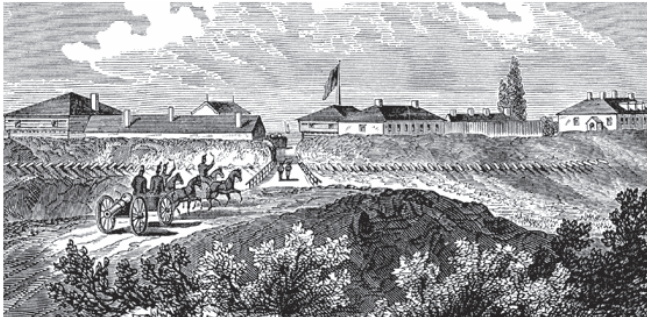


Where
the past
is present

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TEACHER RESOURCE LESSON PLAN

LIFE IN A BRITISH FORT



INTRODUCTION

This lesson helps third grade students understand the life and culture in Detroit during the British occupation between 1760 and 1796. The lesson includes a comprehensive background essay, a list of additional resources, and copies of worksheets and primary sources.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Why was the fort at Detroit important to the British?
What was life like in and around the fort?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand the role of a British fort in North America during the late 18th century.
- Practice mapping skills by creating and labeling a map of a British fort.

MI GLCES – GRADE THREE SOCIAL STUDIES

H3 – History of Michigan Through Statehood

- 3-H3.0.1 – Identify questions historians ask in examining the past in Michigan.
- 3-H3.0.2 – Explain how historians use primary and secondary sources to answer questions

about the past.

- 3-H3.0.5 - Use informational text and visual data to compare how American Indians and settlers in the early history of Michigan adapted to, used, and modified their environment.
- 3-H3.0.6 - Use a variety of sources to describe interactions that occurred between American Indians and the first European explorers and settlers in Michigan.
- 3-H3.0.8 – Use case studies or stories to describe how the ideas or actions of individuals affected the history of Michigan.

COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS - ELA

Reading

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

Writing

- 1 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

LESSON PLAN: LIFE IN A BRITISH FORT

BACKGROUND ESSAY

Who Owns North America?

As the French fur trade in the Great Lakes region prospered in the middle of the 1700s, other nations entered the area – first the British and then the Americans. These nations fought over control of large parts of the Western Hemisphere. Many battles took place to decide which nation would control the region and the forts, and therefore, the fur trade. The Native Americans had been there the longest, so foreign powers often sought their help in the battles. Almost as often these foreign powers made promises to the Native people that they did not keep.

The flag at the fort in Detroit changed many times between 1760 and 1813.

The French and Indian War

In the 1740s, the population of European Americans on the east coast was rising. The British colonials looked to lands to the west of the Appalachian Mountains for more space. These lands had traditionally belonged to Native American groups, but the French had also claimed them. Around 1750, the French and the British began to argue over who owned the land in present-day western Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1753, the French began to settle the Ohio River valley, near present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The British, who felt this land belonged to the colony of Virginia, sent a young officer named George Washington to the French fort with a letter asking them to leave. The attempt was a failure, and the British and French continued to fight over control of the area until war was declared in 1756.

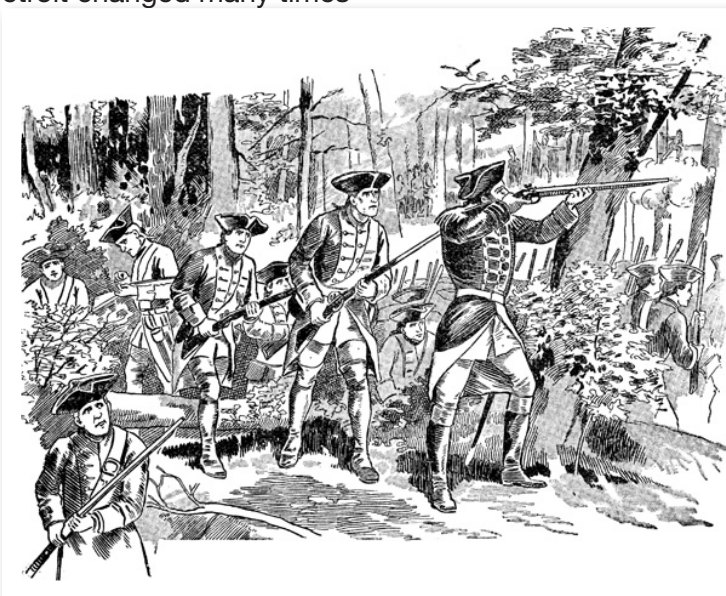
The bulk of the fighting in the French and Indian War took place in the New York colony and Quebec, Canada. In the beginning the French won several key battles, but by 1759 the British had gained most of their New York forts back and had started

to capture forts in Canada. In the summer of 1759, the British laid siege to Quebec, knowing it was a strategic French stronghold in the new world. The fighting lasted almost three months, until the French surrendered in September 1759. At this time the British had control of all of North America except Montreal and Detroit.

In the Treaty of Paris in 1760 that ended the war, France ceded all of its land in North America, including Detroit, to the British. In September 1760, British Major Robert Rogers arrived in Detroit and took control of the city from the French.

The British renamed the French Fort Ponchartrain

“Fort Detroit.” In 1778 they razed Fort Ponchartrain and built a new fort on a bluff above the village. They named it Fort Lernoult for Richard Lernoult, the British commander in charge of Detroit at the time. The British controlled Detroit from 1760 until 1796, which was more than 12 years after Detroit and Michigan became part of the United States as a result of the American



Revolutionary War.

Pontiac's Rebellion

By 1763, Ottawa Chief Pontiac was unhappy with the British, who had taken much of the Native American lands in Michigan. The French had tried to deal fairly with the Native Americans, but he feared the British wanted all of his people's land and would cheat them out of it.

Pontiac decided that the only way to protect his people was to unite all the Native American groups in Michigan and attack the British. Their goal would be to kick them off their lands and send them back from where they came.

Pontiac held a great council on the Ecorse River. It included members of many Native American tribes, including the Chippewa, Ottawa, Shawnee,

LESSON PLAN: LIFE IN A BRITISH FORT

Delaware, Miami, Potawatomi, and Hurons. Together, they planned to attack Fort Detroit. Other Native American groups in Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania launched their own attacks on British forts.

Between May and October, eight Great Lakes forts fell. Unable to get Detroit to surrender, Pontiac and his allies held Fort Detroit under siege.

By October, the winter was getting closer and many groups tired of battle and went home. Pontiac then discovered that the British and French had signed a peace treaty, which meant he could no longer count on the support of the French in his attacks. In 1763 Pontiac surrendered his attack on Fort Detroit.

American Revolution

During the American Revolution Detroit was controlled by the British, but it was not a colony. It was not directly involved in the war for independence, but instead was a strategic stronghold for the British in North

America. Detroit housed several American prisoners of war during the war.

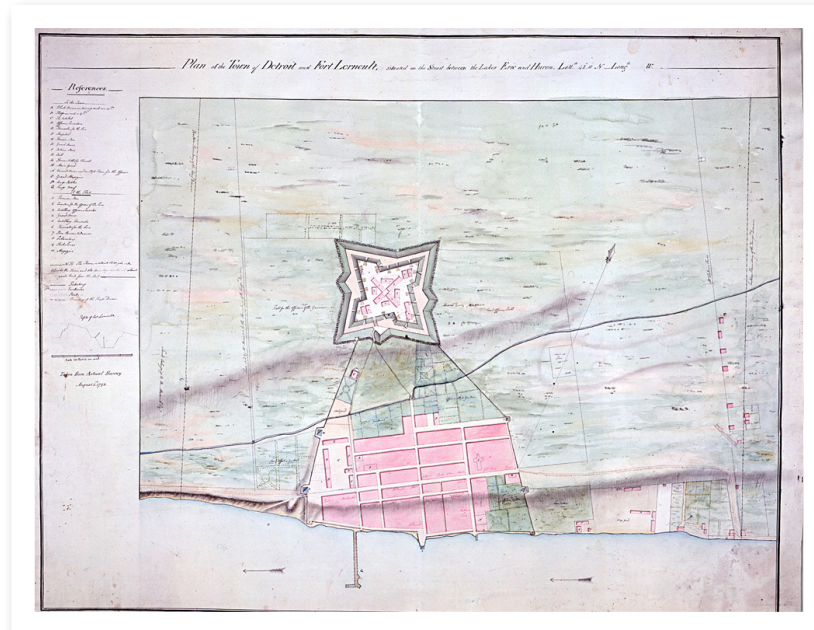
After America won independence from Great Britain in 1783, the new nation fought both the British and Native Americans for control of Great Lakes forts. The British refused to surrender Detroit, and the Americans had a difficult time reaching the fort and village because much of Ohio was controlled by Native American groups that did not want the Americans to take their land.

The conflict between Native American groups and the young United States was called the Northwest Indian War. Many Native Americans in the Northwest Territory had sided with the British in the Revolutionary War. When the British ceded this land to the United States after the Revolutionary War, the

Native Americans were angry. The British had not consulted them before they surrendered the land. As a result, many tribes organized into the Western Indian Confederacy and fought against the U.S. forces that were trying to claim their lands. Under the leadership of Blue Jacket of the Shawnees and Little Turtle of the Miamis, the Western Indian Confederacy won several battles against the Americans in 1790 and 1791. They were encouraged and supplied by the British, who had refused to evacuate British fortifications in the region.

In 1791, President George Washington ordered

General "Mad" Anthony Wayne to organize and train a proper fighting force. Wayne took command late in 1793. He led United States forces to a victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, which finally brought the conflict to an end. Indian tribes were forced to cede extensive territory, including much of present-day Ohio, in the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.



In 1796, after Colonel John Francis Hamtramck secured the village for the Americans, the British surrendered Detroit to Captain Moses Porter. Over ten years after Detroit officially became property of the United States, it finally was controlled by American troops.

LESSON PLAN: LIFE IN A BRITISH FORT

MATERIALS USED:

Data Elements

- *Map: Detroit, 1760 – Fort Detroit*
- *Map: Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult*
- *Essay: Life in a British Fort*
- *Glossary: British Fort Terms*

Worksheet

- *Diagram: Blank Fort*



LESSON SEQUENCE

1. Pass out *Essay: Life in a British Fort* to the students. Read together as a class, and host a discussion using the following questions as a guide:
 - How were frontier forts built?
 - Who built them?
 - What were they made from?
 - Who lived in the frontier forts? Where did the soldiers live?
 - Where did the villagers live?
 - What made living in a frontier fort hard?
2. Show the students *Map: Detroit, 1760 – Fort Detroit* and *Map: Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult*. Explain that these are two different forts that once were built in Detroit. Explain that one fort was built by the French and the other by the British. Lead a discussion where the students compare and contrast the features of the forts.
3. Pass out *Glossary: British Fort Terms*. As a group, go through the list and discuss the meanings of each term. Use *Map: Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult* to show where each term is on the fort.
4. Break the students into small groups of 3-4. Give each group a copy of *Diagram: Blank Fort*. Ask them to work together by labeling the fort with the glossary terms. They can use *Map: Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult* as a reference. Let them know that there is no key for the placement of the buildings, so they need to discuss together where they think the buildings would be located.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Anderson, Fred. *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
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- Antal, Sandy. *Wampum Denied: Proctor's War of 1812*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997.
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- Taylor, Alan. *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
- Voorhis, Ernest. *Historic Forts and Trading Posts of the French Regime and of the English Trading Companies*. Ottawa: Dept. of the Interior, 1930.
- Woodford, Arthur M. *This Is Detroit, 1701-2001*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001.
- Yanik, Anthony J. *The Fall and Recapture of Detroit in the War of 1812: In Defense of William Hull*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011.

LINKS

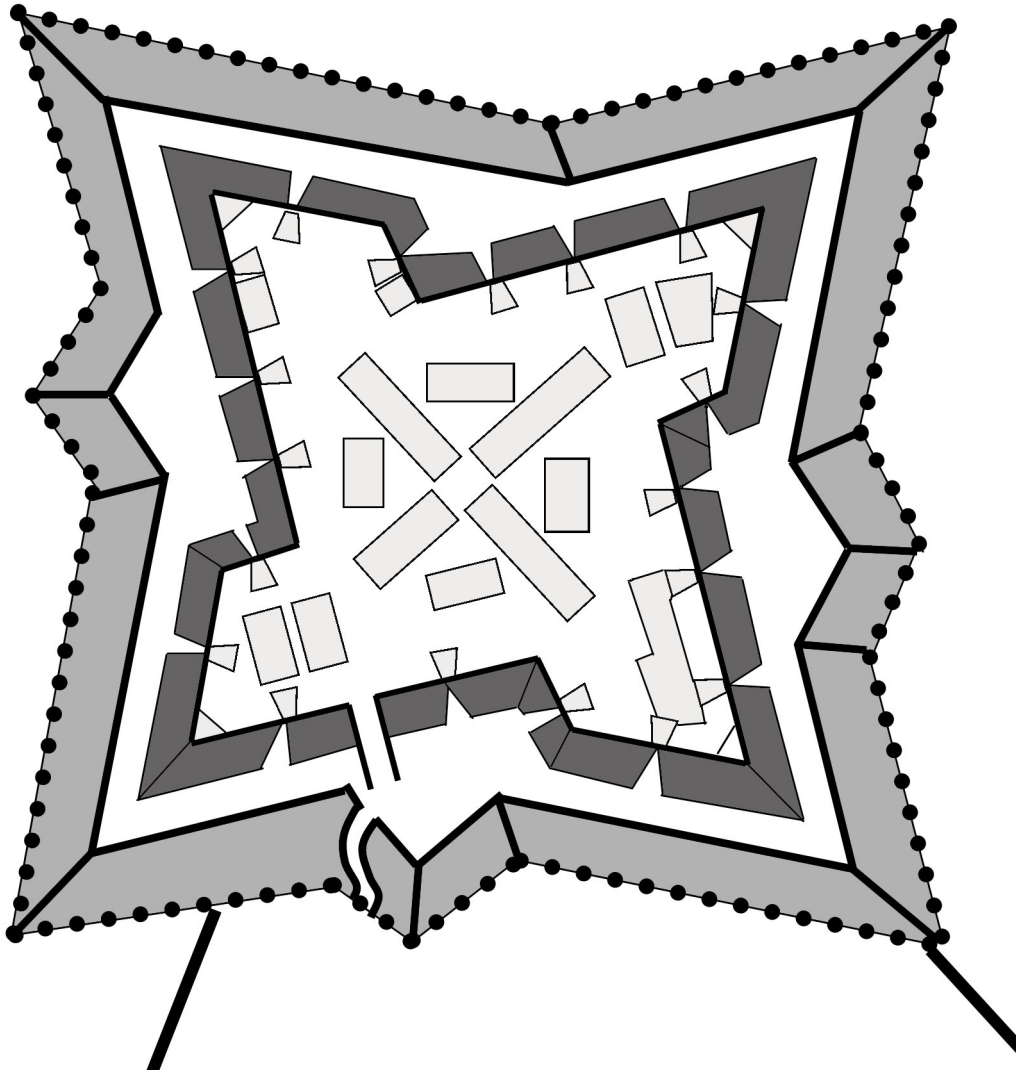
- History.com, French and Indian War: <http://www.history.com/topics/french-and-indian-war>
- History.com, War of 1812: <http://www.history.com/topics/war-of-1812>
- Library of Congress, Northwest Ordinance: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/northwest.html>
- NC Department of Cultural resources, French and Indian War Interactive: http://www.ncdcr.gov/interactive/french_indian_war/index.html
- NPS, Military Architecture on the American Frontier: http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/gero/papers/1983-1984/sec5.htm
- Ohio History Central, American Revolution: http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/topic.php?nm=american_revolution&rec=3
- Ohio History Central, French and Indian War: <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=498>
- Ohio History Central, Pontiac's Rebellion: <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=539>

**For more information about the
Detroit Historical Society,
or to schedule a field trip to the
Detroit Historical Museum or
Dossin Great Lakes Museum,
visit detroithistorical.org**

DIAGRAM: BLANK FORT

Label Fort Lernoult

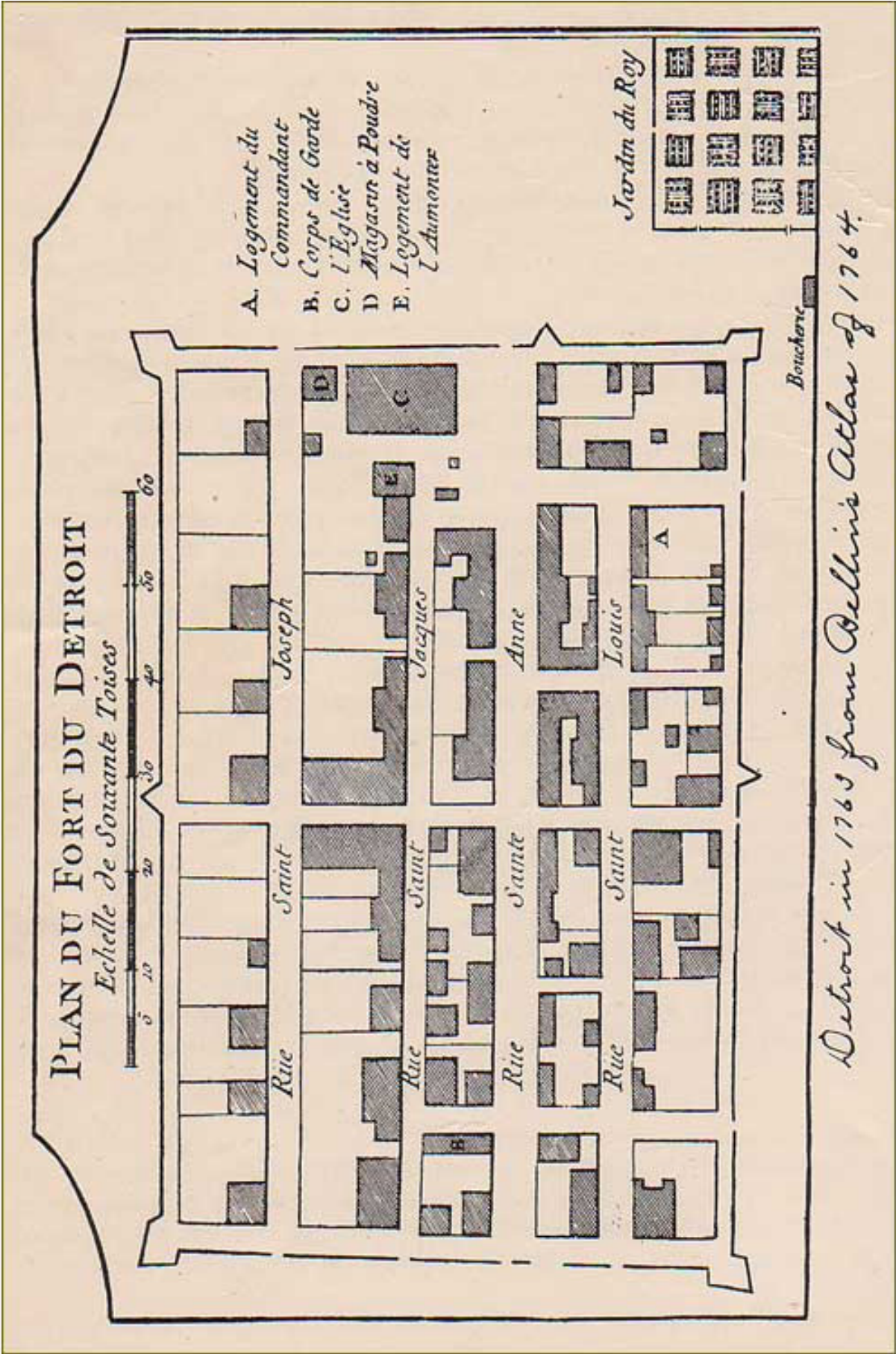
Using the map outline and key below, label the major parts of a British fort with their proper numbers.



KEY:

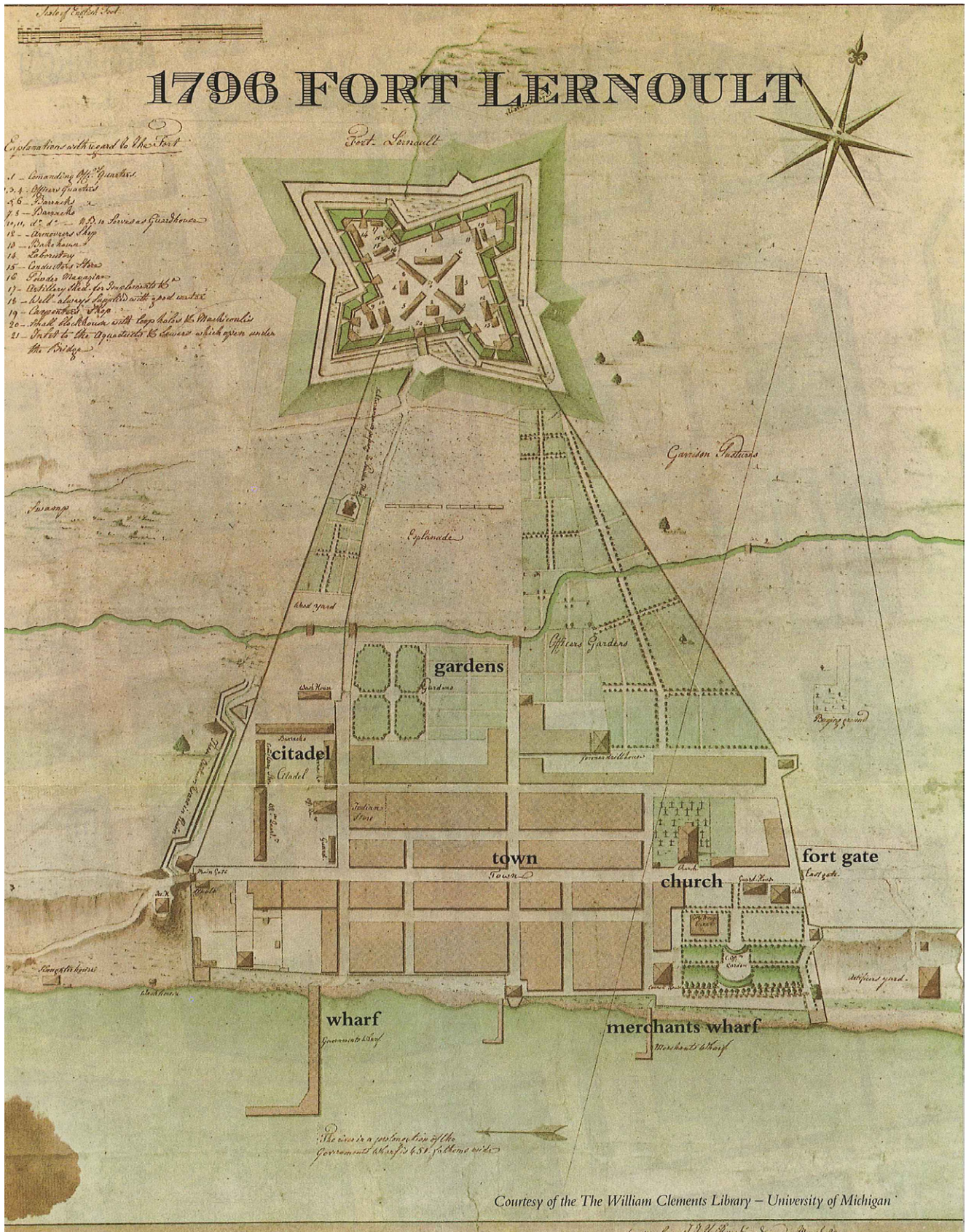
- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1 - Barracks | 5 - Fort | 9 - Parade |
| 2 - Bastion | 6 - Headquarters | 10 - Parapet |
| 3 - Dry Ditch | 7 - Magazine | 11 - Rampart |
| 4 - Embrasure | 8 - Palisade/Stockade | 12 - Store |

History Detroit



Detroit in 1763 from Bellin's Atlas

MAP: DETROIT, 1790 – FORT LERNOULT



Courtesy of the The William Clements Library – University of Michigan

James - R. - J. 2 H. R. - & George March 20 - 72

ESSAY: LIFE IN A BRITISH FORT (PAGE 1)

During the 1700s life in frontier forts was difficult. Because they were isolated from the cities of the east, the forts lacked the resources to make living comfortable. Many times the forts were built quickly out of logs the soldiers cut from the forests around them. The forts and their buildings were crude structures that were cold in the winter and hot in the summer. They leaked when it rained and became fire hazards when they were dry. Because the ground was earth, it often washed away in heavy rains or was deep with mud. Keeping the fort livable required hard work.

According to Colonel De Peyster, who was in charge of Fort Lernoult in Detroit in 1780, "The new Fort will give constant employment for this Garrison for some time to come, the ditches filling faster than we can sod, owing to extreme weather, and springs breaking out in all parts, which brings down the earth [walls] in great clods."

For the soldiers and civilians that lived in and around the forts, life could be very hard. Soldiers' letters and diaries were filled with accounts of overwork, fatigue, disease, boredom, exposure to extremes of temperature, and desertion.

All the supplies for the fort, including food, had to be shipped from more populated areas. Supply trips often took weeks, and many times the food arrived spoiled. Other times Native Americans or enemies intercepted and destroyed the supplies before they could arrive at the fort.

When the forts received their food supplies without problems, soldiers could expect to get around seven pounds of bread, three pints of peas, and seven pounds of beef each week. However, rarely did the soldiers get as much food as they were promised. Soldiers would supplement their small rations with berries, nuts and other food found in the nearby wilderness, or with meat supplied by friendly Indians. As a whole, the British soldiers had not been trained in the forest survival skills that could have prevented some of their suffering, particularly hunger. Some fort commanders encouraged gardens near their forts.

Sickness and disease were common in the forts, which were overcrowded and often

unsanitary. Scurvy was found where food supplies were meager, and dysentery was very common. Smallpox raged through many of the frontier forts, killing large numbers of soldiers and Indians. Due to the shortage of

doctors at the forts, soldiers could not count on proper treatment for sickness or battle injuries.

Despite the difficult living conditions, British frontier forts protected the citizens in local villages from attacks by Indians and their enemy, the French. Although constructed out of wood and earth, the British followed specific plans when building their forts. When the British built Fort Lernoult at Detroit, they followed a plan drawn by Captain Henry Bird.



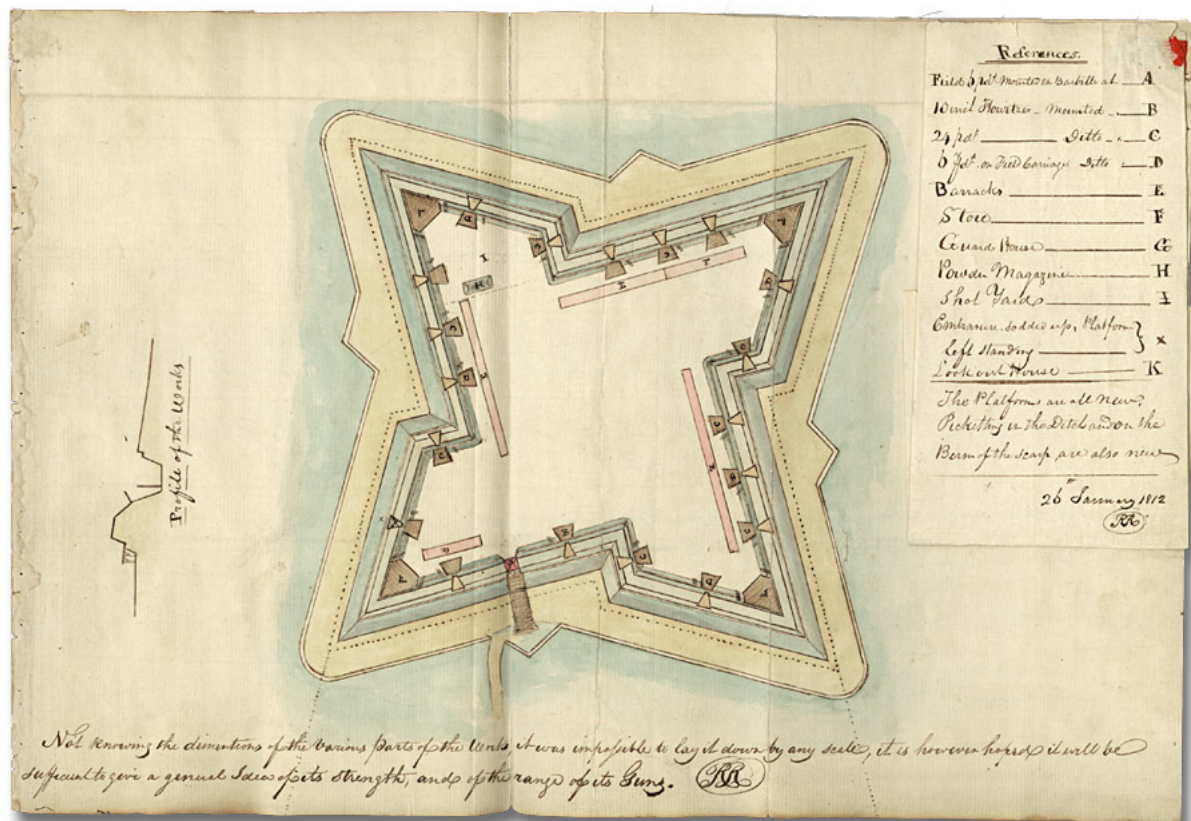
ESSAY: LIFE IN A BRITISH FORT (PAGE 2)

First, they built a wall made of a pile of tree trunks about four feet high. In the top, they added long sharpened stakes about eight feet long. Then they buried the wall in an eleven foot high earth embankment that was twelve feet wide at the top and twenty-six feet thick at the base. On the outside of the wall, they dug a ditch about five to six feet deep and twelve feet wide, and then added a fence that was about twelve feet tall.

They left one entrance to the fort on the south side that faced the village. It was protected by a drawbridge, a blockhouse and two twenty-four pound cannons. Each wall of the fort had two cannons, and each corner – or bastion – had four smaller cannons.

The flat ground inside the fort was called the “parade.” In addition to being used as exercise grounds, the parade contained many buildings. The buildings inside the fort served various military purposes. They included military headquarters, housing – or barracks – for the soldiers and officers, warehouses for supplies, and a storage room for ammunition and gunpowder – called a magazine.

In 1779, Fort Lernoult in Detroit was home to 381 soldiers, not including the officers. When not engaged in battles, the soldiers helped repair the fort and stockade, cleared land outside the fort and engaged in military exercises.



GLOSSARY: BRITISH FORT TERMS

BARRACKS: Buildings, like dormitories, to house soldiers and officers.

BASTION: A built-up corner of the fort that includes cannon and other defensive weapons.

BATTLEMENTS: The notched top of a wall with open spaces for firing weapons.

BLOCKHOUSE: Usually a two story wood building with an overhanging second floor. Used as a standalone fortification or as part of a larger fort, such as a corner bastion.

DRY DITCH: A ditch without water that surrounds the walls of a fort, hindering the advance of an attacker. They are often filled with sharpened stakes.

EARTHWORKS: A fort with main walls of earth. Also called ramparts.

EMBRASURE: An opening in the fort wall through which cannon are pointed to fire at the enemy.

FORT: An enclosed place or fortified building for military defense, usually equipped with earthworks, guns, a garrison of troops and permanent buildings.

GUARD HOUSE: A place for the off-duty guards to sleep during their tour of duty.

HEADQUARTERS: The quarters of the ranking officers and where orders are issued.

MAGAZINE: A room or building for keeping gunpowder and other explosives.

NECESSARY: The privy, or outhouse, of the fort.

PALISADE: A barrier of sharpened logs closely planted in the ground. Can be vertical or can project horizontally from earthworks. Also called a stockade.

PARADE: Level area or ground in the interior of a fort.

PARAPET: Earthen or stone platform around the top of the rampart in a fort. They usually have walls about seven feet high to protect the defenders.

RAMPART: A broad embankment of earth which surrounds a fortified place. In forts, it is considered to be the entire top of the fortification. In many fortifications, dirt ramps were constructed from the parade to the top of the rampart for weapons and troop access. Also called earthen works.

STOCKADE: A timber wall or defensive barrier. Also called a palisade.

STORE: Warehouse for storing clothing, equipment, and food.