

Windmill Pointe

Lake Sainte Claire

A story of Detroit's most Important Indian battle and other stories.



The Old Windmill

*Painted by Roy C. Gambel from
the most reliable old sketches and pictures obtainable.*

Grosse Pointe Historical Society

www.gphistorical.org

IN the "old days" when on the way to the Old Club and the Flats, the only route led up past Windmill Pointe and Lake St. Clair.

Windmill Pointe, because of its traditions and its picturesque setting, had a fascination for me from boyhood and later when I acquired this particular spot, I took great interest in keeping any story or article that touched on this subject.

I remember the pile of stones – the wreck of the old stone mill – the grove of cherry trees and the two majestic old French pears (they are still alive and producing – much over 100 years old).

I built a shack on the Pointe and "camped" there for several years. I picked up interesting relics – a fine specimen on Indian stone war axe and several stone skinning knives – on the beach. The Indian hunter no doubt found the fine gravel beach a favorite place to clean his game.

I remembered the story from old inhabitants of unearthened Indian skulls used to decorate the loads of gravel from the pits located here years ago. Not strange when we realize that probably a thousand Indians were killed and many buried here.

I remember the story of the finding of the bones of an English soldier with his rusted musket and equipment.

No doubt this had been an outstanding point of value and seemingly of interest to the Indians for thousands of years, and I am sure my friends who love the waters around Detroit and my friends in the Old Club will enjoy these few pages, and this small pamphlet gives me a vehicle to extend to you.

Christmas, 1930

FEW DETROITERS, in reading the early history of their city, have any idea of the location of "Presque Isle" so frequently referred to in early history as being near Detroit. There is no island by that name near here now.

It was only in reading the abstract of title of the property on Windmill Pointe that I discovered that Windmill Pointe to be the "Presque Isle" (almost an island) referred to.

From time to time I have saved newspaper items and other material that had a bearing on the history of Windmill Pointe.

It has been interesting to select these articles on the following pages and preserve them in this form.

**O. J. Mulford.
1930.**

From a pamphlet in the Detroit Public Library, printed during the life of General Cass.

PREFACE

General Cass, when in Paris, obtained permission from the French government to examine the colonial archives, and to have such of the documents copied as were important to the early history of this region. He made full use of the permission, and has now in his possession copies of many of the official reports of the French officers, throwing much light upon the settlement and progress of the Peninsula, and of the various posts established upon the lakes, and of their intercourse, both hostile and peaceful, with the numerous Indian tribes who occupied this country. The enterprising character of the early French adventurers to Canada is well known. After establishing themselves at Quebec, they penetrated the vast regions to the West, the Northwest, and to the Southwest, and conciliating or subduing most of the Indian tribes, projected the foundation of a mighty empire. It was their design to establish a cordon of posts in the rear of the British settlements, from Quebec to new Orleans, and thus to circumscribe and eventually to subdue them, and it was to remonstrate against this encroachment, that General Washington, then a young provincial officer, was sent upon his perilous expedition to the Ohio. However, the scheme was frustrated, and the French dominion was terminated by the capture of Quebec and the surrender of Canada.

During this long interval of a century, the history of Michigan is almost unknown. A remote transatlantic dependency, it occupied but little attention, and excited but little interest. And it is precisely this period, to which the documents above alluded to refer. General Cass has furnished the publisher with a translation of one of the most interesting of these papers. It is the official report by the commanding officer of Detroit, Mr. Dubuisson, of the siege of this place, in 1712, by the Ottagamies and Mascoutins, made to the Governor-General of Canada.

We understand, also, that General Cass has procured from the proper office, in London, copies of many communications from British officers, narrating events, which occurred here, between the fall of the French power and the cession of the Western posts under Jay's treaty. Among others, is the official report of the siege of Detroit, by Pontiac, 1762, and of the battle of Bloody Bridge.

In 1712, Detroit was protected by a stockaded work only. The upper line of pickets probably crossed Jefferson Avenue near the residence of Mr. Joseph Campau. The Ottagamie village was further up the river, and is stated, by Mr. Dubuisson, to have been within a pistol shot of his work.

The Huron village, to which reference is made in the report, was just below the run, which falls into the river, upon the farm of Governor Woodbridge. It was known as Ruisseau de Huron, or Huron run.

The Indians called by Mr. Dubuisson Ottagamies, are now known as the Foxes. The Mascoutins have become extinct.

OFFICIAL REPORT

Made by The Commanding Officer

MR. DUBUISSON

TO THE

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA

OF THE

WAR

WHICH TOOK PLACE

AT DETROIT

IN 1712

BETWEEN

THE FRENCH AND THEIR ALLIES

AND THE

OTTAGAMIE AND MASCOUTIN INDIANS

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIR, as I have thought it was of great consequence to inform you of the state of this post, by an express canoe, I have requested Mr. De Vincennes to make the voyage, having assured him that this arrangement would be pleasing to you, persuaded as I am, Sir, that you are very solicitous about what passes here. The fatigue I undergo day and night, in consequence of the public and private councils that I hold with the Indians, preventing me from rendering you a detailed account of all the circumstances, Mr. De Vincennes has promised to forget nothing which has passed, in order to communicate it fully to you.

The destruction of two Mascoutin and Ottagamie villages is one of the principal reasons which induces me to send this express canoe. It is God, who has suffered these two audacious nations to perish. They had received many presents, and some belts, from the English, to destroy the post of Fort Pontchartrain, and then to cut our throats and those of some of our allies, particularly the Hurons and Ottawas, residing upon the Detroit River; and after that, these wretches intended to settle among the English and devote themselves to their service. It is said that the band of Oninetonam and that of Mucatemangona have been received among the Iroquois, and have established a village upon their lands. This information has been brought by three canoes of Ottagamies, who have been defeated by the Chippeways within four leagues of this post. I am under some apprehension for the safety of Mr. Delaforet, because, being no doubt upon his march to this place, he may fall in with some of those hostile bands, who have joined themselves to the Iroquois.

The band of the great chief Lamima, and that of the great chief Pemoussa, came early in the spring and encamped, in spite of my opposition, at about fifty paces from my fort, never willing to listen to me, speaking always with much insolence, and calling themselves the owners of all this country. It was necessary for me to be very mild, having, as you know, Sir, but thirty Frenchmen with me, and wishing to retain eight Miamis, who were with Mr. De Vincennes, and also to sow our grain and pasture our cattle; and besides the Ottawas and Hurons had not come in from their winter hunt. I was thus exposed every day to a thousand insults. The fowls, pigeons, and other animals belonging to the French were killed without their daring to say a word, and, for myself, I was in no condition openly to declare my intentions.

One of their parties entered my fort, in order to kill one of the inhabitants, named Lagmenesse, and a daughter of Roy, another inhabitant. I could then no longer restrain myself, but took arms to prevent their accomplishing their object. I compelled them to retire immediately from the vicinity of the fort, in order not to give them time to strengthen their party, as they expected the Kickapoos, their allies, that they might together execute their nefarious project; hoping to be strong enough to retire without loss among the English and Iroquois. They waited but for a favorable moment to set fire to the fort.

But they were alarmed when they learned that the party of Mascoutins, who had wintered upon the heads of the St. Joseph, had been cut off to the number of a hundred and fifty men, women and children by Sagunia, a war chief of the Ottawas and Pottawatomies. They immediately determined to set fire to an Ottawa cabin, which was close by the gate of my fort. I was informed of their intention by an Ottagamie Indian, named Joseph, who long since left his people and came to reside among us. It was from him I learned all that passed in the Ottagamie and Mascoutin village. He had the honor to be presented you, Sir, last year at Montreal. He informed me of the intention to set fire to my fort, and I immediately sent an express canoe to the hunting grounds of the Ottawas and Hurons, to request them to join me as soon as possible. I sent also another canoe to the other side of the lake, to invite the Chippeways and Mississaugas to join us.

The church and the house of Mr. Mullet were outside of the fort, and all our wheat was stored there. The contrary winds prevented our allies from arriving, which troubled me much, as the circumstances now pressing, I prevailed on the few Frenchmen, who were with me, immediately to bring the wheat into the fort. And it was well I did so; for, two days later, it would have been pillaged. We had to fire upon the enemy to secure it, and as it was they stole a considerable portion of it. But the principal object was to pull down, as quickly as possible, the church, the storehouse, and some other houses which were near my fort, and so close that the Indians, at any time, by setting fire to them might have burnt out works. And, besides, it was important in order to defend ourselves in case of an attack, which very soon took place. It becomes us to render thanks to the Lord for His mercies. We should have been lost if I had not formed this determination. I put on the best countenance I could, encouraging the French, who were in consternation, believing themselves lost. The apprehension I entertained, that some accident might happen to the French, who had not yet arrived, and the necessity of sowing our grain and pasturing our cattle prevented me from refusing them permission to enter the fort to trade, for fear they should suspect I was aware of their object. The only thing I could do was to tell them that I apprehended them to remain so near, and therefore I was about to repair my fort. They did not appear to give much credit to my assertions. Our men were obliged to draw some posts of which the Indians had taken possession, in order to repair the fort, as soon as possible, and I succeeded perfectly well in effecting the repairs with material taken from some of the houses. They wished to preserve a pigeon house from which they might have assailed us, but I deceived them and took possession of it. I placed it immediately opposite their fort and pierced it with loop holes. I mounted two swivels upon logs of wood to serve as cannon, in case of necessity.

The thirteenth of May, while I was impatiently awaiting the arrival of my allies, who were the only aid I could expect, Mr. De Vincennes arrived from the Miami country with seven or eight Frenchmen. He brought me no news of the Indians, which gave me much trouble, and I did not know on what saint to call. But Heaven watched over our preservation, and when I least expected it, there entered a Huron, all breathless, who said to me, "My father, I wish to speak to you in secret. I am sent to you by our peace chiefs." There were then in their villages but seven or eight men. It seems that our deliverance was miraculous, for all the others arrived two hours after, and the Ottawas also. The messenger said, God has pity on you. He has decreed that your enemies and ours should perish. I bring you information that four men have just arrived at our fort, not daring to enter yours, on account of the Ottagamies and Mascoutins, who surround you. Makisabie, war chief of the Pottawattomies, and his brother, Tehamasimon, are at their head, and desire to council with you.

I requested Mr. De Vincennes to meet them, and he recognized at once the four Indians. He returned an hour after to render me an account of the interview, and told me, on the part of Makisabie, that six hundred men would soon arrive to aid me, and to eat those miserable nations, who had troubled all the country. That it was necessary to keep myself on my guard against the Ottagamies and Mascoutins, who might learn the expected arrival of assistance.

I requested Mr. De Vincennes to return to the Huron fort, and to ascertain from Makisabie if it would not be satisfactory to his people to content ourselves with driving away the Mascoutins and the Ottagamies, and compelling them to return to their former vilalegs, which, Sir, was your intention. But this could not be done, for the Hurons were too much irritated. This great affair had been too well concerted during the whole autumn and winter with all the nations. Mr. De Vincennes, perceiving it would only irritate the Hurons to speak of accommodation, dropped the subject, and the more readily, as they said these wicked men never kept their words. Nothing else could be done, but to be silent, and to put the best face upon the affair, while we fought with them against our common enemies. The Hurons even reproached us with being tired of living, as we knew the bad intentions of the Ottagamies and Mascoutins. They said it was absolutely necessary to destroy them, and to extinguish their fire, and

it was your intention they should perish. They added that they knew your views on this subject at Montreal.

M. De Vincennes returned and told me it was useless to speak of any accommodation. And in truth, I well knew there was great danger in having so many nations around us, of whose good intentions we were not certain. I then closed the gates of the fort and divided my few Frenchmen into four brigades, each having its brigadier. I inspected their arms and ammunition, and assigned them their stations on the bastions. I put four of them into the redoubt I had just constructed. I placed some of them at the two curtains, which were most exposed, and armed them with spears. My two cannon were all ready with slugs of iron prepared to load them, which had been made by the blacksmith. Our Rev. Father held himself ready to give a general absolution in case of necessity, and to assist the wounded, if there should be any. He communicated also the Sacred Host.

Every arrangement being made, and while we were waiting with impatience, I was informed that there were many people in sight. I immediately ascended a bastion, and casting my eyes towards the woods, I saw the army of the nations of the South issuing from it. They were the Illinois, the Missouris, the Osages and other nations yet more remote. There were also with them, the Ottawa chief, Saguina, and also the Pottawattomeis, the Sacs, and some Menominees. Detroit never saw such a collection of people. It is surprising how much all these nations are irritated against the Mascoutins and the Ottagamies. This army marched in good order, with as many flags as there were different nations, and it proceeded directly to the fort of the Hurons. These Indians said to the head chief of the army you must not encamp. Affairs are too pressing. We must enter immediately into our Father's Fort, and fight for him. As he has always had pity on us, and as he loves us, we ought to die for him. And don't you see that smoke also? They are these women of your village, Saguina, who are burning there, and your wife is among them. Not another word was necessary. There arose a great cry, and, at the same time, they all began to run, having the Hurons and the Ottawas at their head. The Ottagamies and the Mascoutins raised also their war cry, and about forty of them issued from their fort, all naked, and well armed, running to meet our Indians, and to brave them in order to make them believe they were not afraid. They were obliged, however, to retreat immediately, and to return to their village. Our Indians requested permission to enter my fort, which I granted, seeing they were much excited. It was my design they should encamp near the woods, that they might not be troublesome to us. All the Indian chiefs assembled upon the parade ground of my fort, and spoke to me as follows: "My father, I speak to you on the part of all the nations, your children, who are before you. What you did last year in drawing their flesh from the fire, which the Ottagamies were about to roast and eat, well merits that we should bring you our bodies to make you the master of them, and to do all you wish. We do not fear death, whenever it is necessary to die for you. We have only to request, that you would pray the Father of all Nations to have pity on our women, and our children, in case we should lose our lives with you. We beg you to throw a blade of grass upon our bones to protect them from the flies. You see, my father, that we have abandoned our villages, our women and our children, to hasten as soon as possible to join you. We hope that you will have pity on us, and that you will give us something to eat, and a little tobacco to smoke. We have come from a distance, and are destitute of everything; we hope you will give us powder and balls to fight with you. We don't make a great speech. We perceive that we fatigue you and your people by the ardour which you show for the fight." I immediately answered them, and briefly: "I thank you, my children, the determination that you have taken, to offer to die with us, is very agreeable to me, and causes me much pleasure. I recognize you as the true children of the Governor-General, and I shall not fail to render him an account of all you have done for me today. You need not doubt, that when any question respecting you interest arises, he will regard it favorably. I receive order from him every day, to watch continually for the preservation of his children. With regard to you necessities, I know you want everything. The fire which has just taken place, is unlucky for you, as well as for me. I

will do all I can to provide you with what you want. I beg you to live in peace, union, and good intelligence together, as well as among your different nations as with the French people. This will be the best means of enabling us to defeat our common enemies. Take courage then; inspect and repair your war clubs, your bows and arrows, and especially your guns. I shall supply you with powder and ball immediately, and then will attack our enemies. This is all I have to say to you."

All the Indians uttered a cry of joy and of thanks, and said: "Our enemies are dead from the present moment. The heavens begin to grow clear, and the Master of Life has pity on us."

All the old men made harangues through the fort, to encourage the warriors, telling them to listen to my words, and strictly to obey all my orders. I distributed among them immediately a quantity of balls and powder; and then we all raised the war cry. The very earth trembled. The enemy, who were not more than a pistol shot distant, raised also their war cry, at the same time. The guns were immediately discharged on both sides, and the balls flew like hail.

We had to do as our Indians did, in order to encourage them. The powder and balls that you had the goodness to send us, Sir, the past autumn, did not last long. I was obliged to have recourse to three barrels, that Mr. De Lamothe left with a certain Roy to sell, not leaving me a single grain when he went away, for the defense of the fort, in case of an attack. All mine was exhausted, as well as a quantity which I had been obliged to purchase of some of the French people.

I held the Ottagamies and the Mascoutins in a state of siege during nineteen days, wearing them out by a continual fire night and day. In order to avoid our fires, they were obliged to dig holes four or five feet deep in the ground, and to shelter themselves there. I had erected two large scaffolds, twenty feet high, the better to fire into their villages. They could not go out for water, and they were exhausted by hunger and thirst. I had from four to five hundred men, who blockaded their village night and day, so that on one could issue to seek assistance. All our Indians went and hid themselves at the edge of the woods, whence they continually returned with prisoners, who came to join their people, not knowing they were besieged. Their sport was to shoot them, or to fire arrows at them and then burn them.

The enemy that I had kept besieged, thinking to intimidate me, and by this means to have the field left open to them, covered their palisades with scarlet blankets and then hallooed to me that they wished the earth was all coloured with blood; these red blankets were the mark of it; they hoisted twelve red blankets as standards in twelve different places of their village. I well knew that these signals were English, and that they fought for them. This, indeed, they told us, for we could speak from one to the other. They said they had no father but the English, and told all the nations, our allies, that they would do much better to quit our side and join theirs.

The great war chief of the Pottawattomies, after having requested my advice and permission, mounted on of my scaffolds and spoke to our enemies in the name of our nations in these words: "Wicked nations that you are, you hope to frighten us by all that red color which you exhibit in your village. Learn, that if the earth is covered with blood, it will be with yours. You speak to us of the English, they are the cause of your destruction, because you have listened to their bad councils. They are enemies of prayer, and it is for that reason that the Master of Life chastises them, as well as you, wicked men that you are; don't you know as well as we do that the Father of all the Nations, who is at Montreal, sends continually parties of his young men against the English to make war, and who take so many prisoners that they do not know what to do with them. The English who are cowards, only defend themselves by secretly killing men by that wicked strong drink, which has caused so many men to die immediately after drinking it. Thus we shall see what will happen to you for having listened to them."

I was obliged to stop this conversation, perceiving that the enemy had requested to speak, merely to attract our attention while they went for water. I ordered our great fire to recommence, which was so violent that we killed more than thirty men, and some women, who had secretly gone out for water. I lost that day twelve men, who were killed in my fort. The enemy, in spite of my opposition, had taken

possession of a house, where they had erected a scaffold behind the gable end, which was of earth. Our balls could not penetrate this defense, and thus, every day, many of our people were killed. This obliged me to raise upon one of my scaffolds, the two large logs upon which were mounted our swivels. I loaded them with slugs, and caused them to be fired upon the scaffold, which troubled me so much. They were so well aimed, that at the first two discharges, we heard the scaffolds fall, and some of the enemy were killed. They were so frightened that we heard them utter cries and frightful groans, and towards evening they called out to know if I would allow them to come and speak to me. I assembled immediately the chiefs of all the nations who were with me, to ascertain their opinion; and we agreed it was best to listen to them, in order, by some stratagem, to withdraw from them three of our women, whom they had made prisoners some days before the siege, and one of whom was the wife of the great war chief Saguina. I told them, through my interpreter, that they might come in safety, to speak to me, as I was willing they should have that satisfaction before dying.

They did not fail the next morning to make me a visit. We were very much surprised not to see the red flag in their village, but only a white flag. It was the great chief Pemoussa, who was at the head of this first embassy. He came out of his village with two other Indians, carrying a white flag in his hand. I sent my interpreter to meet him and conduct him to me, and to protect him from the insults of some of the young warriors. He entered my fort; I placed him in the midst of the parade ground, and then I assembled all the chiefs of the nations who were with me, to hear our ambassador, who spoke in these words:

(Presenting a belt of wampum and two slaves.)

"My father, I am dead; I see very well, that the heaven is clear and beautiful for you only, and that for me, it is altogether dark. When I left my village, I hoped that you would willingly listen to me. I demand of you, my father, by this belt, which I lay at your feet, that you have pity on your children, and that you do not refuse them the two days that they ask you, in which there shall be no firing on either side, that our old men may hold a council, to find the means of turning away your wrath.

"It is to you that I now speak, you, other children, listening to the advice of our father; this belt is to pray you to recollect that you are our kindred. If you shed our blood, recollect that it is also you won; endeavor then to soften the heart of our father, whom we have so often offended.

"These two slaves are to replace, perhaps, a little blood that you may have lost. I do not speak many words until our old men council together, if you grant us those two days that I have asked of you."

I answered him thus: "If your hearts were properly moved, and if you truly considered the Governor at Montreal as your father, you would have begun by bringing with you the three women whom you hold as prisoners; not having done so, I believe your hearts are yet bad. If you expect me to listen to you, begin by bringing them here. This is all I have to say."

All the chiefs who were with me exclaimed with a high voice, "My father, after what you have just said, we have nothing to answer to this ambassador. Let him obey you, if he wished to live."

The ambassador answered, "I am only a child. I shall return to my village to render an account of what you have said to our old men."

Thus finished the council. I gave him three or four Frenchmen to reconduct him assuring him that we would not fire upon his village during the day, on condition, however, that no one should leave it to seek water; and that if they did so, the truce should be at an end, and we should fire upon them.

Two hours after, three chiefs, two of them Macoutins, and the third an Ottagamie, came bearing a flag, and bringing with them the three women. I made them enter into the same place where the others were stationed, and where all our chiefs were again assembled. The three messengers spoke as follows: "My father, here are these three pieces of flesh that you ask of us. We would not eat them, thinking you would call us to an account for it. Do what you please with them. You are the master. Now, we Mascoutins and Ottagamies request that you would cause all the nations, who are with you, to retire, in

order that we may freely seek provisions for our women and children. Many die every day of hunger. All our village regret that we have displeased you. If you are as good a father as all your children, who are around you, say you are, you will not refuse the favor we ask of you."

As I had now the three women whom I sought, I did not care any longer to keep fair with them, and I therefore answered, "If you had eaten my flesh, which you have now brought to me, you would not have been living at this moment. You would have felt such terrible coils, that they would have covered you so deep in the ground, that no one would any longer speak of you, so true is it that I love the flesh of the Father of all the Nations. With regard to the liberty that you demand, I leave to my children to answer you. Therefore I shall not say any more."

The head chief of the Illinois, whose name is Makouandeby, was appointed by the chiefs of the other nations to speak in these words:

"My father, we all thank you for your kindness to us; we thank you for it, and since you give us permission to speak, we shall do so."

And then addressing the hostile chiefs, he said: "Now listen to me ye nations who have troubled all the earth. We perceive clearly by your words, that you seek only to surprise our father, and to deceive him again, in demanding that we should retire. We should no sooner do so, but you would again torment our father, and you would infallibly shed his blood. You are dogs, who have always bit him. You have never been sensible of the favors you have received from all the French. You have thought, wretches as you are, that we did not know all the speeches you have received from the English, telling you to cut the throats of our father, and of his children, and then to lead the English into this country. Go away, then. For us, we will not stir a step from you; we are determined to die with our father; we should disobey him; because we know your bad heart, and we would not leave him alone with you. We shall see for this moment who will be master, you or us; you have now only to retire, and as soon as you shall re-enter your fort, we shall fire upon you."

I sent an escort to conduct the ambassadors to their fort, and we began to fire again as usual. We were three or four days without any intercourse, firing briskly on both sides. The enemy discharged their arrows so rapidly that more than three of four hundred were flying at the same time, and at their ends were lighted fuses; the object being to burn us, as they had threatened to do. I found myself very much embarrassed; the arrows fell upon all our quarters, which were covered with straw, so that the fire easily caught many of them, which frightened the French so much that they thought everything was lost. I reassured them, telling them that this was nothing, and that we must find a remedy as soon as possible. "Come then," said I, "take courage, let us take off the thatch from the houses, and let us cover them with bear skins and deer skins; our Indians will help us." I then directed them to bring in two large wooden pirogues which I filled with water and provided Badrouilles at the end of rods, to extinguish the fire, when it should break out anywhere, and hooks to pull out the arrows. There were four or five Frenchmen, who were wounded. I fell into another embarrassment much greater than this. My Indians became discouraged, and wished to go away, a part of them saying that they should never conquer those nations. That they knew them well, and that they were braver than any other people; and besides, I could no longer furnish them with provisions.

This inconstancy ought to teach us how dangerous it is to leave a post so distant as this without troops. I then saw myself on the point of being abandoned, and left a prey to our enemies, who would not have granted us any quarter, and the English would have triumphed.

The French were so frightened that they told me they saw clearly it was necessary we should retire as quickly as possible, to Michilimacinae. I said to them, "What are you thinking of? Is it possible you can entertain such sentiments? What! Abandon a post in such a cowardly manner? Dismiss such thoughts, my friends, from your minds; do things appear so bad? You ought to know, that if you should abandon me, the Governor-General would follow you everywhere, to punish you for your

cowardice. What the Indians have just said ought not to frighten you. I am going to speak to all the chiefs in private, and inspire them with new courage. Therefore change your views, and let me act, and you will see that everything will go well." They answered me, that they did not think of retiring without my consent, nor without me at their head; believing that we could not hold the place, if our Indians should abandon us. They begged me to pardon them, and assured me that they would do all I wished. And truly, I was afterwards very well contented with them. They did their duty like brave people.

I was four days and four nights, without taking any repose, and without eating or drinking, striving all the time to secure to my interest all the young war chiefs, in order to keep the warriors firm, and to encourage them so that they would not quit us until our enemies were defeated. To succeed in this object, I striped myself of all I had, making presents to one and another. You know, Sir, that with the Indians one must not be mean. I flatter myself that you will have the goodness to approve all these expenditures, which for me are immense, and for the King, of no consequence, for otherwise, I should be very much to be pitied, having a large family, which occasions me a great expense at Quebec.

Having gained all the Indians in private, I held a general council, to which I called all the nations, and said to them:

"What, my children! When you are just on the point of destroying these wicked nations, do you think of retreating shamefully, after having so well begun? Could you lift up your heads again? You would be overwhelmed with confusion. All the other nations would say, are these the brave warriors who fled so ignominiously, after having abandoned the French? Be not troubled, take courage, we will endeavor yet to find a few provisions. The Hurons and the Ottawas, your brothers, offer you some. I will do all I can to comfort you and to aid you. Don't you see that our enemies can hardly preserve their position. Hunger and thirst overpower them. We shall quickly render ourselves masters of their bodies. Will it not be very pleasant, after such a result, when you visit Montreal, to receive there the thanks and friendship of the Father of all Nations, who will thank you for having risked your lives with me? For you cannot doubt, that in the report I shall make to him, I shall render justice to each of you, for all you will have done. You must also be aware that to defeat these two nations is to give that life and peace to your women and children, which they have not yet enjoyed."

The young war chiefs, whom I had gained, did not give me time to finish, but said to me, "My father, allow us to interrupt you; we believe there is some liar, who has told you falsehoods. We assure you that we all love you too much to abandon you, and we are not such cowards as is reported. We are resolved, even if we are much more pressed with hunger, not to quit you, till your enemies are utterly destroyed." All the old men approved of these sentiments, and said, "Come on, come on, let us hasten to arm ourselves, and prove that those are liars who have reported evil of us to our father." They then raised a great cry, and sung the war song, and danced the war dance, and a large party went to fight.

Every day some Sacs, who had lived some time with the Ottagamies, left their fort and came to join their people, who were with me, and who received them with much pleasure. They made known to us the condition of our enemies, assuring us that they were reduced to the last extremity; that from sixty to eighty women and children had died from hunger and thirst, and that their bodies and the bodies of those who were killed every day caused an infection in their camp, as they could not inter their dead, in consequence of the heavy fire that we continually kept up.

Under these circumstances, they demanded permission to speak to us, which was granted. Their messengers were their two great chiefs, one of peace, the other of war; the first named Allamima, and the other Pemoussa. With them were two great Mascoutin chiefs, one Kuit, and the other Onabimaniton. Pemoussa was at the head of the three others, having a crown of wampum upon his head and many belts of wampum on his body, and hung over his shoulders. He was painted with green earth, and supported by seven female slaves, who were also painted and covered with wampum. The three other chiefs had each a chichory in their hands. All of them marched in order, singing and shouting with all their might,

to the song of the Chichories, calling all the devils to their assistance, and to have pity on them. They had even figures of little devils hanging on their girdles. They entered my fort in this manner; when being placed in the midst of the nations, our allies, they spoke as follows:

"My father, I speak to you, and to all the nations who are before you. I come to you to demand life. It is no longer ours. You are the masters of it. All the nations have abandoned us. I bring you my flesh in the seven slaves, whom I put at your feet. But do not believe I am afraid to die. It is the life of our women, and our children, that I ask of you. I beg you to allow the sun to shine, let the sky be clear, that we can see the day, and that hereafter our affairs may be prosperous. Here are six belts, that we give you, which bind us to you, like your true slaves. Untie them, we beg you, to show that you give us life. Recollect, ye nations, that you are our great nephews, tell us something, I pray you, which can give pleasure on our return to our village."

I left it to our Indians to answer these ambassadors. They were, however, so much enraged against them that they would not give them any answer. Eight or then of them asked permission to speak to me in private.

"My father, we come to ask liberty of you to break the heads of those four great chiefs. They are the men who prevent our enemies from surrendering at discretion. When these shall be no longer at their head, they will find themselves much embarrassed, and will surrender."

I told them they must be drunk to make me such a proposition. "Recollect, that they came here upon my word, and you have given me yours. We must act with good faith, and if such a thing were done, how could you trust one another? Besides, if I acquiesced in this proposition, the Governor-General would never pardon me. Dismiss it, therefore, from your thoughts. They must return peaceably. You see clearly that they cannot avoid us, since you resolved not to give them quarter."

They confessed I was right, and that they were foolish. We dismissed the ambassadors in all safety, without, however, giving them any further answer. These poor wretches well knew there was no longer any hope for them.

I confess, Sir, that I was touched with compassion at their misfortunes; but as war and pity do not well agree together, and particularly, as I understood they were paid by the English for our destruction, I abandoned them to their unfortunate fate; indeed I hastened to have this tragedy finished, in order that the example might strike terror to the English, and to themselves.

The great fire recommenced, more and more violently; the enemy, being in despair, beaten in their village and out of it; and when they wished to go for water or to gather a few herbs, to appease their hunger, had no other resource but an obscure night with rain, in order to effect their escape. They awaited it with much impatience, and it came on the nineteenth day of the siege. They did not fail to make use of it, decamping about midnight, and we did not know their escape until daylight. I encouraged our people, and they pursued them very vigorously. Mr. De Vincennes joined in the pursuit, with some Frenchmen, and this gave much pleasure to the Indians.

The enemy, not doubting but that they would be pursued, stopped at the Presq' isle, which is opposite Hog Island, near Lake St. Clair, four leagues from the fort.

Our people, not perceiving their entrenchment, pushed into it, and lost there twenty men, killed and wounded. It was necessary to form a second siege, and also an encampment. The camp was regularly laid out; there were a hundred canoes every day, as well as Ottawas, Hurons, Chippeways, and Mississaugas to carry provisions there. The chiefs sent to me for two cannon and all the axes and mattocks that I had, to cut timber, and to place it so as to approach the hostile entrenchment; together with powder and ball. As for the Indian corn, tobacco and seasoning, they were supplied as usual, without counting all the kettles of the French, which are now lost, and that I had to pay for.

The enemy held their position for four days, fighting with much courage; and finally, not being able to do anything more, surrendered at discretion to our people, who gave them no quarter. All were

killed except that women and children, whose lives were spared, and one hundred men, who had been tied, but escaped.

All our allies returned to my fort with their slaves, having avoided it before, as they thought it was infective. Their amusement was to shoot four or five of them every day. The Hurons did not spare a single one of theirs.

In this manner came to an end, Sir, these two wicked nations, who so badly afflicted and troubled all the country. Our Rev. Father chaunted a grand mass to render thanks to God for having preserved us from the enemy.

The Ottagamies and Mascoutins had constructed a very good fort, which, as I said, was within pistol shot of mine. Our people did not dare to undertake to storm it, notwithstanding all I could say. The works were defended by three hundred men, and our loss would have been great, had we assaulted it; but the siege would not have been so long. Our Indians lost sixty men killed and wounded, thirty of whom were killed in the fort, and a Frenchman, named Germain, and five or six others were wounded with arrows. The enemy lost a thousand souls, men, women, and children.

I ought not to forget, Sir, to state, that there were about twenty-five Iroquois, who had joined themselves to the Hurons of the Fond du Lac in this war. These two nations distinguished themselves above all the others, and therefore their loss has been proportionably greater. They received the thanks of all the Indians, and more particularly, of the Pottawattomies, to whom they made satisfaction for an old quarrel, by presents of slaves and pipes. I brought about this accommodation. I dare venture to assure you, Sir, that the general assembly of all nations has put them at peace with one another, and renewed their ancient alliance. They calculate upon receiving many presents, which, they say, Sir, you promised them.

I have determined, with the consent of his nation, to send you, the grand chief of the Illinois of Roch village. His name is Chachagonache. He is a good man, and has much authority, and I trust, Sir, that you will include him to make peace with the Miamis.

This affair is of very great consequence, the Miamis having sent me word, that they should abandon their village and build another on the Oyou, in the fond of Lake Erie. It is precisely where the English are about to erect a fort, according to the belts they have sent to the different nations. They also said, that they would be contented, if you sent them, Sir, a garrison and a Rev. Father, a Jesuit, and some presents, that they say you promised them.

Maakisabie, the Pottawattomie chief, has much influence over the mind of this Illinois chief. He goes with him. Joseph, who accompanies them, deserves your kindness. I have had much trouble to save his life.

I venture, Sir, to request, that you would take care that the Indians, who are with Mr. De Vincennes, return contented; their visit secures this post.

Saguina has complained to me that Mr. Destiettes would not wait for him last spring, believing it was through contempt.

Poor Otchipouac died this winter. It is a great loss to us, for he had much firmness, and was well disposed towards the French. We have another difficult affair, which threatens to give us much trouble. The Kickapoos, who live at the mouth of the Maumee River, are about to make war upon us, now that our allies have left us; about thirty Mascoutins have joined them. A canoe of Kickapoos, who came here to speak to the three villages, has been defeated, by the Hurons and Ottawas. Among them was a principal chief, whose head was brought to me, with the heads of three others. This was done out of resentment, because the last winter they had taken prisoners some of the Hurons and the Iroquois; besides they considered him a true Ottagamie. I believe, that if Mr. De Vincennes had not been at the mouth of the Maumee at the time, the Kickapoos would have killed the two Hurons and the Iroquois. There was every probability of it. Those same Indians took prisoner also, Langlois, who was on his

return from the Miami country, and who had charge of many letters from the Rev. Fathers, the Jesuits of the Illinois villages. All these letters have been destroyed which circumstance has given me much uneasiness, as I am sure, Sir, there were some for you from Louisiana. They dismissed him, after robbing him of his peltry, charging him to return and tell them the news; but he had no more desire to do that than I had to permit him. However, the Ottawas might safely send there, because the Kickapoos have among them one of their women, with her children. I will endeavor to prevail upon the Ottawas and the Hurons to accommodate their difficulties with the Kickapoos in order that our repose may not be troubled here.

The different nations have returned peaceably with all their slaves. Saguina has abandoned his village, and gone to Michilimacinac. The Pottawattomies abandoned also theirs, and will either come here or go to the Illinois. More than half of the Ottawas, of this place, will repair to Michilimacinac. The Chippeways and Mississaugas will go to Topicanich. They have not at all been disposed to make any satisfaction to the Miamis, for the murder of the last year, with Mr. De Tonty. The Miamis are very urgent upon this subject. I spare no trouble to induce them to be patient, and also to persuade them that I am laboring earnestly for their interest.

I have the honor to inform you, Sir, that I accomplished a measure the last year that Mr. De Lamothe never could effect during all the time he was here; which was to compel the Otatwas to make a solid peace with the Miamis, and to engage them to visit the latter, which, till now, they never would do. I succeeded very happily in the object, the Miamis having received them very kindly, and a durable alliance has been the consequence.

I flatter myself, Sir, it will be agreeable to you to be informed that Mr. De Vincennes has faithfully performed his duty, and that he has labored assiduously here, as well as on his voyage to the Miamis and Ouyatonoms the last winter.

If I am so happy, Sir, as to receive your approbation of my conduct, I shall be fully compensated for all my trouble, and shall experience no more dejection.

My success has been much owing to the great influence I have over the nations, Mr. De Vincennes is the witness of this. I do not say this either to gratify my vanity, or to claim any credit, for truly I am very tired of Detroit.

You can easily judge, Sir, in what a condition my affairs must be, in consequence of having no presents, belonging to the king, in my hands. However, I venture to trust to your goodness, and hope that you will not suffer a devil to be reduced to beggary.

I have the honor to be, with very profound respect, Sir, your very humble, and very obedient servant,

(Signed) DUBUISSON.

Au Fort du Detroit, Pontchartrain, June 15, 1712.

This letter was addressed to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Governor-General of New France.

EXPENDITURES.

Statement of expenditures, made by Mr. Dubuisson, for the service of the King, to gain an influence over the nations and to secure them in his interest, in order to sustain the post of the Fort de Pontchartrain, of Detroit, against the Ottagamies and Mascoutins, who had been paid by the English to destroy it, to wit:

Livres

4	barrels of powder of 50 lbs. Each, to distribute to the Indians, for the defense of Fort de Pontchartrain, and to attack that of the Ottagamies and Mascoutins; the powder having been purchased of the voyageurs, at 4 livres per lb. Making the sum of	800
300	lbs. Balls for the same object, at 50 sols the lb.	450
60	bags of Indian corn, at 8 livres the bag, for the subsistence of the Indians	480
300	flints at 7 sols per hundred	21
5	guns to give to five chiefs, in order to attach them to the interests of Mr. Dubuisson, estimated at 30 livres each.....	150
8	blankets, to bury certain principal Indians, killed in the service, estimated at 30 livres each.....	240
8	pr. of leggins for the same object, at 7 livres 10 sols the pr.	60
8	shirts for the same object, at 10 livres each.....	80
100	lbs. tobacco to be ready to be given to the Indians at all times at 4 livres the lb.	400
100	butcher knives, to use as bayonets, for the Indians	100
3	lbs. vermilion to paint the warriors, at 40 livres the lb.	120
		2,901

I certify, that I furnished, for the service of the King, for the defense of Fort de Pontchartrain, the articles mentioned in the above statement.

Done at Quebec, Oct. 14, 1712.

(Signed) DUBUISSON

WINDMILLS, SPOOKS AND WITCHES OF THE OLD-TIME GROSSE POINTE

From SATURDAY NIGHT – Nov. 11, 1922

A Pioneer's Recollections of the Grand Marais, Windmill Pointe, Presque Isle, the Indian Burying Ground and the Old Mills Along the Detroit River, the Last of Which Was Taken Down Some Years Ago on the Canadian Shore, as They Seemed to a Child of the Last Century

By Mrs. Isabella G. B. Lothrop

(The following interesting article was read by Mrs. Lothrop at a meeting of Louisa St. Clair Chapter, D. A. R., several years ago. Mrs. Lothrop is a charter member of the chapter. – THE EDITOR.)

THERE are not many old Detroiters left now who remember the "Grand Marais" – "Big Mash," as the degenerate descendants of the early French settlers used to call it. It began at Connor's Creek and rolled away in a prairie-like sweep of coarse marsh grass, to the river on one hand and the distant purple woods on the other as far up as Fox Creek, its northern boundary. To the casual glance it appeared to be a piece of waste moorland, soggy and unproductive, but woe to the unwary who ventured upon its treacherous surface. It was an unaffordable morass full of quags and sloughs and miry bogs.

In the spring when the blue flags blossomed it became an azure sea shot with gold, and later in June the wild roses along the border of the road on the west side of converted it into a scented garden of the orient, but in the late summer and in the cool days of autumn, when the east wind blew mournfully across its russet down and went whispering through the withered stalks of the reeds and rushed along the muddy pools – then indeed, it was a desolate spot, full of uncanny suggestion, a fit abode for the wanton *feu-follet* and other mischievous sprites.

Away toward the east along the river's edge a stunted growth of willows and wild poplars broke the dead level of its monotonous line, and the lighthouse, rising stiff and white above the scanty herbage, redeemed with a touch of human interest the lonely scene.

Presque Isle, "almost an island," was the pretty French name for the distant sandy knoll that lay beyond the reedy sea, as isolated and nearly as inaccessible as any island. Here the lighthouse people lived in solitary seclusion, their only neighbor a hermit Frenchman who lived on Windmill Pointe, and who spent his days hunting muskrats in the swamp and his nights in getting drunk. The main approach to Presque Isle was by the waterway, but in certain seasons of the year one might reach it by the mainland driving through Poupard's Lane to the beach, and thence along the shore to Windmill Pointe.

POUPARD'S LANE was subsequently opened to the public and christened "Bishop's Road" in honor of the Catholic bishop who built himself a house on the northeast side of the lane down by the water's edge. One of our early jaunts to Presque Isle stays in my memory. It was a lovely midsummer's day and a good breeze had tempted the boys of the party to sail down to the lighthouse. They started ahead with

the lunch baskets, and my mother and Miss Jane Brush followed them on land with the "young fry" stowed away in a double-seated road wagon built to hold four and made to carry six in a pinch.

There was, as I said, no road. At the end of the lane one struck out across the beach toward the lighthouse. When the reeds encroached too close on the narrow strip of sand to admit of a free passage it was simple matter to turn out into the shallow water and drive a few rods trusting to luck that we should come through all right. It was an age of faith. We had gone in this happy-go-lucky fashion about halfway when our old nag came to a sudden halt before an ill-smelling quagmire that barred our way.

"Oh, go 'long, Bess," said my mother, clicking the reins.

But Bess refused to budge. Now! With the intuition of a child I felt that a horse's instinct should be respected, but the old adage, "A child is to be seen but not heard," was strictly enforced with us, so I sat silent. My mother was high spirited and brooked no opposition from man or beast. With a smart blow she brought the whip down on the mare's flanks and old Bess sprang forward to land up to her withers in the mire. We were in a predicament. The tugs were loosed from the whiffletree and I was ordered down the shaft. But the mare did not wait for me. With a desperate forward lunge she freed herself, leaving me in her place in that filthy slough of despond.

Perhaps it was the remoteness and "ungetableness" of Presque Isle that endeared it to the hearts of the Grosse Pointe children, or it may have been the mystery that enshrouded it that lent it its charm. To us it was enchanted ground, haunted by memories of a wild and romantic past, and we loved it with the enthusiasm of adventurous youth.

A little to the north of the lighthouse, hidden behind an orchard of gnarled and twisted apple trees lay Windmill Pointe, the mecca of our childish pilgrimages, a tiny, pebbly point, pushing out into the clear waters where lake and river met and crowned by the crumbling ruins of an old stone mill. "Witches' windmill," so my mother called it in the days when she, too, went gypsying with her young comrades, coming up the river Indian fashion in dug-outs, from the distant town, to romp over the isolated shore. We held it in great veneration because of the unholy association, and approached the wall that still stood, with awe and apprehension, fearful lest the witches that held it in thrall might suddenly appear and curse us for our presumption, or worse still, some wandering shades of dead braves from the Indian burying ground near by drop down upon us.

THE mill was built of white-washed stone with walls nearly three feet thick. Toward the river front it had fallen away and only a half circle of the solid masonry remained standing. The roof was gone and a pile of broken stones blocked the narrow squat doorway. There was danger in venturing too near, for the tottering walls might come tumbling down upon one; but danger only served as an incentive to us, and regardless of parental cautions we scrambled over the rubbish heaps and climbed upon one another's shoulders to peer through the slits that served as windows. We shouted defiance to the invisible witches, and then, our false courage forsaking us, fled trembling to hide ourselves in the neighboring bushes.

Eventually the last wall was taken down by the lighthouse keeper for safety's sake and all that was left to mark the spot of the haunted mill was a pile of white stones half sunken in the water. This may have been the Trombley Mill mentioned by Judge Campbell in his history of Michigan, as standing on Trombley's (now Connor's) Creek, near the starting point of the old Moravian Road. But in my day

Connor's Creek had shifted its outlet further down the river and all trace of the Moravian Road had been obliterated.

My mother remembered the old building still intact, a gloomy structure, forsaken and abandoned. The superstition was that it was haunted and that no one could live there because a curse rested upon it, but practical people said that the roof leaked and that it was deserted because windmills were no longer in requisition. It was so different in construction from the wooden mills that once flanked the river's front that I have sometimes wondered if it had always served the purpose of a mill, or whether at some remote time it might not have been a place of refuge in case of raids from hostile Indians. The old Indian burying ground, as we called it in its neighborhood, certainly bore evidence of some fierce fighting once upon a time on Presque Isle.

WE had all read *The Leather Stocking Tales*, been brought up on them, in fact, and Indians were to us a more potent imaginative stimulant than Samson, or Hector, or Richard Coeur de Lion, or in short the whole radiant mythological galaxy whose wonder-deeds make bright the dreamland of the child. Indians were to us—little Yankee materialists that we were— "the real thing." Had we not seen the dark-browed squaws with papooses strapped to their backs, squatting in our market place? "Tell us" – and with whoops echoing the savage war cries we scrambled over the stones to the fields beyond.

Oh, that burying ground!

I can still feel the thrill that stirred my blood when I trod its sandy furrows. It was a field of hidden treasure to us, a mine of buried wealth that must disclose itself to the patient seeker. There was one story that we children never tired of telling – how a copper pot and some Indian ornaments had once been turned up by the ploughshare in this same field. As often as we told the story, the pot grew in size until at last it became a great caldron heaped to the brim with riches, and up and down the field we went in eager search, that legendary pot ever before us, a glittering possibility animating our hopes and stimulating our zeal. Stone tomahawks were there and flint arrowheads in numbers, and other and more gruesome mementoes from which we shrank back affrighted, but no brazen pot did we ever see, except in our mind's eye.

IT was indeed a field of the dead, and every turn of the mellow soil seemed to bring to sight some moldering fragment of a forgotten brave. Custom never dulled the edge of my feminine aversion to these ghastly relics, but it was different with my less fastidious brothers. I remember in particular one grim souvenir – a grinning death's head leering up at me through the crystal waters of the well of our boat house that had been fetched back as a treasure-trove from Presque Isle by some mad youth as an amusing reminder of a savage past.

This burying ground, although we did not know it, was in reality an old battle field, the site of a savage encounter between the French and the Indians in 1712. In the spring of that year shortly after Cadillac had returned to France, the Foxes, a belligerent tribe, in company with Outagamies and Mascoutins came down from Green Bay upon Detroit with intention of "wiping it out." The commandant, Dubuisson, a flowery Frenchman, for whose exaggeration we must make allowance, describes them as an innumerable throng who came with streaming banners, accompanied by many allies, each bearing the ensign of his tribe.

After an unsuccessful attempt to capture the fort they withdrew to the banks of Lake St. Clair. The commandant then dispatched a company of French soldiers and an army of Indians, to drive them away. The attacking party found the enemy entrenched behind fallen trees near Windmill Pointe. Instead of charging the breastworks, the French erected high stages along the front of the works and taking positions on these, compelled the Foxes to keep under cover. The Foxes, not being able to get through to French slaughtering them in great number. Dubuisson in his official report gives the number of slain as 1,000.

AND now a last word about windmills in Detroit in general. The old ruin on Windmill Pointe was one of a chain of noisy, whirling mills where the frontiersmen brought their grain for grinding. In fact these old windmills were once a unique feature of our river front. Isaac Weld, an Irish gentleman who visited Detroit in 1796, mentions them in a letter quoted by Judge Campbell in his history.

"The country round Detroit," writes Mr. Weld, "is uncommonly flat, and in none of the rivers is there a fall sufficient to turn even a grist-mill. They grind their corn at present by windmills, which I do not remember to have seen in any other part of North America."

The last of these landmarks was taken down some years ago to make way for the Walker distillery buildings on the other side of the river. It stood empty and dilapidated amid lumber piles and rubbish heaps, close to the water's edge on a weedy strip of beach not far from the Walkerville ferry landing, a circular wooden frame on a base of stone and mortar. The weather-beaten siding was peeling away in spots, the wings were gone, there were no steps up to the high doorway. All the same there was a certain picturesque charm about it. In Mrs. Hamlin's *Legends of Detroit* there is a sketch of this same mill, but it would seem that the young draughtsman had drawn on her imagination for the missing wings, for we find them there intact.

In the old Jones mansion that stood in the center of the square that reached from Fourth to Fifth Streets on Fort Street, running back to Lafayette Avenue, there used to hang an old oil painting of the Detroit River that must have been painted at some very early period, for it gave the impression of the river as being a body of water surrounded by rushes and windmills.

In regard to the letter above quoted by Judge Campbell in his *History of Michigan*, I should say that the Irish traveler, author of the letter, had certainly not visited certain of the early settlements on Long Island, for he might have seen there windmills such as he found along Detroit River. I, myself, can bear witness to one at least of these relics that has survived time's destructive forces, that I came upon by chance in my rambles over that stretch of shore that lies between Southampton and Easthampton, for the moment has slipped my memory. I found it weather-beaten, as all buildings are by the sea, but not dilapidated. There it stood with its great sails set for action, at the meeting of two cross roads, looking for all the world like an old Delft tile.

Had I been 20 years younger how gladly should I have taken it for a studio. That old mill brought vividly to mind the lurid scene in *The Cloister and the Hearth*, where Gerald escapes from the Robber's Roost, and sets fire to the mill and the entrapped cutthroats.

Progress, alas! is a Moloch that demands its sacrifices. What aesthetic thrill can even the most impressionable of sentimentalists feel at sight of a relic of a romantic past, if seen against a background of a dago fruit shop, as I was forced to see my eighteenth century find on Long Island.

Grosse Pointe Historical Society

www.gphistorical.org

