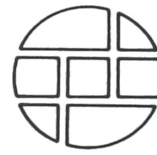


# Mapline



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## Celebrating Illinois' Bicentennial

Robert A. Holland

The next few installments of *Mapline* will have a decidedly Midwestern flavor. This issue and the next (Fall 2018) will celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of the state of Illinois, which in 1818 became the twenty-first state in the Union. Following issues will feature articles relevant to the question, “What is the Midwest?” This inquiry is the subject of a number of forthcoming interdisciplinary research projects and public programs to be held at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Newberry’s interdisciplinary investigation of this question will make full use of its research centers, collections, fellowship programs, public exhibitions and lectures, adult education seminars, conferences and symposia, teacher development programs, and digital resources. Additionally, the Chicago Map Society will join these efforts by dedicating its 2018-19 Program Year to presentations focused on Midwestern themes.

As defined by the United States Census Bureau, the Midwest comprises the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup> These states, in turn, may be grouped into two regions: the Northwest Territory (also known as the “Old Northwest”) and the Great Plains. The Northwest Territory entered the United States in 1783 at the conclusion of the American Revolution and the Great Plains entered the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase. The state of Illinois was organized from the Northwest Territory (along

with Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin) and so this seems like a suitable point to begin our celebration of the state’s bicentennial. In particular, this article focuses on some noteworthy maps that chronicle the partition of Illinois from the Northwest Territory.

The Northwest Territory was organized under a series of ordinances that laid the basis for its government and division into states, the most important of which was the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.<sup>2</sup> This statute established a government for the Northwest Territory, outlined the process for admitting a new state to the Union, and guaranteed that newly created states would be equal to the original thirteen states. In detail, it stipulated that each district in the Northwest Territory would have a governor and judges appointed by Congress until it attained a population of 5,000 adult free males, at which time it would be recognized as a territory and it could form its own representative legislature. It required that the Northwest Territory eventually comprise a minimum of three and a maximum of five states and that an individual territory could be admitted to statehood in the union after having attained a population of 60,000. The Ordinance of 1787 also prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory, guaranteed freedom of religion and other civil liberties, provided for the fair treatment of Indians, and encouraged schools and other means of education for the Territory’s residents.

The first map illustrated (Fig. 1) depicts the organization of this area in 1816: Ohio achieved statehood in 1803, and so is cut off in this presentation of



Fig. 1. Mathew Carey, "Upper Territories of the United States," from Carey's *General Atlas, Improved And Enlarged; Being A Collection Of Maps Of The World And Quarters, Their Principal Empires, Kingdoms, &c* (Philadelphia: M. Carey And Son, 1818). David Rumsey Collection P732

the “Upper Territories of the United States.” Illinois, Indiana and Michigan were now independent territories, and the remainder of the region is still designated the “Northwest Territory.” Note that the northern boundary of the Illinois Territory extends that of the Indiana Territory at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. This is in accord with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which provided that one or two states should be created from the area west of Lake Michigan and should extend down to the lake’s southern tip.

Illinois was granted statehood in December 1818. Its 56,345 square miles made it the second largest state in the Union by area; but, its 36,000 residents made it the smallest in population. This made its application for statehood problematic, because the Ordinance of 1787 required a territory to have a population of 60,000 before it could become a state. Congressmen, concerned that the territory did not have the necessary population, insisted that a proviso be attached to the state’s enabling bill stipulating that a census of the territory’s population be taken before it could form a state government. Nathaniel Pope, who was the Illinois Territory’s delegate to Congress at the time, tried to have the census requirement removed from the bill, but was unsuccessful. Consequently, Illinois was forced to tally its residents, and it forwarded a census to Congress that was questionable at best. The census counted, for example, anyone on a territorial road as an Illinois resident—whether coming, going, or as was often the case, both. Counting simply continued until the 60,000 figure was reached.

In 1818, John Melish published the first map of the new state (Fig. 2) as part of a plan to compile an atlas of the United States that showcased his 1816 map of the fledgling country.<sup>3</sup> This large map would become one of the most important and influential maps in North American history. Melish intended to supplement it with a set of individual state maps based on actual surveys and drawn on a uniform scale, which at the time was “a new and revolutionary idea that facilitated size comparisons.”<sup>4</sup> He was forced to revise most of these maps shortly after their publication, as the continual process of surveying and settlement within each state made its map outdated by the time he published it. Unfortunately, Melish’s atlas was never completed, because

he died in 1822 after publishing just six state maps.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of the first edition of his map of Illinois, the best Melish could do was to anticipate the geography of Illinois, given that the map was published before Illinois officially became a state. As shown in this map, Melish underscores the source of the data for this map (surveys in the General Land Office) by using the Land Office Districts as subdivisions instead of counties, and we see that these districts cover the southern portion of the state, where most of the new state’s population was concentrated (especially along the Mississippi River Valley and the Wabash and Ohio Rivers). There is also a western district marked “Military Bounty Lands.” The lands north and northwest of Illinois were still territories, as this map indicates on those borders. An “Indian Boundary” line bisects the state, and there is a line drawn above the Shawnee District in a northeasterly-southwesterly direction designated “Old Indian Boundary Line.” A line labeled the “Third Primary Meridian” bisects the surveyed portion of the southern part of the state from north to south running through the mouth of the Ohio River, and orthogonal to this line is a base line with “Ranges West” and “Ranges East” inscribed above it. Additionally, a “Fourth Primary Meridian” bisects the Bounty Lands running through the mouth of the Illinois River and a base line runs at right angles to the west from this meridian with “Ranges West” noted above it. (Another prime meridian—the Second—is shown but not labeled; it runs through the mouth of the Wabash River.)

These features of Melish’s map vividly highlight the mechanism fixed by the Land Ordinance of 1785 that was used to carve states out of the Northwest Territory.<sup>6</sup> To begin, the land within a territory could only be surveyed and sold after Indian titles to the land were extinguished. As indicated by the Indian Boundary line on this map, most of the land in the northern reaches of Illinois was still occupied by Indians; it would be fifteen years before this land was fully ceded.<sup>7</sup> (The next issue of *Mapline* will discuss in detail the Indian land cessations in Illinois.) Once Indian titles to the land were acquired by the federal government (which was the only unit of government that could make treaties with the Indian nations), the land was surveyed and described by a system of townships and sections; it would then

be offered for sale through the General Land Office.<sup>8</sup> Melish clearly depicts the procedure for this description: first, a principal meridian was established and then a point was selected along the meridian to establish an orthogonal base line. The six-mile square townships would start at the intersection of these two lines, numbering ranges east and west of the meridian (indicated by Roman numerals) and townships north and south of the base line (shown with Arabic numerals).<sup>9</sup>

The tract designated as “Military Bounty Lands” in the western part of the state had been set aside as bounties for the soldiers who served as volunteers in the War of 1812. Surveyed in 1815-1816 (using the Fourth Principal Meridian), Melish notes that of the 5,575,680 acres in this tract, 3,500,000 acres were Bounty Lands, and that the difference was offered for sale by the federal government. As their bounty, soldiers received 160 acres each and were required to locate their warrant by lottery. Most did not end up relocating there, however, and many sold their warrants to land speculators. This served to arouse local hostility against absentee speculators, and squatters began to settle in the tract, disregarding the title or rights. The situation got more convoluted when the new state of Illinois began to sell these lands for taxes—a revenue stream that served as the state’s principal source of income for a considerable period. Most of the ownership in this tract was transferred to tax titles. Consequently, population growth, which was considerable in the area from about 1823 to 1837, was arrested by conflicting land claims. The situation would be resolved only after many years of litigation and much legislation.

Melish’s 1818 map distorts the course of the Mississippi River north of Rock Island, but its most glaring inaccuracy is the northern border of Illinois, which is represented as that proposed by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. In Melish’s defense, the Congressional committee considering Illinois’ petition for statehood suggested that the state’s northern border should agree with the Indiana state line. What he could not anticipate is that Nathaniel Pope would argue—successfully this time—that the line 42° 30’ should be used instead. This would push the border about sixty-two miles north of the provision made by the Ordinance of 1787, and much further north than Indiana’s northern extremity.

Pope eloquently convinced the committee that this would connect the new state with the northern interests of New York and New England through a Great Lakes port at Chicago; the Erie Canal was soon to connect the Great Lakes to New York. In addition, Pope pointed out that a canal connecting Lake Michigan with the Illinois River had implications beyond those of purely commercial interest: it would place Illinois into the political orbit of the northern states, thus “affording additional security to the perpetuity of the Union.”<sup>10</sup>

One unspoken issue here was slavery. The Ordinance of 1787 outlawed slavery within its boundaries, and thus, Illinois had no choice but to enter the Union as a free state. Many settlers in southern Illinois, however, had migrated from the South and strongly sympathized with the pro-slavery cause. Moreover, southern Illinois was largely dependent on its trade relations with its neighbors to the south and west, all of whom had or would enter the Union as slave states. There was no question, then, where the allegiance of this part of the state would lie in the event the Union was threatened with dissolution. Thus, Pope’s implicit line of reasoning was this: if Illinois were given a footing on the Great Lakes, it would have the opportunity to develop a thriving commerce with—and dependence on—the eastern states. This would put in check the interests of the southern part of the state, and help to ensure Illinois’s commitment to the Union. The soundness of Pope’s argument was proven during the Civil War, as the northern portion of Illinois counterbalanced the secessionist tendencies of the state’s southern regions, and Illinois proved to be an important part of the Union during the War Between the States.<sup>11</sup>

Melish quickly reacted to the change in the northern boundary of Illinois, publishing a new edition of his map in 1819, and another in 1820. (The latter edition is shown in Fig. 3). At the top of the map Melish remarks, “The Northern Boundary of this State has been extended to 42° 30’ a little beyond what is exhibited on the plate.” The southern tip of Lake Michigan is shown on the map with both Chicago and “Melwakee” noted along its western shore. This map depicts and names more rivers than on the 1818 edition, as well as a few Indian settlements. The southern portion of the state is now subdivided by counties, and the map

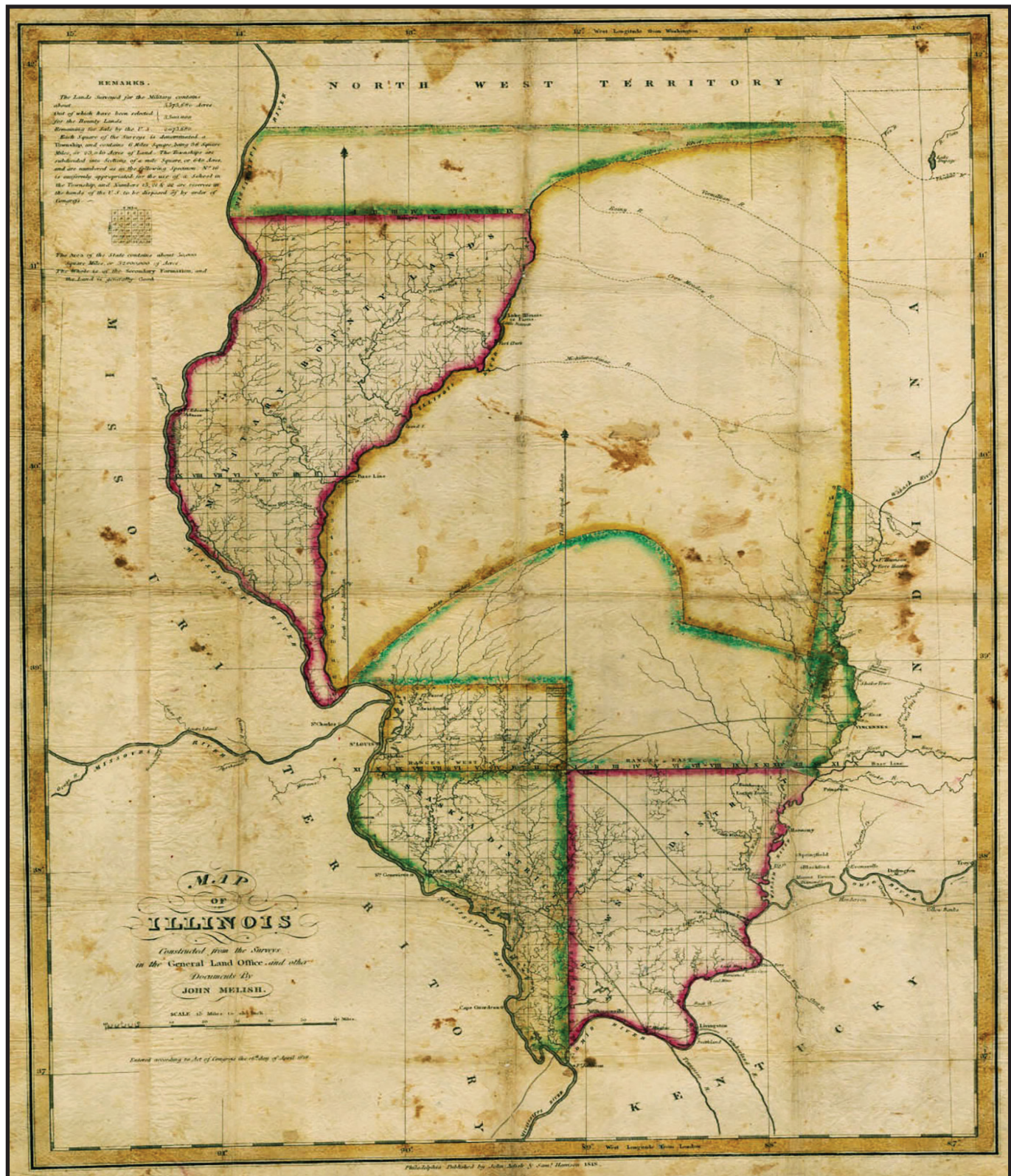


Fig. 2. John Melish, "Map of Illinois: constructed from the surveys in the General Land Office and other documents" (Philadelphia: John Melish & Saml. Harrison, 1818). Map courtesy of the Map Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



makes it obvious that these have been organized using the townships set out during the land survey. This map also shows a corridor of land marked by Indian Boundary lines that extend from Chicago at the northeast end and through which it had been proposed to construct a canal linking Lake Michigan and the Illinois River.

The idea of such a canal can be traced back to Louis Jolliet, who in 1673 passed through this corridor on his return from explorations with Father Jacques Marquette down the Mississippi River. In his report to the governor of Québec, Jolliet noted that the area possessed “a very great and important advantage, which perhaps will hardly be believed. It is that we could go with facility to Florida in a bark, and by very easy navigation. It would only be necessary to make a canal by cutting through but half a league of prairie, to pass from the foot the Lake of Illinois [Lake Michigan] to the river Saint Louis [Illinois River].”<sup>12</sup> The following article by Carl Kupfer and David Buisseret details Jolliet’s memories of this area and his dream of a canal that would link Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River.

At the time Illinois achieved statehood, the commercial need for such a canal was slight, but disasters on land during the War of 1812 (including a massacre at Fort Dearborn) amplified the military importance of a safe and passable highway from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River. And at the conclusion of the war, the opportunity came to acquire the land through which to build a canal. In 1816, the federal government finalized the Treaty of Saint Louis with the Northwestern tribes that had sided with the British during the war. This treaty included the cession to the United States of a strip of land ten miles north and ten miles south of the mouth of the Chicago River, and extending along the river in a southwesterly direction to the Fox and Illinois Rivers.<sup>13</sup>

The building of this canal would also satisfy a national ambition that immediately followed the 1803 Louisiana Purchase: the creation of a national internal waterway connecting New York with New Orleans. The envisioned route connected New York to the Great Lakes via a canal from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, and the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River by way of a canal from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River. A plan for this route was first mentioned in Congress in 1808, and six years later it was wholeheartedly en-

dorsed by the *Niles Register*: “By the Illinois River it is probable that Buffalo, in New York, may be united with New-Orleans, by inland navigation, through Lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan, and down the river to the Mississippi. What a route! How stupendous the idea! How dwindles the importance of the artificial canals of Europe compared to this water communication. If it should ever take place...the Territory [of Illinois] will become the seat of an immense commerce, and a market for commodities of all regions.”<sup>14</sup>

The *Register*’s predictions would come true, as the northern terminus of the canal would indeed become the seat of an immense commerce and a market for commodities from all regions. However, as we will relate in our upcoming issue, it would be the railroads that made Chicago into such a booming commercial hub of the Midwest.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Geographic Areas Reference Manual* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1994), Chapter 6.

<sup>2</sup> Also known as the Ordinance of 1787, it was officially titled “An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States North West of the River Ohio,” and it was adopted by the Confederation Congress on July 13, 1787. United States, Charles Thomson, United States Continental Congress, and Continental Congress Broadside Collection, “An ordinance for the government of the territory of the United States, North-west of the river Ohio. [New York: s.n, 1787].” Online Text. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/90898154> (accessed January 7, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> John Melish, “Map of the United States with the Contiguous British & Spanish Possessions Compiled from the Latest & Best Authorities by John Melish” (Philadelphia: John Melish, 1816). Among other important features, this map is the first to show the United States as a continental state—that is, as stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Along with this map, Melish separately published—primarily as an aid to travelers—the book, *A Geographical Description of the United States, with the Contiguous British and Spanish Possessions, Intended as an accompaniment to Melish’s Map of these Countries*.

<sup>4</sup> See Walter Ristow, *American Maps and Mapmakers: Commercial Cartography in the Nineteenth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1985), 166-168.

Melish noted in *A Geographical Description of the United States* that he planned to publish a series of sheet maps on a uniform scale that would form an atlas of the United States; he ex-

panded on this plan in *A Geographical Description of the World* (1818).

<sup>5</sup> A map of Indiana was the first to be published and was followed by a map of Tennessee, both released in 1817. The Illinois map was first published in 1818, with an “improved” edition in 1819 and this 1820 edition, of which the Rumsey website states that “no mention is made in any sources of this map.” Retrieved from the David Rumsey Map Collection Database and Blog, <http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps5147.html> (accessed January 20, 2018). A copy of the 1818 Illinois map is held at the Library of Congress and by the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana; the Newberry Library and the National Archives both have a copy of the 1819 map. After the first edition of his Illinois map, Melish published Alabama in 1818, Mississippi in 1819, and Louisiana in 1820.

<sup>6</sup> *Journal of Continental Congress*, Vol. 28 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, May 20, 1785), 375.

<sup>7</sup> See Solon Buck’s map of Illinois in 1818, which depicts the lands occupied by the Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Sauk, Fox, Winnebago, Chippewa and Ottawa tribes at the time. Solon Buck, *Illinois in 1818*, 2nd ed. (Springfield: Illinois Centennial Commission, 1917), 59.

<sup>8</sup> Since Congress lacked the power of direct taxation at the time, the proceeds from these land sales were one of the federal government’s principal sources of revenue. The township system was set up in accordance with what at the time was thought as the ideal size for an agricultural community; for example, everyone in the thirty-six square mile area could walk to the center of the community, attend a meeting, and return home the same day.

<sup>9</sup> There were two exceptions to this procedure: land owned by French settlers in Illinois, whose right to their property had been affirmed by the Treaty of Paris of 1783; and those tracts of land that the Indian peoples had “reserved” from cessions. There are no such reservations remaining in Illinois.

<sup>10</sup> *Annals of the Congress, of the United States. Fifteenth Congress, First Session, Vol. 32: March 12, 1818 to April 20, 1818* (Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1854), 1677. Moving the state’s border northward would also place Galena, with its valuable lead mines, within the state.

<sup>11</sup> The northern addition to Illinois has played an important role in the internal dynamics of state politics ever since. The growth of Chicago eventually placed more than half of the state’s citizens in this area, which created a political split between the rural “downstate” interests and the urban center in the far northeastern reach of the state. Suburban growth around the city of Chicago, especially since the 1950s, has added a third factor to the dynamics of state politics. Accordingly, today’s political machinations can often be broken down to forces that reflect downstate, suburban, and Chicago interests.

<sup>12</sup> As reported by Father Dablon in his letter of August 1, 1674 and published in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, Vol. 58 (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1899), 105.

<sup>13</sup> The borders of this cession are still prominent today as “Indian boundary” streets and roads: Rogers Avenue and Forest Preserve Boulevard run along its northern edge; part of the old George Brennan Highway (now Interstate 57) runs along the southern edge.

<sup>14</sup> *Niles Weekly Register Supplement to No. 153* (Baltimore: August 6, 1814), 394.

## Louis Jolliet’s Memory of the Chicago Area

Carl Kupfer and David Buisseret

When Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette returned from their pioneering voyage down the Mississippi River in July 1673, they decided (following local advice) not to retrace their outward journey, from Green Bay down the Wisconsin River. Instead, they were to take the Illinois River back to Lake Michigan, and thence to Green Bay. This brought them through the present Chicago area as they paddled up the Desplaines River, across a portage, along the Chicago River, into Lake Michigan, and along the western shore to Green Bay. Marquette remained at the St. Xavier Mission near the present city of Green Bay, while Jolliet continued on to Sault Ste. Marie to spend the winter months.

They had been making a map of their journey, and Marquette’s version of it has survived, and may still be seen in the Jesuit archives at Montréal.<sup>1</sup> It is believed there may have been another map drawn by Jolliet which he took with him when in the spring of 1674 he set off from Sault Ste. Marie to return to Québec. Alas, when he had passed Montreal, his canoe overset in the Saint Lawrence River, and all his papers were lost, including the map. He continued on to Québec to report to the Jesuit superior, Father Claude Dablon, and to the governor of French Canada, the Count de Frontenac. The French Crown expected to receive from Jolliet a narration of the voyage, as well as a map of the newly-discovered territories.

In order to reconstruct the lost map, Jolliet relied on his memory as he described the voyage of discovery to Father Dablon. During this visit in Québec, he would have met with Jean Baptiste Louis Franquelin, Québec’s leading cartographer, to discuss





Fig. 4. Franquelin/Jolliet map, c. 1675 (SHD Vincennes, R67/39).

drafting a map of suitable quality, replacing the one lost in the river, to present to the Crown. Franquelin combined this new information, bearing on the area south of Green Bay, with the version of Lake Superior and upper Lake Michigan already well delineated by Dablon and Allouez around 1669.<sup>2</sup>

The resultant map (Fig. 4, which we shall call the “Franquelin/Jolliet map”<sup>3</sup>) was in some ways defective; in particular, it located the Mississippi River far to the west of its actual course, and offered little new geographical information. Unlike the Marquette map, this Franquelin map cuts the Mississippi River off at the map’s margin, about 200 miles north of the place where the explorers ended their southward journey and turned back to the north.

When he came to describe the Chicago portage and river mouth, though, Jolliet’s memory was remarkably accurate. He remarked to Dablon that “we could readily sail a ship to Florida [Gulf of Mexico]. One

would merely dig a canal through half a league [about 1.5 miles] of prairie from the lower end of the Lac des Illinois [Lake Michigan] to the river Saint-Louis [Des Plaines and Illinois Rivers].”<sup>4</sup> Jolliet added that “the river seemed to me the most beautiful and the best site for a settlement. The place we entered into the lake is a fine harbor for accomodating vessels and sheltering them from the wind. The river is wide and deep, full of catfish and sturgeon, and there is abundant game for 80 leagues.” Jolliet’s memory of this promising country was also expressed by the precision with which he drew the area, which we have been able to reproduce, thanks to high-definition imagery from Paris.

To assess the accuracy of this part of the map, we reproduce a section from Stephen Long’s map of 1816, held at the National Archives (Fig. 5).<sup>5</sup> This large-scale map contains accurate geographical detail regarding the upper Illinois River and the Desplaines River (which begins at the confluence with the Kankakee

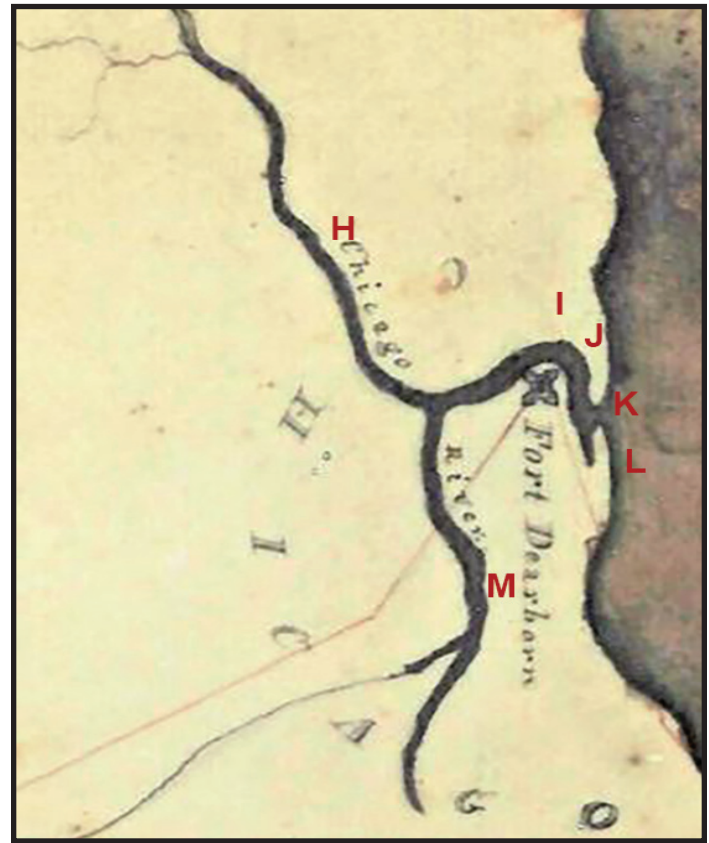
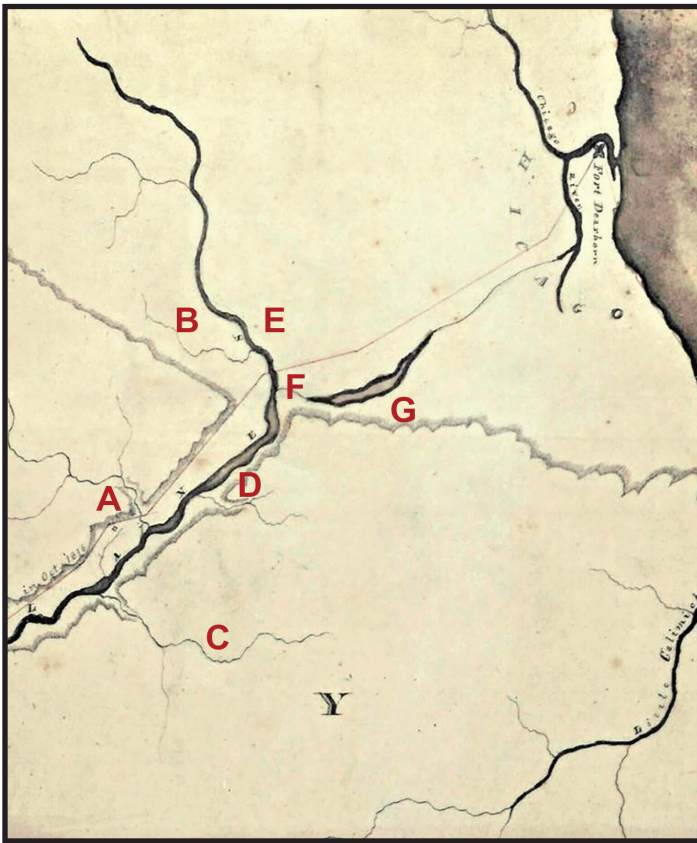


Fig. 5. Section from Stephen Long survey map (1816), with enlarged view of Chicago area at right (National Archives, College Park, Maryland).

River) and the Chicago region. Major Stephen Long, a topographical engineer with the U.S. Army, had received orders in 1816 to conduct a preliminary survey of the water route between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River. He was convinced that “a canal uniting the waters of the Illinois with those of Lake Michigan may be considered of the first importance (for military and commercial purposes) of any in this quarter of the country.”<sup>6</sup> He and his company headed north from St. Louis along the banks of the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers, continuing across the Mud Lake portage, through the Chicago River system and up to Lake Michigan. They surveyed the river courses and prominent geographical features to compile a map that can be compared to the Franquelin/Jolliet map of the same region.

Fig. 6 shows that the Franquelin/Jolliet map coincides closely with the 1816 Long survey. Notice the outlet to Lake Michigan, flanked by two sandspits, and the sharp bend of the Chicago River. Long, by the way, shows the location of the reconstructed

Fort Dearborn. The gap between the spits is relatively large on the Franquelin/Jolliet map, perhaps because the river, extending as far west as the South Branch and Mud Lake, was at flood stage and the Lake Michigan water level was at or near periodic high surface water elevations. (Lake water levels fluctuate seasonally on the order of 12 inches and up to six feet, from low to high, over a period of years.)

The Franquelin/Jolliet map also correctly depicts major Chicago area streams that are tributary to the Illinois River. While not to scale as Major Long shows them, these include the Main Stem, North and South Branches of the Chicago River, the upper and lower reaches of the Des Plaines River, and the modern Salt and Flag Creeks. Jolliet referred to the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers as “rivière Saint-Louis,” and did not name the others. Long identified the Des Plaines and Chicago Rivers by name, but Salt and Flag Creeks had apparently not yet been named.

All in all, Jolliet’s memory of this hitherto un-

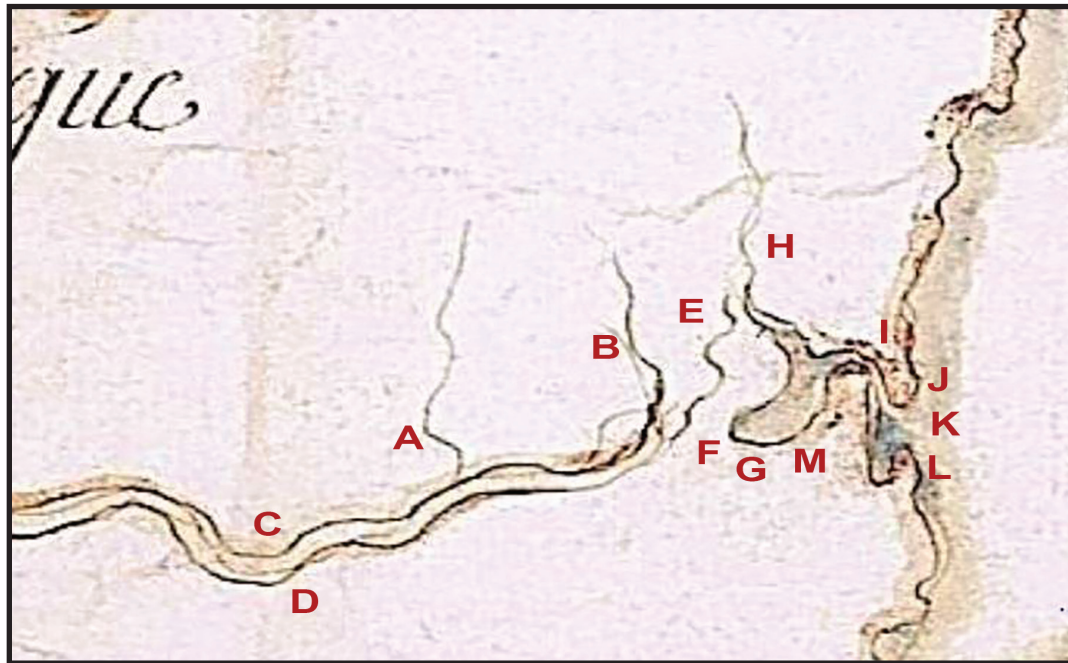


Fig. 6. Comparison of Franquelin/Jolliet with Stephen Long maps.

charted region, through which he had simply passed on his way northwards, then transmitting the cartographic information on to Franquelin, coincides remarkably closely with the early nineteenth-century surveyed delineation of the same area.

#### Legend for Figures 5 and 6

- A: Flag Creek
- B: Salt Creek
- C: Meandering Stream
- D: Des Plaines River (lower reach)
- E: Des Plaines River (upper reach)
- F: Portage
- G: Mud Lake
- H: Chicago River (north branch)
- I: Sharp bend in river
- J: North Sand Spit
- K: River Mouth
- L: South Sand Spit
- M: Chicago River (south branch)

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Jacques Marquette, MS map of the Upper Mississippi River and western Great Lakes, c. 1673 (Jesuit Archives, Montréal).
- <sup>2</sup> Claude Dablon/Claude Allouez (?), "Lac Tracy ou Superieur, avec les Dépendances de la Mission du Saint-Esprit," c. 1668 (Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes, Dép. Marine, Cartes et Plans, R67/76).
- <sup>3</sup> Jean Baptiste Louis Franquelin, *Carte de la découverte du Sieur Jolliet...*, c.1675 (Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes, Dép. Marine, Cartes et Plans, R67/39).
- <sup>4</sup> Claude Dablon, *Relation des années 1672-3*, (Archives de la Province de France, Chantilly, France, Fonds Brotier 155 [Canada -1] 10-13).
- <sup>5</sup> Stephen Long, *Survey Map of Chicago Area*, 1816 (Map P2, RG77, Records of Office of Chief of Engineers, National Archives, College Park, MD).
- <sup>6</sup> "Report of Reconnaissance." 16th Congress, 1st Session, House Ex. Doc. 17, Serial 32, Report of Long to George Graham, Interim Secretary of War, 4 March 1817.

# Rockford Map Publishers, Inc.

Wilbert Stroeve

The November 2017 meeting of the Chicago Map Society featured two gentlemen from Rockford Map Publishers, Charlie Lunn and Brock Alekna. This firm was founded in 1944 and is now the country's leading provider of plat maps and spatial data. They brought along several of their publications, including county plat books that showed land ownership. These books tried to conform as much as possible to a 6x6 square mile section on each page for each county, in accordance with the Public Land Survey System.

Among the items brought for display was a 1957 plat book for Dewitt County (IL) and a 2018 plat book for Woodford County (IL). These clearly showed the early manual map creations as well as the current

GIS-driven and aerial/satellite views. The speakers acknowledged that their printed products are not as frequently sold these days, but their books are nonetheless useful to land owners, genealogists, banks, auctioneers, and oil, gas, and mining companies.

In addition to the county plats, Rockford Map Publishers has developed more specialized map books, featuring canoe trails, snowmobile trails, and camping and fishing sites. Some of these were also on display. Seeing the original Mylar maps that were created and then updated manually, demonstrated the amount of work involved. It was mentioned that the effort to digitize these items was also very labor-intensive, but that it was the investment one had to make in order to be more up-to-date and responsive to changes in the field.

Rockford Map Publishers owns the largest and most comprehensive plat information record of its kind in the country and is recognized as a leading pioneer in the industry. What started as rural farm mapping has now grown to include digital map products, custom mapping services and spatial parcel data throughout the United States.

## Rockford Map Publishers: County Atlases, 1944-2017

Gerald A. Danzer

As my colleague Wilbert described in the article just next door to mine, the CMS heard the story of Rockford Map Publishers, a source for hundreds of rural plat books for counties in the Midwest. These familiar local atlases traditionally had a pedestrian look, using the county as the frame of reference. They were then divided into civil townships, one per atlas page, portrayed at a scale that permitted each farm to be properly circumscribed and labeled with the owner's names. Small tracts and town or village lots were not given; consequently, rural atlases are not truly comprehensive in their coverage and are used primarily to locate individual farms. These, in turn, usually had no street address or even, in many cases, a road with an official name.

County plat books did, however, provide a physical context for the county beyond the lines of the



Fig. 7. Photo Collage of Mr. Lunn and Mr. Alekna's talk, "County Plat Books for the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries." (Photo courtesy of Brock Alekna.)

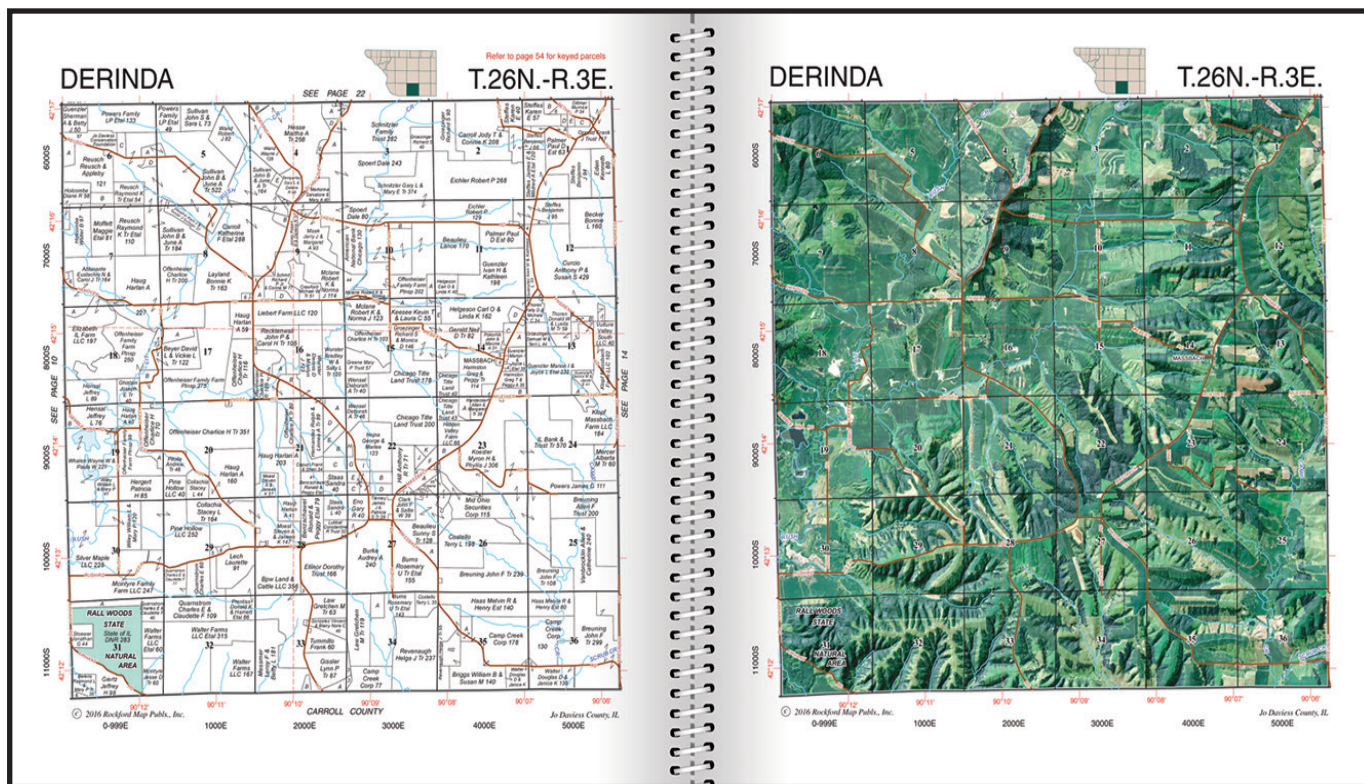


Fig. 8. Inside spread of a township featured in one of Rockford Map Publishers' plat books. The left side depicts the plat map that includes landowner names and parcel boundaries. The right side features the RMP's new facing-page 3D aerial maps, which are created by taking digital elevation model data (DEM) and merging it with aerial imagery to create a textured, 3D aerial image. (Photo and descriptions courtesy of Brock Alekna.)

township and range system. They marked roads and railroads, located schools, churches, and other landmarks, and traced water courses. By placing particular farms in the context of local environmental factors, and by systematically providing identical coverage for adjoining counties, these commonplace publications found a significant place in the rural culture of the twentieth-century Midwest.

Rockford Map Publishers has three important stories to tell, given its position as the last of the major publishers of this genre of map books. First, one must note the enduring popularity of these simple, county-based directories. In their experiences in both production and marketing respectively, the meeting's speakers Charlie Lunn and Brock Alekna emphasized a continuing demand for paper maps. These maps are important for providing an overview of local conditions, including sufficient detail, and appearing in a traditional format that is attractive to a wide variety of consumers.

A second important theme of this presentation

was how the production of these maps has changed over the course of the last half-century, from the personally gathered data and hand-drawn examples, to the GIS-informed and digitally-based productions of today's company. Over the course of the company's existence, aerial photography became an important tool, initially for drawing the maps, but today it provides a companion image to appear side-by-side with a traditional cadastral map. One end result of the digital revolution was to multiply the company's assets, creating an instantly available archive that could provide governmental units, utility companies, realtors, and others with up-to-date digital images in return for a substantial income beyond that which now accompanies traditional paper atlases.

The last important thought, which presumably ran through the minds of many in the audience, was the great resource that the farm plat books present to family and community historians, genealogists, people interested in the local environment, and anyone who is fascinated

by how local conditions change over time. Thus one does not need to explain why the Newberry Library is interested in collecting these atlases, or why the evening's presentation was so warmly received by the audience.

Rockford Map Publishers continues a long tradition of this Illinois city serving as a center for county farm atlas publishing. William W. Hixson founded the most celebrated of these firms in 1898, issuing hundreds—or possibly thousands—of “Hixson atlases” before his death in 1952. His efforts more or less standardized the format and scope of these atlases, at least for the Midwest, including an unfortunate reluctance to place a date of publication on each imprint. Other notable Rockford firms issuing similar atlases include the Thrift Press in the 1920s and Paul Baldwin and Sons in the 1960s.

Compared to Hixson, no publisher rivaled his output until Rockford Map Publishers reached its zenith in the 1970s, when it had over five hundred atlases in print. These atlases covered almost all the counties in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Iowa, as well as reached out to Missouri, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, South Dakota, Idaho, Alabama, and West Virginia.

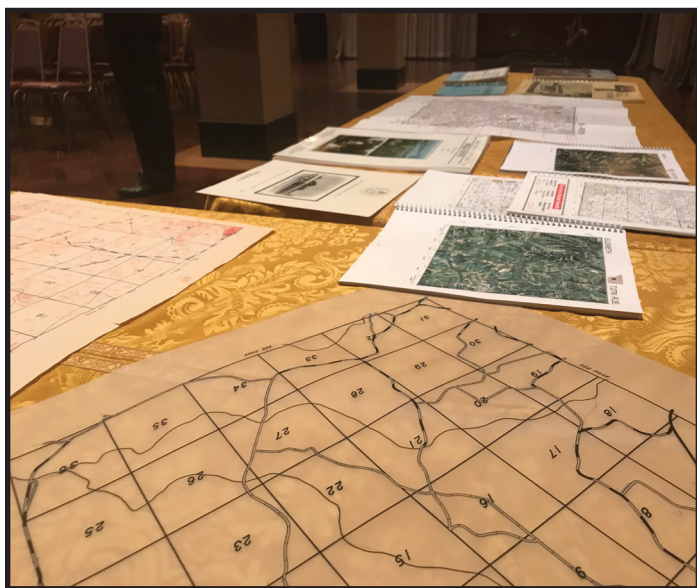


Fig. 9. Table display of materials created by Rockford Map Publishers. (Photo courtesy of Brock Alekna.)

## Smith Center News

### New Acquisition: An Annotated Map

James Akerman

The hundreds of thousands of maps the Newberry Library preserves in its collections were not made to sit around in a library. They were made, of course, to be used: to be consulted to solve some geographical puzzle, teach history and geography, plan the expansion of a city, help someone find their way, or be admired as a work of art. We can learn much about how a map was used, or at least intended to be used, by carefully interrogating a map and its various contexts. Printed maps, however, rarely tell us much about the individuals who actually used them. For this reason, we are always on the lookout for maps that bear the marks of actual use, especially those in the form of annotations.

Maps used for travel are a particularly rich source for such annotations. We recently acquired a road map of England and Wales by Thomas Kitchin published in London in 1770 by Robert Sayer (Fig. 10), one of the leading British map publishers of the late eighteenth century. It is in all respects a typical road map of its day, showing the road distances and routes between major cities and towns. The publisher cut the printed map into sections and backed it with linen, making it both portable and durable. Its owner has carefully inscribed in ink a rambling route from London, north to Edinburgh, and back again. An itinerary at right lists several places visited with dates, from June 25 to August 27, 1777. Two ships off each coast seem to have been added as decorative flourishes. The author of the annotations is surely one of four companions identified as “R Gurney, I M Fisher, D Springal, D Lindoe, comittes.”

A journey of such length and expense would have likely been undertaken by persons of a certain financial means. The inscription “comittes,” which is a slight corruption of the Latin word for “companions” (*comites*), suggests that the companions were well-educated. Perhaps these were four young men, maybe school companions, off on a summer's adventure.



Fig. 10. Thomas Kitchin, *Kitchin's most accurate map of the roads of England and Wales* (1770). The Newberry Library, Map2F G5751.P2 1770 .K58

# The Graff Online Collection

James Akerman

The Newberry Library's inventory of digital resources and publications, most of them free for use and download, is rapidly expanding. If you haven't checked them out lately, you should, at <https://www.newberry.org/digital-resources-and-publications>.

The library is especially pleased to announce the launch of the digital archive of the Everett D. Graff Collection of Western Americana. Here you can explore more than 130,000 digitized images from this renowned collection, documenting America's westward expansion. Topics covered include narratives from explorers, pioneers, hunters, traders, and prospectors; ac-



Fig. 11. Humphrey Phelps, Ornamental map of the United States & Mexico (1846). The Newberry Library, Map6F G3700 1847 .P5



Fig. 12. US General Land Office, *Map of the bounty lands in Illinois Territory* (1818). The Newberry Library, VAULT broadside Graff 1505

counts of the Mormon treks of 1846 and 1849, the California gold rush, and overland travel during the 19th century; the development of transcontinental railroads; the growth of Western city and town life; and the history and culture of Native Americans. Maps abound!

For an introduction to the collection, you can browse selections at <http://publications.newberry.org/graff>, or view the entire collection of Graff printed books at Internet Archive or Graff manuscript content at CARLI Digital Collections.

This has long been one of our favorite of the library's collections, including many hundreds of maps published separately or in pamphlets and books relating to the Midwest and West. We reproduce two here from those that are now online.



## The Newberry's New Open Access Policy

The Newberry Library is pleased to announce a major revision to its policy regarding the re-use of collection images: From now on, images derived from the Newberry's collection are available without licensing or permissions fees owed to the library.

This new policy, which emerges from the Newberry's ongoing commitment to access, applies to everything from the pictures that researchers take in the library reading rooms, to the 1.7 million high-resolution Newberry images currently online.

In adopting this open access policy, we're hoping to eliminate critical roadblocks to scholarly research and publication, while encouraging everyone to use and share collection images more freely as they develop new scholarship or creative work.

For more information, please visit our website devoted to rights and reproductions issues: <https://www.newberry.org/rights-and-reproductions-faqs>.

## Midwestern Road Maps and Travel Ephemera Project

James Akerman, Martha Briggs, and  
Alice Schreyer

In the summer of 2017, the Newberry Library received a grant from the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation for a pilot project to arrange and describe the portion of its general travel ephemera collection relating to the American Midwest and adjacent parts of Canada. Work on the project began in the fall under the supervision of the Newberry's Department of Maps and Modern Manuscripts. This ephemera consists primarily of an assortment of maps and travel promotional brochures, most relating to twentieth-century automobile travel.

Since its founding, The Newberry has been an important repository of maps, books, and manuscripts relating to the history of travel. This collecting strength has sharpened since the 1940s with the acquisitions of the archives of three major American

railroad companies and the Graff collection of Western Americana, which includes many books, pamphlets, and maps related to tourism and migration. Since the 1980s the library has added the archives of the "big three" of American road map publishing, Rand McNally, H. M. Gousha, and the General Drafting Company, as well the archives of several smaller publishers. It has also received collections of official state highway and motor club maps, and subject, geographical, and topical collections of travel maps, guidebooks, and ephemera formed by individuals.

We estimate the Newberry's entire holding of twentieth-century road map, guidebook, road atlas, and related travel ephemera collections at about 250,000 items. The Newberry's online catalogue includes some 14,000 individual records of road maps and travel ephemera, possibly the largest number of such records online anywhere. However, producing individual item-level records of the entire, growing corpus of these materials would require many years and would not serve potential users well. We decided, instead, to process and describe the remaining ephemera and maps according to the best practices of modern archival work. As a test of this approach, in 2016 and 2017 a recently acquired collection of maps published by the famous French tire and travel company Pneu Michelin was processed and described by Map Cataloger and Reference Librarian Patrick Morris, under the guidance of Manuscripts and Archives Librarian Alison Hinderliter. The finding aid for this collection may be found online at [https://mms.newberry.org/xml/xml\\_files/Michelin.xml](https://mms.newberry.org/xml/xml_files/Michelin.xml).

The Delmas grant represents a second pilot approach to this work, in which we are developing procedures for processing and making accessible large volumes of travel ephemera. This material constitutes a great historical record of recent American travel, but it is mostly poorly sorted and not described and organized in an inventory or finding aid available online. Since October 2017, Processing Assistant Elizabeth Richardson has been busily sorting and housing ephemera following geographical and topical protocols developed by Processing Archivist Catherine Grandgeorge. Richardson has already processed 90% of the Midwestern materials and will be moving on to other parts of the United States and Canada soon.



Fig. 13. Travel brochure for Chicago (Sinclair) service stations (c. 1925). Rand McNally Collection (Newberry Library).

A finding aid to these Midwestern materials will be published online upon completion of the work. In due course, we will seek funding that will allow us to process the remaining road map archives, including full catalogue records for several thousand guidebooks published by Rand McNally, the American Automobile Association, and others. Interested parties should also consult our online catalogue for extensive holdings of guidebooks forming part of the Roger Baskes Collection of maps, atlases, and books.

## Upcoming CMS Events

Thursday, June 21, 2018

*The Shogun's World: Japanese Maps from the 18th & 19th Centuries*

Speaker: Richard Pegg

Location: The Barry MacLean Collection, Green Oaks, Ill.

## A Note from Conservation: The Rosaccio Map

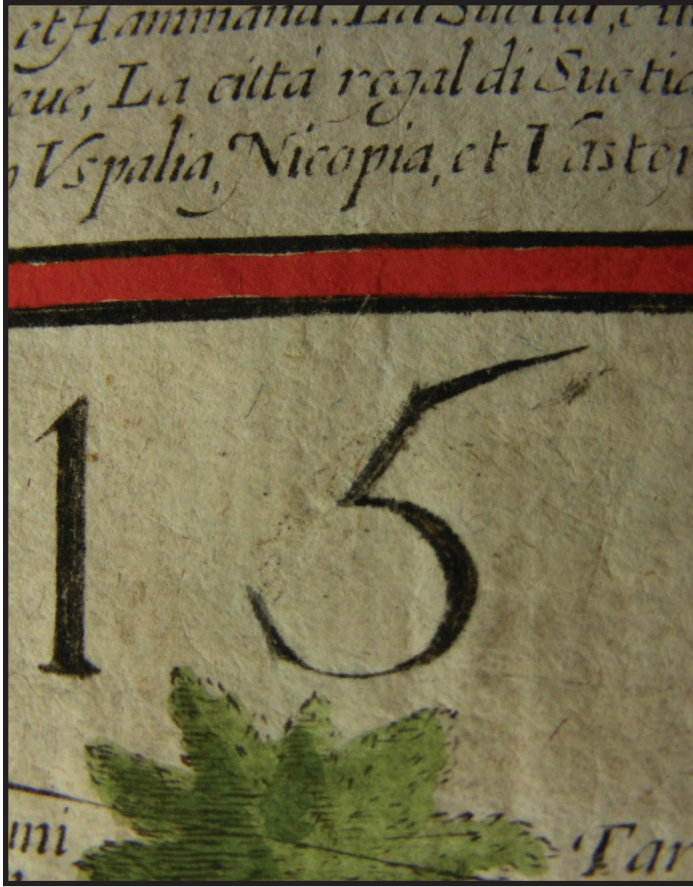


Fig. 14. Close-up views of the numbers “5” and “9” on Rosaccio, *Universale Descrizione di Tutto il Mondo*. (Images courtesy of Lesa Dowd.)

In our Summer 2017 issue of *Mapline* (no. 126), we brought you “Not a Date with an Angel: the Rosaccio World Map of 1597/1647,” written by David Buisseret and Arthur Holzheimer. Detailing *Universale descrizione di tutto il Mondo*, this piece discussed the various copies of the map, housed at institutions including the Library of Congress, Harry Ransom Center at Austin, Texas, Harvard Map Library, and Newberry Library.

Since the publication of this article, Lesa Dowd, Director of Conservation at The Newberry, has continued her careful examination of the map’s rather sketchy date. As Buisseret and Holzheimer explained, Ms. Dowd confirmed that the date on the Newberry’s copy of the map had been changed from “1647” to a date of a fresh edition of “1597.” The “1” and the “7”

of The Newberry’s copy are visibly darker and thicker than the “5” and the “9.”

Close-up photographs of the “5” and “9” clearly expose the scratching out of the previously printed numerals. While UV examination did not reveal any new information, microscopic examination at 100x and 200x confirmed a physical manipulation of the date. These microscopic examinations showed a clear distinction between later manuscript ink (alongside the printing ink at the top of the “5”).

To date, the later manuscript ink has been tested for iron content, concluding it was not early iron gall ink. It is suspected to be twentieth-century ink, but confirmation would require further testing.

First issued in 1976, *Mapline* is co-published by the Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography and the Chicago Map Society, both of which are housed at The Newberry in Chicago. *Mapline* serves to keep its readers informed of each organization's work, including their publications and sponsored events. More generally, *Mapline* is devoted to advancing knowledge of the history of cartography by reporting events, ideas, and issues in the field. In addition to printing short articles reflecting current research, it functions as a bulletin to announce recent acquisitions to the cartographic collections at The Newberry. It also contains brief reports on conferences, exhibitions, societies, and lectures beyond The Newberry.

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***Save the Date!***  
***The 20<sup>th</sup> Kenneth Nebenzahl, Jr., Lectures in the History of Cartography***  
***November 7-9, 2019***  
***The Newberry Library***

Since 1966, the Nebenzahl Lectures have been dedicated to exploring promising new themes and lines of research in the study of the science, art, and culture of mapmaking. Each series consists of several lectures given by a small group of invited scholars whose work addresses the theme of that year's series. The collected lectures of most series have been published by the University of Chicago Press. The lectures are free and open to the public; however, registration is required. For details on the Nebenzahl Lectures, see [www.newberry.org/past-nebenzahl-lectures](http://www.newberry.org/past-nebenzahl-lectures).



**The Chicago Map Society** is the oldest map society in North America, and has held monthly meetings at The Newberry since 1976. We typically meet the third Thursday of every month during the academic year (September through June). Meetings start at 5:30 p.m. with a social half-hour, followed by an hour presentation on a cartographic subject of interest to our membership.

**President:** Robert A. Holland



**The Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography** was founded in 1972 to advance knowledge of the history of cartography and to promote the use of the Newberry's cartographic collections. Among the many programs it sponsors to achieve these goals are institutes and seminars, research fellowships, exhibitions, workshops for educators and public historians, public lecture series, and a variety of print and electronic publications.

**Director:** James R. Akerman