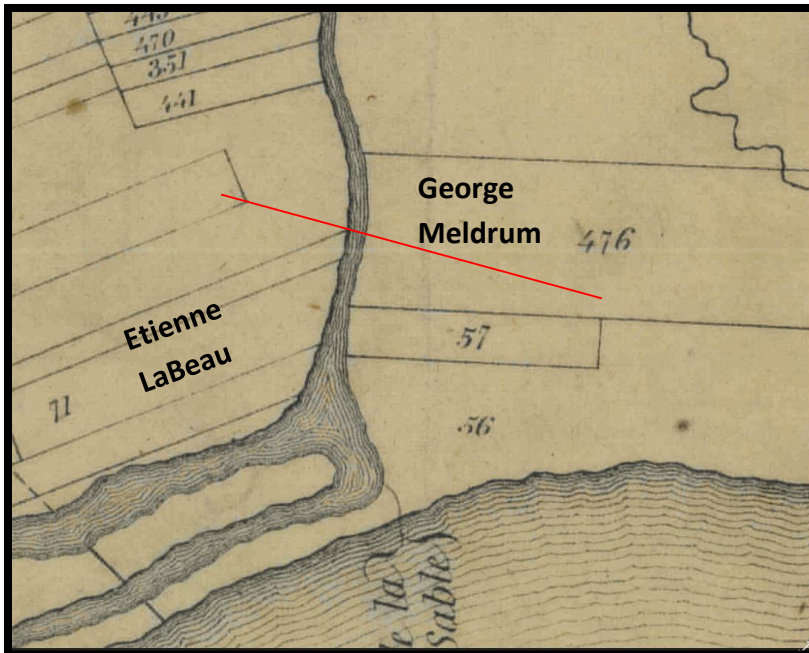
*"D.U.R. Car Barn, Monroe, Mich." located behind the powerhouse*

*Courtesy of Michael Huggins*





*"Monroe, Mich, D. M & T Elec. Ry. Power House"*  
*Courtesy of Michael Huggins*



**Figure 16.5: Detail of “Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory, As Surveyed by Aaron Greeley, Surveyor, in 1810.”**

Showing LaBeau and Meldrum property, also in red is Hull Road (Dixie Hwy).

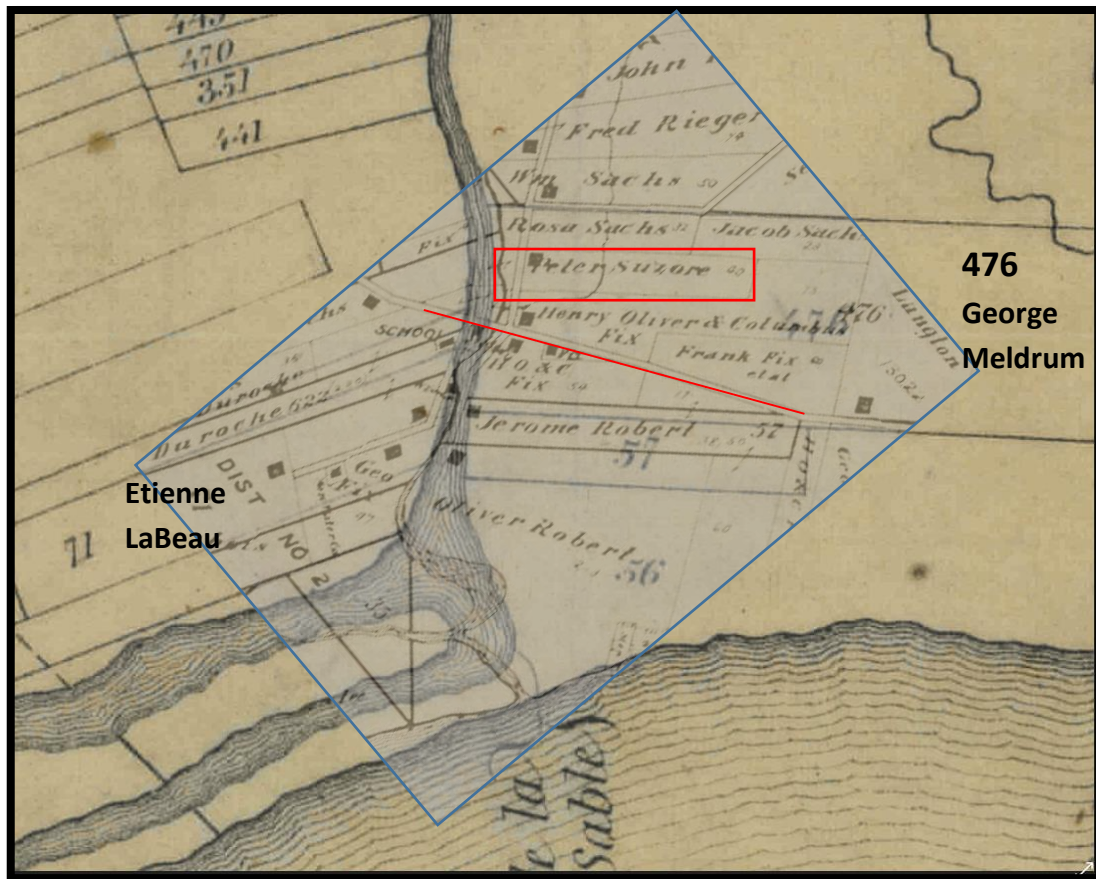
*Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan*

Also, we do not want to forget the incident we looked at in the introduction, where on April 11, 1901, the *Monroe Democrat* reported that a workman hired by Peter Suzore was digging a post hole and discovered a human skull. The family investigated further and found a complete skeleton; they decided to cover it back up, except Peter kept the skull. Peter resided in Frenchtown Township not far off North Dixie Highway by Sandy Creek. But there is a lot more history tied to this property.

In chapter four we looked at the settlers killed at Sandy Creek during the battle on January 18, Rene’ LeBeau and Jean-Baptiste Solo, but there were also soldiers killed there after the battle of January 22. Sandy Creek resident Francis Gandon testified that his neighbor Alex Gee told him that the Native Warriors took possession of his house and held soldiers prisoner there. Francis also states that when he returned home, he found his house burnt down and all his property destroyed. Furthermore, his “*wife would not agree to live there any more on account of the dead bodies she seen there; where the house stood there was three or four skeletons which were burnt.*”<sup>214</sup>

<sup>214</sup> “Affidavit of Francis Gandon Concerning Massacres, etc., Committed by Indians at Sandy Creek,” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*. Vol. VIII, Lansing: Thorp & Godfrey, 1886, pp.642-44.





**Figure 16.6: Overlay of Lang & Greeley maps**

Francis lived very close to Hull Road (Dixie Highway) and was very much bothered by all the back-and-forth traffic by his house from the Native Americans going to and from Detroit.<sup>215</sup> Although we do not have a map showing his property, we know he lived north of the creek by the highway, close to LeBeau and Solo. In fact, Solo was returning from Gandon's house when he was shot. If we look back at Greeley's 1810 map, we see that parcel #476 was owned by George Meldrum and parcel #71 was owned by Etienne LeBeau (son of Rene'). It could be entirely possible that Gandon was a tenant farmer for George Meldrum, in that Meldrum was a Detroit merchant and used tenant farmers to cultivate his land.<sup>216</sup> Also in the Lang map of 1901, we can see that Meldrum's property #476 was subdivided and Peter Suzore lived on part of it, on the creek close to the road. Although we have no proof, we know that Suzore's property must have been very close to what used to be Gandon's. One thing we do know for sure is that soldiers were held

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> "No. 476. George Meldrum, December 8, 1808," *American State Papers*, Series 8, Public Lands Vol. I, p.415. The description before the land board indicates the southern boundary of the claim is the road that goes from Detroit to Ohio.

prisoner and killed in this vicinity, so we have to ask ourselves could the skeleton found on Suzore's property be one of them?



**Figure 16.7:** Detail from “Map of Michigan.” Showing Peter Suzore’s property.

*Lang, Geo. E. Carleton, Mich. : Geo. E. Lang, [1901]*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4113m.la002097>

## Chapter Seventeen

### Monumental Honors



*"Loranger Square," Monroe 1940s  
Courtesy of Michael Huggins*

The turn of the century brought new attitudes on how the battles, and subsequently the remains, would be looked at in the future. There were numerous articles and letters to the editor in the Monroe papers regarding the fate of the neglected old cemetery at Monroe and Seventh Streets. A petition of seventy-nine people proposed abandoning the old cemetery. There were discussions about whether to move the bodies or leave them where they lay. Resolutions were brought up for and against the cemetery. The monument to the Kentucky soldiers that was promised over thirty-two years earlier was no closer to becoming a reality.



# ABOLISH THE OLD CEMETERY.

## A Nuisance, A Menace and an Eyesore.

A petition signed by numerous citizens has been presented to the council and will be acted upon probably at its next session to abolish the old cemetery on Monroe street. This place has been an eyesore to the city for years. It is neglected, unsightly, and a menace to both the health and morals of Monroe. It is overgrown with weeds and underbrush, and is abused as a rendezvous for evildoers of both sexes, so that ladies are afraid to pass by it in the evening. It is almost three quarters of a century since it has been used for new interments, the last body having been buried there Sept. 17, 1838—the body of Horatio G. Kendal. The following are the names of those entombed therein:

NAME	RELATIVES	AGE	DATE BURIAL
Robert Gilmore			June 3, 1826
Samuel Agnew			July 22, 1830
Zenas W. Humphrey			March 10, 1831
Samuel Feit			Sept. 10, 1821
One stone effaced			
Charlotte Garwood	Wife of Jos. C. Garwood		Jan. 22, 1835
Desiah Harvey			March 18, 1831
Isaac Lee			June 9, 1824
Jas. B. Cornell		5 yrs	Aug. 10, 1834
Minerva Cornell	Daughter of Jas. and Eliz.	5 mos	Aug. 11, 1830
Jane Mulhollen	Daughter of Daniel and Isabelle		No date
Mary Jane Mulholland	Daughter of John and Abigail	3 yrs	Jan. 9, 1837
One stone effaced			
Hiram B. Hopkins			Sept. 1, 1834
John Frisbee	Son of Dr. John Frisbee		Nov. 13, 1832
Jabez Chickering			Oct. 20, 1826
Avory G. Spaulding		24 yrs	Sept. 19, 1834
Alonzo M. Williams		24 yrs	April 20, 1835
M. A. Williams	Infant son of A. M. Williams		
Evelyn S. Finch	Daughter of Joseph and Emma Finch	1 yr	May 21, 1838
Ann Shew	Wife of Henry Shew	70 yrs	1830
Harriet Gayer	Wife of Wm. Gayer	53 yrs	Oct. 15, 1832
Wm. Gayer		58 yrs	Sept. 12, 1835
Milley Butler	Wife of John Butler	63 yrs	Sept. 16, 1835
Lyman Hart	Of Palmyra, N. Y.	27 yrs	Aug. 15, 1834
Betsey Ann Stringham	Wife of Rowland Stringham	20 yrs	March 3, 1835
Sarah Emerson	Wife of Timothy Emerson	50 yrs	April 11, 1837
Jane E. Blodgett	Wife of Alvah Blodgett	25 yrs	March 13, 1834
Mary K. Smith	Wife of Sam B. Smith	24 yrs	Sept. 3, 1838
Mary M. Connell		7 yrs	June 22, 1833
James Patterson		23 yrs	April 12, 1836
Peter Gallam		35 yrs	Aug. 22, 1835
Jane	Sister of Peter Gallam	38 yrs	Sept. 7, 1836
Mary Norcoors	Wife of Aaron Norcoors	58 yrs	Aug. 19, 1832
Sarah Stuart	Wife of Chester Stuart	21 yrs	April 11, 1830
Horatio Kendal		37 yrs	Sept. 17, 1838
Name erased	Son of H. G. and Sophia Kendal	20 mos	Sept. 7, 1838
Clarissa Stone	Dau. of Sam'l and Catherine Stone	14 yrs	March 17, 1835
Jonathan Stevens		75 yrs	Oct. 13, 1834
Lucy Stevens	Wife of Jonathan Stevens	74 yrs	Sept. 15, 1834
Adelaide Stophlet	Dau. of Sam and Adelaide Stophlet	8 mos	Sept. 10, 1837
Patrick Gallagher			July 24, 1838
Adelaide Curtis	Daughter of N. D. and Mary Curtis	10 mos	Nov. 14, 1833
Susan Darrah	Wife of Lewis Darrah	30 yrs	Sept. 18, 1835
Susan Darrah	Dau. of Lewis and Susan Darrah	6 weeks	Sept. 25, 1837
George Duffield	Son of John and Mary Duffield	11 mos	June 2, 1836
Jerusha Wells	Wife of Morris Wells	24 yrs	Nov. 3, 1821

*Rebecca Stewart wife of Chester Stewart*  
The land originally belonged to the Mulholland estate, and in case its use as a cemetery ceases will revert to them. In the event of its being abolished it is supposed that many of the bodies will be claimed by relatives and reburied in their lots. In the cases of the unknown dead the city can give them decent reburial in its four lots in Woodland. The council should certainly move at once to do away with the old cemetery as a matter of both health and morals.

"Abolish the Old Cemetery," Newspaper Clipping

Courtesy of the Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum System



But all that changed when a group of civic minded women banded together and formed the Monroe Civic Improvement Society in 1901 for the beautification of Monroe. One of their main concerns was the historical aspect of the city. Mrs. William Van Miller served as president of the Society throughout its existence. She *“begged the members to lend not only enthusiasm to herself, but to one another. That the markings of these places must be done now or it never would be accomplished.”*<sup>217</sup>

*“On the corner of Monroe and Seventh Streets there was, a few years before, an ancient and uncared for burial ground, the first burials in which were the bones of an unknown number of unknown Kentuckians who had lost their lives...which had hereto lain unhonored and unmarked in a nearby field.”*<sup>218</sup> But no more, the Civic Society made it their mission to beautify it into a lovely park. Next was to see the actual memorial erected on what they dubbed “Memorial Place.”

Thus, on January 23, 1903, Senator Simon Van Akin of Monroe introduced a bill in the state senate for the erection of the monument with an appropriation of \$5000. The bill passed and designs were sought. Lloyd Brothers of Toledo got the contract. The memorial was to be composed of granite with the state seals of Michigan and Kentucky on it.<sup>219</sup>

September 1, 1904 was a gala day for Monroe, with over 10,000 spectators, and numerous local dignitaries, as well as dignitaries from Kentucky, to witness the dedication of the long-promised monument to the Kentuckians.

*“Kentucky Monument, Monroe, Mich.”*

*Courtesy of Michael Huggins*



<sup>217</sup> “Deserved Tributes,” *The Observer*, November 11 1939.

<sup>218</sup> Bulkley. *History of Monroe County Michigan*. p.135. Notice at the end of the petition, it says that the land was originally donated by Daniel Mulhollen.

<sup>219</sup> “Michigan’s Memorial to those Who Fell in the River Raisin Massacre,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 21 1904, DFP-PQ.



*"Memorial Park, Monroe, Mich."  
Courtesy of Michael Huggins*

Kentucky Secretary of State H.V. McChesney said of the occasion:

*It will be remembered that after the surrender the able-bodied prisoners were immediately marched away, no opportunity being allowed for burying our dead. The following spring burial was given to such remains as could be found. Years afterwards our State removed these remains, and they now rest near the monument referred to, at the capital of our State....But more of the sacred dust rests here, perhaps, than was removed, and so this is to us an hallowed spot, and rendered doubly so by the ceremonies of this day. With this monument as evidence of your sentiment toward us we will no longer feel that the bones of our dead lie in a strange land. It is a strange land no longer. This day's Work has extended the boundaries of our hearts love, and we have annexed this territory.<sup>220</sup>*

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<sup>220</sup> "The River Raisin Massacre and Dedication of Monuments," *Historical Collections Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*. Vol. 35, p.211.





Top & Left:  
Memorial Place  
Courtesy of Author

When it was time for  
Colonel Bennett  
Young to speak, he  
said:

*Here beneath  
the  
storehouses,  
under the  
streets, amid  
its smiling  
gardens and  
green swarded*

*lawns, under wide spreading elms, you have won the richest spoils—the  
ashes of Kentucky's brave.<sup>221</sup> Of all the men killed in that war, over one-  
half were from our state, and one-third are buried near where we stand  
now. Of all that band that came north to save Frenchtown, of all the army*

<sup>221</sup> "The River Raisin Massacre and Dedication of Monuments," *Historical Collections Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*. Vol. 35, p.226; *Register of Kentucky State Historical Society*, p.40.

*that surrendered, under Winchester's orders to Gen. Proctor, only thirty survived and only three boxes of poor dust remain of the rest.*<sup>222</sup>

The Civic Society also erected bronze plaques on buildings and boulders of other historical sites throughout the city. They were not done with building large monuments however, when only a month later they dedicated another one.



*"Soldiers Monument, Monroe, Mich. "*  
*Courtesy of Monroe County Library System*

*The Civic Improvement society held their regular meeting...and their most important transaction was the adoption of a design of the monument to mark the place where the battle of the River Raisin was fought. It is more pretentious than was first supposed, but as the ladies received so much encouragement in their project, they were enabled to go farther than they first dared hope. The monument will be unique. It is in the form of a square column, seven feet square at the base and four feet at the top, the height being twelve feet. It will be made of hard heads [large boulders] set in cement, with a granite tablet on both sides. The total cost will be \$325, freight and cartage, amounting to about \$30.00, having been donated, as*

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<sup>222</sup> "Heroes of Kentucky: Monument in Their Memory Unveiled at Monroe Tribute to Those Who Fell in River Raisin Massacre," *Detroit Free Press*, September 2 1904, DFP-PQ.



*was also a carload of screenings for the base. It will be erected on the north bank of the river between the Lake Shore and Michigan Central tracks...*<sup>223</sup>

While the foundation was being dug on Elm Street by the corner of North Dixie Highway by the north side of the river, many bones were found, reportedly up to four skeletons. They were reinterred at the site, now the monument is their grave marker.<sup>224</sup>



*"Soldiers Monument"*

*Courtesy of Monroe County Library System*

The *Monroe Democrat* published four articles concerning the discovery of the remains. When taken together they all say virtually the same thing and corroborate that the remains were reinterred under the monument. One article gives more details and the number of skeletons:

*While Dynamite Jim (Navarre) was excavating for the proposed monument to mark the location of the Massacre of the Raisin, along the north bank of the river, between the Lake Shore and the Michigan Central tracks, he discovered a number of human bones buried about eighteen*

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<sup>223</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, July 15 1904.

<sup>224</sup> "The River Raisin Massacre and Dedication of Monuments," *Historical Collections Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*. Vol. 35, p.206.

*inches below the surface of the ground. One skull was in perfect preservation, and there were portions of seven or eight others. It is thought that at least eight men were buried there. They were probably Kentuckians, as the bones are not those of Indians.*<sup>225</sup>

*“River Raisin Massacre Monument, Monroe Mich.” Postcard  
Courtesy of Author*



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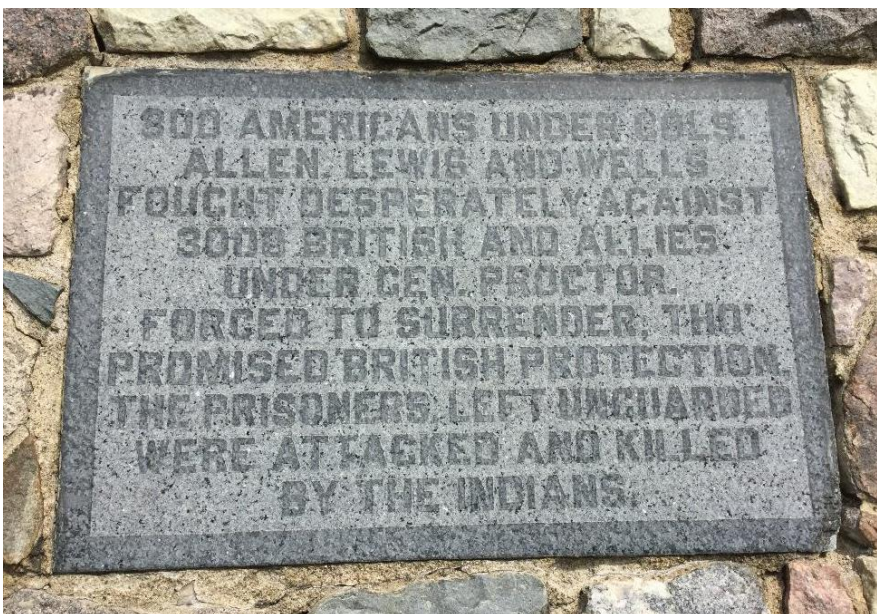
<sup>225</sup> *Monroe Democrat*, August 12 1904. Dynamite Jim was James Eli Navarre brother of Samuel Navarre and lived in the City of Monroe.





Dedication day was October 14, 1904 about 1,000 spectators attended the ceremony, which was preceded by a parade of 600 children, who had a penny drive to donate to the cause.

Rev. Father Downey of St Mary's Church gave the oratory saying: *"Sleep on, brave tender and true southern lads, and while no blue grass of a southland waves over your mounds, the waters of the Raisin, like a mother's tears, will ever water your resting ground."*<sup>226</sup>



*Plaques on Monument  
Courtesy of Author*

Former Mayor Jacob Martin had a word of advice for the current mayor (V. Sisung): *"Their task is done and well done, and in their behalf to you, Mr. Mayor, as representing the city of Monroe. I present this their completed work. So long as our city stands, let it and its fellow-monument in Memorial Place, be sacredly cared for and preserved."*<sup>227</sup>

<sup>226</sup> "Shaft to Mark River Raisin Battlefield Presented to the City of Monroe," *Monroe Democrat*, October 21 1904, pp.1-4.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

Mayor Sisung told how the soldier's bones were found when excavating for the foundation of the monument and how they were again reinterred underneath it.

The inscription on one side of the monument side reads: *"Eight hundred Americans under Colonels Allen, Lewis and Wells fought desperately against three thousand British and allies under General Proctor. Forced to surrender tho' promised protection. The prisoners left unguarded were attacked and killed by the Indians."*

The other side says, *"Site of Battle of January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1813. General Winchester in command, and River Raisin Massacre January 23, 1813. Erected by the women of the Civic Improvement Society of Monroe."*

Almost a century after the cairn monument was erected by the Monroe Civic Improvement Society, it was crumbling and finally succumbed to being hit by an automobile. Oddly enough the accident was on the date of the battle January 23. The fate of the monument was in question for a little while as the City of Monroe considered whether to immediately repair it or wait until a park could be developed at the site across the street, where it was being moved. In the meantime, it would have continued to deteriorate. Ultimately it was decided to proceed with the repairs and the monument was taken apart piece by piece and reassembled directly across the road from where it was. Anticipation ran high as people watched and waited to see if there was anything in the monument itself, or if bones would once again be discovered underneath it. Expectations were dashed however when nothing was revealed.<sup>228</sup>



—Evening News photo by Kevin Dille  
A huge chunk of stones is missing from this historic monument, located just west of the E. Elm Ave.-N. Dixie Hwy. intersection. It was built in 1904 through the efforts of the Civic Improvement Society.

*Courtesy of The Monroe Evening News (see note 222)*

<sup>228</sup> "Monument to soldiers – and historic example of civic duty – crumbles," *The Monroe Evening News*, June 13 1993; "Repairs to be made to battle monument," *The Monroe Evening News*, August 16 1993; "Repairing obelisk a monumental task," *The Monroe Evening News*, February 2002; "Monument to be moved across the street," *The Monroe Evening News*, May 7 2002; "A place in history," *The Monroe Evening News*, September 5 2002.





*"Monument Today"*  
*Courtesy of Author*

In contrast to the big public spectacle being made over the monuments, something relatively quiet, yet even more important, was happening in a little area of someone's yard. A very compelling article appeared on the first page of the *Record Commercial* on September 1, 1904:

### *THEIR FINAL REST*

*A RATHER INTERESTING CEREMONY TOOK PLACE IN THE ORCHARD OF Alex T. Navarre, Monday, when Mrs. E. O. Grosvenor, Miss Jennie Sawyer [member of the civic society] and the venerable Felix Geniac dug up the bones of the Kentuckians who fell during the battle of the River Raisin. Prior to 1860, Joseph Navarre, the father of Alex T. had gathered up the bones found on his farm each year while plowing and carefully stored them in his barn. It was the intention of the senior Navarre to ship the bones to Frankfort, Kentucky in order that the last trace of the brave southern sons might rest in their native soil.*

*The rebellion broke out and this prevented Mr. Navarre from carrying out his plan and the bones were buried by Felix Geniac, who was then in the employ of Mr. Navarre.*

*Mr Geniac, accompanied by turnkey Vizard visited the orchard Monday and walked to the exact spot where he had, forty-four years ago*

*buried the bones. Mr. Metty began digging very carefully and soon came upon the remains of those brave soldiers. What was found was placed in two boxes, each member of the party taking part in the ceremony. The party consisted of Miss Jennie Sawyer, Felix Geniac, Alex T. Navarre and his son Leo and daughter May, Ed. Vizard and RECORD representative.*

*The remains were taken to Memorial Place and interred for their final rest. The teeth and some of the smaller bones were placed in a metal box in order to protect them from returning to dust and ashes.<sup>229</sup>*

Incredibly, we finally have our answer as to whether the bones Joseph Navarre was trying to get back to General Combs in 1860, and Captain McCullough in 1861, ever made it back to Kentucky. Evidently, they never got picked up or shipped back to Kentucky.

Yet, we have to wonder why Combs did not mention them or think about taking them home with him to Kentucky when he was here for the reunion in 1872. There might be an explanation for that. The article points out that the Civil War interrupted Joseph's intentions in 1861. Also, only one year after that and his letter to Captain McCullough, Joseph passed away at the age of seventy-six years. Luckily the bones were not forgotten after forty-four years passed and finally ended up buried in the cemetery that was established for the Kentuckians. They are still in a "foreign land" and a long way from home however.

*"Alex T. Navarre and Benjamin Dansard Jr. at the Navarre homestead, preparing to ride in the dedication parade for the Kentucky monument in 1904."*



*Courtesy of the Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum System*

<sup>229</sup> "Their Final Rest," *Record-Commercial*, September 1 1904, p.1.

## Chapter Eighteen

### Looming Smokestacks

Evidently Joseph Navarre had not found all the remains, for almost fifty years later another skeleton turned up on the old Francios Navarre farm. The *Record Commercial* reported that on August 8, 1907, William Beck, while excavating for his new house on Humphrey Street, found a skeleton only two feet in the ground. It was believed that it belonged to a man of about twenty-five to thirty years old, since the teeth were “*in first class condition*,” although the skull was crushed. The parcel was originally part of the Navarre farm about 500 feet from the location of where General Winchester’s headquarters were. The report goes on to say that the remains might have been those of a scout.<sup>230</sup> In the 1980s Dennis Au documented a Native American occupation site behind the current day Sawyer House, on the former Navarre farm, close to this vicinity.

William Beck was actually C. William Beck and worked at his family’s lumberyard, C.F. Beck and sons, which was named after his father and grandfather. It was located very close to his home, other members of his family also lived in the same area. William built his home in 1907, and married Zaida Kolb in 1908.



“William Beck on his wedding day, with Wolverine Club members, at his new house on Humphrey Street,” circa 1908

Courtesy of the Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum System

<sup>230</sup> “Local Happenings,” *Record-Commercial*, August 8 1907, p.5.

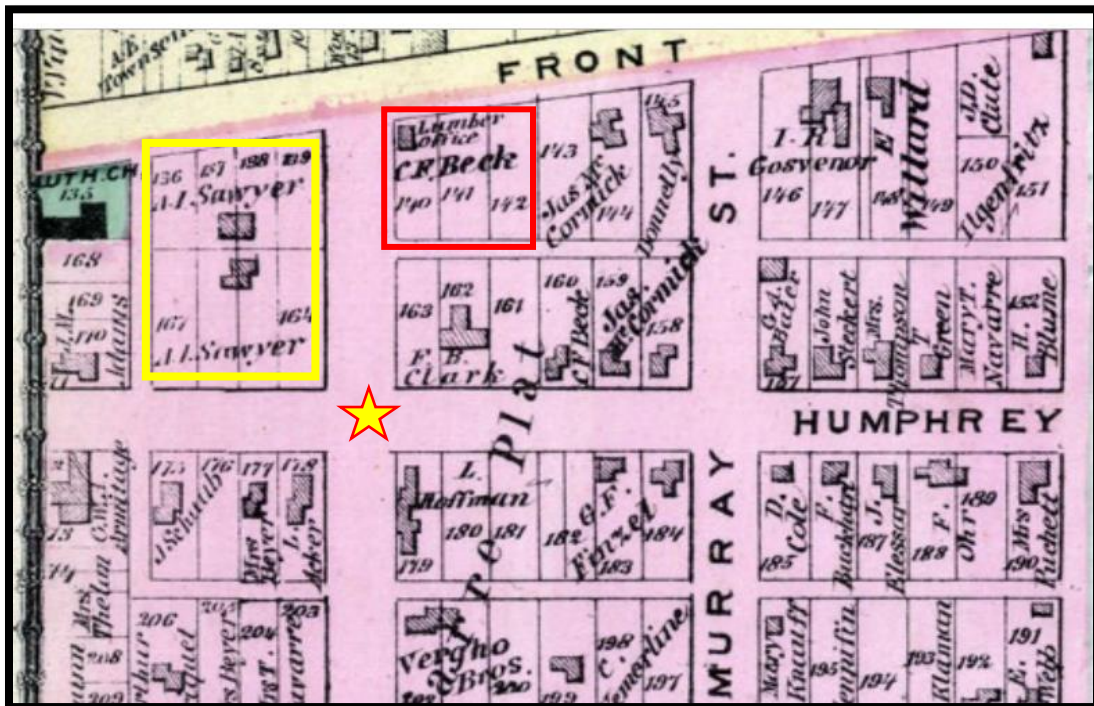




*Above & Below: "C.F. Beck & Son Co. Lumber Yard"*  
*Courtesy of the Monroe County Library County Library System*







**Figure: 18.1:** Detail of “County atlas of Monroe, Michigan / from recent and actual surveys and records under the superintendence of S. M. Bartlett for F. W. Beers.” Star shows area where skeleton was found. Yellow box is where General Winchester’s Headquarters were on Navarre farm, today A.I Sawyers. Red box shows Beck family lumber company.

*Co Bartlett, S. M. and L. E. Neuman and Charles Hart.  
New York: F. W. Beers, 1876. Unity Atlas of Monroe, MI.*



*"The Wayne Stockade" by Fran Maedel  
Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

Another article published just twenty-one days later on August 29, 1907, reported that while workmen were digging for a new reservoir, by the electric powerhouse, they unearthed a skull and most of a skeleton. The spot was originally where the blockhouse stood and was part of the Wayne Stockade (modern day Elm Avenue and Monroe Street).<sup>231</sup>

So another skeleton turns up where the Wayne Stockade was. There is no mention of this one possibly being Native American as the other four we looked at in chapter sixteen. Incidentally the Wayne Stockade was burned down by the British / Native Americans five months before the battles when River Raisin was surrendered in August of 1812. There were some skirmishes at the stockade, but no deaths were recorded that we currently know of.

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<sup>231</sup> *Record-Commercial*, August 29 1907, p.1.

Let us jump ahead for a moment and look at a September 16, 1930 newspaper, where the Monroe Evening News published a “From Our Files, 30 years Ago” article referencing September 20, 1900: *“While excavating at the power house site, laborers found bones, small pieces of flint, and part of an Indian pot. This was near the old stockade and it is presumed Inidans were buried here during the war of 1812-13.”*<sup>232</sup>

We know that the chances of the Wayne Stockade area being a burial ground for the Native Warriors involved in the battles are slim to none, considering it was burned down before the battles. Not to mention it would be doubtful they would consider that a suitable resting place to bury their dead after the battles. But, remember when we looked at the original report in chapter sixteen, page 132, it said there was speculation the remains could be prehistoric.

There might be another clue to the mystery of so many skeletons being found there however, among the papers of Colonel Francois Navarre. On September 14, 1786, when the *habitants* were looking to establish a parish (St. Antoine’s), Potawatomi Chief Eshkeebec (Ashkibey) offered to donate

*A piece of land...for the building of a house of prayer, situated on the mound of land on the right side of River Raisin....This place destined in perpetuity as a place of prayer, can never be occupied for any other purpose, and by the ministers of the Master of Life. Therefore, it is expressly forbidden all persons, of whatever nation they may be, to touch said place, to cultivate or settle thereupon under the pain of losing their labors and of seeing their works destroyed.*<sup>233</sup>

The settlers decided against using that particular plot and it would eventually serve as the foundation to the Wayne Stockade. Since it belonged to the Potawatomi’s, and it was a “mound of land” we could speculate that it might have been used as a burial ground at some point in its history.

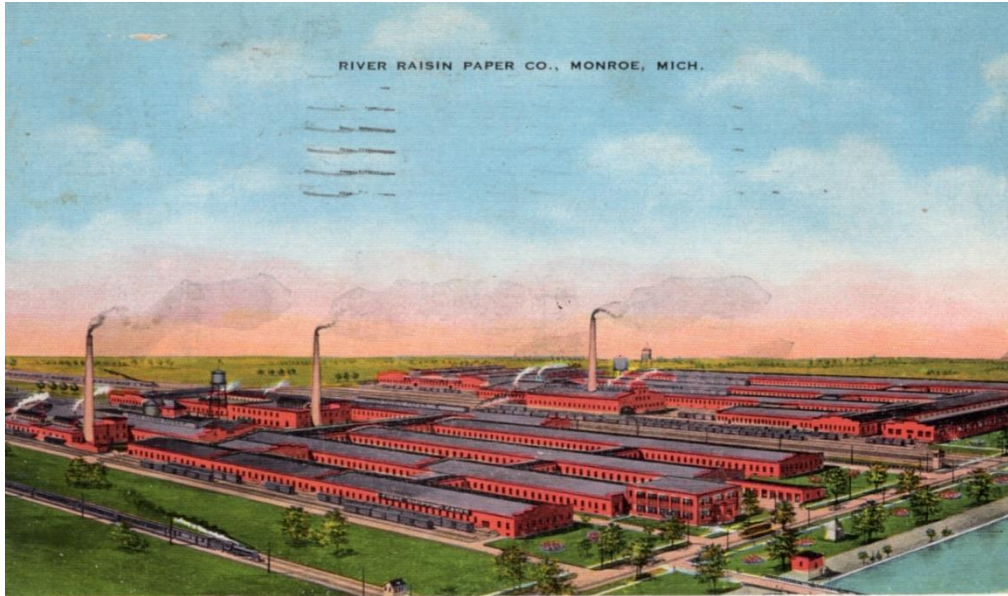
1910 ushered in a new era for the area of the battlefield that would dramatically change the landscape for good. Mr. G. Harley Wood purchased 200 acres on the core area of the battlefield to construct the River Raisin Paper Company.

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<sup>232</sup> “From Our Files: 30 Years Ago,” *Monroe Evening News*, September 16 1930.

<sup>233</sup> Navarre, Francois Colonel. Navarre Family Papers, 1784-1819. Box 1, Monroe County Museum System archives.





*"River Raisin Paper Company," circa 1930s postcard  
Courtesy of Author*

Over the ensuing decades, the area would be transformed by a massive complex of industrial buildings and residences for plant workers. Even the soil would be altered forever as ash, cinder, and other industrial waste was heaped upon it for many years, resulting in the area later being declared a brownfield. Today, archeological investigations are all but impossible in most areas because of the four-to-six-foot layers of fill.

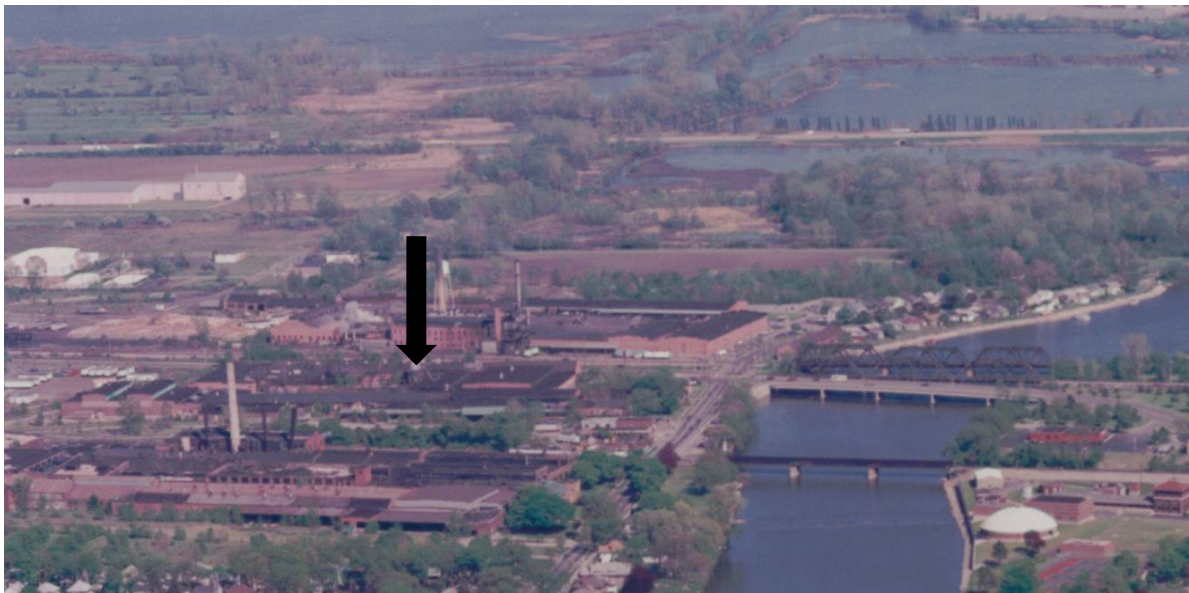


*"River Raisin Paper Company," postcard  
Courtesy of Michael Huggins*

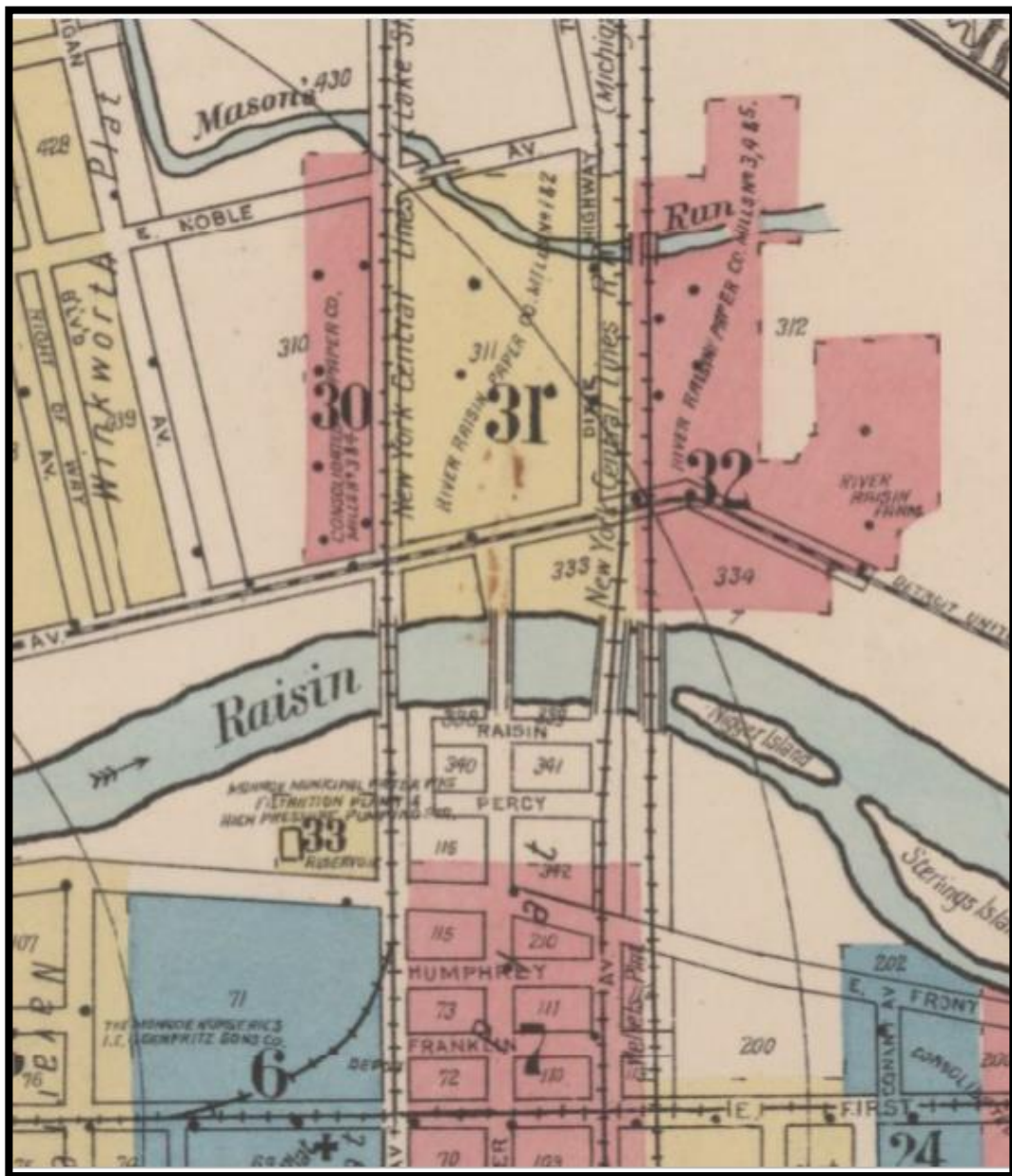




*"River Raisin Paper Products, Elm Avenue", undated  
Courtesy of Rusty Davis*



*"Photo of Paper Mill complex," Arrow delineates the papermill complex area  
Courtesy of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park*

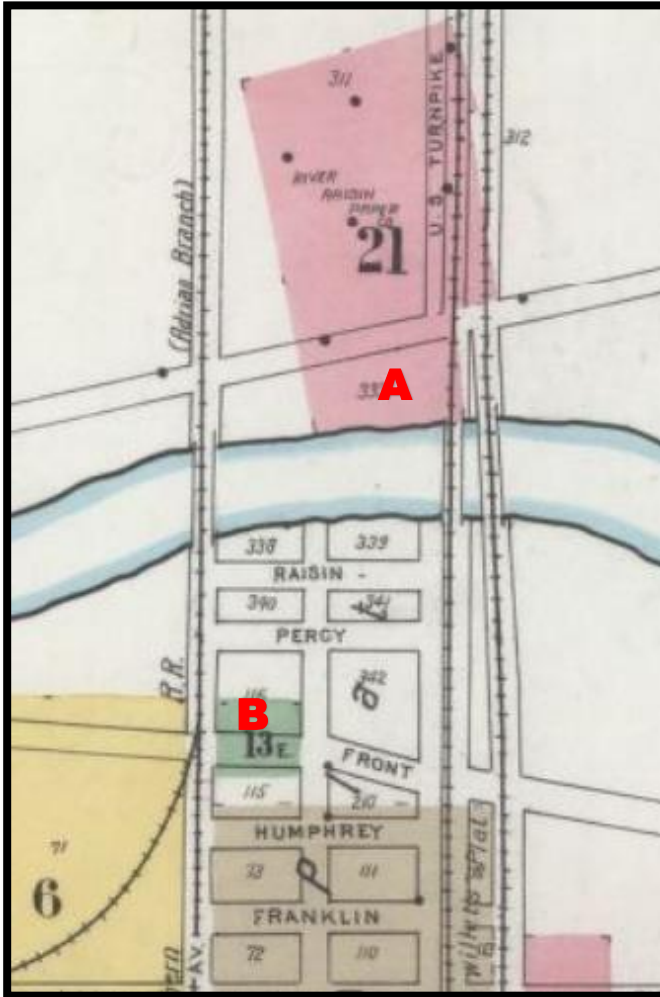


**Figure 18.2: Detail from “Map from Monroe, Monroe County, Michigan.”** Showing the expansion of the paper mills.

*Sanborn Map Company, Nov. 1922*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151908><http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151922>



**Figure 18.3: Detail from “Map from Monroe, Monroe County, Michigan.”** Showing approximate areas of grave discoveries.

- A. Aug. 12, 1910:  
2 skeletons found  
(Soldier/Native American?)
- B. 1921:  
1 skeleton found  
(Native American?)

*Sanborn Map Company, May 1916*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151916>

On August 12, 1910, the *Monroe Democrat* reported that “victims” of the battle, one soldier and one Native American woman, were

found in the same vicinity by workmen while putting a sewer line across Elm Avenue for the new paper plant, just a few yards from the obelisk monument. The woman was thought to be of a high rank because a copper bracelet, other copper jewelry items, earrings, necklace, and beads, were found along with two knives. The skeleton of the soldier had a metal letter C with his remains.<sup>234</sup>

In 1921, on East Front between Winchester and Kentucky Streets, (which was part of the retreat route on January 22) while excavating for a building, workmen found a skeleton that was believed to be Native American. The remains were reburied by the river in a box.<sup>235</sup>

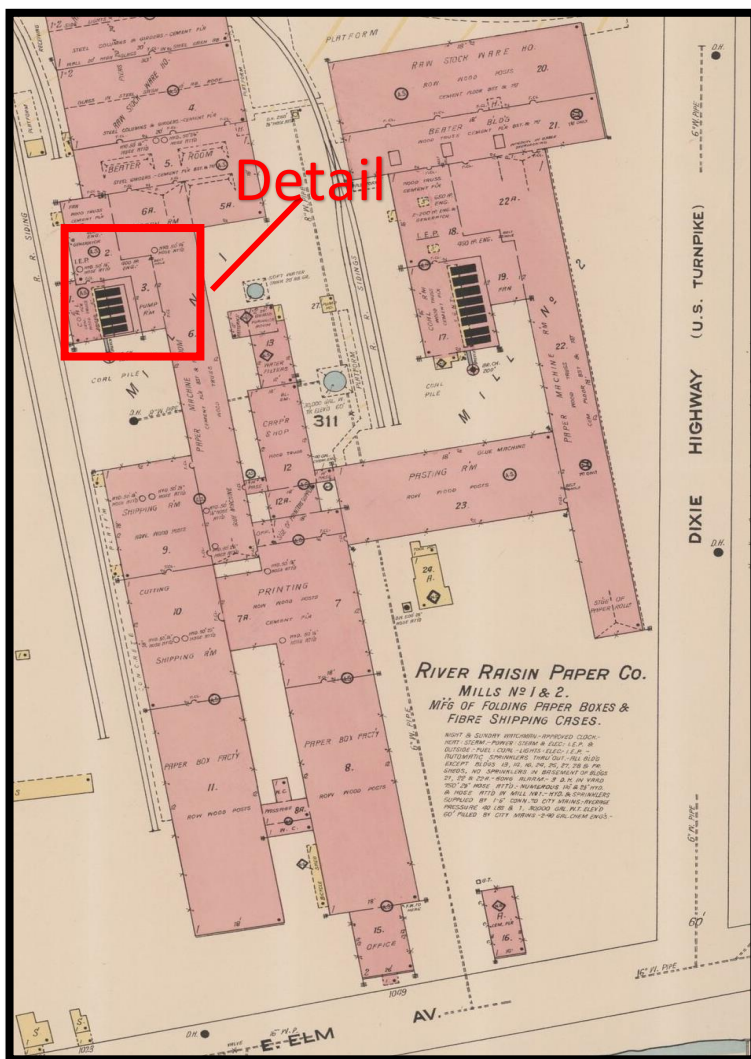
<sup>234</sup> “Found Two Skeletons,” *Monroe Democrat*, August 12 1910.

<sup>235</sup> “Skeleton Was Found By Workmen,” *The Monroe Evening News*, April 1921.



Bulkley relayed a similar account in his *History of Monroe County* book:

*In the course of excavating for foundations and cellars for the mill, a large quantity of relics were exhumed, consisting of well preserved skeletons, tomahawks, hunting knives, military buttons articles of pottery, rosaries and a few coins, also a few cannon balls six pound caliber. One of the skeletons evidently was that of an Indian chief of very large proportions with whom were buried his implements of war. The collection of relics has been carefully preserved by the mill proprietors and is exhibited to visitors.<sup>236</sup>*



In fact rumors abound about bones and skulls being found during initial construction of the paper mill as well as subsequent activities over the following years.<sup>237</sup> In the 1950's commercial artist for the paper company, Edwin Long, reported that human remains were uncovered when footings were being installed for a new machine under the floor of building number three.<sup>238</sup> Former Monroe County Museum Director Matthew Switlik, when interviewed by *The Monroe Evening News*, said that the museum had been contacted numerous times from previous factory employees claiming remains were found during excavations in the 1950s.<sup>239</sup>

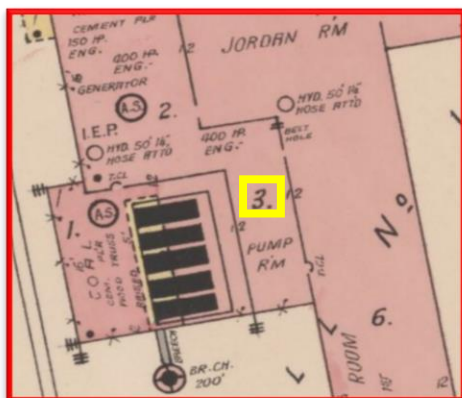
<sup>236</sup> Bulkley. *History of Monroe County Michigan*. p.401.

<sup>237</sup> Au, Dennis. *An Historical and Archaeological Investigation of the River Raisin Battle Site of 1813*. Monroe: Monroe County Historical Commission, July 1 1977, pp.47-8.

<sup>238</sup> River Raisin NBP archives, Ralph Naveaux Collection, from random references compiled June 6 22 2017.

<sup>239</sup> "Smurfit eastside mill site of War of 1812 battle," and "Smurfit sells eastside mill," *The Monroe Evening News*, October 15, 1997.





**Figure 18.4: Detail from “Map from Monroe, Monroe County, Michigan.”**  
Showing building #3.

*Sanborn Map Company, Nov. 1922*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151908>  
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151922>

There are even rumors of skulls being used as bookends on office shelves. The plant underwent a myriad of different companies over the decades but was finally closed for good in 1995 and was demolished.

Meanwhile over the years, remains were still turning up in familiar places. In 1957, workers lowering the New York Central System tracks on First Street were told to gather soil from between Washington and Monroe Streets for the project. As they dumped out the load however, they were utterly shocked to see bones appear amongst the grains of dirt. The bones were analyzed and thought to be animal bones. Yet, just three years later in 1960 human remains were found in the same area (refer to page 109).<sup>240</sup>



*“Looking down Front Street, Monroe,” undated*  
*Courtesy of the Michael Huggins*

<sup>240</sup> *The Monroe Evening News*, August 16 1957.

On July 6, 1966, a trenching company for Michigan Bell Telephone Company unearthed bones five feet down underneath a sidewalk on the west side of South Monroe Street, between Front and First Streets. Many of the bones of a skeleton were discovered. It is believed the sidewalk was originally installed in the early 1900's. The bones were examined and determined to be human by coroner Eli Allore, who also reburied the remains.<sup>241</sup> However, a location was not given for the reburial. In any case we have proof once again that the first Protestant Cemetery was never made completely devoid of graves.

In 1990, the City of Monroe was having land prepared downtown at Loranger Square, Washington and First Streets, for a Lotus Fountain to be installed when workman unearthed some human remains. The remains were studied and found to be prehistoric Native American bones and were reburied. It is thought that this area was an old Native American burial ground.<sup>242</sup>



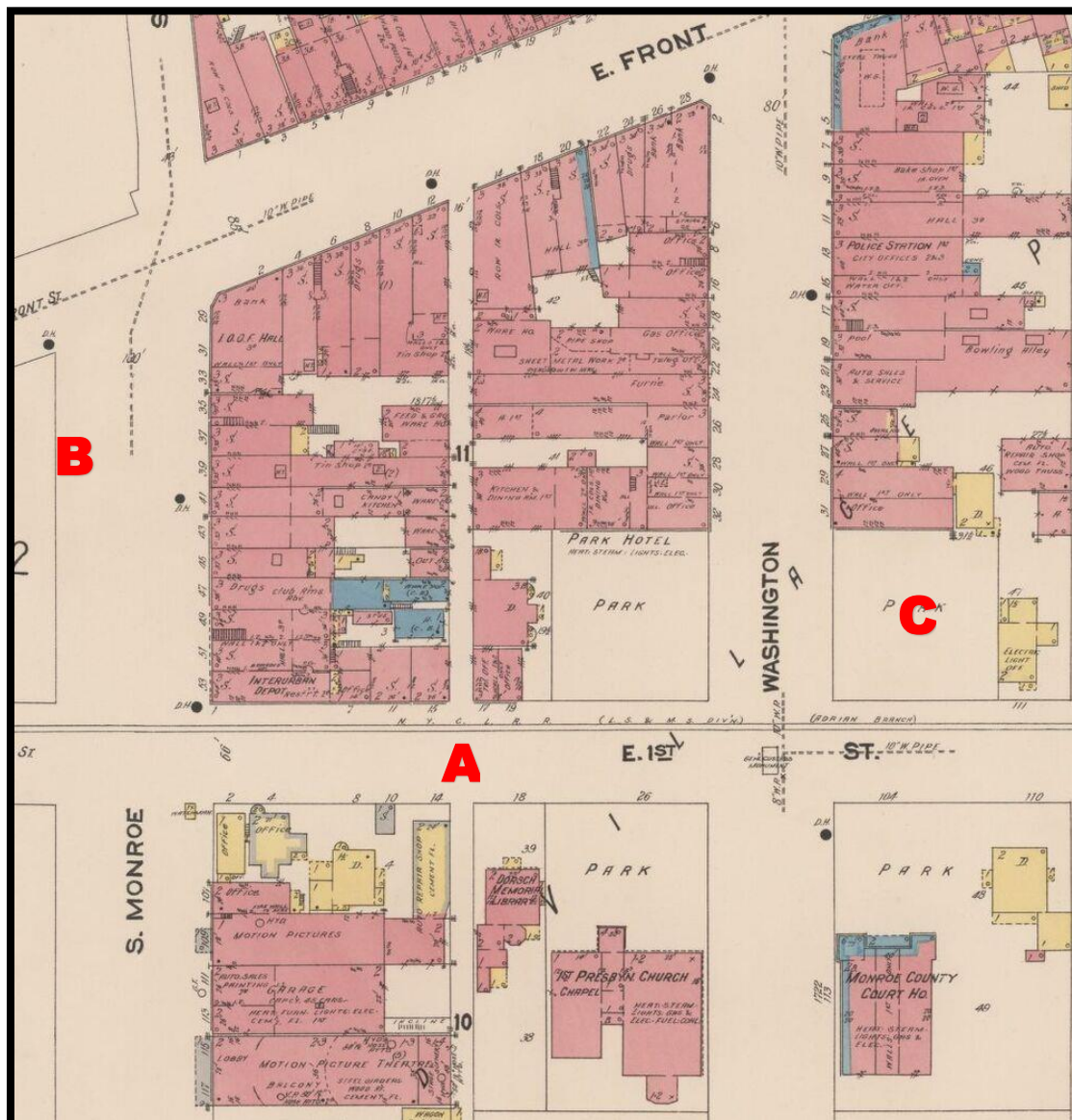
*Lotus Fountain in Loranger Square  
Courtesy of Author*

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<sup>241</sup> "Bones Found in City Identified as Human," *The Monroe Evening News*, July 7 1966; "Bones May Be Remnant of Massacre," *The Monroe Evening News*, July 8 1966.

<sup>242</sup> River Raisin NBP archives, Ralph Naveaux Collection, from random references compiled June 22 2017.





**Figure 18.5: Detail from “Map from Monroe, Monroe County, Michigan.”**  
Showing approximate locations of combined graves.

- A. 1957: Bones found (not exact location-animal?)
- B. July 6, 1966: Bones found (where 1<sup>st</sup> Protestant Cemetery was located)
- C. 1990: Bones found (Native American Burial ground)

Sanborn Map Company, Nov 1922

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4114mm.g041151922>



*“Ariel view of Monroe, MI. looking south to Lake Erie”  
Courtesy of the Monroe County Library System*

Now let us look at all the combined discoveries made in Monroe, focusing on the north part of Monroe (A) and the south part of Monroe (B). Please note that areas are approximate, and one letter can mean more than one skeleton.



**Figure 18.6: “Standard atlas of Monroe County, Michigan : including a plat book of the villages, cities and townships of the county...farmers directory, reference busines directory.”**

*Compiled and published by Geo. A. Ogle & Co.  
Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1896*

<http://name.umd.umich.edu/3927818.0001.001>



## Detail A

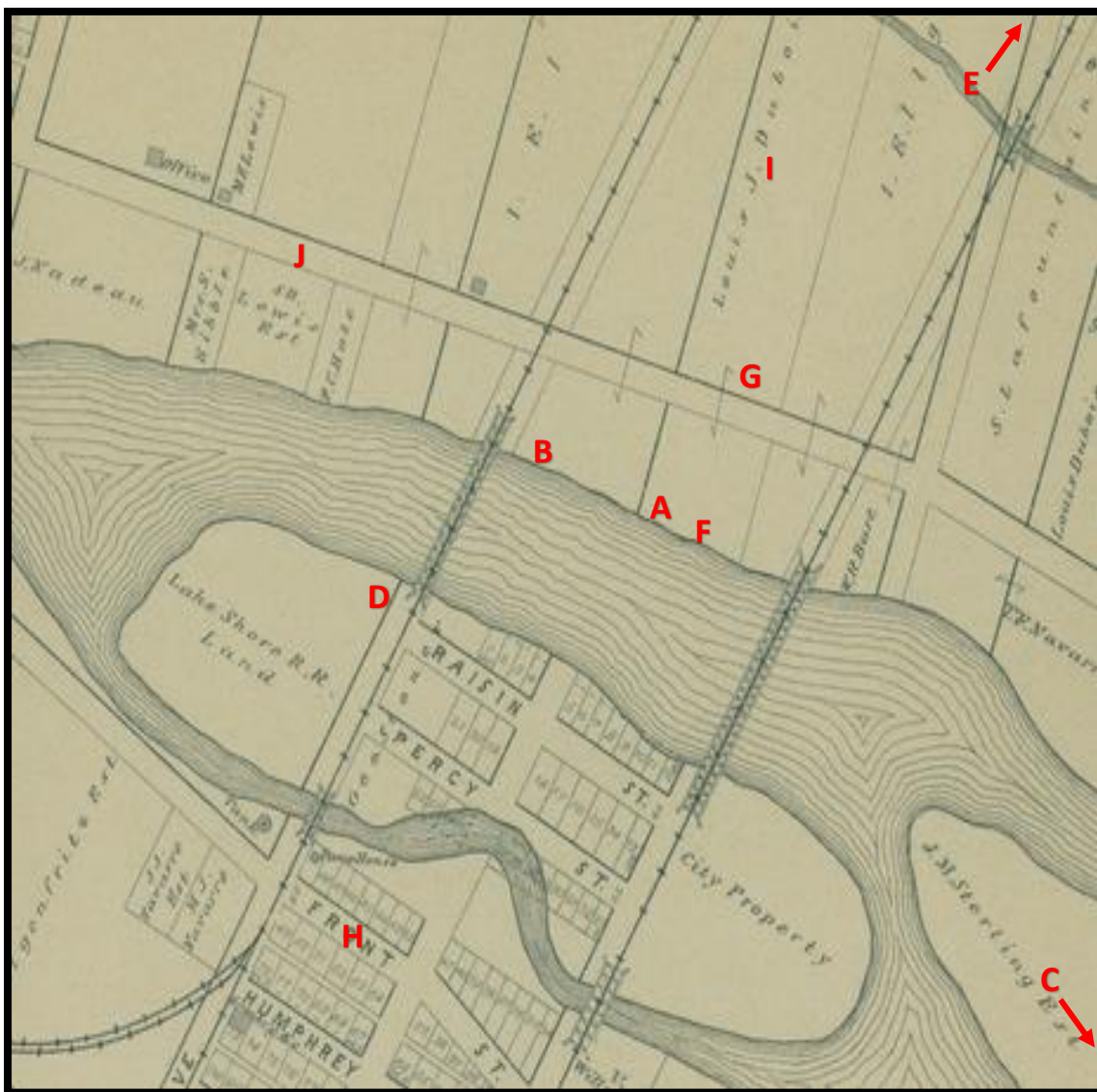


**Figure 18.7: Detail A of “Standard atlas of Monroe County, Michigan : including a plat book of the villages, cities and townships of the county...farmers directory, reference business directory.”** Showing combined discoveries in red.

*Compiled and published by Geo. A. Ogle & Co.*  
 Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1896.  
<http://name.umd.umich.edu/3927818.0001.001>

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| A. July 1848:      | 13 tomahawked skulls and other bones, found Monroe Street  |
| B. Oct. 4, 1860:   | Bones found “almost every street” including Washington & Monroe Sts.<br>Also many bones collected by Joseph Navarre up to 1860, no exact locations |
| C. April 19, 1894: | Native American Skeleton? found Kellie Harness Shop, Monroe St. (where cemetery was)   |
| D. June 10, 1897:  | Native American skeleton found Kronbach grocery, Monroe St. (where cemetery was)   |
| E. 1900:           | 3-4 Native American skeletons? found where Wayne Stockade was, Elm & Monroe Sts.   |
| F. Aug. 8, 1907:   | Skeleton found by Humphrey St. (part of Navarre farm)  |
| G. Aug. 29, 1907:  | Skeleton found where Wayne Stockade was, Elm & Monroe Sts.   |
| H. 1957:           | Bones found somewhere between Washington & Monroe Sts. by First St.  |
| I. July 6, 1966:   | Bones found Monroe St. (where cemetery was)  |
| J. 1990:           | Bones found by Lotus Fountain, Washington & First Sts. (Native American Burial ground)   |

## Detail B



**Figure 18.8: Detail B of “Standard atlas of Monroe County, Michigan : including a plat book of the villages, cities and townships of the county...farmers directory, reference busines directory.” Showing combined discoveries in red.**

*Compiled and published by Geo. A. Ogle & Co.*

Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1896.

<http://name.umd.umich.edu/3927818.0001.001>

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| A. Nov. 14, 1867: | 30 skulls & many bones found on north bank of River on Erastus Kimberly property   |
| B. 1869:          | Many skulls & bones found by riverbank as railroad bridge raised   |
| C. 1872:          | House Island, skulls, bones, tools, etc... Native American village?  |
| D. Aug. 30, 1894: | Skeleton found west of railroad bridge on island (retreat route)   |
| E. Aug. 11, 1901: | Skeleton found Suzore property at Dixie Hwy & Sandy Creek  |
| F. Aug. 12, 1904: | 8 Skeletons found by Elm & Dixie Hwy. while digging for Cairn Monument   |
| G. Aug. 12, 1910: | 2 skeletons found Elm Ave. when running line from river across street to paper mill and many skeletons found sometime when cellars added |
| H. 1921:          | 1 skeleton (Native American?) found between Kentucky and Winchester on Front St.   |
| I. 1950s:         | 1 skeleton found under paper mill building #3, and rumored many skeletons found in the 1950s   |
| J. 1950           | 3 trenches of bones found (also 3 skulls), Elm Ave.  |



## Chapter Nineteen

### In search of...



*Skirmish Line Historical Marker  
Courtesy of Author*

Thus far we have looked at how the victims of the battles lay unburied, or hastily buried, to how they were accidentally discovered over the years. Now let us turn our attention 360 degrees to the search for the victims....

In the year 2000, a forensic dog survey was conducted on areas of the battlefield and in the City of Monroe. Sandra Anderson and her dog "Eagle" worked on flushing out the graves at St. Antoine's the previous year. In examining the area around where the current River Raisin Battlefield pavilion sits, the dog alerted to a line of bone fragments. This is where the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry would have been on January 22, suggesting the location of the skirmish line. Eagle detected that the bones were recovered in the past and only fragments still exist. There were some other hot spots that signaled the possibility of a skeleton and many bones around Detroit and Elm Avenues.



*"Plum Creek," circa 1893*  
*Courtesy of the Monroe County Library System*

The dog also alerted to scattered skeletal remains south of Plum Creek and east of Kentucky Avenue, the area of the retreat route of January 22. Another location was under Elm Avenue to the bank of the River Raisin at the corner of North Dixie Highway. An additional hotspot was the riverbank between the former obelisk monument site to the old bridge abutment. Remains under the parking area of the former papermill by Elm Avenue and South of Dixie Highway were also signaled.

In downtown Monroe, Eagle alerted to skeletal remains still being in the first Protestant Cemetery.<sup>243</sup> In the mid-1980s Dennis Au had an opportunity to search for remains behind the buildings at this location but was unable to recover anything. In utilizing the original deed for the cemetery, Au mapped out the area and concluded that the cemetery is now primarily under the western side of South Monroe Street, extending under the sidewalk and about nine feet under the buildings.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Forensic Dog Survey, 1999 & 2000, River Raisin NBP archives, copies at Office of the State Archeologist.

<sup>244</sup> "Cemetery downtown?" *The Monroe Evening News*, May 29 1986.



*Corner of South Monroe and Front Streets, looking westerly  
Courtesy of Author*

At Memorial Place, the dog signaled remains not only where graves still exist, but that there were also graves in rows throughout the park and even into the alley. Remains were also detected around and under the monument itself. The City of Monroe actually did a ground penetrating radar scan of the cemetery in 2005. Examining it (on the next page) we can see where the graves have been identified by tombstones that still exist, versus those that have long since disappeared or never existed in the first place.<sup>245</sup>

At Loranger Square, the dog detected many remains packed in a small space and very close together.<sup>246</sup> Interestingly enough, as we have seen in the past, many of these areas were where bones were found accidentally throughout the last two centuries.

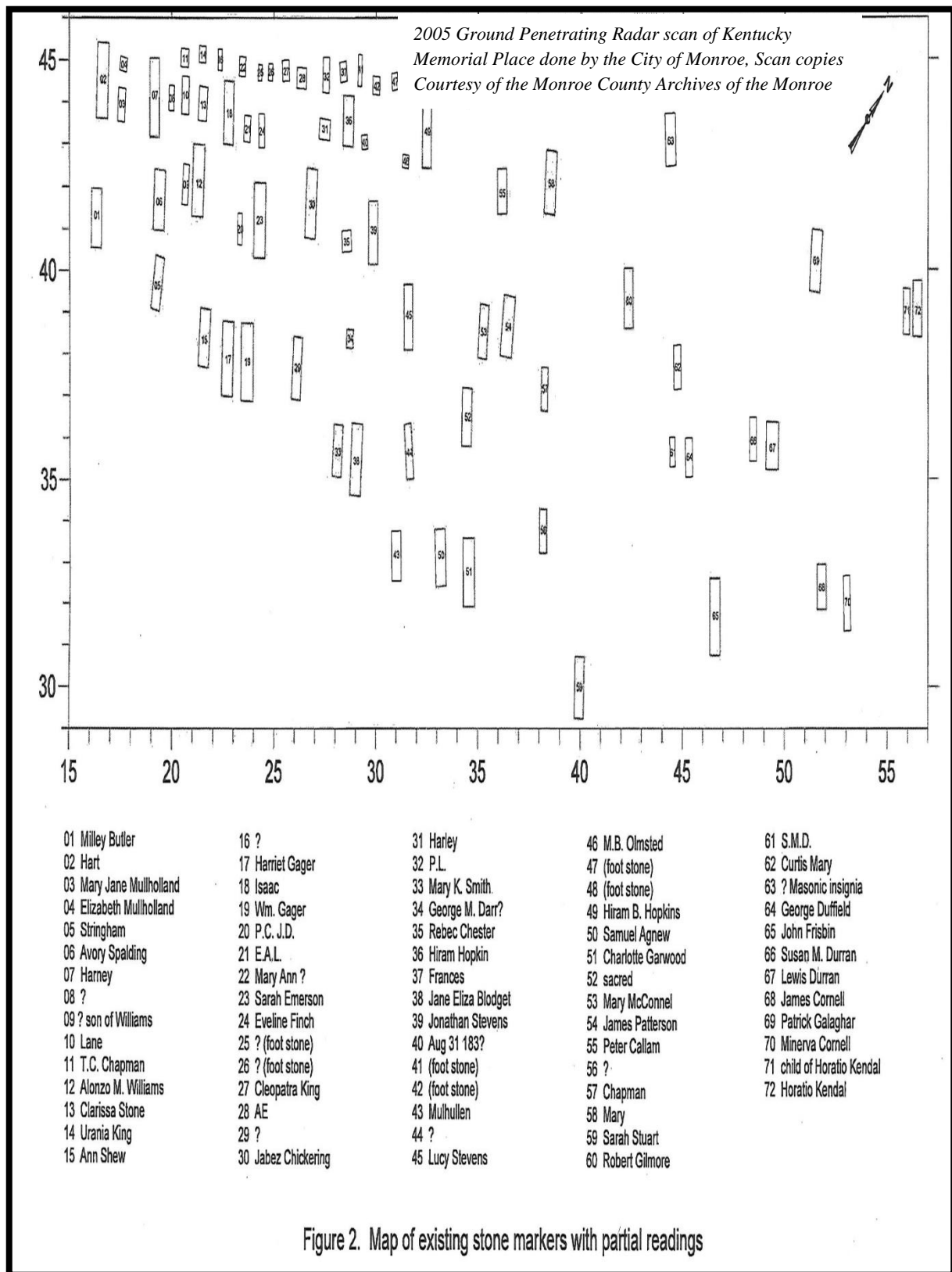
In the year 2000, archeological investigation into some of these areas where the forensic dog had detected remains, failed to produce any human remains. Ironically in 2003, the cadaver-dog handler, Sandra Marie Anderson from Midland, Michigan, was indicted on ten counts, including planting human remains and fiber evidence during searches with her dog, Eagle, and one of those locations was Monroe County. In 2004 she plead guilty that she had planted bones and other evidence in cases she had worked.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Monroe County Museum System archives, photocopies of the City's ground penetrating radar scans. Not sure of the date of the scans, maybe 2013?

<sup>246</sup> Forensic Dog Survey, 1999 & 2000.

<sup>247</sup> "Cadaver – dog handler charged with rigging evidence searches," *Washington Times*, August 20 2003; "Cadaver expert faked evidence," *Detroit Free Press –AP*, March 11 2004.





2005 Ground Penetrating Radar scan of Kentucky Memorial Place done by the City of Monroe

Scan copies Courtesy of the Monroe County Archives of the Monroe County Museum

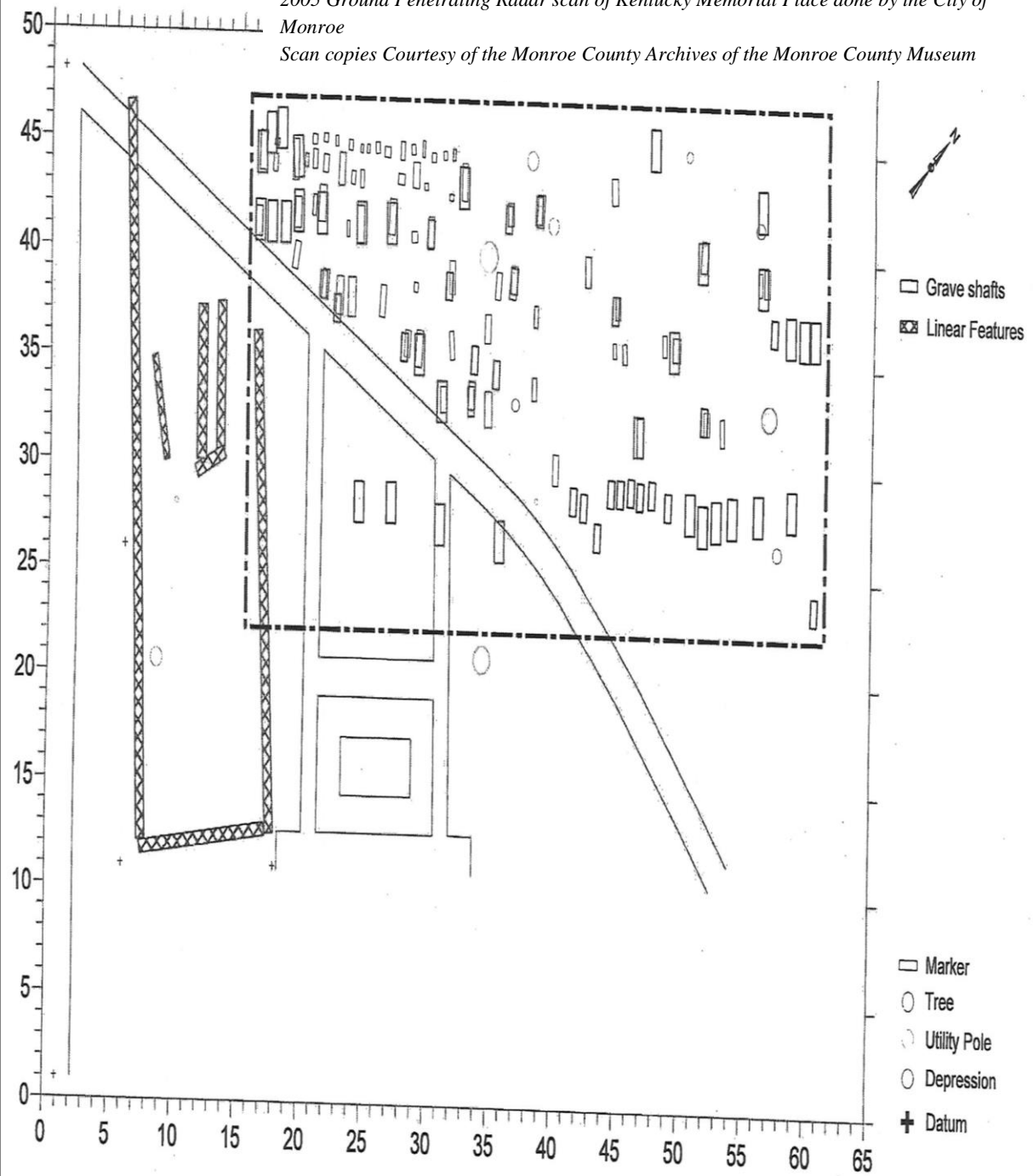


Figure 7: Subsurface features identified with GPR

2003 was a big year for the battlefield -- the paper mill was finally going to be demolished. Anticipation ran high about what may be found during the demolition. An editorial appeared in *The Monroe Evening News* by staff writer Scott Neinas detailing



*Photos:  
Courtesy  
of Bill  
Saul*



what people should do if they happen to find bones in the vicinity. He said he received a call from a former resident, Jim Kibble, who said he grew up on Elm Avenue. Mr. Kibble relayed how the basement of a neighbor's house was being dug out in the 1950s and "*three trenches of bones*" were found. He told how his grandfather took three skulls and put them up by the road on top of a small hill. Residents were horrified and refused to drive down the street, until a mailman finally took the skulls and deposited them in his mailbag. The story goes that he "*took them home, varnished them and placed them on his mantle*" for a conversation piece.<sup>248</sup>

Nonetheless, people were disappointed when nothing turned up but dust.



*Courtesy of Bill Saul*

Other archeological digs from the 1970s to the early 1990s revealed evidence of foundations dating back to the time of the battle.<sup>249</sup> Also investigations in 1998, 2000, and 2003 yielded artifacts and puncheon fence evidence from the original settlement as well as many bones, none of which appeared to be human however. Dr. Michael Pratt,

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<sup>248</sup> "Dig Up Bones? Find Police, not varnish," *The Monroe Evening News*, July 7 2003; In fact the basement for the house next to Jim Kibble's was dug in 1949. The house is located on Elm Avenue east of Michigan Avenue.

<sup>249</sup> "An Historical and Archeological Investigation of the River Raisin Battle Site of 1813," Monroe: Monroe County Historical Commission, July 1, 1977; "Report on Archaeological Testing 1980 Season River Raisin Battlefield Site," Monroe: Monroe County Historical Commission, June 1981; Demeter, Stephan C. *Monroe Paper Mills 1 and 2: An Archaeological Evaluation*. Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Inc. 1991; Note we first met Demeter in Detroit in chapter 10.



Anthropology Professor from Heidelberg College, who directed the three digs said, In the past “human remains found were first thought to be Kentucky militiamen killed in the massacre Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>. But it’s also possible they could be remains of Native Americans or people who lived in the village....This may be a more complex archaeological site than first believed.”<sup>250</sup>

Archeologist Stephan Demeter studied the paper mill area in 1991 and noted that there was “a potentially significant prehistoric component” to the area.<sup>251</sup> In 2002, Pratt and William Rutter said “trenches revealed evidence of a Fort Meigs Phase (A.D. 1450-1650) Native American village,” in the corner area of Elm Avenue and Dixie Highway.<sup>252</sup> Further investigations in 2004, revealed a possible Woodland component.<sup>253</sup> More recent investigations in 2009, have turned up little, since the fill and disturbance of the land makes such investigation extremely hard and all but impossible. Another thing to keep in mind is soil conditions. Just what exactly are the chances of finding remains after 200+ years? As we have seen previously in Detroit, even after 100+ years bones were not much more than fragments or dust. Basically, what we are left now with is examining soil disturbances and soil changes, but what will new archeological surveys turn up?



”Kentucky Memorial Place”  
Courtesy of Joseph Mazur

<sup>250</sup> “Battlefield holds secrets of past,” *The Monroe Evening News*, January 19 2004, pp.1, 11A.

<sup>251</sup> Demeter, Stephan C. *Monroe Paper Mills 1 and 2: An Archaeological Evaluation*.

<sup>252</sup> Pratt, Michael G. and William E. Rutter. *Phase II Archaeological Reconnaissance of the River Raisin Battlefield, Monroe, Michigan*. The Mannik and Smith Group, Inc., 2002.

<sup>253</sup> Pratt, Michael G. and William E. Rutter. *Archaeological Assessment of Selected Areas of the River Raisin Battlefield, Monroe, Michigan*. The Mannik and Smith Group, Inc., 2004.



## Chapter Twenty

### Conclusion

We have seen how people want to ignore the responsibilities of the dead, and how often they become unnamed, unknown and forgotten. Even those who were once honored or reinterred with all kinds of pomp and circumstance, just to be forgotten years later and in many cases, reburied over and over again. In some cases, not reinterred at all, but simply left and paved over in the name of progress.

As the story becomes more and more lost through time, we tend to ignore it, or forget about it, or simply not concern ourselves with it.

We have traveled back 200+ years and are now back to the present. What a journey we went on. We started out by learning about the Battles of the River Raisin and the consequences of those battles, which still go on today. We learned about the fate of Captain Hart and Captain Woolfolk, the soldiers, and even the settlers that perished.

We learned about the earliest Protestant cemeteries in Monroe and the soldiers' burials. Then in 1818, we saw how Governor Cass called for the remains of the soldiers and notable War of 1812 leaders to be conveyed to Detroit for a proper military burial: Henry Holmes from Mackinaw, John Brooks Jr. from Put-in-Bay, and Captain Nathaniel Hart from the River Raisin. We saw the contradictory accounts of where they were buried in Detroit, either the Protestant Cemetery or Fort Shelby. Then we learned the fate of each of these places. We followed the remains to the next cemetery, either Clinton or Russell Street, and how these cemeteries fared with time. We followed the remains from there to being in the care of Captain Brooks and their journey home to Kentucky.

We discovered that the remains of Henry Holmes, along with the River Raisin soldiers, might have made it to the Russell Street Cemetery, if we go with the account of Alanson Sheley. But we do not know anything else about the fate of Holmes. He might have gotten dug up and reburied in one of the bigger cemeteries, or he might be under the streets of Detroit yet. We never hear of anything else concerning John Brooks Jr. after he was interred at Fort Shelby. Chances are his skeleton is still there under the streets. But what about Captain Hart? He was one of the River Raisin soldiers that Governor Cass specifically wanted reburied in Detroit. Chances are Woolfolk's remains made it to Detroit, but Hart's are still probably under the ground in the vicinity of the historical marker on North Dixie Highway in Monroe, where he was killed going down Hull's Road on the way to Detroit in 1813.

Remember that was only one group of the soldiers from 1818. We also learned of other groups and individuals being discovered accidentally throughout the centuries. And we tried to determine if they made it home or not.

Finally, in the 1980's, we shifted gears to looking for the soldiers and evidence of the battles. We also learned that the battlefield, as well as Monroe, has a very long complicated history with plenty of evidence of prehistoric components especially when it comes to the Native Americans. We do know that they were here long before the Euro-American settlers, prehistoric evidence confirms that. But in recent times, were any of the remains found actually Native American at all? Were any from the battles? Since no forensic examination was done, we do not know. Bias from the time does not confirm a thing. Much more research needs to be done on the Native American component. So many are still unknown, unnamed, and forgotten.

Over time we have seen how scars developed upon the battlefield from industry and how that impacted the integrity of the land.

We also looked at the efforts to remember -- in the way of reunions and monuments and how that influenced different ways of thinking about the remains. Yet, we also saw over time how some of those efforts deteriorated and almost seemed for naught.

But, with the establishment of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park in October 2010, the battlefield will be protected for all perpetuity, and now so will the stories of what happened there.

As we have maneuvered through this complicated 200+ years of history, have we managed to solve the mystery of the River Raisin dead? We have looked at all possibilities; we have discovered many variations of accounts. We have seen how the lost soldiers have reminded us throughout the centuries they are still here.

So where exactly are the lost American soldiers of the River Raisin?

Well, we are much closer to being able to answer that question now, even though the answer is not nice and tidy, or even very positive. But we can confidently say they are still under the battlefield grounds, they are under downtown Monroe in the paved over first Protestant cemetery, they are in Kentucky Memorial Place, they are in Detroit, and finally they are in Kentucky.

Now that we know, let us never forget again. Above all, let us think about these places and those remains and all that has happened over the 200+ years. Even though so many still remain unknown, and unnamed, we must remind ourselves, and others, to not let them be forgotten, but to always "REMEMBER THE RAISIN!"



*River Raisin*  
*Courtesy of Author*

## **Appendices**

<b>A.</b>	<b>Roster of the American Dead at the River Raisin</b>	<b>180</b>
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## **A. Roster of the American Casualties at the River Raisin**

**Totals** (*estimates, list is not all inclusive and some wounded that were killed later might not be included*)

300 Killed (might include killed after battle)

50 Wounded

8 Mortally Wounded

545 Captured/Missing

65 Killed after battle

Ward, Thomas (Jan 23)

### **General James Winchester's Staff:**

Irvin, John

McIlvan Thomas Surgeon

Woolfolk, John H. Captain

### **5th Kentucky Militia Regiment:**

Armstrong, Stewart (Jan 22)

Blythe, James Ebenezer (Jan 23)

Crawford, Alexander Private

Darnell, Allen (Jan 23)

### **17th U.S. Infantry:**

Blake, Beverly A. (Jan 22)

Blake, Braxton Private (Jan 22)

Dacony/Downey, Henry (Jan 24)

Edwards, Robert (Jan 22)

Gardner, John (Jan 22)

Graves, Thomas C. (Jan 22)

Liggett, James Ensign (Jan 25)

Logan, Robert (Jan 22)

Meade, James Captain (Jan 22)

Montgomery, Alexander Surgeon

Overton, Thomas J. Lieutenant (Jan 22)

Redding, William (Jan 22)

Reed, Robert (Jan 22)

Sharer, Phillip Ensign (Jan 22)

Wells, Levi (Jan 22)

Wells, Thomas K. (Jan 22)

Darnell, Daniel (Jan 23)

Davis, William (Jan 22)

Elder, Samuel M.

Fant, Thomas (Jan 23)

Fields, Luke (Jan 18)

Frame, William (Jan 18)

Graves, Benjamin Franklin Major (Jan 25/26)

Hart, Nathaniel G.S. Captain (Jan 23)

King, Thomas W.

MacDonald/McDaniel/McDonald, John (Jan 18)

Mesmer, Peter

Price, James Captain (Jan 22)

Reiley, James (Jan 18)

Searls, Charles (Jan 23)

Shindlebower, George

Smith, Stephen

### **1st Kentucky Militia Regiment:**

Bowles, Joseph Ensign (Jan 22)

Short, Cyrus Private (Jan 18)

Snydor, John D. Sargent (Jan 22/23)

Vincent/Visant, John (Jan 18)



### **1st Kentucky Rifle Regiment:**

Allen, John Lieutenant Colonel (Jan 22)  
Benson, Thomas S. Sargent (Jan 18)  
Berrisford, Arnold  
Biscoe, James  
Boone, Isaac  
Butler, William (Jan 23)  
Chism, Richard  
Clark, Phillip  
Cox, John (WIA Jan 18)  
Crow, Thomas (WIA Jan 18)  
Davis, Thomas C. Surgeon (Jan 22)  
Edmiston, John (Jan 22)  
Harrison, Robert (Jan 18)  
Hickman, Paschal (Jan 23)  
Humble, Jesse (Jan 18)  
Kenton, Simon  
Lane, John  
Mayhall, Francis (Jan 18)  
McBride, Lapsley  
McCracken, Virgil (Jan 23)  
Moore, Joshua (Jan 18)  
Moses, Morgan Private (Jan 18)  
Nailor, John  
Parker, James  
Phillips, John  
Pitts, Joseph  
Poindexter, Meriwether  
Prewitt, William F.  
Quinn, David

Robertson/Robinson, Alexander  
Robertson/Robinson, George  
Simpson, John Captain (Jan 22)  
Simpson, Joseph (Jan 18)  
Smith, John  
Smith, Samuel (WIA Jan 18)  
Stevens, William  
Tate, John  
Throckmorton, Samuel  
Wilson, James

### **Local Militia:**

Couture, Jean-Baptiste Captain (Jan 22)

### **Civilians:**

Chovin/Shovin, Henri (Jan 22)  
LeBeau, Rene' (Jan 18)  
Soleau/Solo, Jean-Baptiste (Jan 18)

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### **Combined Roster**

Allen, John Lieutenant Colonel  
(Jan 22)  
Armstrong, Stewart (Jan 22)  
Benson, Thomas S. Sargent (Jan 18)

Berrisford, Arnold  
Biscoe, James  
Blake, Beverly A. (Jan 22)

Blake, Braxton Private (Jan 22)  
 Blythe, James Ebenezer (Jan 23)  
 Boone, Isaac  
 Bowles, Joseph Ensign (Jan 22)  
 Butler, William (Jan 23)  
 Chism, Richard  
 Chovin/Shovin, Henri (Jan 22)  
 Clark, Phillip  
 Couture, Jean-Baptiste Captain  
 (Jan 22)  
 Cox, John (WIA Jan 18)  
 Crawford, Alexander Private  
 Crow, Thomas (WIA Jan 18)  
 Dacony/Downey, Henry (Jan 24)  
 Darnell, Allen (Jan 23)  
 Darnell, Daniel (Jan 23)  
 Davis, Thomas C. Surgeon (Jan 22)  
 Davis, William (Jan 22)  
 Edmiston, John (Jan 22)  
 Edwards, Robert (Jan 22)  
 Elder, Samuel M.  
 Fant, Thomas (Jan 23)  
 Fields, Luke (Jan 18)  
 Frame, William (Jan 18)  
 Gardner, John (Jan 22)  
 Graves, Benjamin Franklin Major  
 (Jan 25/26)  
 Graves, Thomas C. (Jan 22)  
 Harrison, Robert (Jan 18)  
 Hart, Nathaniel G.S. Captain (Jan 23)  
 Hickman, Paschal (Jan 23)  
 Humble, Jesse (Jan 18)  
 Irvin, John  
 Kenton, Simon  
 King, Thomas W.  
 Lane, John  
 LeBeau, Rene' (Jan 18)  
 Liggett, James Ensign (Jan 25)  
 Logan, Robert (Jan 22)

MacDonald/McDaniel/McDonald,  
 John (Jan 18)  
 Mayhall, Francis (Jan 18)  
 McBride, Lapsley  
 McCracken, Virgil (Jan 23)  
 McIlvan, Thomas Surgeon  
 Meade, James Captain (Jan 22)  
 Mesmer, Peter  
 Montgomery, Alexander Surgeon  
 Moore, Joshua (Jan 18)  
 Moses, Morgan Private (Jan 18)  
 Nailor, John  
 Overton, Thomas J. Lieutenant  
 (Jan 22)  
 Parker, James  
 Phillips, John  
 Pitts, Joseph  
 Poindexter, Meriwether  
 Prewitt, William F.  
 Price, James Captain (Jan 22)  
 Quinn, David  
 Redding, William (Jan 22)  
 Reed, Robert (Jan 22)  
 Reiley, James (Jan 18)  
 Robertson/Robinson, Alexander  
 Robertson/Robinson, George  
 Searls, Charles (Jan 23)  
 Sharer, Phillip Ensign (Jan 22)  
 Shindlebower, George  
 Short, Cyrus Private (Jan 18)  
 Simpson, John Captain (Jan 22)  
 Simpson, Joseph (Jan 18)  
 Smith, John  
 Smith, Samuel (WIA Jan 18)  
 Smith, Stephen  
 Snyder, John D. Sargent (Jan 22/23)  
 Soleau/Solo, Jean-Baptiste (Jan 18)  
 Stevens, William

Tate, John  
Throckmorton, Samuel  
Vincent/Visant, John (Jan 18)  
Ward, Thomas (Jan 23)

Wells, Levi (Jan 22)  
Wells, Thomas K. (Jan 22)  
Wilson, James  
Woolfolk, John H. Captain

## **B. Kentucky County Namesakes - Biographies:**

### **Lieutenant Colonel John Allen**

John Allen was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia on December 30, 1771, to James and Mary Kelsey Allen. Around eight years old his family moved to Kentucky around where Danville is today, then four years later to the Bardstown area. He set up his law practice in Shelby County and earned quite a name for himself among the top lawyers in Kentucky. On October 19, 1798, he married Jane Logan and they had four daughters. In 1800, he was elected to represent Shelby County in the Legislature. When he relocated to Franklin, he represented the county in the House, 1803-1806. From 1807-1810 he represented Franklin in the Kentucky Senate. Then in 1810 he served in the Senate for Shelby County, until his death.

In the Battles of the River Raisin, he led the American right wing on the first battle of January 18, 1813, then on January 22, he was in charge of the center of the line, behind the farmers fences and tried to help reinforce the falling right flank that was retreating over the river. He was killed during the retreat.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, his wife, Jane, remained hopeful that he was a captive of the Native Warriors and would one day return home. For eight years she performed a nightly ritual of throwing open the north facing window shutter, and placing a candle on the windowsill, while she watched for her husband to appear in the shadows. The ritual only stopped because she succumbed to her grief in 1821.

### **Captain Bland Williams Ballard**

Bland Williams Ballard was born in Spotsylvania County, Virginia on October 16, 1759, to Bland Ballard Sr. and to the former Miss Williams. The family moved to Kentucky in 1779. Ballard married Elizabeth Williamson and they had seven children. He ended up marrying Diana Matthews, after Elizabeth died. Unfortunately, he lost his second wife as well, and married a third time to Elizabeth Weaver Garrett.

He joined the militia right after arriving in Kentucky and served in the campaigns against the Native Americans under Colonel Bowman in 1779, and George Rogers Clark in 1780, 1782 and 1786, even after a serious hip injury. He was with Mad Anthony Wayne in the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. June 6, 1812, he was commissioned Captain in Lieutenant Colonel John Allen's 1st Rifle Regiment.



At the Battles of the River Raisin on January 18, 1813, he led the advance guard and was slightly wounded. On the Battle of January 22, he was wounded a second time, but was able to march to Amherstburg with the other prisoners.

After the war, he resided and served as a Delegate of Shelby County in the 1800, 1803, and 1805, Kentucky General Assembly. Ballard died on September 5, 1853, at 95 years of age. He was initially buried on his plantation, but the following year he was reinterred and buried, with his first wife, in the State Memorial section of the Frankfort Cemetery. Bland Ballard is the only survivor of the Battles of the River Raisin, who had a county named in his honor.

### **Captain John Edmonson**

Captain John Montgomery Edmonson (Edmiston) was born February 21, 1764, in Washington County, Virginia to William and Nancy Edmiston. He fought in his father's company as a private in the Revolutionary War in the Battle of King's Mountain in 1782. He married his cousin, Margaret Robinson Montgomery, and they had three children. While in Virginia, he served as Clerk of the Court at Abingdon. In 1790, he moved to Fayette County, Kentucky, where through land purchases he became quite prosperous.

In 1812, at fifty years old, he formed a company in Allen's 1<sup>st</sup> Rifle Regiment. He was elected Captain in June 1812. But he resigned from captain in October and served as a private. In the Battles of the River Raisin, he was killed on January 22, 1813, during the retreat.

### **Major Benjamin Franklin Graves**

Benjamin Franklin Graves was born in Virginia in 1771, to Joseph and Frances Graves. He moved with his family to Kentucky in 1791. They settled in Fayette County, here Graves grew up and pursued a career in agriculture. In 1801 and 1804, he was elected to represent his county in the lower house of the Kentucky General Assembly. He married Polly Dudley, and they had six children.

His commission as Major, 2nd Battalion, 5th Kentucky Volunteer Regiment, was dated August 7, 1812. At the Battles of the River Raisin on January 22, 1813, he was in charge of the line on the west, behind the farmers fences. He was wounded while passing put ammunition to his men and was left in one of the *habitant's* houses. On January 23, he was taken prisoner by the Potawatomi's and was last seen at one of their camps a few days later by the River Rouge. After that he was never seen or heard from again.

### **Captain Nathaniel Gray Smith Hart**

Nathaniel Gray Smith Hart was born in Hagerstown, Maryland in 1784, and was the son of Colonel Thomas and Susanna Gray Hart. The family moved to Lexington, Kentucky in 1794. On April 6, 1809, Hart married Anna Edwards Gist and they had two children. Nathaniel's sister Lucretia married Henry Clay.

Nathaniel ran his father's mercantile business and studied law under his brother-in-law, Henry Clay. He practiced law in Lexington and became a Magistrate. Just before the war he commanded the Lexington Light Infantry of the Fayette County militia. When war was declared, his unit was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment under Colonel William Lewis. On October 4, 1812, he was appointed Deputy Inspector to the left wing of the Northwestern Army. Thus, he was not technically in command of his company at the River Raisin.

At the Battles of the River Raisin, he was wounded on January 22, 1813, and was being treated by Dr. Todd in one of the *habitant's* houses. On January 23, he was taken prisoner by the Native Americans and was killed by a Native Warrior.

The grieving widow was so distraught that relatives sent her on a vacation to take her mind off losing her husband in 1818. The trip proved unsuccessful and on her way home she passed away in Philadelphia at the age of 27 years.

### **Captain Paschal Hickman**

Paschal Hickman was the son of Reverend William Hickman and his mother was a Shackelford. The family moved to Franklin County, Kentucky in 1784 and on January 17, 1788, moved to the Forks of Elkhorn. Hickman was well liked and was 6'2" tall. He married Elizabeth "Betsy" F. Hall on March 11, 1797, they had three daughters. Paschal made his home with his family in Frankfort. He owned several properties, amounting to 600 acres in sixteen different Kentucky counties, amassing quite an estate.

He served in many of the campaigns against the Native Americans and was a scout for General Mad Anthony Wayne in 1794. He was an ensign in 1802 and promoted to lieutenant in 1803. In 1808 he was appointed the Jailor of Franklin County. On June 8, 1812, he was commissioned captain in John Allen's First Rifle Regiment.

In the Battles of the River Raisin on January 18, 1813, Paschal was severely wounded and was not able to participate in the Battle on January 22. He was convalescing in one of the *habitant's* houses and on January 23, he was killed by the Native Warriors. According to his father's manuscript, Paschal's mother was, "*Sorely distressed in mind about the massacre of her son at the Raisin, she pined away and died June 9, 1813.*"

### **Captain Virgil McCracken**

Virgil McCracken was from Woodford County, Kentucky, and the son of Cyrus and Elizabeth McCracken. He has been described as an intelligent, patriotic and fearless man. In 1800 he married Sally Caldwell and they had five children. He represented Woodford County in the lower house of the Legislature in 1810 and 1811. June 13, 1812, he was commissioned Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Rifle Regiment under Allen.

At the Battles of the River Raisin, he fought on the right wing on January 18, 1813. On January 22, he was at the center of the line, behind the farmers fences. He tried to help reinforce the falling right flank that was retreating over the river. He was wounded during the retreat and left in one of the *habitant's* houses. On January 23, McCracken was taken prisoner by the Native Americans.

Ensign Isaac Baker in his report to General Winchester, dated February 25, 1813, declared: *"About the 10th instant, an Indian brought captain M'Cracken's commission to Sandwich; the paper was bloody. The fellow said he took the captain in trust, but sometime after when stripped and examined, he found an Indian scalp in his bosom, which induced him to kill him. This you cannot but be assured is an humbug of the fellow's own making to screen himself from the odium of barbarity. The captain's character and the danger that attended his carrying such furniture in a disastrous battle, gives it to the lie."*

### **Captain James Meade**

Not much is known about James Meade's history. It is believed he is either from Fayette County or Woodford County, Kentucky. A veteran of the Battle of Tippecanoe, in 1812, he was made Captain of the 17<sup>th</sup> United States Infantry.

In the Battles of the River Raisin, he was killed on January 22, 1813, while trying to defend the American right flank. When the flank fell, he and his men fled to the riverbank, there they tried to make a counterattack. He was shot while urging his men on.

### **Captain John Simpson**

John Simpson moved with his family from Virginia to Lincoln County, Kentucky. John was known for his extraordinary height of 6' 7". A veteran of the Battle of Fallen Timbers, he became a lawyer and moved to Shelby County. Here he became a member and Speaker of the House of Representatives and was elected to the United States Congress. Simpson had just been elected U.S. Representative to the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress when the War of 1812 broke out.

When the War started Simpson was Captain of Grenadiers, 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Shelby County. But on June 13, 1812, he became Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Rifle Regiment. At the Battles of the River Raisin, on January 22, 1813, he was killed defending the right flank of the American Army.

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## C. Comments on the Book

- A Brief Comment on Shawna Mazur's  
*Unknown, Unnamed, Forgotten; The River Raisin American Dead*

*Many years ago, during my museum tenure, I began to gather references concerning the disposition of the remains of those killed in the 1813 Battle of the River Raisin. I must admit that I was completely baffled by the myriads of often contradictory reports from official documents, newspaper articles, and local gossip. Some of the "sightings" seemed to resemble modern ghost stories or UFO encounters.*

*Shawna Mazur has done a remarkable job in sorting through these references, finding new ones, and organizing them into a readable account. Where inconsistencies exist between the various sources, she has not tried to disguise them, but has carefully reasoned them out so that readers may judge for themselves.*

*This was an era when records were not fully kept and when bodies were often left where they lay. I would not hesitate to recommend Mrs. Mazur's account to anyone interested in the mysteries surrounding the final resting places of "Kentucky's Gallant Dead."*

Ralph Naveaux

Former Director, Monroe County Historical Museums

Author of *Invaded on All Sides: The Story of Michigan's Greatest Battlefield*

- *Shawna Mazur's, well-researched and written book, "Unknown, Unnamed, Forgotten...The River Raisin American Dead," continues the efforts of exploring the nearly two century-old mystery to discover the final resting place of the remains of these War of 1812 heroes, who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Mazur uses source and secondary documents to trace the movement of the remains of these soldiers from their death on the battlefield to numerous burial sites in Michigan and Kentucky. This book is a must-have for any student of Kentucky's military history.*

John M. Trowbridge,  
Command Historian emeritus, Kentucky National Guard

- *Unknown, Unnamed, Forgotten  
Shawna Mazur*

*The fate of the remains of the Kentucky dead from the Battles of Frenchtown in January 1813 have long been debated. In Unknown, Unnamed, Forgotten, Mazur, a ranger at the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, attempts to resolve those questions. Using contemporary accounts and newspaper reports, Mazur follows the path of the bones of those soldiers from battlefield graves, to Detroit and eventually to Kentucky. This twisted journey is full of mystery and heartbreak and shows how the war dead were treated in times past.*

Rusty Davis  
Historian, Volunteer for River Raisin National Battlefield Park

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