

OWNERSHIP OF DETROIT COMMONS

To the Honorable Governor & Judges
of the Territory of Michigan

The Memorial of the Subscribers, in behalf of their Fellow
Citizens of the Town of Detroit; Humbly Sheweth;

That your Honors were authorised by an Act of Congress
of 21st April 1806 to lay out a Town, including the *whole* of
the old Town of Detroit, and Ten Thousand acres adjacent,
excepting certain Military reserves.

That your Memorialists were proprietors in the old Town
of Detroit on the 11th June 1805, and were found by your
Honors, in full possession of the Detroit commons,⁵⁵ extend-
ing two miles back from the Detroit River, under a Law of
the United States late Government of the North West
Territory, entitled "An Act to incorporate the Town of
Detroit" passed by the House of Representatives and
Council of said Territory, and approved by His Excelency
Arthur S^t Clair Governor of the same on the 18th January
1802, enacted when your Memorialists were a component
part thereof, under the second grade of Government
authorised by the Ordinance of Congress of the 13th July
1787. Consequently the old Town of Detroit at the time
Congress passed the aforesaid Act of 1806 comprehended
the said Commons, and made a part and parcel thereof.

Your Memorialists under this idea, set on foot a petition
to your Honorable Body last year, which was lately read
in open Session, but was not referred to a Committee to
make a report on its merits, as is the usual practice of all
Legislative Bodies, nor has the question as yet, been taken
on the Subject; *which consequently is still open for investiga-
tion.*

Your Memorialists further beg leave to remark that their
right to the Detroit Commons has been strengthened by the
5th Section of the Act of Congress of the 3^d March 1805,
which recognises the principle of possession and occupancy,
prior to, and since the 1st July 1796, and that an Entry in
Conformity to said Act was made with the Commissioners

⁵⁵ A history of the public domain at Detroit is given in Farmer, *Hist. of Detroit*, 24 ff.
The present document has been printed in *Mich. Pio. Colls.*, XXXVI, 236-39. The original
manuscript (here printed) is preserved among the Askin papers.