

The Silversmiths
of Old Detroit

WALTER E. SIMMONS II

THE SILVERSMITHS OF OLD DETROIT

by

Walter E. Simmons II

A THESIS

Submitted to the Office for Graduate Studies,

Graduate Division of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

1969

MAJOR: ART HISTORY

APPROVED BY:

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Adviser

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Date

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PREFACE

The history of the decorative arts in the United States has been related by many authors, but has always been concerned almost entirely with objects produced in the Eastern portion of the country. In areas such as Detroit that were not directly connected with the seventeenth and eighteenth-century settlements on the East Coast, little basic research has been accomplished. It will be the purpose of this writer to discuss one area of the decorative arts, silver, in depth, with the hope that the reader already cognizant of the field in the Eastern United States may be made aware of the contribution the Detroit area has made to the decorative arts of this country.

The general history of silver in the largest early cities of New France, Montreal and Quebec, will be considered, as smiths from this area gave birth to the craft in Detroit, as well as a more specific history of the men who developed the craft in Detroit itself. This latter history will cover not only the early French silversmiths but also

those men working during the period of English domination and during the early years of American rule. Particular attention will be paid to silver ornaments made for the Indian trade as this area was of particular importance to the trade in Detroit prior to 1830.

The material contained herein could not have been collected in the time period generally allotted for a master's degree without the help of one man and one institution. Mr. Francis W. Robinson, Curator of Medieval Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts, allowed this writer free usage of the results of his many years of research into the silver of early Detroit and many of the references contained herein are due to his great kindness. The staff at the Burton Historical Collection, the Detroit Public Library, were also invaluable in the preparation of this thesis. No work on any aspect of the history of Detroit could be undertaken without the usage of this repository and all reference material noted herein may be found in this institution. Mr. Karel Wiest has also been of great help in the matter of mark identification. The following institutions and private

owners are to be thanked for providing illustrative material: The Detroit Institute of Arts; The François Baby House, Hiram Walker Historical Museum; The Archdiocese of Detroit, Chancery Archives; Francis Vigo Chapter, D.A.R., Grouselands Museum; Dr. Nathaniel Ewing, Mr. and Mrs. James O. Keene. Mr. Charles T. Miller has been deeply involved with the preparation of the illustrations contained herein; his cooperation has been invaluable.

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INTRODUCTION

A Brief History of Silver in New France

The first appearance of silver in New France came very soon after the founding of the city of Quebec in 1605. The early Catholic priests necessarily brought with them from France their ritual vessels which by Canon law were required to be made of either silver or gold and a few of the most wealthy early residents would have been able to bring with them a limited number of silver table utensils. . . . For the first few decades of settlement though, silver vessels, even in ecclesiastical hands, were very scarce, being limited to only the most essential items of church ritual and probably, in private hands, almost completely to eating utensils. But the use of this rare metal did increase rapidly as is pointed out by a statement made by the Venerable Mother de l'Incarnation, first Superior of the Ursuline Monastery in Quebec who wrote in 1660 ". . . silver, which was quite rare in this country,

is now quite common."¹

The two earliest silversmiths known to have worked in New France are Jean-Baptiste Villain and René Fezeret. They were both born and trained in France and were in the Montreal area as early as 1667.² Unfortunately, none of their work is identifiable today but most of it would have been for the Catholic Church as this institution controlled most of the wealth in the area at this time. Their vessels would have been copied for the main part after similar objects made in France and brought to the new land. In the collections of various religious groups in Montreal and Quebec are a few French silver vessels dating as early as the 1620's and a great number dating before 1700.³ These objects are naturally primarily ecclesiastical in nature but a few candlesticks, écuelles, papboats and other small

¹ Ramsay Traquair, The Silver of Old Quebec (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1940), p. 3.

² John Langdon, Canadian Silversmiths 1700-1900 (Toronto: Privately Published, 1966), pp. 72 & 139.

³ Traquair, op. cit., pp. 103-30.

table items are represented. While it is not certain that all of these objects were taken to New France soon after their manufacture, it is reasonable to assume that most of them did arrive with the earliest settlers and were used by local smiths as prototypes for their wares.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the merchant and landed gentry classes in New France were becoming greatly enlarged and began to compete with the Catholic Church for the work of the silversmith. Many people were by now quite well to do and they naturally turned to their craftsmen to form their wealth into tangible objects. The reason for this was not, as might be presumed, a mere show of wealth though, but rather mainly because this was the most convenient method for the protection of wealth. Banks not being the stable institutions of today, a wealthy person would secure silver coinage and have it melted down and turned into tableware. This provided not only usable objects of a decorative nature but also a quickly reclaimable source of monetary funds that was reasonably easily protected.

After 1700, the silversmith craft became well

established in Montreal and Quebec and the number of men working in this area increased rapidly. As the population and wealth of New France increased, so did the number and size of the churches that required silver ritual vessels and tableware, and so did the number of requests for silver objects from private parties. Silver table ware from small eating utensils to large serving dishes became quite common and it was not unusual for large advertisements of objects of this type to appear in the local newspapers. For instance, the following list of silver articles was sold at auction in Quebec in 1728:

two soup tureens	six forks and spoons
four candlesticks	twenty three table forks
four salt cellars	eleven octagonal platters
one egg cup	two sauce boats
twenty forks	two sugar bowls
four bowls	one large platter
one oil lamp	four knives
one coffee pot	four large spoons
four oval platters	two olive spoons ⁴

The total weight of this collection exceeded fourteen hundred ounces, a princely sum indeed. The average person at this time surely would not have had such a large group of silver objects as this, but the list does indicate the

⁴Langdon, op. cit., p. 6.

surprisingly large amounts of silver table wares available in New France at this reasonably early date.

Table wares and ritual vessels were not the only items with which the silversmith concerned himself at this time although they were by far the most important part of his business. The local Indians became aware of the value the white man placed on silver very early in the history of New France and gifts of personal body ornaments made of this precious metal soon became the major method used to impress an Indian chief with the settlers' trustworthiness and desire for friendship. As these gifts were usually made only to the most important members of a tribe, the need at this time for articles of this type was not too large; soon though, they were to become one of the main areas of production for the silversmith and to involve him directly with the Indian trade.

The white settlers of New France traded with the Indians from the time of their first settlements, but until the value of the many fur pelts available in the new world was recognized in the mother countries, this trade never reached any sizable proportions. This recognition took

place slowly during the first half of the eighteenth century and after 1763 when New France was taken over by the English, the fur trade rapidly increased until, by 1800, over 200,000 pounds worth of furs were exported from Canada to England.⁵ The silver body ornaments mentioned above were one of the main mediums of exchange used in this business and their production provided a new field that many silversmiths worked in almost exclusively. The marks of over thirty five Montreal and Quebec makers alone have been found on Indian silver items and it is probable that even more men in these two towns than this were working in the field. It would be impossible to say today how many items of this type were produced during the period 1760 to 1820 when the fur trade was at its height, but the total would surely be in the hundred millions. For example, between August, 1797 and April, 1801, one fur trading company alone spent 4,184 pounds on silver ornament; and in one transaction alone during this period, placed the following order totaling but 342 pounds

⁵E. E. Rich, The Fur Trade and the Northwest (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), p. 188.

pounds with Narçisse Roy, a Montreal smith:

4,500 brooches	181 pair large earbobs
12 large brooches	78 beavers
10 gorgets	75 ear wheels
100 wrist bands	20 arm bands
2,500 pair earbobs	264 heart brooches
1,500 small crosses	20 double crosses ⁶

It is interesting to note that some of the earliest producers of these Indian trade items were in fact Americans living, as early as 1760, in the larger East coast centers of population. Due to the problem of shipping their goods to the western frontier and to the fact that so much of the fur trade was carried on from Canada rather than America, this aspect of the American silver business did not reach the size it did in Montreal and Quebec. Some of the American smiths who did produce these goods are: Joseph Richardson, Edmund Milne and William Hollingshead of Philadelphia; Daniel Christian Feuter of New York City; Barent Ten Eyck of Albany; and Charles A. Burnett of Alexandria, Virginia.⁷

⁶Langdon, op. cit., p. 19.

⁷George Irving Quimby, Indian Culture and European Trade Goods (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), pp. 201-02.

It should be pointed out that while this business was extremely extensive, it in no way precluded the normal work of the silversmith. Churches and private parties continued to call for an ever increasing amount of silver items and many men who prospered in the field never entered into the Indian trade area at all.

Soon after 1820, the silversmith craft in Canada began to change and the wholesale and retail aspects of the business began to evolve into separate entities. Many of the craftsmen in the 1830's were importers as well as workmen and after 1860, almost all silver items were made by a wholesaler who had no direct contact with the public and sold by a retailer who often had no training in the craft itself. As this change took place, the silversmith slowly lost the standing he had once had in the business community and his importance in the settling of North America became history.

A Brief History of Silver in Detroit

The history of the silversmith craft in Detroit parallels that seen in Montreal and Quebec very closely.

Father Cadillac, the city's founder, used the first silver in the area in St. Anne's Church which according to a 1711 inventory included a chalice with its paten, a monstrance without a stand and other ritual vessels.⁸ These objects, which were surely made in France, were probably similar in style and decoration to the silver monstrance, presumably also of French origin, given to the Jesuit Mission located near present day Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1686 by the French official Nicolas Perrot. This object is the earliest surviving vessel known to have been used in that area of New France now part of the United States and is illustrated in The French in America 1520-1880 on page 36. It is unfortunate that no church or private silver objects known to have been used in Detroit prior to 1750 survive today, but surely pieces other than those used by Father Cadillac existed in the area at that time.

Fortunately, two pieces of Indian silver from this early period have recently been found in central Michigan. The gorget and pectoral illustrated in Plate I may be dated as early as circa 1720 and are comparable in design and

⁸Francis W. Robinson, "Silversmiths of Early Detroit," Detroit Historical Society Bulletin, IX, No. 2 (1930), 8.

workmanship to any such items made in New France at that time. Their use in Detroit as gifts to a prominent Indian chief is only natural, but the fact of their origin in the city is startling indeed. The area around Detroit held few families indeed at this time and certainly could not have supported a silversmith. Presumably the maker of these two ornaments was an armorer and worked in silver only when the occasion arose. A second man, Jean-Baptiste Baudry dit Des Buttes dit St. Martin, who also was an armorer, was in this area as early as 1743 and may also have worked in silver although this fact is not now certain. Aside from these two persons, there is no one known to have lived in Detroit during the first forty years of its settlement who might have produced silver vessels.

After 1760 when the British assumed control of the area, Detroit began to grow much more rapidly than previously due to the strong influence of the fur trade. As could be expected, the silversmith trade benefited greatly from this growth and was flourishing strongly by the mid 1780's. As early as 1777, with the arrival of Joseph Schindler, Detroit entered into the Indian silver trade,

although due to his short stay in the area, this date should perhaps be discounted. By 1784 though, Israel Ruland, John Kinzie and John Kirby were all producing silver for the Indians and they may be called the fathers of this industry in Detroit. Actually, it is surprising that there were not more silversmiths in the area in the twenty year period before the arrival of these three men as in 1768, Duperon Baby, one of Detroit's earliest Indian traders, order a silver écuelle and plate and a silver ewer from Quebec.⁹ This same man also was ordering Indian silver from Quebec at least as early as 1774 at which time he placed an order for 100 pair of earbobs and 24 ear wheels in that town.¹⁰

Between 1780 and 1830, there were over twenty silversmiths in Detroit who are known to have worked in the Indian trade and ten more who are known to have been capable of doing so. Many of these men were also active as

⁹Marius Barbeau, "Indian Trade Silver of Canada," The Minnesota Archaeologist, VI, No. 4 (1940), 127.

¹⁰Ibid.

traders and were not full-time smiths, probably because there was more money involved in dealing directly with the Indians. This may perhaps be the reason that throughout this period, many traders still purchased the major percentage of their silver ornaments from either Montreal or Quebec. Many of the workmen in these cities had large shops manned with several apprentices and would have been more capable of filling the large orders often placed by traders than a single individual working in Detroit. The size of these orders may be seen from the following requests sent to Robert Cruickshank of Montreal by Angus Mac Kintosh, a Detroit area trader, May 19, 1800 and January 26, 1801:

- 6 sets of gorgets
- 12,000 small brooches at 6/6
- 5,000 large brooches at 15/
- 24 small armbands at 15/
- 100 pair of wrist bands at 2/9
- 100 ear wheels
- 20 large crosses at 23/4
- 100 assorted crosses
- 1,500 large earbobs
- 6,000 small brooches at 8/
- 5,000 small earbobs
- 100 pair wrist bands at 3/6
- 130 pair wrist bands at 2/2
- 20 large crosses at 20/
- 12 large moons

12 head bands¹¹

 10 sets of gorgets
 8 sets of moons
 16,000 small brooches at 6/
 8,000 small brooches at 8/
 5,000 large brooches at 15/
 12 arm bands at 15/
 30 large crosses at 20/
 30 large crosses at 23/4
 3,000 pair large earbobs
 15 head bands, assorted
 12 hair pipes
 3,000 pair small earbobs
 150 pair of ear wheels at 3/6
 8 armbands five inches wide
 200 wrist bands at 2/2
 150 wrist bands at 2/9
 150 wrist bands at 3/6
 50 wrist bands at 4/6¹²

The size of a typical order from a Detroit silver-smith may be seen from the following transaction between Thomas Smith, a Detroit merchant, and John Kirby which took place in 1783:

70 small brooches, 17/6
 200 large brooches, four pounds
 100 small brooches at 1/8
 1 ear wheel, 8/
 3 gorgets at 16/

¹¹Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Mac Intosh MSS., L5:1798-1803, pp. 100-101.

¹²Ibid., pp. 201-202.

1 moon, 9/
1 pair wrist bands, 1 pound¹³

Domestic silver was also produced in Detroit during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but only to a very limited extent. All such objects known to exist today are illustrated herein along with the only piece of church silver known to have been produced in the area. This chalice, illustrated is actually silver gilt and is artistically one of the finest pieces of American silver known. It is unfortunate that little about the maker, Victor Roguette, is known for he was seemingly the greatest craftsman to work in this trade in Detroit.

After 1830, the silversmith trade in Detroit diminished rapidly and the jeweler took over his position in the community. The major men after this date such as Doty, Smith, and the Piquette brothers did not themselves work in silver although they did hire some workmen who were at least capable of making table utensils. A good

¹³Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Thomas Smith MSS., L4:1779-1800, pp. 132-133.

percentage of what these men sold, though, was made elsewhere, mainly on the East coast of the United States, and in some instances, the retailing of silver was only a small portion of such a person's business. One person, Thomas B. Leavenworth, continued to produce silver until late in the century but he is decidedly an anomaly. No person or firm from this period is included in this thesis unless he is known to have sold silver, either from advertisements or from existing marked objects. The story of the jeweler is better told elsewhere.

Detroit Silver, a Critique

The aesthetic value of the illustrated pieces of Detroit silver varies greatly from the extremely simple Indian objects to the more complex pieces of table ware. The greatest piece known today is certainly the Rouquette chalice (Plate VI). While it is obviously a direct copy of an early seventeenth-century French form, it is extremely well made and gives ample evidence of Rouquette's ability as a smith. The fact of its form not being original in no way detracts from Rouquette's abilities as it is probable that he was commissioned to produce the object in this manner.

His spoon (Plate III) is, if only typical of the general style at that time, also well made and serves to reinforce one's appraisal of his ability. His gorget (Plate V) is another matter entirely. Although it is solidly constructed, the quality of engraving is poor indeed and could easily lead one to question Rouquette's abilities. However, as is the case with most objects of this type, aesthetics did not enter into consideration when it was made, so no judgment of this type can be validly made today. One need only know that these objects were intended for the Indian trade and that the Indian cared only about the value of the metal used to determine the reason for this seeming lack of skill. Some smiths though did achieve a better quality of engraving on objects of this type than Rouquette, as is evidenced by the Riopelle gorget illustrated in Plate V. But while this certainly is to Riopelle's credit, one cannot fault Rouquette technically for doing the least amount of work necessary.

By far the best piece of Detroit Indian silver extant today is the Oneille cross (Plate V). It has a very graceful outline and in this respect is one of the better

objects of its type known. The quality of the engraving is equally high although the placement of the design on the cross is rather awkward. It would have been much more effective if the design had been extended farther along the upper and lower arms of the piece. This also, though, may be due to the nature of Indian silver work as the engraving on Oneille's coffee set (Plate IV) evidences an excellent sense of design and a high degree of workmanship. The pieces themselves also show these characteristics, especially in the handling of the finials on the coffee pot and sugar bowl. The cover of the sugar bowl could perhaps have had a higher dome as seen in the coffee pot, although as they are actually not from the same set, this is perhaps not a fully justified criticism. The handle of the coffee pot is also a bit awkward due to its long extension from the body of the piece but this again detracts but little from the piece as a whole. In general, they are excellent forms and typical of Eastern United States practice of this period, from whence their basic design most probably came.

Another smith from this period, Jean-Baptiste Piquette, was surely the equal of Oneille as is shown by

the écuelle illustrated in Plate VI. The workmanship here is equal to any found in Canada, especially in the casting of the handles and in the over-all proportions of the piece. It is unfortunate that more of his table ware is not known today, as it surely would be of a quality equal to this piece. His one time partner, Pierre-Jean Desnoyer, is also represented by a single piece, the beaker illustrated on Plate VI. Although very plain, it is an excellently conceived form and of a high quality of workmanship. The one piece of Indian silver made during their partnership illustrated herein (Plate II) has, unfortunately, been severely damaged by burial. Enough remains though, to tell that it was carefully constructed and engraved with an above average amount of care. This head band form is a rather unusual one and is not often found due to the amount of silver needed to form it. The fact that Desnoyer and Piquette were chosen to make it points out clearly the standing their firm had in Detroit in the early nineteenth century.

The unidentified maker, I.M., judged on the two Indian pieces illustrated in Plate I, was not a very

skillful smith. The metal used for the objects was very thin and the finish of the edge of the gorget is very poor indeed. It would have been much more effective if a wire edging had been used as in the case of the gorget seen in Plate V. The engraving of the gorget, while well designed, is very crude and, in fact, the design most probably is a direct copy of a French regimental badge and not original with the maker. The spacing of the cut outs on the pectoral is also poorly handled and in general, these two pieces would lead one to believe that I.M. was not a trained silver smith.

The three spoons illustrated in Plate VII are all fairly typical of early nineteenth-century work both in Detroit and elsewhere. The Lagrave spoon is very simple in design harking back to late eighteenth-century motifs whereas the I.B. and Sibley spoons voice the beginnings of the Victorian era. From this point in time on, the industrial revolution dictated to the person working in silver, a new, more regimented, form of production and hence, designs for flat ware became less and less a choice for the workman. This is easily seen in Plate IX where almost all of the

objects are virtually identical in basic design. The Leavenworth items however, do show a degree of originality, especially in the large tablespoon seen at the far right and in the fork. These pieces are especially pleasing and clearly point out Leavenworth's premier standing in the field in Detroit after 1850. His ladle (Plate VI) is extremely well made being much heavier than is normal at this date, a trait seen throughout his work.

The other objects seen in Plate IX are typical not merely of Detroit work at this time but also of almost any work in the United States. It is of course true that many if not most of them were made elsewhere for sale in Detroit and that it is impossible to separate this group from most of those pieces actually produced in the area, but aside from Leavenworth, any Detroit made piece such as the Doty plain handled teaspoon or ladle would not differ in any important aspect from the general Victorian norm. The fiddleback handle so prominent here is a pleasing form and in all of the objects illustrated well carried out and solidly constructed. The more ornate handles seen at the left of the Doty grouping and

on the M. S. Smith butter knife are perhaps less pleasing to the modern eye than they were to the Victorians, but at least they are well made and within their own style group, well carried out.

Due to the small number of early Detroit made silver objects known today, it is very difficult to compare this industry with one in another location. The comparison is also perhaps unfair as Detroit, until well after 1800, was a mere outpost of civilization compared to such major population areas as Montreal or Quebec in Canada or Boston, Philadelphia or New York in the United States. However, while it is true that excellent silver objects were made in Detroit, the best craftsmen working there would have been at most average if compared with their contemporaries in any of the aforementioned cities and the lesser Detroit artists would probably not have been able to find work on their own in a more populated area. This is more true when one looks at tabelwares than is the case with Indian items which were often rather carelessly produced in most areas, although even

here, the Detroit workman could not be classed with the few top men in this field in either Montreal or Quebec. The later jewellers would probably have been able to work most anywhere if their business ability (which is certainly not under discussion herein) was of a high enough quality; and the one true smith of the late period, Leavenworth, could certainly have held his own with any flat ware maker of his period. It should be clear to the reader then, that the body of this work will deal mainly with the historical aspect of this subject rather than the aesthetic value of the objects produced by the various Detroit silversmiths.

THE SILVERSMITHS OF OLD DETROIT

Jean-Baptiste Baudry dit Des Buttes dit St. Martin

Jean-Baptiste Baudry dit Des Buttes dit St. Martin was born July 3, 1684 at Three Rivers to Guillaume Baudry dit Des Buttes and Marie-Jeanne Soulard.¹ His father was born in Quebec October 2, 1656 as was his mother December 4, 1666; they were married there July 13, 1682.² Jean married Marie-Louise Doyon (Doyen) in Quebec October 8, 1721.³ They came to Detroit sometime between August 23, 1733 when one of their children was born in Quebec,⁴ and August 15, 1743 when their eldest child was married at St. Anne's in the

¹Abbe Cyprien Tanguay, Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes (Montreal: E. Senecal and Fils, 1871-1890), I, 31.

²Ibid., loc. cit.

³Ibid., II, 152.

⁴Christian Denissen, "Genealogy of French Families in Detroit" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, n.d.), S, 3688.

presence of his parents.⁵ On April 1, 1750, Jean obtained a grant of land on the southwest coast of the Detroit River where he resided until his death; he was buried in St. Anne's under the second pew on the Epistles' side of the church November 20, 1755.⁶

His father was a silversmith in Three Rivers as well as an armorer⁷ and presumably taught his son these trades. Jean was called both an armorer and a blacksmith in St. Anne's records⁸ and while it seems that he was capable of working in silver, it is probable that he did not own a touchmark die.

I.M.

The two pieces of Indian silver shown in Plate I are are by far the earliest pieces of Detroit silver known today.

⁵Ibid., S, 3687.

⁶Ibid., S, 3685.

⁷John Langdon, Canadian Silversmiths 1700-1900 (Toronto: Privately Published, 1966), p. 45.

⁸[Anon.]⁵, "Registre de Sainte Anne, Detroit February 2, 1704-December 30, 1848" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, n.d.), II, 512.

They may be dated, by comparing the style of the touchmark and the type of engraving with similar objects of a known date produced in New France, as early as 1720. The fact that the mark reads "FT. DETROIT" would also point to this general time period, as the term "fort" was generally included in the place name only during the first twenty to thirty years of this area's inhabitation. Unfortunately, few documents exist today from this early period and research has so far failed to locate a person of this time period with the correct initials who is known to have worked in silver.

It is entirely possible that this maker was not a full time smith but rather worked mainly with base metals or armaments. This was generally the case at this time and as the workmanship of the gorget and pectoral is not of the quality found in New France at this time, it is probable that I.M. was not a fully trained silversmith.

Charles André Barthe

Charles André Barthe was born in Montreal on February 22, 1722 to Théophile Barthe and Marguerite

Charlotte Alavoine.⁹ His father was born in Tarbe, France in 1695 and his mother in La Rochelle in the same year; they were married in Montreal March 18, 1721.¹⁰ Charles was the younger brother of Pierre Barthe (q.v.) and was in Detroit by October 4, 1746 when he was listed in St. Anne's records as godfather to a son of Antoine Campau.¹¹ His relationship to this family was very close as is shown by his marriage to Marie-Thérèse Campau, April 24, 1747.¹² He had twelve children born in Detroit between 1748 and 1765¹³ and he died in Detroit March 14, 1786.¹⁴

Barthe was called in St. Anne's records at various

⁹ Denissen, op. cit., BI, 498-500.

¹⁰ Ibid., loc. cit.

¹¹ [Anon.]⁵, op. cit., I, 268.

¹² Ibid., I, 273.

¹³ Ibid., I, passim.

¹⁴ Milo M. Quaife (ed.), The John Askin Papers (Detroit: The Detroit Library Commission, 1928-1931), I, 226.

times a merchant,¹⁵ a gunsmith,¹⁶ and an armorer.¹⁷ He was presumably trained by his father who was "Armorer to the King [of France]" in Montreal.¹⁸ Although no specific information has been found that Barthe worked in silver, his training would have enabled him to do so as was the case with his brother, Pierre. Certainly for the main part he was a merchant and probably did not own a touchmark die.

Many references to his working at this trade are to be found in the Askin papers.¹⁹ His relationship to John Askin, which was always very close, was heightened by Askin's marriage to his daughter, Marie.²⁰ Barthe was also very close to Francis Vigo, another Indian trader with whom he also had many business transactions.²¹ This relationship

¹⁵[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., I, 413.

¹⁶Ibid., I, 416.

¹⁷Ibid., I, 316.

¹⁸Ibid., I, 499.

¹⁹Quaife (ed.), op. cit., passim.

²⁰Ibid., I, 34.

²¹Ibid., I, passim.

is pointed out by a very personal letter written to Askin by Vigo telling of Barthe's death.²²

At various times, Barthe held several positions of importance in Detroit among which were Chief Overseer of the Roads at the Fort and Dependencies²³ and Senior Warden of St. Anne's Church.²⁴ In 1750, he was living on St. Anne Street²⁵ and later, he moved to the Eustache Gamelin Farm which he had purchased prior to 1763.²⁶

Pierre Barthe

Pierre Barthe was born on an as yet unknown date to Théophile Barthe and Marguerite-Charlotte Alavoine.²⁷

²²
Ibid., I, 226.

²³
[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., II, 628.

²⁴
Ibid., II, 636.

²⁵
Quaife (ed.), op. cit., I, 34.

²⁶
Ibid., loc. cit.

²⁷
[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., I, 499.

His father was born in Tarbe, France in 1695 and his mother in LaRochele in the same year; they were married in Montreal March 18, 1721.²⁸ Pierre was the younger brother of Charles-André Barthe (q.v.). He was in Detroit as early as March 26, 1755 when he signed St. Anne's records as godfather to a son of Charles-Nicolas Rembault²⁹ and on March 3, 1760, married Marie-Charlotte Chapoton.³⁰ He was called Armorer to the King [of France]³¹ in St. Anne's records, a trade he presumably learned from his father who held the same title in Montreal.³² He was recorded in St. Anne's records as living on St. Louis Street in July 1763.³³

Pierre is mentioned twice in an article dealing with an English court of inquiry held by Major Henry Gladwin to

²⁸Denissen, op. cit., BI, 498-500.

²⁹[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., I, 396.

³⁰Ibid., I, 499.

³¹Ibid., II, 533.

³²Ibid., I, 499.

³³Ibid., II, 576.

investigate an Indian uprising near Detroit in 1763. In a session held September 8, 1763, it was reported that a "Mr. Bart," who called himself a gun and silversmith, was living with the Indians and that he had deserted the Fort [Detroit] where he had formerly lived.³⁴ In a later session held in October, 1763, it was further reported that "Piero Bart" and other Frenchmen had been noticed lately aiding the Indian cause.³⁵ While the first reference could refer to Pierre's brother, Charles-André, the second would indicate the opposite. Also, the fact that Pierre's family disappears from all Detroit records after this date while Charles-André continued to live in Detroit until his death in 1786 would again indicate that these two reports do refer to him and not his brother. Many Frenchmen left Detroit rather than give up their allegiance to France after the English assumed control of the Fort in 1760 and it may be assumed that Pierre was one of these. It is not known where

³⁴Charles Moore (ed.), "The Gladwin Manuscripts," Collections and Researches Made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society (Lansing: Michigan Pioneer Historical Society, 1897), XXVII, 646.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 650-651.

he and his family went after 1763 and his death is not recorded. His main occupation was certainly that of armorer and gunsmith or trader and it is probable that he did not own a touchmark die.

Théophile Le May

Théophile Le May was born in Montreal in 1735 to Louis Le May and his second wife Marie-Thérèse Aubry.³⁶ His father was born in Pte-aux-Trembles in 1694 and his mother in Montreal November 30, 1712; they were married in Montreal November 15, 1734.³⁷ Le May was in Detroit by November 24, 1764 when he is first recorded in St. Anne's register.³⁸ On June 3, 1765 he married Marie des Anges Pelletier (Peltier) in Detroit³⁹ and after her death married Marie-Louise Courtois January 2, 1798 also in Detroit.⁴⁰

³⁶Denissen, op. cit., L3, 3977-78.

³⁷Tanguay, op. cit., V, 317; II, 67.

³⁸[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., II, 614.

³⁹Ibid., II, 627.

⁴⁰Ibid., III, 1463.

He was living on St. Jacques Street in Detroit as early as 1766.⁴¹ He died in this city and was buried from St. Anne September 12, 1801.⁴²

Le May was a close friend of François-Paul Malcher (q.v.) as is shown by the fact that this silversmith placed surety on the bond required of Le May's wife when she was made the administrator of his estate October 3, 1801.⁴³ He also knew Charles-André Barthe (q.v.) as they were both witness to the same marriage in Assumption November 22, 1773.⁴⁴

While there is no certain knowledge that Le May worked in silver, his closeness to the smiths Malcher and Barthe plus his stated position, Master Armorer to the King,⁴⁵ surely occasion his inclusion in this paper.

⁴¹Ibid., II, 658.

⁴²Ibid., IV, 1654.

⁴³Clarence Monroe Burton (Compiler), "Probate Court for Wayne County, Michigan. Digest of Files" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, n.d.), I, 8.

⁴⁴[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., II, 627.

⁴⁵Tanguay, op. cit., V, 321.

Jacob Harsen

Jacob Harsen, who is recorded as going to Detroit in the 1760's,⁴⁶ was born in Albany, New York in February, 1738 to Jacobus Harzen and Catharyna Pruyn where he married Alida Groesbeck June 4, 1764; their daughter Mary, who later married Gerrit Greverat (q.v.) was born in Albany May 13, 1765.⁴⁷ On April 24, 1766, William Johnson of Albany gave Harsen a letter of introduction when he went to the Niagara Falls area to work as a "smith."⁴⁸ It is not known how long he stayed in this area but he is recorded in Detroit as early as 1779.⁴⁹

Harsen is recorded as a silversmith by Norman Rice in his book on Albany silver⁵⁰ and is called both a silversmith and gunsmith repeatedly in a family geneological file

⁴⁶Norman S. Rice, Albany Silver 1652-1825 (Albany: Albany Institute of Art, 1964), p. 11.

⁴⁷Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies of the First Settlers of the Ancient County of Albany from 1630-1800 (Albany: J. Munsell, 1872), p. 60.

⁴⁸Statement by James O. Keene, personal interview, December 30, 1967.

⁴⁹Quaife (ed.), op. cit., I, 309.

⁵⁰Rice, loc. cit.

collected by W. L. Jenks.⁵¹ He is recorded in Detroit as late as 1800⁵² and lived for many years on Harsen's Island (which was named for him) where he died at an as yet unknown age.⁵³ None of his work is known today and it is possible that, like so many smiths who followed more than one trade, he did not own a touchmark die.

François-Amable Mailloux

François-Amable Mailloux was born in Quebec July 10, 1739 to Vital Mailloux and Catherine-Jean Denes.⁵⁴ His father was born in Quebec August 12, 1709 as was his mother in 1707; they were married June 12, 1730 in Montreal.⁵⁵ He was usually called Amable, omitting the first of his given names to distinguish him from his brother Louis

⁵¹Port Huron Public Library, W. L. Jenks file, passim.

⁵²Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, May MMS., D3: 1798-1804, February 4, 1800.

⁵³Quaife (ed.), loc. cit.

⁵⁴Tanguay, op. cit., V, 468-469.

⁵⁵Ibid., V, 468.

Amable Mailloux, born in 1731, who was generally called Louis and who was a navigator.⁵⁶ Amable married Magdelaine Rousseau, the sister of Dominique Rousseau (q.v.) in Quebec January 7, 1767⁵⁷ and after her death married Isabelle-Casse St. Aubin in Detroit October 12, 1781.⁵⁸ At this time he was called in The St. Anne's records a silversmith. He was buried at St. Anne's January 22, 1808.⁵⁹ He was apprenticed to Alexander Picard, a Quebec silversmith, December 29, 1756⁶⁰ and was in Detroit by May 11, 1780 when he was first recorded in St. Anne's records.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, MS. E & M, Silversmiths.

⁵⁷ Ibid., loc. cit.

⁵⁸ Tanguay, op. cit., V, 470.

⁵⁹ [Anon.]⁵, op. cit., V, 2284.

⁶⁰ Letter from Louis Carrier to George MacDonald, December 9, 1944. Carbon copy owned by Francis W. Robinson.

⁶¹ [Anon.]⁵, op. cit., III, 985-986.

Gerrit Greverat

On October 9, 1789, Jacob Harsen (q.v.) gave a plot of land on present day Harsen's Island to his granddaughter Mary whose parents were Gerrit Greverat and Sara Harsen.⁶² Greverat and Harsen are said to have come from Albany, New York⁶³ and these two families may be identified with the following genealogical information. Gerrit Greveraad was baptised April 21, 1745 in Albany, New York where his parents Isaac Greveraad and Alida Gerritsen were married November 11, 1727.⁶⁴ Sara Harssen was born in Albany May 13, 1765 to Jacob Harssen and Alida Groesbeck who were married there June 4, 1764.⁶⁵ In this deed Greverat was called a silversmith as he is in the family history in "The Totem Pole."

⁶²Burton Historical Society, The Detroit Public Library, Woodbridge MSS., October 9, 1789.

⁶³Newell E. Collins, "The Gravereat Family," The Totem Pole, 15, No. 4 (1945), 1-4.

⁶⁴Pearson, op. cit., p. 56.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 60.

Gerrit probably came to the Detroit area with Israel Ruland, Jacob Harsen and John Visger (q.v.), arriving as early as April 14, 1769 when he is recorded as having purchased land on St. Anne's Street.⁶⁶ On October 27, 1772, he took Israel Ruland (q.v.), who probably also accompanied him to Detroit, as a servant.⁶⁷ As Ruland later worked in silver, he was surely Gerrit's apprentice also.

Gerrit was for the better portion of his years in Detroit a trader and was in partnership with both Visger and Colin Andrews.⁶⁸ The records of these men found in early land records point out clearly the large size of their business.⁶⁹ He may have produced some silver while

⁶⁶Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration (compiler), "Early Land Transfers, Detroit and Wayne County, Michigan" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, 1936), ABC, 121.

⁶⁷Ibid., ABC, 104.

⁶⁸Clarence Monroe Burton (ed. in chief), The City of Detroit Michigan 1701-1922 (Detroit-Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1922), II, 957-958.

⁶⁹Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration (compiler), "Early Land Transfers . . .," op. cit., ABC and I, passim.

in Detroit but probably did not own a touchmark die. He is said to have died shortly after moving to Harsen's Island where the family went about 1790.⁷⁰

Joseph Schindler

Joseph Schindler first appears in Quebec in 1763 where he married Marie-Geneviève Maranda in 1764. In 1775 he went to Mackinac and in 1777, moved to Detroit.⁷¹ Almost immediately he was tried before the local justice on the charge of making poor quality silver.⁷² His defence was that he had never served apprenticeship to a qualified silversmith and that he therefore was unable to judge the quality of silver. He also stated that the silver concerned in the charge had been obtained by melting down old silver objects brought to him and that therefore he was not to blame for the quality of the metal. His apprentice Michel Fortin testified in his behalf in this defence. Although

⁷⁰Collins, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

⁷¹Langdon, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

⁷²[Anon.]², The Remembrancer; or Impartial Repository of Public Events For the Year 1778 (London: 1778), pp. 188-191.

he was acquitted by the jury, he was forced to leave the town immediately by the military commanders then in charge. After this forced departure he returned to Canada where he died in 1786.⁷³ Although a large amount of Indian silver made by Schindler is known today, it is doubtful that any objects could be identified with his short stay in Detroit. Because of this fact, none of his work need be illustrated here.

François-Paul Malcher

François-Paul Malcher was born in France, probably in or near Paris, about 1751.⁷⁴ he, along with Pierre-Jean Desnoyers (q.v.), purchased titles to land near Gallipolis, Ohio from the Paris agent of the Scioto Land Company and they arrived in this area in 1790 only to find their titles worthless and the land a virgin forest.⁷⁵ His movements

⁷³Langdon, op. cit., p. 126.

⁷⁴[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., V, 2304.

⁷⁵John L. Vance, "The French Settlement and Settlers of Gallipolis," Publications of the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society (Columbus: The Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society, 1895), III, 45-47.

for the next year or so are somewhat vague, but he was in Detroit by 1793 when he was recorded as a silversmith in the papers of John Askin.⁷⁶ In 1802, he purchased the St. Bernard farm located on the Detroit River opposite Belle Isle⁷⁷ where he lived until his death at the age of 59, October 16, 1810⁷⁸ at which time the property passed into the ownership of St. Anne's Church.⁷⁹

From the few remaining pieces of his work known today, Malcher seems to have been a very competent smith, although this opinion was not held by at least one of his contemporaries. On November 20, 1804 William Burnett of St. Joseph wrote James May of Detroit a letter in which is mentioned the fact that he had thought of putting his son in apprenticeship to Malcher but that he had later "learned that Mr. Marchere [sic] is certainly a very good man but not a good silversmith."⁸⁰

⁷⁶Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Askin MSS., L4: 1792-93, p. 131.

⁷⁷Burton (ed. in chief), op. cit., II, 1269.

⁷⁸[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., V, 2304.

⁷⁹Burton (ed. in chief), loc. cit.

⁸⁰Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Solomon Sibley MSS., Box 1811.

There is a great deal of question as to whether or not Malcher was married, a problem that is directly related to his movements between 1790 and 1793. On November 8, 1811, William Woodbridge of Marietta, Ohio wrote Solomon Sibley of Detroit referring to the claim of Malcher's "wife," Rosalie Lepad against his estate.⁸¹ In this letter it is claimed that "about 20 years ago" (i.e., circa 1791) Rosalie Lepad married François-Paul Malcher in New York State and that after living together "for a few years," Malcher left his wife. It is also stated that both the witnesses of the wedding and the certificate of the presiding Justice can be produced to back the claim. Unfortunately, no other document referring to this claim seems to exist today and its outcome is not known.

References to Malcher are to be found in many early Detroit account books; the most interesting of these is a reference in a book of James May concerning a pair of gold ear rings sold to May by Malcher.⁸² His work today is known

⁸¹Ibid., Box 1804.

⁸²Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, May MSS., D3: 1798-1804, June 9, 1801.

through three spoons marked: P. M. DETROIT in separate rectangles (Plate VI). They are excellently made and designed and speak well of Malcher as a silversmith.

John Visger

John Visger is named in the record of the trial of Joseph Schindler (q.v.) as a silversmith competent to judge the quality of a given silver object.⁸³ He is thought to have come from the Schenectady area⁸⁴ as did Jacob Harsen, Israel Ruland and Gerrit Greverat (q.v.) and may be probably equated with Johannes Vischer who was born in Schenectady to Harmen Visscher and Hester Van Iveren.⁸⁵ Both Harmen and his father, Johannes Visscher I, are listed by Pearson as using, at times, the spelling "Visger" which is a reasonable English pronunciation of the Dutch name, and it may be assumed that John Visger was named for his grandfather and Anglicized his name as was often done at that time. John

⁸³[Anon.]², op. cit., p. 188.

⁸⁴Quaife (ed.), op. cit., II, 219.

⁸⁵Pearson, op. cit., p. 144.

was baptised May 26, 1751 in Schenectady as was his father October 8, 1721. His parents were married February 3, 1750 in Schenectady.⁸⁶

While it is probable the Visger came to Detroit with Gerrit Greverat, who was in the area as early as 1769, his first mention in this area is during the Schindler trial. His main occupation was Indian trader and for many years he was associated in this business with Greverat and Colin Andrews.⁸⁷ A great many transactions made by these men are listed in the land records from 1780 to 1800 and from this it is obvious that their trade was very extensive.⁸⁸

In a letter dated September 10, 1799, John Askin writing to Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Cuyler states that Visger was in bad health and makes the fact that he was

⁸⁶ Ibid., loc. cit.

⁸⁷ Quaife (ed.), op. cit., I, 309.

⁸⁸ Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration (compiler), "Early Land Transfers . . .," op. cit., ABC and I, passim.

all but poverty stricken very clear.⁸⁹ It is not known when or where Visger died but it is possible that he did not live long after this date. It may be assumed that he did little work as a smith in Detroit and that he did not own a touchmark die.

Dominique Rousseau

Dominique Rousseau was baptised November 9, 1775 in Quebec; his parents, Louis-Alexander Rousseau and his second wife Marie-Joseph Chabot, were married in Quebec in 1750.⁹⁰ On January 30, 1776, he married in Montreal Charlotte Fouret dit Champagne whose brother Pierre was a silversmith in Montreal.⁹¹ In 1781, he leased a pew in Notre Dame Church in Montreal, listing his occupation as silversmith.⁹²

On January 7, 1767, Rousseau's sister, Magdelaine,

⁸⁹Quaife (ed.), op. cit., II, 247-248.

⁹⁰Tanguay, op. cit., VII, 58.

⁹¹Langdon, op. cit., p. 58.

⁹²Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, MS. E & M, Silversmiths.

married the silversmith François-Amable Mailloux.⁹³

As Rousseau was twelve years old at this time and almost ready to begin his apprenticeship, it may well be that his brother-in-law taught him his trade. He became an Indian trader, probably around 1781 when he sold his house in Montreal to Charles Duval in exchange for Indian trade silver, and probably did little work in silver after this.⁹⁴ His activities as a trader led him to most of the various small towns on the western frontier and he is recorded in Detroit in 1799 when he was paid 691 pounds 6 shillings by Meldrum and Parke, Detroit merchants, for value received.⁹⁵ Between 1798 and 1801, he engaged 23 men to work for him in Michelimackinac and the Illinois Territory and in 1801 engaged two men to go to Detroit.⁹⁶

⁹³Ibid., loc. cit.

⁹⁴Ibid., loc. cit.

⁹⁵Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration (Compiler), "Early Land Transfers. . .," op. cit., I, 93.

⁹⁶Antoine Roy (ed.), Rapport De'L Archiviste De La Province De Québec Pour 1943-1944 (Montreal: The Quebec Provincial Government, 1946), pp. 369.

While he was on the frontier, he married an Indian woman, Jeane Cook, by whom he had several children; two of them were baptised at Michelimackinac in 1821.⁹⁷ He returned to Montreal to stay in 1812 where he died, February 27, 1825.⁹⁸ It is doubtful that he produced any large amount of silver after becoming a trader although he is included herein as this possibility cannot be denied.

Israel Ruland

Israel Ruland was born on Long Island, New York,⁹⁹ May 2, 1758¹⁰⁰ and was in Detroit by October 27, 1772 when he bound himself to Gerrit Grøeverat (q.v.) until he should become twenty one in consideration of food, lodging

⁹⁷Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), "The Mackinac Register," Collection of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1910), XIX, 136-137.

⁹⁸Burton Historical Society, The Detroit Public Library, MS. E & M, Silversmiths.

⁹⁹Quaife (ed.), op. cit., I, 545.

¹⁰⁰Letter from James H. Halpin to Francis W. Robinson, The Detroit Institute of Arts, October 26, 1964.

and forty pounds New York currency.¹⁰¹ In 1779, the year his apprenticeship ended, he became a trader and an active patriot as is pointed out in the Haldimand papers where he and Colonel George Rogers Clark were accused of helping prisoners at Detroit escape the fort.¹⁰² At this time, Colonel David Strong stated, in a letter to Solomon Sibley of Detroit with reference to Ruland's attempt to secure a license to trade with Blue Jacket's Indian Tribe, that Ruland had been of great service to his country (America) and had paid much money out of his own pocket to secure the release of prisoners from the Indians.¹⁰³

Ruland was active in the Indian trade throughout his life and was, on several different occasions, in

¹⁰¹Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Project Administration (Compiler), "Early Land Transfers . . .," op. cit., ABC, 104.

¹⁰²[Anon.]¹, "The Haldemand Papers, Copies of Papers on File in the Dominion Archives at Ottawa, Canada," Collections and Researches made by the Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan (Lansing: Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan, 1887), X, 356.

¹⁰³Quaife (ed.), loc. cit.

partnership with John Askin. In 1795 he and Askin and others attempted to secure a large area of land from the Indians at the Grand Council held in Greenville, Ohio.¹⁰⁴ In the partnership papers signed by these men, Ruland is called a silversmith. His work in silver is well recorded in the business archives of early Detroit in the 1780's and 1790's; in fact, he is represented in these records far better than any of his contemporaries. The following entries are typical of the many that could be cited showing silver he sold to various merchants and traders:

363 old brooches at 40/
 2 armbands at 24/
 100 brooches at 46/
 6 armbands at 18/
 12 wrist bands at 5/
 267 small brooches at 36/¹⁰⁵

 100 pair of ear bobs at 1/
 1000 small brooches at /9½
 50 pair earbobs 1/4
 7 crosses¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Ibid., I, 545-48.

¹⁰⁵Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Thomas Smith MMS., D3: 1783-84, August 15 & 25 and September 3, 1783.

¹⁰⁶Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Askin MMS., J8: September 14, 1796-June 21, 1797, November 17, 1776.

500 small brooches at 18/
 53 pair ear bobs at 1/7
 50 pair ear bobs at 1/8
 miscellaneous silver work 16/6/10¹⁰⁷

On March 29, 1798, Ruland sold his house and land in Detroit to Antoine Oneille (q.v.); in the deed his silversmith tools were specifically excepted from the transaction.¹⁰⁸ As he disappears almost completely from Detroit business records at this time, it may be presumed that he moved to the Rasin River shortly after this date where he had a great many land dealings in the 1790's¹⁰⁹ and where he was a member of the first county court in 1805¹¹⁰ and Justice of the Peace in 1810.¹¹¹ Although

¹⁰⁷Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Hands MMS., L4: 1791-1811, January 25, 1792 and January 31, 1793.

¹⁰⁸Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Campau MSS., April 29, 1798.

¹⁰⁹Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration (Compiler), "Early Land Transfers . . .," op. cit., I, 112-120.

¹¹⁰Talcot E. Wing, "History of Monroe County," Report of the Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan (Lansing: Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan, 1883), IV, 319.

¹¹¹Clarence Monroe Burton (Compiler), "Proceeding of the Land Board of Detroit" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), p. 190.

his marriage date is not known, he and his wife Mary Ann Christle had a son baptised in St. Anne's December 2, 1798.¹¹² Ruland died prior to June 18, 1817 when his son Israel was in Detroit settling his estate.¹¹³

Julien Freton

In a ledger book of Alexander Macomb, a Mr. Ferton, silversmith, is listed for the years 1779 to 1783.¹¹⁴ This man may probably be equated with one Julien Freton who appears often in the records of early Detroit. He was born in the Grosse Pointe area July 12, 1760 to Julien Freton dit Nantais and Marie-Josette Gastignon.¹¹⁵ His father was a native of the diocese of Nantes in Brittany, France where he was born in 1727 and married Marie-Josette, a

¹¹²Denissen, op. cit., RII, 8608.

¹¹³Quaife (ed.), op. cit., I, 545.

¹¹⁴Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Macomb MMS., L4: 1778-1783.

¹¹⁵Denissen, op. cit., E, F, Ge, 4171.

native of Detroit, on February 12, 1759 at St. Anne's.¹¹⁶
 Julien Senior died July 4, 1767 and his wife later married
 Alexander Heler.¹¹⁷ Julien Junior married Thérèse Belloux
 in Detroit January 20, 1783¹¹⁸ and after her death, married
 Catherine Thebault, also in Detroit, May 20, 1811.¹¹⁹

The family lived in Grosse Pointe until around
 1818 when they had a child born in Mt. Clemens where they
 were still living in 1820, when their last child was born.¹²⁰
 The time and place of Julien's death are not recorded and no
 objects attributable to him are known today.

Mr. Mion

A Mr. Mion is recorded in a ledger book of Thomas
 Smith as a silversmith June 12, 1783.¹²¹ He has not been

¹¹⁶Ibid., E, F, Ge, 4170.

¹¹⁷Ibid., loc. cit.

¹¹⁸[Anon.]⁵; op. cit., III, 999.

¹¹⁹Denissen, op. cit., E, F, Ge, 4171.

¹²⁰Ibid., E, F, Ge, 4175.

¹²¹Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public
 Library, Thomas Smith MMS., L4: 1779-1800, June 13, 1783.

located elsewhere in Canada or in other Detroit records as of this date.

John Kirby

John Kirby is recorded in a family history as a silversmith and a trader.¹²² He is said in this history to have come to Detroit as a young man and to have married Alice Donaldson. He is listed in some business records of early Detroit as early as 1783 and as late as 1789.¹²³ In one of these listings, he is recorded as selling the following Indian silver items which he presumably made:

- 70 small brooches
- 100 small brooches
- 1 pair wrist bands
- 200 large brooches
- 3 gorgets
- 1 moon¹²⁴

¹²²Homer Lewis Love, "Genealogical Records of Elizabeth Love Heavenrich" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), p. 50.

¹²³Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Thomas Smith MMS., L4: 1779-1800, pp. 132-133.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 133.

As of this time, it is not known how long he stayed in this area and none of his work is known to have survived.

John Kinzie

John Kinzie was born in Quebec to John McKinzie and Anne Haliburton December 23, 1763; soon after this his father died and his mother married William Forsyth.¹²⁵ He was in Detroit by 1784 when, on April 5, he purchased a lot on St. Anne Street.¹²⁶ For the next few years he worked as a silversmith and is so recorded in the account books of William Macomb (September 1786 and July 1787¹²⁷), James May (1794 and 1795¹²⁸) and John Asking (April 18, 1794¹²⁹).

¹²⁵Clarence Monroe Burton, "The Families of Forsyth, Kinzie and Lytle" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), p. 28.

¹²⁶Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration (Compiler), "Early Land Transfers. . .," op. cit., ABC, 112.

¹²⁷Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Macomb MMS., L4: 1784-1786, N.P.

¹²⁸Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, May MMS., L4: 1786-1798, p. 77.

¹²⁹Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Asking MMS., L4: E, 1793-1795, April 18, 1794.

He also worked in silver in Fort Defiance, Ohio from 1789 to 1792¹³⁰ and probably also at Miamistown (near present day Fort Wayne, Indiana) in 1788 and 1789.¹³¹ His absence from Detroit seems to have been occasioned by his French heritage and his consequent dislike for the English; he was known as an ardent supporter of French rule, although his return to Detroit in 1793, after the United States had taken over the area, points out the fact that his political beliefs slowly changed to coincide with those of the new nation.¹³²

He was married to Eleanor Lytle, the widow of Daniel McKillip in Detroit in 1798¹³³ and on September 12 of that year, purchased a house and land on St. Louis Street.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Consul Willshire Butterfield, History of the Gertys (Cincinnati: R. Clark, N.D.), p. 273.

¹³¹ Milo M. Quaife, "Eleanor Little, Pioneer," Burton Historical Collection Leaflet, VIII, No. 3 (1930), 38.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 38 ff.

¹³³ Burton, loc. cit.

¹³⁴ Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration, "Early Land Transfers . . .," op. cit., I, 296.

It is questionable if he lived in the house for very long, however, as prior to 1798, he had established himself at St. Joseph, Michigan where he remained until 1804 when he went to Chicago¹³⁵ where, in the fall of that year, he was the Justice of the Peace.¹³⁶ He remained there until the area was captured by the English in 1812 when he was taken prisoner and returned to Detroit.¹³⁷ He remained in Detroit until 1816 when he returned to Chicago¹³⁸ where he died January 6, 1828.¹³⁹

As was the case with many silversmiths, Kinzie was also a trader and merchant which businesses took up the greater part of his life. After his marriage in 1798 and his removal to Mt. Joseph, he was known and referred to as a trader or merchant, and although one must presume he

¹³⁵ Butterfield, op. cit., p. 44.

¹³⁶ Frederick Clever Bald, Detroit First American Decade (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1948), p. 232.

¹³⁷ Juliette Augusta Kinzie, Wall-Bun, The Early Days of the North-West (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1901), p. 186.

¹³⁸ Quaife, op. cit., p. 44.

¹³⁹ Burton, op. cit., p. 22.

continued to work in silver on occasion, this craft certainly played a very small part in his life after this date.

Louis Robitaille

Louis Robitaille was born in Lorette in 1765 to Pierre Robitaille and Marie-Geneviève Parant.¹⁴⁰ His father was baptised June 3, 1734 in Lorette¹⁴¹ and his mother February 22, 1732 in St. Joachim;¹⁴² they were married November 7, 1757 in Quebec.¹⁴³ On April 21, 1789 he married Louise Munro in Quebec at which time he was called a silversmith.¹⁴⁴

Louis' sister Geneviève married Jean-Nicolas Amiot, a Quebec silversmith in 1777¹⁴⁵ and as he was twelve

¹⁴⁰Tanguay, op. cit., VII, 13.

¹⁴¹Ibid., VII, 11.

¹⁴²Ibid., VI, 235.

¹⁴³Ibid., VII, 13.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., loc. cit.

¹⁴⁵Langdon, op. cit., p. 120.

at this time, the age when it was usual he begin an apprenticeship, it is probable that Louis was taught his trade by his brother-in-law. The relationship of these two families continued as is shown by the fact that Paul Morin, who was apprenticed to Robitaille in 1790 for a period of six years, was re-apprenticed in 1792 to Laurent Amiot who was also a silversmith and the brother of Jean-Nicolas Amiot.¹⁴⁶

It may be taken from this that Louis left Quebec in 1792 or shortly thereafter and it is known that he was in Detroit as early as 1794.¹⁴⁷ He remained in Detroit until at least 1799 and is later recorded working in Sandwich as a silversmith for Angus Mackintosh, a leading Indian trader from 1819 until his death, 1822.¹⁴⁸ During the period from circa 1799 to 1819, his location is unknown but it is interesting to speculate that he may have been living in the Illinois Territory. A ladle and teapot marked

¹⁴⁶Ibid., loc. cit.

¹⁴⁷Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Campau MSS., June 6, 1794.

¹⁴⁸Langdon, loc. cit.

"L R ILLINOIS" are extant today and so far their maker is unknown.¹⁴⁹ Although family history records the ladle as having been made in 1776, its form and decoration are very classical in feeling which would tend to place its manufacture much closer to 1800. In fact, it is quite similar in style to the articles made by Antoine Oneille (q.v.) in Vincennes after 1803 and it could easily be contemporary with them. This writer would tend to overlook the family's history of this piece, both for the above stated reasons and because of the generally unreliable nature of so many family histories, and tentatively assign these two Illinois pieces to Robitaille.

Pierre Riopelle

Pierre Riopelle was born in Detroit April 5, 1772 to Ambrose Riopelle and Thérèse Campau.¹⁵⁰ His father was born in L'Ange Gardien March 3, 1738 and his mother in

¹⁴⁹ Ruth Hunter Roach, St. Louis Silversmiths (St. Louis: Privately Published, 1967), p. 103.

¹⁵⁰ [Anon.]⁵, op. cit., II, 790.

Detroit October 26, 1749;¹⁵¹ they were married in Detroit November 24, 1776.¹⁵² Pierre married Monique Delisle in Detroit January 26, 1808¹⁵³ and was buried from St. Anne's March 11, 1811.¹⁵⁴ In 1805 and 1806, he gave J. and F. Lasselle of Detroit 750 pair of earbobs worth 10 shillings each in payment for various merchandise he had purchased from them.¹⁵⁵ Although it is not specifically stated, these ear bobs were surely of silver due to their value and one may presume Riopelle made them.

I. B.

The marks I B and Detroit are found on a large Indian cross which is privately owned in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Unfortunately, permission has not been given

¹⁵¹Denissen, op. cit., RI, 8236.

¹⁵²[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., II, 663.

¹⁵³Ibid., IV, 1639.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., V, 2307.

¹⁵⁵Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Campbell MMS., 2L3: 1803-1808, pp. 612-613.

to reproduce this object but a drawing of it may be found in an article by George Flashard in The Minnesota Archaeologist, Vol. VI, Number IV for 1940. From the drawing, the cross appears to have been well designed. It dates stylistically from circa 1800 and there are two people known to have worked in silver in Detroit at this time who could have made it: Isaac Brunson and James Brown. Little is known of either of these men to date and until more is learned about them, this mark cannot be attributed to either of them with any surity.

Either of these men also could have used the mark found on the spoon illustrated in Plate VII. This spoon was made, according to family tradition, for Joseph Campau of Detroit and would also date circa 1800. Arbitrary assignment of these two marks could be made but this would be useless.

James Brown

There is only one mention of James Brown known to

date that connects him with Detroit.¹⁵⁶ In this listing he received four shillings for mending two gold rings. It is unfortunate that more of his history is not known as he may have been the owner of the IB touch mark which is discussed elsewhere herein.

Samuel Brown

Samuel Brown appears in the early business records of Detroit only in the year 1797 and to this date nothing else is known of him.¹⁵⁷ It is to be hoped that further research will shed more light on his activities.

Isaac Brunson

Isaac Brunson is known to have been a silversmith in Detroit from 1799¹⁵⁸ to 1801.¹⁵⁹ It is unfortunate that

¹⁵⁶Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, May MMS., D3: 1798-1804, March 18, 1799.

¹⁵⁷Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Askin MSS., J8: September 14, 1796-June 2, 1797, January 27 and February 1, 1797.

¹⁵⁸Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, May MMS., D3: 1798-1804, March 18, 1799.

¹⁵⁹Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Campau MMS., August 29, 1801.

more is not known about him as it is possible that he was the use of the IB touch marks which are discussed elsewhere herein. It is to be hoped that further research may clarify this problem.

Pierre Dethuy

Pierre Dethuy is listed as a silversmith in one of the ledger books of William Hands, an early Detroit merchant; although the entry is not dated, the book covers the years 1791 to 1811.¹⁶⁰ The transaction included Dethuy's selling 1,000 brooches, 15 pair of earbobs and 35 pair of larger earbobs. Aside from this entry Dethuy remains unknown.

Antoine Oneille

Antoine Oneille (Oneil, O'Neil, Oneal, Onel) first appears in Detroit February 13, 1797 when he married

¹⁶⁰ Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Hands MMS., L4: 1791-1811, p. 21.

Catherine Cicot; in the church records, his parents are listed as Joseph Oneal (sic) and Josephine-Jean Doime of Quebec.¹⁶¹ Unfortunately neither he nor his parents are to be found in any early Canadian geneological records and nothing is known about Antoine previous to his arrival in Detroit. He is recorded as a silversmith in a ledger of John Askin's March 20, 1797 when he was given 24 silver dollars by Askin with which to make Indian silver ornaments.¹⁶² He was also called a silversmith when he purchased a house and lot from Israel Ruland (q.v.) March 29, 1798; it was also stated in the deed that he was living at that time in the Southwest region of St. Anne's Parish.¹⁶³ His stay in Detroit was very short and he is known to have been working in Vincennes, Indiana in 1803.¹⁶⁴ He may have gone

¹⁶¹[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., III, 1437.

¹⁶²Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Askin MMS., J8: September 14, 1796-June 2, 1797, March 20, 1797.

¹⁶³Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Campau MMS., March 29, 1798.

¹⁶⁴Langdon, op. cit., p. 110.

there as early as 1800 as on August 26 of that year, when his second son was baptised, he was listed as being absent.¹⁶⁵ On May 15, 1820, when Barnabe Campau was appointed guardian of his children after the death of his wife, Oneille was said to be residing in St. Geneviève, Missouri Territory.¹⁶⁶ He was still in this area in 1827 as on May 15 of that year his residence was given in a deed as the Missouri Territory.¹⁶⁷ Although the date and place of his death are not known, it is probable that he died somewhere on the Western frontier.

Oneille was surely one of the better smiths of this period in Detroit. The Indian cross (Plate V) is very well made and the coffee service (Plate IV) (made during his stay in Vincennes) speaks for itself. Its

¹⁶⁵[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., III, 1551.

¹⁶⁶ Clarence Monroe Burton (compiler), "Probate Court For Wayne County, Michigan. Digest of Files" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), I, 66.

¹⁶⁷Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Progress Administration, "Early Land Transfers. . .," op. cit., IV, 56.

classical style is well handled and the workmanship it displays is of the first quality. It is unfortunate that no hollow ware of his, made during his stay in Detroit, is known today.

Augustin Lagrave

Augustin Lagrave was born in Montreal September 18, 1777 to Antoine Lagrave and Thérèse Relince dit Sansregret.¹⁶⁸ He was apprenticed to Pierre Huguet dit Latour in Montreal from 1791 to 1797¹⁶⁹ and left for Detroit in the fall of 1800 in the employment of Jaques and François Lasselle.¹⁷⁰ On September 20, 1803, he married Cecile Descompts dit Labadie, the sister of the wife of Jean-Baptiste Piquette (q.v.) who was a witness to the ceremony.¹⁷¹ These two

¹⁶⁸Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, MS., E & M, Silversmiths.

¹⁶⁹Langdon, op. cit., p. 92.

¹⁷⁰Roy (ed.), op. cit., p. 414.

¹⁷¹[Anon.]⁴, "Registre de la Paroisse de L'Assumption August 31, 1752-December 31, 1824" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), II, 852.

silversmiths were seemingly close friends as when Piquette was married, Lagrave was one of his witnesses.¹⁷² He also witnessed the marriage of Joseph-André dit Clark (q.v.) in 1804¹⁷³ and his wife was godmother to one of Piquette's children in 1811.¹⁷⁴ Lagrave was buried from Assumption Church August 17, 1825.¹⁷⁵

Mr. Francis Robinson purchased the spoon illustrated in Plate VII from a direct descendent of Lagrave, providing excellent documentation for the mark. The spoon is well made and speaks highly of Lagrave's ability as a smith.

James Sibley

James Sibley was born in 1779 in Thompsonville, Connecticut and was apprenticed to Stephen Sibley of

¹⁷²Ibid., II, 1026.

¹⁷³Ibid., II, 885.

¹⁷⁴[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., VI, 2616.

¹⁷⁵Denissen, op. cit., LI, 3133.

Great Barrington, Massachusetts.¹⁷⁶ He was working in Albany, New York about 1800 and from 1803 to 1826 in Canandaigua, New York.¹⁷⁷ His location for the next decade is unknown but he was advertising in Ann Arbor, Michigan as early as 1835.¹⁷⁸ He opened a store in Detroit in 1836¹⁷⁹ and had returned to Ann Arbor by 1843.¹⁸⁰ He returned to New York State sometime after this and was listed in the Rochester directories from 1847 until 1850.¹⁸¹ He retired in that year and returned to Canandaigua where he died July 31, 1865.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Joan L. Shield, "Silversmiths of Rochester," Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences Bulletin, Number 8 (1944), 30.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., loc. cit.

¹⁷⁹ The Detroit Daily Advertiser, September 3, 1836, p. 3.

¹⁸⁰ Shield, loc. cit.

¹⁸¹ [Anon.]⁷, New York State Silversmiths (Eggerts-ville: The Darling Foundation of New York State Early American Silversmiths and Silver, 1964), p. 161.

¹⁸² Shield, op. cit., p. 30.

The mark shown in Plate XI is given in various books as either James Sibley¹⁸³ or Clark Sibley who worked in New Haven, Connecticut until his death in 1807.¹⁸⁴ The latter attribution was based on the research of George Barton Cutten who is generally conceded to be one of the leading authorities in the field.¹⁸⁵ The Darling Foundation has refused to comment on the reason for their attribution.¹⁸⁶ On the basis of the general scholarship of these two references, this writer feels more weight should be given to the Clark Sibley attribution but is including the mark herein in the hope that future research may clarify the problem.

¹⁸³ [Anon.]⁷, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁴ Henry N. Flynt and Martha Gandy Fales, The Heritage Collection of Silver (Old Deerfield: The Heritage Foundation, 1968), p. 322.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Henry N. Flynt, President Heritage Foundation, April 30, 1968.

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Charles Darling, President The Darling Foundation of New York State Early American Silversmiths and Silver, April 15, 1968.

Joseph Vessiere dit Laferte

Joseph Vessiere dit Laferte was born in Detroit in December, 1780, to Louis Vessiere dit Laferte and his second wife Catherine Esprit dit Champagne. His father was born in Lower Canada in 1736 and his mother in Detroit in 1749; they were married September 23, 1771 in Detroit.¹⁸⁷ Joseph married Louise Goyeau in Assumption February 16, 1808¹⁸⁸ and was buried from St. Anne's November 25, 1826.¹⁸⁹ An unmarked spoon in the Detroit Institute of Arts, attributed to him by his descendents, is the only trace of Joseph's work known today, and it is likely that, as he did not mark this piece, he had no touchmark die. A person named Laferet is recorded in an account book of J. and F. Lasselle as being a silversmith between 1803 and 1808 and although his first name is not given he may be equated with the person under discussion here.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷Denissen, op. cit., LI, 5314.

¹⁸⁸[Anon.]⁴, op. cit., II, 979.

¹⁸⁹[Anon.]²⁵, op. cit., V, 2487.

¹⁹⁰Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, Campbell MMS., ZL3: 1803-1808, p. 203.

Joseph Ruland

On October 11, 1804, Joseph Ruland and Margaret (Hanna) Aitken were married in Assumption Church at which time they were called residents of the parish and Ruland was referred to as a silversmith.¹⁹¹ He first appears in the area in 1800 when, on September 2, of that year, he signed a petition as an English resident of Detroit.¹⁹² The family's last appearance in early records is December 17, 1815 when they had a child named Israel baptised as Assumption Church; the boy's godfather was the silversmith Israel Ruland (q.v.).¹⁹³ Nothing else is known of the family and Joseph's work remains unknown today.

Jean-Baptiste Piquette

Jean-Baptiste Piquette was born in Montreal in

¹⁹¹[Anon.]³, "Register of Marriages, Christening and Burials of the Church of England at Sandwich, Upper Canada 1802-1827" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), I, 15.

¹⁹²Clarence E. Carter (ed.), The Territorial Papers of the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934), p. 107.

¹⁹³[Anon.]³, op. cit., II, 29.

1781 to Charles-Amable Piquette and Marie-Joseph Le Duc.¹⁹⁴
 His father was baptised January 3, 1738 in Montreal and
 married November 21, 1774 in that city.¹⁹⁵ Jean was in
 Detroit by 1803 at which time he was in partnership with
 Pierre-Jean Desnoyers (q.v.) in the silver trade.¹⁹⁶
 This association lasted until the great fire of June 11,
 1805 after which he remained in business by himself until
 his death April 24, 1813¹⁹⁷ at which time he was living
 on Jefferson Avenue.¹⁹⁸ He took Jean-Louise Monet dit
 Boismenu (q.v.) as an apprentice in 1806.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴Denissen, op. cit., LI, 3134.

¹⁹⁵Tanguay, op. cit., V, 260.

¹⁹⁶Friend Palmer, Early Days in Detroit (Detroit:
 Hunt and June, [c. 1906]), p. 469.

¹⁹⁷[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., V, 2323.

¹⁹⁸Clarence Monroe Burton (compiler), "Proceedings
 of the Land Board of Detroit" (Unpublished Manuscript,
 Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library,
 1915), p. 191.

¹⁹⁹Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public
 Library, Piquette Jr. MMS., March 27, 1806.

On January 31, 1809, he married Elenore Descompts dit Labadie whose sister had previously married Augustin Lagrave (q.v.).²⁰⁰ His two sons, John Baptiste Jr. and Charles continued in the silver business although they were too young when their father died to have been trained by him; they are mentioned separately elsewhere in this paper.

Piquette's *écuelle* (Plate VI) is one of the few extant pieces of Detroit tableware. It shows a high degree of craftsmanship and is a tribute to his skill as a smith. The piece is unusual as while it is purely French in form, the handles are typically New England. Seemingly, Piquette used a New England porringer handle to make the mold for the handles of this piece.

Dominique Riopelle

Dominique Riopelle was born in Detroit September 20, 1787 to Ambrose Riopelle and Therese Campeau.²⁰¹ His

²⁰⁰[Anon.]⁴, op. cit., II, 1026.

²⁰¹[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., III, 1110.

father was born in L'Ange Gardien March 3, 1738 and his mother in Detroit October 26, 1749;²⁰² they were married November 24, 1766 in Detroit.²⁰³ Dominique married Colette Gouin in Detroit January 26, 1818²⁰⁴ and died in Detroit, May 17, 1859.²⁰⁵ Family tradition records him as being a silversmith²⁰⁶ and his brother, Pierre (q.v.), is also known to have worked in silver.

There are several gorgets (Plate V) known today by Riopelle and they are typical in workmanship to most pieces of this type. One spoon is also known which is very well made. His mark, D R, conjoined script in an oval is on all of these pieces; the spoon (Plate VIII) also bears the mark: REOPELLE, Roman capitals in a

²⁰² Denissen, op. cit., RI, 8236.

²⁰³ [Anon.]⁵, op. cit., II, 663.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., IV, 1768.

²⁰⁵ The Detroit Free Press, May 19, 1859, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ Homer Lewis Love, "Geneological Records of Elizabeth Love Heavenrich" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), passim.

rectangle. This spelling does not follow that used in the various written records of Detroit and must therefore be considered incorrect.

Jean-Louie Monet dit Boismenu

Jean-Louie Monet dit Boismenu was born in Detroit January 28, 1790 to Michel Monet dit Boismenu and Marie-Anne Griffard.²⁰⁷ His father was born in Sainté Rose, September 27, 1756²⁰⁸ and married January 21, 1788 in Detroit.²⁰⁹

Jean-Louie was apprenticed to Jean-Baptiste Piquette in Detroit March 27, 1806 for a period of six years which agreement was revoked August 1, 1809.²¹⁰ He married Marguerite Sancrainte, the widow of Antoine Riopel July 27, 1813²¹¹ and by September 25, 1819, was

²⁰⁷[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., III, 1186.

²⁰⁸Denissen, op. cit., MII, 6882.

²⁰⁹[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., III, 1120.

²¹⁰Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Piquette Jr. MSS., March 27, 1806.

²¹¹[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., IV, 1699.

living near the Rasin River.²¹² As of the present, nothing is known of Monet after this date and no work attributable to him is extant.

Levi Brown

The earliest mention of Brown in Detroit is an advertisement he placed July 23, 1819 for the sale of a wagon which could be seen at Chauncy S. Payne's (q.v.).²¹³ It may be presumed he was working with Payne at this time as a clock and watch repairer, which position he advertised in November, 1823.²¹⁴ In early 1826, Brown and Payne split and Brown went into the clock and watch business by himself.²¹⁵ He went to New York City²¹⁶ to live sometime after 1840 when he was President of the Detroit Mechanics Society²¹⁷ and before the issuance of the 1845 Detroit City

²¹²Ibid., VI, 2757.

²¹³The Detroit Gazette, July 23, 1819, p. 3.

²¹⁴Ibid., November 28, 1823, p. 3.

²¹⁵Ibid., July 25, 1826, p. 3.

²¹⁶Palmer, op. cit., p. 407.

²¹⁷Silas Farmer, The History of Detroit and Michigan (Detroit: Silas Farmer and Co., 1884), II, 713.

directory which does not contain a listing for him.²¹⁸ He is credited with the invention of the gold pointed pen for which he charged five dollars.²¹⁹ This claim cannot be substantiated, though, and it may be merely that he introduced this new product to the Detroit area. Although none of Brown's marked work is known today, his closeness to Chauncy S. Payne, who was a silversmith, would lead one to believe that Brown did deal in at least silver tableware although he seems to have been mainly concerned with clocks and watches and probably was not a working silversmith.

Chauncy S. Payne

Chauncy S. Payne was born November 16, 1795 in Schodack, Rensselaer County, New York.²²⁰ He first worked in Albany, New York from 1812 to 1815 with his brother Hiram who was a clock and watch maker,²²¹ and was in

²¹⁸James H. Wellings, Directory of Detroit, 1845 (Detroit: 1845).

²¹⁹Palmer, op. cit., p. 428.

²²⁰Franklin Ellis, History of Genessee County, Michigan (Philadelphia: Everts and Co., 1879), p. 141.

²²¹Ellis, loc. cit.

Detroit by November 28, 1817 when he advertised the location of his shop in the store formerly occupied by C. Ten Eyck and Company.²²² There are several mentions in early newspapers of his going to New York to purchase clocks and watches in 1819 and 1820²²³ and in 1802 he is known to have sold Indian silver to the United States Government for distribution in Sault St. Marie, Mackinac and L'Arbre Croche, Michigan.²²⁴ On May 25, 1821, he advertised as a jeweler and dealer in Indian silver works.²²⁵ At this time, his shop was referred to as Chauncy S. Payne and Company, Levi Brown (q.v.) having been taken into the business as a clock and watch repairer. The shop also included a tin-smith, James Lockwood.²²⁶

²²² The Detroit Gazette, November 28, 1817, p. 3.

²²³ Ibid., 1819, 1820, passim.

²²⁴ George I. Quimby, Indian Culture and European Trade Goods (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 100.

²²⁵ The Detroit Gazette, May 25, 1821, p. 3.

²²⁶ Ibid., June 20, 1823, p. 3.

The partnership of Payne and Brown was dissolved early in 1826 at which time Brown stated he would continue with a fresh supply of jewelery, clocks and watches.²²⁷ Soon after this, Payne and his wife Louisa Lavinia Smith, whom he had married in 1824,²²⁸ moved to Painesville, Ohio where they were living as early as June 22, 1824.²²⁹ They later returned to Detroit and then went to Flint in 1837 at which time James Sibley (q.v.) took over Payne's business.²³⁰ The family remained in Flint where Payne became one of the leading citizens in the area and where he died January 31, 1877.²³¹ Francis Robinson of the Detroit Institute of Arts has recorded one gorget marked: C. S. P., capitals in a rectangle that may easily be assigned to Payne.

²²⁷Ibid., July 25, 1825, p. 3.

²²⁸Ibid., May 21, 1824, p. 2.

²²⁹Vital Records Project of the Michigan Works Project Administration, "Early Land Transfers . . .," op. cit., III, p. 190.

²³⁰Ellis, loc. cit.

²³¹The Detroit Free Press, February 1, 1877.

Victor Rouquette

Victor Rouquette was active in Detroit from 1818 to 1824. His earliest mention is in the Detroit Gazette for October 16, 1818 at which time he advertised he had established his silversmith shop at the house of Mr. La Douceur.²³² In that year, he engraved the commemorative copper plate placed in the cornerstone of the new St. Anne's church building.²³³ On April 27, 1819, he witnessed the marriage of Jean-Baptiste Vernier and Monique Lauson²³⁴ whose spoons, made by Roquette, are now in the Detroit Institute of Arts. In 1821, he made a silver tankard that was presented to General Alexander Macomb by the citizens of Detroit.²³⁵ The present location of this tankard is unfortunately not known. His last mention in Detroit is July 24, 1824 when he witnessed the marriage of Jean-Baptiste Bequette (q.v.) and Thérèse Durette.²³⁶

²³²The Detroit Gazette, October 16, 1818, p. 3.

²³³[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., V, 2599.

²³⁴Ibid., IV, 1783.

²³⁵Farmer, op. cit., p. 225.

²³⁶[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., IV, 1854.

At sometime previous to his arrival in Detroit, Rouquette married Philiberthe Berthelon;²³⁷ they presumably were French Canadian although nothing is known of the family aside from their short stay in Detroit. Jean-Baptiste Bequette (q.v.) left Detroit soon after his marriage and was in Fort Wayne, Indiana by 1826. Due to Rouquette's seeming closeness to the Bequette's, he may also have gone to Fort Wayne.

Rouquette's chalice (Plate VI) is by far the best piece of Detroit silver known today; it is actually silver-gilt and is extremely well made. It is perhaps not as ambitious in design as similar Canadian objects of this period but the design itself is well carried out. His gorget (Plate V) is also well made but does carry the faults generally found on objects of this type.

Jean-Baptiste Bequette

Jean-Baptiste Bequette was born at an unknown date in the Diocese of Quebec to Michel Bequette and Geneviève-

²³⁷ Ibid., VI, 2789.

Borgia Levasseur.²³⁸ He married Thérèse Durette in Detroit on July 2, 1824 at which time the church records state he had been in Detroit for seven years.²³⁹ It is interesting to note that Victor Rouquette (q.v.) who was an accomplished silversmith, was a witness to this marriage. Bequette's last mention in Detroit records was May 20, 1827 when his second child was baptised at St. Anne's.²⁴⁰ It is probable that he was not in Detroit at this time however as he was working as a silversmith for William G. and George W. Ewing in Fort Wayne and Logansport, Indiana as early as 1826 and at least until 1843.²⁴¹ After this date his location is not known and his death is not recorded.

Joseph André dit Clark

Joseph André dit Clark was born in Vincennes, Indiana in 1779 to Joseph André dit L'Italien and Marie-

²³⁸ Ibid., IV, 1854.

²³⁹ Ibid., loc. cit.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., VI, 3038.

²⁴¹ Statement by Francis W. Robinson, Curator of Medieval Art, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan, Personal Interviews, January, 1967.

Josephthe Dumais.²⁴² His father was born in Pavia, Italy²⁴³ and married at St. Anne's Church in Detroit June 30, 1774.²⁴⁴ The family left Detroit for Vincennes sometime after 1776 when their second child was baptised at St. Anne's,²⁴⁵ and had returned to Detroit by 1782 when Joseph Senior and his family of wife and four children were listed in a census of the area.²⁴⁶

Joseph Junior returned to Vincennes sometime after this where on November 9, 1795, he was apprenticed to Colonel John Small to learn the trade of gunsmith and ". . . as much of the Silversmyth [sic] Business as is

²⁴²M. C. Coquillard, Alexis Coquillard--His Time (South Bend: Northern Indiana Historical Society, 1931), p. 21.

²⁴³Tanguay, op. cit., II, 37.

²⁴⁴[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., A, 127.

²⁴⁵Denissen, op. cit., A, 127.

²⁴⁶[Anon.]¹, "The Haldemand Papers, Copies on File in the Dominion Archives at Ottawa, Canada," Collections and Researches made by the Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan (Lansing: Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan, 1887), X, 611.

convenient."²⁴⁷ This agreement was terminated May 3, 1802²⁴⁸ and he returned almost immediately to Detroit where on October 16, 1804, he married Susanne Drouillard in Assumption Church, Sandwich.²⁴⁹ One of the witnesses at this ceremony was Augustin Lagrave (q.v.) who is known to have been a silversmith. His wife died in Detroit, January 31, 1813²⁵⁰ and on July 29, 1813, he married Clemence Fearson.²⁵¹ He died at his home on the corner of Riopelle and Larned June 10, 1849.²⁵²

Unfortunately little is known of Joseph Junior's life. A family history states that his nickname was taken

²⁴⁷Coquillard, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁴⁸Ibid., loc. cit.

²⁴⁹[Anon.]⁴, op. cit., II, 885.

²⁵⁰Denissen, loc. cit.

²⁵¹[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., IV, 1700.

²⁵²Detroit Free Press, June 12, 1849, p. 2.

from George Rogers Clark who was in the Vincennes area at the time of his birth and that while he made a set of silver spoons for the wedding of his daughter Sophia, his main trade was that of gunsmith.²⁵³ As this belief agrees easily with the very precise wording of his apprentice papers, it seems probable that he did little work in silver and probably never owned his own touchmark die.

John Baptiste Piquette Junior

John Baptiste Piquette Junior was born in Detroit September 30, 1809 to Jean-Baptiste Piquette (q.v.) and Eleanore Descompts dit Labadie; his godfather was Pierre Jean Desnoyers (q.v.), a one time partner of his father.²⁵⁴ His given name was actually Jean-Baptiste Junior but he Anglicized it to John very early in his life and continually used it until his death.

²⁵³Coquillard, loc. cit.

²⁵⁴[Anon.]⁵, op. cit., V, 2210.

He was probably trained in the shop of Levi Brown as was his brother Charles (q.v.), although his history is not known until 1835 when he and his brother were partners in the watch and jewelry business.²⁵⁵ When this association was dissolved in late 1836, he went into business for himself at 97 Jefferson. He went into bankruptcy in late 1841²⁵⁶ at which time his shop was taken over by M. H. Gridley, a clock and watch repairer.²⁵⁷ Nothing more is known of John until his death August 24, 1851,²⁵⁸ although from the city directories, it is evident he was not in the jewelry business after 1841.

²⁵⁵ Clarence Monroe Burton (compiler), "Digest of the Detroit Free Press, 1835-1837" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), p. 228.

²⁵⁶ Clarence Monroe Burton (compiler), "Digest of the Detroit Daily Advertiser" (Unpublished Manuscript, Burton Historical Collection, The Detroit Public Library, N.D.), p. 241.

²⁵⁷ The Detroit Daily Advertiser, December 20, 1841, p. 2.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., August 20, 1841, p. 2.

Charles Piquette

Charles Piquette was born in Detroit February 4, 1813 to Jean-Baptiste Piquette and Elenore Descompts dit Labadie.²⁵⁹ He was employed and presumably trained by Levi Brown (q.v.) sometime after Brown went into business for himself in 1826.²⁶⁰ He was in the watch and clock, and jewelry business with Charles S. Adams for a short time after leaving Brown and after dissolving this partnership July 15, 1835,²⁶¹ worked with his brother John (q.v.) until late 1836.²⁶² On November 25, 1836, he advertised his newly opened silver spoon factory;²⁶³ he continued this work along with the watch and clock, and jewelry business until his death August 9, 1859.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ [Anon.]⁵, op. cit., VI, 2654.

²⁶⁰ Palmer, op. cit., p. 629.

²⁶¹ Burton (compiler), "Digest of the Detroit Free Press, 1835-1837," op. cit., p. 4.

²⁶² Ibid., p. 228.

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 278.

²⁶⁴ The Detroit Free Press, August 10, 1859, p. 1.

Charles married Rachel Jane David of Quebec June 8, 1848.²⁶⁵ The shop he ran in conjunction with his brother was located on Jefferson between Griswold and Woodward, a location he kept throughout his business career. His spoons illustrated in Plate IX are well made; the teaspoon is unusual as it bears the touchmark of a second maker illustrating the point that much late Detroit silver was actually not made in the city.

George Doty

George Doty was born in Canandaegua, New York in 1818 to Ellis Doty and Ruth Pierce. His father was born in Wardsbury, Vermont July 7, 1783 and his mother in Sandersfield, Massachusetts; they were married October 28, 1805.²⁶⁶ The family was in Mount Clemens as early as 1822 and came to

²⁶⁵ The Michigan Christian Herald, June 16, 1848, p. 1.

²⁶⁶ Moses F. Dickinson, "Detroit in 1837," Collections and Researches made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society (Lansing: Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, 1900), XXVIII, 592-594.

Detroit in 1826.²⁶⁷ A short time after this Doty went to Buffalo where he apprenticed in the jeweler's trade²⁶⁸ and in 1835 he was listed as a watchmaker in Albany, New York.²⁶⁹

In 1836, he returned to Detroit and went into partnership on Jefferson Avenue with Edmund Kearsley in the jewelry business.²⁷⁰ This partnership was short lived indeed as it is not listed in the 1837 Detroit Directory and as Doty was in the local militia in 1837.²⁷¹ In 1838, he went into business for himself in Detroit until 1863 when business reverses forced him to lose his store.²⁷² After a short period of time spent in New York City, he returned to Detroit and was in partnership with Daniel W. King, his wife Rachel King's father, from

²⁶⁷John E. Day, "Sketches and Incidents Concerning The Settlement of Macomb County," Report of the Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan (Lansing: Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan, 1883), IV, 312.

²⁶⁸Dickinson, op. cit., p. 593.

²⁶⁹[Anon.]⁷, op. cit., p. 67.

²⁷⁰Dickinson, op. cit., p. 592.

²⁷¹Day, loc. cit.

²⁷²Dickinson, op. cit., p. 593.

1866 to 1867.²⁷³ After this, he was in business by himself until 1874 when he retired to Breckenridge, Colorado where he stayed until shortly before his death in Detroit August 31, 1905 at 43 Hancock.²⁷⁴

Doty himself was not a silversmith but would have employed some smiths in his shop which would account for the mark: George Doty Maker. His pieces (Plate IX) are typical for their period but in no way could they be called outstanding.

Thomas Burr Leavenworth

Thomas Burr Leavenworth was born December 14, 1821 in Bethany, Connecticut to Calvin Leavenworth and Sophia Wooster. His father was born March 9, 1793 in Derby, Connecticut and was married in Oxford, Connecticut in 1812. Leavenworth was apprenticed as a silver spoon maker in Woodbury, Connecticut and in 1842 was working in Newbern, North Carolina. In 1843, he went to Buffalo where he

²⁷³Ibid., loc. cit.

²⁷⁴The Detroit Journal, September 1, 1905, p. 3.

married Ellen Doyle October 26, 1845 and in 1851, he came to Detroit.²⁷⁵ He is listed in the various Detroit directories as a silversmith from 1852-1853²⁷⁶ until 1878.²⁷⁷

His work (Plates VI and IX) is outstanding, both with regard to design and workmanship and he may easily be called the Dean of the late Detroit period. The ladle is especially interesting as it is inscribed: "Presented to F. W. Noble by E. B. Ward, February 12, 1872" and "Native silver from Silver Islet, Lake Superior." The use of metal native to Michigan makes this object of even more importance than its excellent design and workmanship would normally accord it.

Anton Valentine

Anton Valentine is listed in the various city

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Ellis W. Leavenworth, Genealogy of the Leavenworth Family in the United States (Syracuse: 1873), p. 285.

²⁷⁶

Shove (compiler), Shoves Business Advertiser and Detroit Directory for 1852-53 (Detroit: 1852), p. 165.

²⁷⁷

J. W. Weeks and Co. (compiler), Detroit City Directory for 1878 (Detroit: J. W. Weeks and Co., 1878), passim.

directories from 1845²⁷⁸ to 1861²⁷⁹ as both a goldsmith and a watchmaker and jeweler. None of his work is known today, although from his listing as a goldsmith, one would presume he did mark his works. For a short period of time during 1852 and 1853,²⁸⁰ he was in partnership with Frederick Cruwell (q.v.) who worked for Charles Piquette in 1853 or 1854 as a jeweler.²⁸¹ One may presume he marked his works although no objects by him are known today.

John M. Allison

John M. Allison is listed in the various city

²⁷⁸ James H. Wellings (compiler), Directory of Detroit, 1845 (Detroit: 1845), p. 81.

²⁷⁹ James Dale Johnston (compiler), Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetter of Michigan for 1861 (Detroit: 1861), p. 295.

²⁸⁰ Shove (compiler), op. cit., p. 221.

²⁸¹ James Dale Johnston (compiler), Detroit City Directory and Business Advertiser, 1853-54 (Detroit: 1853), p. 74.

directories from 1846²⁸² to 1869-1870²⁸³ as a silver-smith, jeweler and watchmaker. From 1852²⁸⁴ until 1856,²⁸⁵ he was in partnership with James M. Guile and later worked on his own. Francis W. Robinson has recorded the mark: JOHN D. ALLISON, capitals in a rectangle for this maker.²⁸⁶

Frederick Cruwell

Frederick Cruwell is listed as a goldsmith in

²⁸² James H. Wellings (compiler), Directory of the City of Detroit and Register of Michigan for the Year 1846 (Detroit: 1846), p. 73.

²⁸³ James Dale Johnston (compiler), Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetter of Michigan for 1869-1870 (Detroit: 1869), p. 94.

²⁸⁴ Shove (compiler), op. cit., p. 84.

²⁸⁵ James Dale Johnston (compiler), The Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetter of Michigan for 1855-1856 (Detroit: 1855), p. 21.

²⁸⁶ Statement by Francis W. Robinson, Curator of Medieval Art, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan, Personal Interview, January, 1967.

the city directories for 1846²⁸⁷ and 1850-1851.²⁸⁸

In the 1852-1853 directory, he is listed as the partner of Anton Valentine (q.v.) in the jewelry business.²⁸⁹

The 1853-1854 directory lists him as working for Charles Piquette.²⁹⁰ Although none of his work is known today, he presumably did mark his products.

H. B. Marsh

H. B. Marsh is listed as a jeweler and watch-maker in the 1850-1851²⁹¹ city directory and was presumably out of business in 1852 as he is not listed in

²⁸⁷James H. Wellings (compiler), 1846, op. cit., p. 89.

²⁸⁸The Daily Advertiser (compiler), The Daily Advertiser Directory for the City of Detroit for the Year 1850-51 (Detroit: 1850), p. 121.

²⁸⁹Shove (compiler), loc. cit.

²⁹⁰James Dale Johnston (compiler), 1853-1854, loc. cit.

²⁹¹The Daily Advertiser (compiler), op. cit., p. 191.

the directory for that year.²⁹² He could have been working as early as 1847 as no directories were printed between 1846 and 1850 although his exact starting year is not as yet known. The spoons bearing his mark (Plate IX) are well made and seemingly would have found a ready market. It is quite possible that his death rather than business setbacks caused his name to disappear from the Detroit scene.

Lewis P. Durkee

Lewis P. Durkee is listed in the various city directories as a jeweler and watchmaker from 1852-1853²⁹³ until 1861.²⁹⁴ At this time, his business was purchased by his employee Martin S. Smith (q.v.) for whom he worked until 1864.²⁹⁵ He came to Detroit from Oakland County and

²⁹²Shove (compiler), op. cit., passim.

²⁹³Ibid., p. 121.

²⁹⁴James Dale Johnston (compiler), 1861, op. cit., pp. 152, 272.

²⁹⁵Chalres F. Clark (compiler), Charles F. Clark's Detroit City Directory for the Years 1864-65 (Detroit: 1864), passim.

went to Pontiac for a few years after 1864.²⁹⁶ He later returned to Detroit and worked for Wright, Kay and Co. until his death April 4, 1898.²⁹⁷ His marked work (Plate IX) is typical for the period although not of the quality of his contemporary, Leavenworth (q.v.).

Martin S. Smith

Martin S. Smith was born in Lima, New York in 1834. His father Ira D. and his mother, Sarah Snyder, were both natives of Columbia County, New York. The family remained in New York until 1844 when they came to Pontiac, Michigan where, in 1848, Martin became a clerk in a clothing store. After working for the Pontiac Gazette and a second merchant, he came to Detroit in 1851 and worked for Holmes and Company, a local merchant. In 1855 he became associated with L. P. Durkee and Company (q.v.) in the jewelry business.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶The Detroit Free Press, April 6, 1898, p. 3.

²⁹⁷Ibid., loc. cit.

²⁹⁸Frederick Carlisle (compiler), Chronography of Notable Events in the History of the Northwest Territory and Wayne County (Detroit: Wayne County Historical and Pioneer Society, 1890), pp. 437-438.

He purchased the stock of this company in 1861²⁹⁹ and continued the business alone until 1866 when his brothers Frank G. and Edward J. joined him.³⁰⁰ The firm was then called M.S. Smith and Company and continued until 1889 when the name was changed to Frank G. Smith, Sons and Co.³⁰¹

The objects sold by Smith (Plate IX) are typical of mid-nineteenth century work and every object of his known today is marked: "M.S. Smith." It would seem that he continued to use this mark after his brothers joined him in 1866 although further research may locate a piece marked: "M. S. Smith and Co."

²⁹⁹James Dale Johnston (compiler), 1861, op. cit., p. 272.

³⁰⁰Charles F. Clark (compiler), Charles F. Clark's Detroit City Directory for the Years 1866-67 (Detroit: 1866), p. 285.

³⁰¹R. L. Polk and Co. (compiler), Detroit City Directory for 1889 (Detroit: 1889), p. 1252.

APPENDIX

THE USAGE OF PROPER NAMES

The spelling of proper names is always a problem when dealing with historical manuscripts, a problem heightened by the Anglicizing of many names after the English victories of 1760-1770. In general, any name ending in "ette" such as "Piquette" may also be found with the final "te" missing. In such cases, the full form has always been used although the possibility must be considered that the shortened form may often have been purposely used. Obvious misspellings have been discounted when the name has been found enough to make its correct form obvious. A few names have been left in their Anglicized form when it was obvious through continuous usage that the person in question did not desire his forefather's spelling to be used. In case of doubt, the spelling most often found or, if possible, that used by the person himself or used in his presence has been considered correct with other variants being listed in parentheses in descending order of occurrence.

The word "dit" has no exact translation from French to English as it is purely idiomatic. It means that the name or names that follow it are nicknames rather than actual sir or given names. Persons such as Joseph Andre dit Clark often signed with either their sir name or nickname, i.e., "Joseph Andre" or "Joseph Clark," or sometimes with both. The sir name is used throughout the body of this work for the purpose of brevity and clarity although either or both could have been used with equal historical correctness.

Some of the geographic terms used in this thesis need clarification as they do not follow modern usage. From its founding until the English victories in the early 1760's, the area known as Canada was referred to as "New France." After this, the country was divided geographically into two sections; the area now east of the Province of Ontario including Montreal and Quebec being designated "Lower Canada" and the western areas including present day Ontario and the area now in the United States once claimed by Canada being designated "Upper Canada." The term "Detroit," until early in the

nineteenth century, encompassed all the land on either side of the Detroit River including the present day towns of Sandwich, Windsor and Assumption, Ontario and the area stretching from Grosse Pointe to around Monroe, Michigan. The name "Detroit" has been used only to signify the area immediate to the City, the term "Detroit area" or the specific place name such as "Sandwich" being used otherwise. The name "Quebec" has been used to refer to the city rather than the Province. Any place name given without a country may be taken to be in the area of present-day Canada unless it obviously refers to a United States location or unless another country is specified.

There are also several French-Canadian words which need explanation as their translation does not completely follow modern French usage. "Arquebuséer" may be translated as "gunsmith," "Forgeron" as "blacksmith," and "Orfèvre" as "silversmith." The term "armurier" has no exact translation into English although armorer comes very close and has been used throughout this thesis. The term refers to a person capable of working with most metals whose general employment dealt mainly with the

various armaments used on the frontier. In actual usage, it is used almost completely as either a title such as "armorer to the King" or as a job description such as "armorer to this city" rather than as a reference to a person's ability to do a specific type of work.

If in a record of before the mid-eighteenth century a man is referred to by any one of the terms referring to guns or the base metals, this in no way indicates that he would not have been able to work with silver. The ability to work in a base metal alone would have been sufficient to enable a man to work in silver although probably limiting him to rather simple objects. It would seem likely that many gunsmiths and armorers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries worked both in silver and other metals as, in general, one trade was not sufficient to support a man at this time due to the small populations of most of the towns and to the resultant scarcity of work in any given profession. After around 1760 or 1770, when the population began to increase with the coming of English rule, most men seem to have kept more to one trade and this duality quickly

ceases to appear. For these reasons, several men working before 1760 are included herein who are not specifically known to have worked in silver but who seem likely to have been able to and no gunsmith or armorer working after the advent of English rule is included unless specific knowledge of his being a silversmith has been found.

INDIAN SILVER ORNAMENTS

Articles of personal body adornment intended for Indian usage were a major portion of the work produced by many silversmiths in Montreal and Quebec and were seemingly almost the only articles made by Detroit workmen prior to 1830. The forms these articles took were: gorgets (often called half moons), crescent shaped, slightly convex neck or breast ornaments sometimes found in graduated sets; pectorals (usually called moons or breast plates), circular slightly convex breast ornaments also sometimes found in graduated sets; armbands, intended to be worn on the upper arm; wrist bands; earbobs (drop or pendant earrings); ear wheels (circular earrings); crosses, either single or double barred found in greatly varying sizes; brooches and pins, found in a myriad of sizes and shapes including masonic forms; hair pipes (tubular objects through which several strands of hair could be pulled); beaver shape ornaments, the use of which

is not certain today; crown and other similar head ornaments; and large cradle ornaments.

The source of most of these objects is obviously from adornments of the white man; the gorget and pectoral however should be explained. These two objects evolved from similar, although larger, pieces of medieval body armor. Their evolution includes descent through sixteenth-century English and Continental regimental badges which were themselves smaller copies of the earlier functional body armor.

The earliest objects of this type, made before 1725-1750, were usually very ornately engraved with geometric designs such as that seen in Plate I. Later examples used as trading material were usually engraved with a simple animal form (often the totem of the tribe), extremely simple geometric patterns or often left plain. The crosses and Mason pins that are found today had no specific significance whatsoever. This point was at one time strongly contested but the large amount of these items that appear in early bills of sale far outnumber the few Indians that, at that time, were either Christians or Masons.

MANUFACTURING METHODS

The manufacturing methods used by the men listed in this thesis were identical with those used by their contemporaries throughout the world. Their raw material came either from silver coinage (most often the French livre or the Spanish real, the only silver coinage generally available in the New World) or older silver vessels that had been damaged or worn by usage. This material would be melted down and hammered out into thin sheets which would then be shaped into the desired forms. This shaping ranged from simply cutting out a form such as a circular breast ornament and then giving it a minimum of hammer shaping, to forming a hollow piece accomplished by repeated hammering of a circular disk. This latter method consisted of hammering out the silver disk while slowly raising its edges until the wall of the vessel was formed. Engraved, chased or repousse decorative treatments were used in Montreal and Quebec, especially on ecclesiastical vessels, but were almost totally

absent in the Detroit area. Casting was used at times in the eighteenth century to form handles on ecuelles and similar objects and to a great extent, after 1850, to form knives, spoons and forks. In the late nineteenth century, some native silver ore was used by the silver-smiths but this is a decided rarity.

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PLATES

All descriptions read upper right to lower left. All photographs unless otherwise noted by Charles T. Miller. All objects unless otherwise noted collection of the author. Reproduction of these objects without prior consent of the owner is prohibited.

Plate 1. Gorget (Dia. 4-1/4"), and pectoral, I M,
collection of Henry Ford Museum and
Greenfield Village.



Plate 2. Headband (L. 8-1/2"), Pierre-Jean Desnoyers
and Jean-Baptiste Piquette, collection and
photograph, The Detroit Institute of Art.



Plate 3. Spoons (L. 8-3/4"), Victor Rouquette, collection and photograph, The Detroit Institute of Arts (on loan by Mrs. James Hayes, Jr., Mrs. Albert Jarrett and Mrs. Edward Treanore).



Plate 4. Coffee Service, Antoine Oneille; Coffeepot (H. 15-1/4"), Cream Pitcher (H. 8-5/8"), Sugar Bowl (H. 9-5/8") Collection of Dr. Nathaniel Ewing; Bowl (H. 5-3/8") Collection of Grouselands Museum.



Plate 5. Gorget (L. 5-3/8"), Victor Roquette, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James O. Keene; Cross (H. 11-5/16"), Antoine Oneille, Collection of the Hiram Walker Historical Museum; Gorget (L. 5-1/4"), Dominique Riopelle, Collection of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.



Plate 6. Beaker (H. 3-1/2"), Pierre-Jean Desnoyers, Collection of the Hiram Walker Historical Museum; Chalice (H. 10-1/2"), Victor Rouquette, Collection of the Archdioceses of Detroit; Écuelle (Dia. 6-1/2"), Jean-Baptiste Piquette, collection of The Detroit Institute of Arts; Ladle (L. 14-3/8"), Thomas B. Leavenworth, Collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts; Spoon (L. 6"), George Doty; Spoon (L. 8-1/2"), Francois-Paul Malcher, Collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts.



Plate 7. Spoon (L. 5-7/8"), by Augustin Lagrave and
Spoon (L. 9"), by I B, Collection of Francis
Robinson; Spoon (L. 7-1/4"), by James Sibley,
Collection of Rex Lameroux.



Plate 8. Spoon (L. 9") by Dominique Riopelle, Collection
and photo, The Detroit Institute of Art.



Plate 9. Tableware by George Doty; Fork (L. 8"), and Butterknives, Collection of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. Butterknife (L. 7-5/8"), and Spoon (L. 6") by Martin S. Smith; Saltspoon (L. 4"), Collection of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village and Spoon (L. 5-7/8"), by Lewis P. Durkee. Tableware by Thomas B. Leavenworth; Tablespoon (right, L. 8-1/2"), Collection of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. Spoon (L. 6-1/8"), Collection of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village and Tablespoon (L. 8-1/2"), by Charles Piquette; Spoon (L. 6-1/8"), by H. B. Marsh.



Plate 10. Marks of: I M, Dominique Riopelle, Pierre-Jean Desnoyers, Joseph Schindler, Francois-Paul Malcher, Jean Baptiste Piquette, Victor Rouquette, I. B., James Sibley, Augustin Lagrave.



Plate 11. Marks of: Thomas B. Leavenworth, Martin S.
Smith, Lewis P. Durkee, Charles Piquette,
H. B. Marsh, Charles Piquette.



Plate 12. Marks of George Doty.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I was born November 25, 1936, in Detroit, Michigan, and have resided in this area since that time. I received my high school diploma from Grosse Pointe University School, Grosse Pointe, Michigan, in 1954 and after attending Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, for two years, received my B.A. in Art History from Wayne State University in 1961.

In the summers of 1957, 1958 and 1959, I worked as an assistant in the Education Department of the Detroit Institute of Arts. After working part time for the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in 1960, I was appointed a Curatorial Assistant in March, 1961. In 1965, I was appointed Assistant Curator, the position I presently hold. I am in charge of Paintings, Folk Art, Sculpture and Metal in the Museum's collection.

I am a member of The American Association of Museums, The National Early American Glass Club and The Pewter Collectors Club of America.



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