

INTRODUCTION

Post-Contact Archaeology of Michigan and the Upper Great Lakes Region

Misty M. Jackson and Sarah L. Surface-Evans



The roots of historical archaeology in the Upper Great Lakes region run deep, with some of the earliest examples of long-standing research occurring at Fort Michilimackinac (Evans, chapter 2; Heldman 1977; Maxwell and Binford 1961) and Detroit (Pilling 1961a, 1961b; 1965; Ryzewski, chapter 15). For over two decades, John Halsey's *Retrieving Michigan's Buried Past* (1999) represented the most comprehensive volume on Michigan pre- and post-contact archaeology, with contributions by dozens of prominent Great Lakes archaeologists. The research presented in Halsey's volume shaped a generation of archaeologists now working in the region today. In a similar spirit and format, we seek to provide an update on the state of post-contact archaeology in the Upper Great Lakes region since the turn of the twenty-first century. Overall, archaeological research on the post-contact period has seen remarkable growth and development in the last two decades.

Post-Contact Archaeology of Michigan and the Upper Great Lakes Region is a collection of current archaeological case studies and summaries not previously synthesized that demonstrate the breadth and diversity of historical archaeology in the region. Contributors to this volume present recent research from both terrestrial and underwater cultural sites, spanning from the earliest European exploration and settlement of the region to twentieth-century urban landscapes of Detroit. Much of the research in this volume is couched within a community-engaged ethic, which demonstrates that the archaeology of the past is intrinsically linked to social justice in the present. As a result,

we hope that this volume is accessible to both professional archaeologists and interested members of the public.

This volume offers an intriguing sample of archaeological research that has occurred over the last two decades in the Upper Great Lakes. Some chapters in this volume summarize multiple projects, others provide an aspect of dissertations or recent single research projects. In no way did we endeavor to create nor do we intend for the reader to regard this as a comprehensive compilation of all work undertaken in Michigan or the Great Lakes region. Rather, it is our intent to showcase some of the foundational work, trends, and new approaches being practiced by archaeologists today. The reader in search of additional sources for Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana can find many recent publications including Misty Jackson, Kory Cooper, and David Hovde (2024), Floyd Mansberger and Christopher Stratton (2024), Robert Mazrim (2020), Gerald McWorter and Kate Williams-McWorter (2018), Paul Mullins and Glenn White (2010), Paul Shackle (2011), and Heather Walder (2021). For Michigan urban archaeology, we suggest Krysta Ryzewski (2022). Likewise, gray literature on numerous sites in the Upper Great Lakes states remains largely unavailable but will hopefully find its way into future publications (see the Conclusion).

Why Post-Contact?

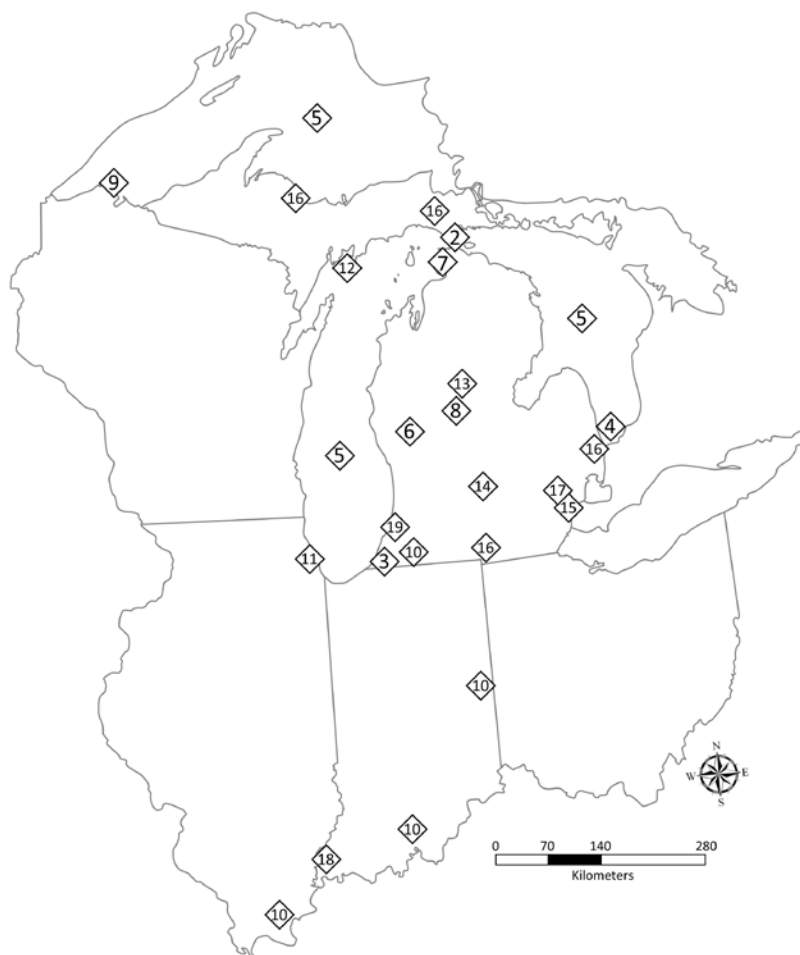
Historical archaeology is a sub-specialization of archaeology that focuses on the recent or historically documented past as opposed to pre-literate human past, which is often referred to as “prehistory” (Orser 2016). The artificial divisions of historic/prehistoric have been criticized particularly within the context of colonized spaces such as North American because they suggest that Native Americans lack history (Cleland 1992; Lightfoot 1995; Orser 2017). However, the dichotomy has also been criticized for use in reference to ancient European societies (Kehoe 2024). This is why for this volume we prefer the term post-contact over historic or historical when referring to the archaeology of the seventeenth through twentieth centuries in the Upper Great Lakes region. Indeed, beginning with the earliest entry of European trade goods into the region, its history has been profoundly affected by the processes and consequences of “contact” (Cleland 1992; Yann, chapter 1). As a result of these contexts, we acknowledge that each of the chapters in this volume is situated within the setting of settler-colonialism and capitalist exploitation, from its preindustrial, global (mercantile) beginnings to industrial capitalism, including the present.

While the term post-contact might find critics who prefer its use only in reference to the period immediately following contact between Indigenous groups and colonizers, we have chosen it to avoid the incongruous use of the terms precontact/historic. We do not advocate completely refraining from using the term “historical archaeology” but seek to more accurately reflect the nature of contact and its impact on the modern world for all people, both Indigenous or non-Indigenous, by using the term “post-contact.”

The post-contact history of the Upper Great Lakes region is a microcosm of North American colonization, and the archaeology of this region has followed similar developments as those in the broader discipline. In particular, historical archaeology has increasingly used its strengths to synthesize disparate strands of information or evidence—archival and documentary, oral histories, material culture and landscapes—to engage with communities and tell multivocal narratives of the past (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Deagan 1982; Gilchrist 2005; Gonzalez-Tennant 2018; Starzmann and Roby 2016; Wilkie 2003). Community-based and engaged praxis is a central theme throughout this volume. Many of the contributors are conducting long-term and meaningful work with descendant communities and show us the relevance of historical archaeology in the modern world (Burnett, Camp, and Painter, chapter 14; Campbell Crawford, chapter 10; Jackson and Andrews, chapter 7; Kramar and Surface-Evans, chapter 13; Lusardi, chapter 4; Peterson and Gregory, chapter 11; Nassaney, chapter 3; Ryzewski, chapter 15; Spencer-Wood, chapter 17; Surface-Evans and Bacon, chapter 8; Van Wormer, chapter 19; Walder et al., chapter 9). However, there is no single theme; the organizing topics are several and deliberately broad and inclusive rather than exclusive. The divisions into which the chapters have been placed reflect this diversity and highlight some common threads connecting this body of research.

While most of the case studies in this volume are based in Michigan, we include several examples in the Upper Great Lakes outside of Michigan because these areas are interrelated through cultural, political, and economic systems (Campbell Crawford, chapter 10; Peterson and Gregory, chapter 11; Strezewski, chapter 18; Walder et al., chapter 9). Map 0.1 shows the locations of sites and areas discussed in each chapter. Michael Strezewski’s (chapter 18) work at New Harmony in southern Indiana compliments Heather Van Wormer’s (chapter 19) focus on the House of David and the City of David in Benton Harbor, Michigan, exploring the place held by intentional communities that formed an important part of the nineteenth-century historical landscape throughout the United States. On the west side of the Great Lakes in Wisconsin,

Heather Walder and colleagues (chapter 9) demonstrate Indigenous-led research similar to that on the east side of Lake Michigan by Misty M. Jackson and Wesley L. Andrews (chapter 7) and by Sarah L. Surface-Evans and Nick M. Bacon (chapter 8). Jane Peterson and Michael Gregory's Chicago archaeology (chapter 11) provides another large, Great Lakes city for comparison with Krysta Ryzewski's review of Detroit archaeology (chapter 15), but also with Amanda J. Campbell Crawford's chapter 10 concerning African American sites. Furthermore, Campbell Crawford recognizes the links to other Great Lakes states in her investigation of Michigan Underground Railroad sites. These chapters help



Map 0.1. Map of the Great Lakes region showing the locations of sites discussed in the volume. Numbers correspond to chapter numbers and the primary sites and locations discussed in each. © Sarah L. Surface-Evans.

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to demonstrate the connections between what might be traditionally viewed as the Great Lakes and Midwest regions.

Political borders and geographic concepts are cultural constructs, and to some degree the limits and boundaries change with time as well. Despite their origin as constructs of colonization, we have chosen to use modern, essentially arbitrary political boundaries to classify Upper Great Lakes archaeology as that practiced in any state adjacent to Lake Michigan, Huron or Superior, rather than basing the definition on watershed only. As several contributors to this volume point out, cultural connections and historical factors link Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin together (Campbell Crawford, chapter 10; Strezewski, chapter 18). For example, while New Harmony, discussed in chapter 18, is located in southern Indiana, it was linked to the Great Lakes region economically. By extending beyond permeable and often undefined boundaries in search of connections, we focus on the interrelated nature of places outside the nebulous notion of “the Great Lakes.” By viewing areas that others define the “Midwest” (an equally nebulous notion) as transition zones facing outward to and entangled with multiple places, economies, and people, in this manner the chapters complement each other, regardless of geographic location.

Volume Themes

The volume is organized into five thematic sections that cover a wide range of topics. Within each section, there is considerable thematic cohesion despite the fact that some chapters are more descriptive and synthesizing, while others offer models and theoretical approaches. In part 1, Early Colonial Contact, authors explore how the French and British interacted with each other and Anishnaabek communities in the Upper Great Lakes region. Jessica L. Yann (chapter 1) asks us to revise our understanding of European and Indigenous contact in the Great Lakes region. She demonstrates how intercultural contact is a complicated and varied process that must be contextualized. Lynn L. Evans (chapter 2) provides updates on six decades of research at Fort Michilimackinac, concisely bringing together for the first time numerous studies and demonstrating how the wealth of data from this site has led to a nuanced view of this multiethnic site. Michael S. Nassaney (chapter 3) reflects on twenty-five years of public archaeology at Fort St. Joseph and shows us how an approach built on collaboration and listening can lead to long-term success.

From these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sites, we turn our gaze to the Great Lakes themselves in part 2, Under the Great Lakes.

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Wayne R. Lusardi (chapter 4) discusses working with a variety of stakeholders to recover the plane of Tuskegee pilot Frank H. Moody from Lake Huron and document the crash site of Lt. Rayburg's Bell P-39Q Airacobra in Lake Saint Clare. While we typically think of shipwrecks and maritime resources as being associated with the Great Lakes, Lusardi's chapter demonstrates that they hold many different stories and material remains of the past. In chapter 5, Daniel F. Harrison proposes a model for the Great Lakes as a maritime landscape. He considers patterns in shipwreck "agency" and illustrates how maritime advancements alter the causes of vessel loss over time. Harrison's chapter provides the reader with a lens through which to understand trends and patterns in Great Lakes shipwrecks.

In part 3, Resistance and Persistence, authors explore how Native American communities maintain their traditions and formerly enslaved communities established their freedom within the region. This section of the volume introduces a number of innovative archaeological projects that represent a significant departure from the focus of historical archaeology twenty years ago. These projects feature Indigenous and Black archaeological theory and proceed from community-engaged approaches. Sean B. Dunham (chapter 6) examines the cultural tradition of cache pits and demonstrates the persistence of this method of storage into the nineteenth century at the Ne-con-ne-pe-wah-se site. Dunham argues that cache pits created long-term connections to places of social and cultural meaning for the Odawa. Misty M. Jackson and Wesley L. Andrews (chapter 7) explore the question of how to identify nineteenth-century Native American farmsteads archaeologically. Like Dunham, they demonstrate that the Odawa relationship with the landscape is highly mobile and seasonally dependent. Farmsteads themselves may have sparse cultural deposits because they were not occupied year-round and other cultural practices may also lead to an ephemeral archaeological signature.

In chapter 8, Sarah L. Surface-Evans and Nick M. Bacon discuss community-led research at the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School. This chapter urges archaeologists to consider archaeological landscapes from Indigenous frameworks and to decolonize historical narratives. As part of this, researchers need to include natural and botanical elements of the landscape and doing so facilitates remembering, both traumatic and nostalgic, by community members. Heather Walder, John L. Creese, Katrina Phillips, and Marvin DeFoe (chapter 9) discuss the Geté Anishinaabe Izhichigéwin (Ancient Anishinaabe Lifeways) Community Archaeology Project (GAICAP). Their community-engaged approach dubbed "Anishinology" integrates traditional cultural

knowledge and scientific approaches to the archaeological study of multiple sites important to the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

In chapter 10, Amanda J. Campbell Crawford discusses the Young's Prairie/Ramptown settlement in Cass County, Michigan, and compares it to similar settlements of free and self-liberated African Americans in Indiana and Illinois. She makes a call for action regarding the identification and evaluation of sites related to African American civil rights and shows how the study of these places is a form of social justice. Jane Peterson and Michael M. Gregory (chapter 11) share their community-based initiative of the Bronzeville Neighborhood Archaeology Project, which explores the lives of African Americans who came to Chicago during the Great Migration. Through the material culture recovered at two households, they show how individuals sought to integrate into urban life and how they coped with racial violence and overcrowding due to restrictive housing policies. The Bronzeville project has helped the community and descendants meaningfully connect to the past.

Part 4, *Institutions and Industry*, explores industrial towns, logging landscapes, and educational and urban settings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jessica L. Yann, Dean L. Anderson, Stacy Tchorzynski, and Troy Henderson (chapter 12) provide a summary of research at the iron smelting town of Fayette. Like Fort Michilimackinac, Fayette was an early Michigan State Park and, as a result, has been archaeologically investigated for many decades. The most recent work at Fayette has focused on class dynamics and the material culture found within extant buildings. In chapter 13, Mandy Meyette Kramar and Sarah L. Surface-Evans explore the social and physical networks that connected late nineteenth-century logging camps, boomtowns, and settler cemeteries together in Clare County, Michigan. Research into these sites and their relationship to each other developed out of community engagement with the Clare County Historical Society and descendants.

Chapter 14, by Jeff Burnett, Stacey L. Camp, and Autumn M. Painter, discusses childhood on the campus of Michigan State University during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The excavations that led to knowing more about these populations came from the Campus Archaeology Program (CAP). CAP is a public archaeology initiative that has improved how the university manages and conceives of their heritage resources. In chapter 15, Krysta Ryzewski provides a retrospective of archaeology in Detroit and discusses the legacies of Arnold Pilling's pioneering urban archaeology in the 1950s through the 1970s. Ryzewski's synthesis challenges the notion that urban settings lack archaeology potential and reminds us that public archaeology has a deep history in Detroit.

Part 5, *Belief and Material Culture*, is a series of chapters that considers the materiality of spiritual practice, religious spaces, and intentional communities. In chapter 16, Misty M. Jackson summarizes reported apotropaic finds, that is, those hidden within structures in Michigan to date, contributing new data. She provides a framework for their evaluation and reviews the literature that suggests interpretations of meaning. Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood in chapter 17 provides a case study of excavations and community involvement at a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Methodist Episcopal parsonage in Troy, Michigan. Interpretation of the artifacts points to differences in prescribed and proscribed behaviors from actual behaviors of clergy or residents.

Michael Strezewski (chapter 18) discusses the intentional community, the Harmony Society, founded in 1814 by German immigrants. He conducted a series of excavations, focusing on the Harmonist kiln where they produced redware and the Wolf house's root cellar, with the express goal of better understanding elements of the Harmonists' daily, mundane, private lives that are not reflected in their extensive documentary sources, particularly business accounts. These investigations have resulted in a new appreciation of the Harmonists as people. In chapter 19, Heather Van Wormer overviews the context of communal movements, that is, intentional communities, focusing on those established in Michigan, and discusses the obstacles that exist for preservation and conservation today. She pays particular attention to two contrasting but related case studies, the House of David and the City of David, in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Van Wormer's and Strezewski's studies complement each other in that the former examines the overall history and theory of intentional communities, focusing on above ground resource preservation, while the latter provides archaeological data on excavated sites of an intentional community. Both, however, explore materiality, and Van Wormer's contribution focusing on above ground material culture of the built environment and landscapes is considered a major contribution to this volume. Indeed, archaeology is defined as "the study of the human past" (Thomas 1979: 456). To limit historical archaeology to only excavated material misses much and fails to follow current developments in community-centered practice.

Though organized around five major topics, chapters in some instances might have been placed under more than one theme. The reader is invited to consider alternate arrangements and relationships between the organizing categories. What is evident, is that this research is situated within the post-contact period and system of Western colonialism and capitalism. Yet, we invite the reader to question

even this notion of the dominance of Western society as the primary framework. As some contributors to this volume endeavored to work within an approach of decolonization, we hope that the research presented here might provoke reactions against capitalism and encourage consideration of other approaches in which economics does not hold priority. These are not new goals or concerns but finding other frameworks remains a perennial issue in historical archaeology. Therefore, readers might also notice a lack of organizing, overarching theoretical approaches in this volume. We welcome this and hope the reader does, too. We think that the diversity of perspectives presented here is one of the main strengths of this collection of chapters.

Dr. Misty M. Jackson is founder of Arbre Croche Cultural Resources LLC. She received her Ph.D. from Michigan State University's Department of Anthropology in 2005. She served as an expert witness in a Native American treaty case concerning farming rights and taught as adjunct professor at Central Michigan University. Jackson has served on numerous boards including Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board, the Center for French Colonial Studies including as president, and the Center for Maritime and Underwater Resource Management (CMURM). Her work includes publications on maritime archaeology and Native American tennis. She is co-editor of and contributor to *The History and Archaeology of Fort Ouiatenon: 300 Years in the Making* (Purdue University Press, 2024).

Dr. Sarah L. Surface-Evans joined the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as Senior Archaeologist in 2022 after a decade as a professor of Anthropology at Central Michigan University. Sarah specializes in community-based archaeological practice in the Great Lakes region. Her research and publications have investigated a variety of topics, including material expressions of health and well-being, the structure of space as an expression of power in settler-colonial landscapes, and the role of memory, nostalgia, and haunting in contested colonial histories. Her recent publications include "Exploring Well-Being at Three Great Lakes Lighthouses" in the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*.

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