

HOUSE GIVEN TO CAPTAIN BIRD

I, Arent Scuyler De Peyster Commanding the Kings or eighth Regiment, and the Posts occupied by it, on the different communications; By the authority in me vested, as a means of improving the appearances in the front of the Fortifications and grand Parade, by improving and cultivating the ground adjacent bounding the Town of Detroit to the North West Do Grant, by these Presents, unto Captⁿ Henry Bird²⁴ of Kings or eighth Reg^t and unto his Heirs or assigns forever, a Lot of ground begining at the N.W. end of S^t Honore Street,²⁵ and on the east side; continuing in a line with said street as far as the Run or ditch which terminates the Grand Parade; then turning towards the East,

²⁴ Henry Bird received a commission as lieutenant, Oct. 3, 1764. Four years later he was assigned to the Eighteenth Regiment, and May 11, 1778, was promoted to the rank of captain. W. C. Ford, *British Officers Serving in the American Revolution 1774-1783* (Brooklyn, 1897), 28. A considerable account of his military career is given by William Renwick Riddell in his *Old Province Tales, Upper Canada* (Toronto, 1920), 4 ff., and numerous documents concerning him are found in the *Mich. Pio. Colls.* Riddell characterizes Bird as "one of the most active and efficient officers in the British service." He came to Detroit from Niagara in the autumn of 1778. The garrison at Detroit was then expecting an attack by Colonel Brodhead, and, deeming the existing fort on the water-front wholly indefensible, the construction of the new Fort Lernoult, at the intersection of Fort and Shelby Streets, was hastily begun. In the absence from Detroit of the regular engineer officer, Captain Bird laid out and planned the new fortification. About the same time the Americans were building Fort Laurens on the upper Ohio as an outpost in their progress toward Detroit. In the spring of 1779, therefore, Bird was sent to take post at Sandusky, where he organized a force which laid siege to Fort Laurens and brought about its abandonment by the Americans. During this period he exhibited his humanity by interceding with his red allies who were about to torture a prisoner, and cursing them when they ignored his plea for mercy. The following year (1780) Bird headed an expedition which raided the Kentucky settlements, and carried off the inhabitants of Martin's and Ruddell's stations. See *Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet*, Vol. IV, No. 2. The manuscript list and pay roll of the Detroit volunteers who went on this expedition is contained in the ledger of Macomb, Edgar, and Macomb, now in the Burton Hist. Coll. At the close of the Revolution, Bird and several others, chiefly army officers, obtained from the natives a grant of land seven miles square at the mouth of Detroit River. Bird's portion was on the present site of Amherstburg, and a manuscript in the Burton Hist. Coll. shows that he paid William Lee for clearing sixteen acres of this land by assigning to him a "wench" named Esther, who had fallen to his share in the division of the plunder taken at Martin's Station in 1780. A document in the Askin Papers shows that in 1796 Captain Bird was living in retirement in England on half-pay, and that he then intended to return to America. He subsequently joined the Fifty-fourth Regiment and assisted in crushing the Irish rebellion. He then joined the expedition to Egypt, where he died in 1801. See, in addition to references already cited, *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XXIII and XXIV, *passim*.

²⁵ St. Honore Street began in front of the fort and ran thence to the river. Its nearest approximation today would be Shelby Street north of Fort.