

A printed broadside dated at Detroit, January 26, 1790. A query for bibliographers and historians, accompanied by facsimile of the broadside by Douglas C. McMurtrie.
Detroit

A PRINTED BROADSIDE

dated at Detroit, January 26, 1790

A Query for Bibliographers and Historians, accompanied by Facsimile of the broadside *By Douglas C. McMurtrie*

Detroit: Designed and Printed by Students of the Department of Printing Cass Technical High School 1942

REPRODUCED herewith is a printed broadside dated from "Detroit, 26th January 1790" which is preserved in the Manuscript Division of the New York State Library at Albany. The question of where and by whom it was printed presents a problem which is by no means easy of solution.

¶ Only two alternatives seem open to consideration. Either Leith and Shepherd, whose names are signed to the broadside, had access to a press somewhere within the immediate field of their operations, which apparently was shipping on the two lakes, Erie and Huron; or the material for this broadside had to be sent a very considerable distance for printing at some point with which the firm was in contact.

¶ In 1790 the printing point which was nearest to Detroit in air-line distance was Pittsburgh, about 200 miles away. Only about 25 miles more remote was Lexington, Kentucky. Other than at these two points, there was no press in operation in 1790 short of the Hudson River, an air-line distance of about 450 miles. Someone who knows much more than I about such matters can better estimate what such distances meant, in those days, in terms of the time required for communication between Detroit and those points.

¶ The other alternative is much more interesting. Was there a press at or near Detroit or Michilimackinac in 1790? We have no indisputable record of printing done at Detroit earlier than 1796, when John McCall is known to have printed there. But there is a report that there was a press at Detroit as early as 1785. Silas Farmer, in his *History of Detroit and Michigan*, tells of a letter in a manuscript letter book of Alexander and William Macomb—the present location of which is unfortunately not known—which acknowledges the receipt of a printing press. This communication, dated in 1785 and addressed to a correspondent in London, complains that no instructions were

received for the use of the press or for putting it together. Up to the present time there has been no evidence that this Macomb press was ever put together and used—unless it was this equipment which John McCall used ten or eleven years later.

¶ It would be tempting to surmise that the Macomb equipment was in use at Detroit in 1790 for the printing, at least, of the Leith and Shepherd broadside and that it later came into the possession of John McCall. But a careful examination of the types known to have been used by McCall, in comparison with the types of the broadside, discloses that the two typefaces, although superficially similar, are not of the same design. If the Macombs actually had printing equipment and if the 1790 broadside was printed with it, then John McCall must have obtained his types from some other source. If, on the other hand, McCall used types which had previously belonged to the Macomb equipment, then the broadside was printed with types from a source which has not yet been identified.

¶ There is a tradition that the French Jesuit missionary, Father Jonois, imported a press and printing materials from France about 1750 and therewith printed a Bible in the Ottawa language at a place called Arbre Croche—in the vicinity, I believe, of Cross Village, in Emmett County, Michigan, not far from the Straits of Mackinac. No concrete evidence of the existence of such a press is known to me, and the tradition is altogether too slight a basis for supposing that a press somewhere near the Straits was available for printing the Leith and Shepherd broadside.

¶ The types of the broadside are considerably worn and the typography is mediocre. It was hardly the work of a well-equipped and efficient printing office. So the question is still open: Where and by whom was this broadside printed?

Gift Author July 24, 1942

Transport on LAKES ERIE and HURON.

LEITH and SHEPHERD hereby give notice to the Public, that the New Schooner the Nancy launched last November, will ply the ensuing season between Detroit and Fort Erie, and occasionally go to Michilimakinac when freight presents.—That no misapprehension may arise respecting the mode of ascertaining the bulkage, it is subjoined.—The rate of Freight over Lake Erie, will be fifteen Shillings New York Currency, equal to nine Shillings and four pence half penny Quebec Currency, for a barrel bulk; and two Shillings New York Currency, or one Shilling and three pence Quebec, per cubic or solid foot, for goods to be estimated by measurement.—Freight from Detroit to Micilimakinac at the rate as four Shillings New York Currency, or two Shillings and six pence Quebec Currency, for a bushel of Corn; and six Shillings New-York, or three Shillings and nine pence Quebec Currency, for a quintal of Flour.—Other goods the same as over Lake Erie.—Packs over each Lake, not measuring more

than five feet, or exceeding 120lbs. in weight, four Sillings New York Currency, or two Shillings and six pence Quebec Currency, per pack.

As this Vessel is constructed for fast sailing, and will be most complete in every respect; the safety and expedition attending Transport in her must be obvious—

Schedule of Packages computable by Barrel Bulk.

Barrel Bulk.

Puncheons not exceeding 120 Gallons, 3 ½.

Porter Hogsheads, 2

Wine ditto. 2

Casks and Barrels of 32 or not exceeding 36 Gallons, 1

Soap 3 Boxes of 1 Cwt. each, 1

Candles 5 ditto of 50lbs. each, 1

Shot 3 ditto of 1 Cwt. each, 1

Iron in Bars 3 Cwt. 1

Do. in Sheets, 1

Stoves Single, 1

Do. Double, 2

Gunpowder 2 whole barrels 100lbs. each, 1

Barrels of Pork ordinary size. 4 Barrels for 3

Kegs of 8 to 9. Gallons, for Kegs, 1

Oil in Jars of 3 ½ Gallons, 6 Jars, 1



Paint in Rundlets, 8 of 28lbs. each, 1

All other Goods to be measured and reduced to Cubic or Solid feet.

LEITH and SHEPHERD.

Detroit, 26 th January 1790.