Although the city of Ann Arbor has now become synonymous with the University of Michigan, the University’s sprawling and verdant campus had a humble predecessor: a two-story schoolhouse on the corner of Bates and Congress Streets in Detroit, Michigan.¹

Originally named the Catholepistemiad, or University of Michigania, this fledgling institution

was written into being on August 26th, 1817 by Judge Augustus B. Woodward, twenty years prior to Michigan’s achievement of statehood. This essay offers a brief historical overview of the University’s origins in Detroit, as well as suggestions for further research on this fascinating and crucial period.

To fully contextualize the founding of the Catholepistemiad, one must venture even further back in time to 1787—shortly after the writing of the Declaration of Independence. Great Britain had ceded to the general government a stretch of land reaching from the Pennsylvania line and the Ohio River on the east and south to the Mississippi River on the west. Known as the Northwest Territory, this land was anchored by the city of Detroit, which was the largest city in the territory at that time. When the general government accepted the Northwest Territory, they drew up a declaration in respect to it, which was later adopted by the Congress of the Confederation on July 13, 1787. In this act, commonly known as the “Ordinance of 1787,” one of the key provisions declared, “schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” Many scholars reference this covenant as early evidence of Michigan’s dedication to public systems of education. Further, in this same year, the New England Ohio Company purchased a large swath of land, and to this company was given two townships explicitly identified for the endowment of a university.

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3 The general government established under the Articles of Confederation.
4 William Ambrose Spill, University of Michigan: Beginnings (Lansing: Michigan historical commission, 1929), 5–6
5 “Northwest Ordinance,” July 13, 1787 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M332, roll 9); Miscellaneous Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774—1789, quoted in Charles Kendall Adams, Historical Sketch of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1876), 1.
In 1805, when Michigan became an organized incorporated territory of the United States, it was granted one township of land for a seminary of learning. Father Gabriel Richard, a prominent educator and leader of the Catholic population in Detroit, soon began encouraging the Governor and Judges of the Territory to follow through with the Congressional grant. Augustus Brevoord Woodward, the first Chief Justice of the Territory of Michigan, echoed his calls for a system of education and proposed a resolution along these lines, although little was done to fulfill their vision. At this time the Michigan Territory was still highly contested, with the British struggling for control of the territory. With the War of 1812 it temporarily became, at least in name, a part of the Province of Upper Canada. Peace was not resumed until 1813, when General Lewis Cass became the civil governor of the territory. In 1814, William Woodbridge, appointed by President James Madison, became Secretary of the Territory.

Given a moment of respite from war, the territory of Michigan was finally primed for the establishment of an educational system. Father Gabriel Richard had not ceased his calls for a seminary of learning, and was now joined by the young Reverend John Monteith, a recent graduate of the Princeton seminary and future Protestant leader of Detroit. At the time, the population of Detroit approximated 1200 and was primarily anchored by the fur trade. In 1817, the Territorial government began to formulate a system of education to serve the Territorial capitol. Along with Richard and Monteith, Lewis Cass, Augustus Woodward, and William Woodbridge devised an educational plan for Michigan.  

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8 Ibid., 8.
9 Ibid., 10.
Judge Woodward, described by many as a learned and eccentric man, drafted the act establishing the “Catholepistemiad, or University, of Michigania” in 1817. The act bore the mark of Woodward’s own classification systems of knowledge and quasi-Greek coinages (Catholepistemiad itself roughly translating to “universal science” or “universal knowledge”), and described the structure and setup of the University as follows:

The catholepistemiad, or university, of Michigania shall be composed of thirteen didaxiim or professorships: first, a didaxia, or professorship, of catholepistemia, or universal science, the didactor, or professor, of which shall be president of the institution; second, a didaxia, or professorship, of anthropoglossica, or literature; embracing all the epistemium, or sciences, relative to language; third, a didaxia, or professorship, of mathematica, or mathematics; fourth, a didaxia, or professorship, of physiognostica, or natural history; fifth, a didaxia, or professorship, of physostophica, or natural history, fifth, a didaxia, or professorship, or physiosophica, or natural philosophy; sixth, a didaxia, or professorship, of astronomia, or astronomy; seventh, a didaxia, or professorship, of chymia, or chemistry; eighth, a didaxia, or professorship, of iatrica, or medical sciences; ninth, a didaxia, or professorship, of zconomica, or economical sciences; tenth, a didaxia, or professorship, of ethica, or ethical[1] sciences; eleventh, a didaxia, or professorship, of polemitactica, or military sciences; twelfth, a didaxia, or professorship, of diegeticia, or historical sciences; and thirteenth, a didaxi [a] or professorship of ennoica, or intellectual sciences, embracing all the epistemium, or sciences, relative to the minds of animals, to the human mind, to spiritual existences, to the deity, and to religion, the didactor, or professor, of which shall be vice president [t] of the institution. The didactors, or professors, shall be appointed and commissioned by the Governor. There shall be paid, from the treasury of Michigan, in quarterly payments, to the president of the institution, the vice-president, and to each didactor, or professor, an annual salary, to be, from time to time, ascertained by law. 11

As argued by historian Howard A. Peckham, Judge Woodward was forging new ground in the establishment of this system, which drew heavily from the French and Prussian models of education. Part of his dedication to public and secular education, which the act emphasizes, can be traced to his close friendship with Thomas Jefferson. Peckham notes that Woodward departs significantly from eastern U.S. universities in several regards. 12 First, while the universities on the East Coast practiced a classical curriculum marked by ancient languages, classics, religion, philosophy, and ancient history, Woodward emphasized

12 Peckham, The Making of the University of Michigan, 6—7.
science and introduced economics in his act, a bold move at the time. Second, in Peckham’s words, the university was “not to be an isolated tower of learning, but the capstone of a statewide educational system which it would supervise.”\textsuperscript{13} The president and professors were given power “to establish colleges, academies, schools, libraries, museums, athenaeums, botanic gardens, laboratories…and to appoint instructors and instructrices in, among, and throughout the various countries, cities, towns, townships, and other geographical divisions of Michigan.”\textsuperscript{14} This structure, which conferred much authority to the “didactors” and president of the University, is reminiscent of the French model that achieved high standards for all schools by establishing the university as a center of control.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 6.
\item\textsuperscript{14} Augustus B. Woodward, “An Act to Establish the Catholepistemiad, or University, of Michigania” (1837).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Third, the university was a nonsectarian system, marking a radical departure from other colleges and universities at the time, which were largely under boards of churchmen and funded through specific denominations. This was reflected in the leadership of the University, which was headed by Reverend John Monteith, a Protestant minister, and Father Gabriel Richard, a Catholic pastor of St. Anne’s Church. In the act drafted by Woodward

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the university was primarily directed by its professors, which, as Peckham notes, further oriented it towards scholarship.\footnote{16}{Ibid., 6.}

Lastly, this educational system was to be supported through public funding, with the act calling for a fifteen percent increase in taxation rates.\footnote{17}{Ibid., 6—7.} Primary schools would be free of cost, and higher education would be available at a low tuition rate. Clearly, this plan carried out the notion of universal secular education proposed by Thomas Jefferson and also reflected the structure of education known as the French or Prussian system. As opposed to Harvard, Yale, and other elite bastions of learning, the “Prussian System” was defined by free access to schools under state supervision, and was comprised of three levels of schooling: primary, secondary, and university. This system stood in opposition to the English system of learning, which preserved its elite classes by denying the “common people” the fruits of higher education. In the act to establish the Catholepistemiad, education was imagined as a (nearly) free and democratic enterprise—a daring move at the time.\footnote{18}{Shelby Brewer Schurtz, The First Twenty Years; the Early History of the University of Michigan in Detroit, Founded August 26, 1817,” \emph{Michigan History Magazine} 19, no. 1 (1935): 4—7.} Many have speculated that this draft, shared with Thomas Jefferson, served as inspiration for the structure of the University of Virginia.

On August 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1817, the act to establish the Catholepistemiad, or university, of Michigania, was signed into law by Judge Woodward, Judge John Griffin, and acting governor William Woodbridge, as Lewis Cass was away from Detroit on business. Another act, passed the same day, fixed the salaries of its employees as follows: President, $25, Vice-President, $18.75, Professors, $12.50, instructors and instructri, $25 each.\footnote{19}{Charles Irish Walker, “A Brief History of the University of Michigan,” 1869.} John Monteith
was granted the presidency and seven didaxiim, or professorships, and Father Gabriel Richard was named vice-president and granted the other six didaxiim. The seven professorships accepted by Monteith were as follows: that of Universal science, Literature, Natural History, Chemistry, Economical science, Ethical Science and Historical science. Richard accepted the professorships of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Medical science, Military science, and Intellectual science. Shortly thereafter, Monteith and Richard established public primary schools in Detroit, Monroe, and Mackinac Island (then called Michilimackinac). They also determined their course of instruction, which included reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar and elocution, and the books to be used, which were Murray’s grammar, spelling book, and English reader, Walker’s elocution and dictionary, and the Holy Scripture. They also established a Classical Academy in Detroit, course of instruction for which included education in the “French, Latin, and Greek Languages, Antiquity, English Grammar, Composition, Elocution, Mathematicks, Geography, Morals and Ornamental accomplishments” (Records of the University of Michigan). Finally, they appointed a treasurer and register, and named a board of trustees and visitors.

September 24th, 1817 marked the laying of the first cornerstone on the aforementioned Bates and Congress Streets, across the street from St. Anne’s Church. They received donations (listed as “subscriptions” in the primary documentation) of $180 from the Territory, $200 from William Woodbridge to be paid over four years, $180 from James Connor to be paid over three years, $250 from merchant James Abbott to be paid over ten years, $300 from John R. Williams, $180 from Abraham Edward, $150 from

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20 John Monteith, Letter to William Woodbridge accepting several Commissions of Professorships (1817).
21 John Monteith, “An Act Prescribing the Course of Instruction in Primary Schools” (1817).
22 Walker, “A Brief History of the University of Michigan.”
Solomon Sibley, and $250 from the Masonic Lodge Zion No. 1, of which Judge Woodward himself was a member. Five days later, on September 29th, 1817, Governor Cass conducted the Treaty of Fort Meigs, through which the Native American tribes of the Ohio Valley ceded the rest of their land to the United States. In this agreement, six sections of land, or 3840 acres, were handed over. Half was allotted to St. Anne's church and the other half went to “the new college at Detroit.” On October 3rd the college of Detroit was established and deemed “The First College of Michigania”; however, no one in the territory was sufficiently prepared to enter it. As such, the predecessor to the University of Michigan, deemed the University of Michigania, never offered instruction at the college level.

The classical academy and primary school, however, were active in their instruction. In a diary entry dated June 10th, 1818, John Monteith writes of “three pious young men” who served as instructors: John J. Deming, Hugh M. Dickey, and Lemuel Shattuck. Hugh M. Dickey, the first teacher in the Classical Department, arrived on January 29, 1818. Like Monteith, he was a graduate of Jefferson College, Pennsylvania. Later that year, on June 10th, Lemuel Shattuck arrived to direct the Primary Department, which he taught using the Lancasterian system. A respected and well-liked instructor, Shattuck stayed with the school until his resignation on December 3rd, 1821.

1821 marked the end of the Catholepistemiad, at least in its current incarnation. The Territorial act of April 30, 1821 was passed (“An Act for the Establishment of a University”), repealing the earlier act and establishing an institution “to be called the

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23 Peckham, The Making of the University of Michigan, 7.
24 Ibid., 7—8.
25 John Monteith, diaries, 1808—1819.
26 Walker, “A Brief History of the University of Michigan.”
University of Michigan” in Detroit. Some speculate that the change came about due to the baroque nature of the name “Cathopistemiad,” which was subject to much ridicule. No longer the primary authorities at the school, Monteith and Richards lost their positions as President and Vice-President, and were replaced by a Board of Trustees, which both were invited to join. Richard elected to accept the position, whereas Monteith left in the summer of 1821 for a professorship at Hamilton College. This new institution, headed by the Board, gained many of the educational powers wielded by its predecessor, including the power to establish schools, academies, and other sites of learning and education. Further, the act declared “persons of every religious denomination were capable of being elected trustees, and no person, president, professor, instructor or pupil was to be refused admittance for his conscientious persuasion in matters of religion.” The Board of Trustees oversaw the land offered in the grant of 1805 as well as the land ceded in the Treaty of Fort Meigs. Finally, they were granted the power to appoint a president and professors, and also to remove them. Although no instruction at the college level was actually being offered, these provisions positioned the University as an institution of power and authority.

The Board of Trustees, as provided for in the Act, would be comprised of 21 individuals, including the Governor. As noted by Charles Irish Walker, a law professor at the University in the mid—late 19th century, the Board was peopled by some of the most prominent individuals in the Territory, named as follows: Gov. Cass, John Biddle, Nicholas Baldwin, Daniel LeRoy, Christian Clemens, William. H. Puthoff, John Anderson, John Hunt,

27 “An Act for the Establishment of a University” (1821), quoted in Charles Adam Kendall, Historical Sketch of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1876), 15—16.
29 Peckham, The Making of the University of Michigan, 9—10.
30 Charles Adam Kendall, Historical Sketch of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1876), 16.
Charles Larned, Gabriel Richard, John. R. Williams, Solomon Sibley, John Monteith, Henry J. Hunt, John L. Leib, Peter J. Desnoyers, Austin E. Wing, William Woodbridge, Benjamin Stead, Philip Lecuger and William Brown. The Trustees first convened on May 20, 1821, and in the second meeting they elected to memorialize Congress regarding University land. It was determined that locating one township of good land in the acres granted was “impossible,” and so on May 20, 1826, an act was passed granting the Territory of Michigan two townships of land for a “seminary of learning,” which could be separately located.  

According to a list of instructors provided by Charles Irish Walker, the primary school and classical academy continued to educate pupils until 1827, and even reached an enrollment of 200. Later, the building was leased to private teachers, and to the city of Detroit in 1831 for the operation of city schools. With the establishment of statehood in 1837, a third act abolished the University in that incarnation, and it began to assume the form that we are familiar with today. The Michigan Constitution of 1835, written prior to statehood, reflected the Prussian ideals espoused by Judge Woodward and the early founders of the Catholepistemiad. The Organic Act of 1837 created the University of Michigan, with a Board of Regents, consisting of 12 governor-appointed individuals, replacing the former Board of Trustees. The original members of the Board of Regents are as follows: Isaac E. Crary, Dr. Zina Pitcher, Lucius Lyon, Thomas Fitzgerald, John J. Adam, Robert McClelland, Dr. Samuel W. Denton, John Norvell, Henry R. Schoolcraft, Ross Wilkins, Michael

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31 Walker, “A Brief History of the University of Michigan.”
33 Walker, “A Brief History of the University of Michigan.”
34 Hinsdale, History of the University of Michigan, 26.
Hoffman, and Gideon O. Whittemore.\textsuperscript{35} As noted by Elizabeth Farrand, most of these men were prominent politicians, and few of them had experience in the matter of education. The last meeting of the Trustees, held in November 18, 1837, granted the University building to the Board of Regents, to operate as a branch University. \textsuperscript{36} On March 20\textsuperscript{th}, 1837, the legislature passed an act to re-locate the University at Ann Arbor, a vote that won by a majority of three votes in the House and seven in the Senate. The Ann Arbor Land Company, which had petitioned to locate the state capital at Ann Arbor, successfully sold the state forty acres of their land for the site of the University. \textsuperscript{37} The first meeting of the Board of Regents took place on June 5, 1837 in the city of Ann Arbor, the University’s new location.

\textbf{Suggestions for further research}

Although scant attention has been paid in recent years to the University’s early history, I would encourage a more thorough investigation of contemporary historical scholarship regarding this topic. My scope of research was unfortunately narrow, and could have been broadened considerably. Some topics I might suggest are the Territory of Michigan’s educational system, Detroit in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and the Treaty of Fort Meigs. I mainly confined my search to histories of the University of Michigan itself, but I believe that more valuable information is yet to be discovered.

Further, it was suggested that I investigate the University’s connection with local Native American histories; however, due to time constraints I could not complete this task. I do, however, have some suggestions for further investigation into this topic. For starters, I

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\textsuperscript{35} Farrand, \textit{History of the University of Michigan}, 26.
\textsuperscript{36} Walker, “A Brief History of the University of Michigan.”
\textsuperscript{37} Farrand, \textit{History of the University of Michigan}, 15—25.
\end{flushright}
would suggest archival research on the Treaty of Fort Meigs, which ceded Native land directly to the college of Detroit. The histories I have read detailing this exchange were written in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and by and large describe the exchange as a gift from local tribes. Of course, I have my suspicions about the conditions under which the land was ceded, and I am aware that the University was sued by the descendants of local tribes in 1981, who claimed that proceeds from the land should gone towards their tuition (they lost). I would also suggest archival (or otherwise) research regarding Father Richard’s relationship with local tribes, as he ran schools for Native pupils prior to the founding of the Catholepistemiad.

Finally, I would suggest a more thorough investigation of the Board of Regents records (1817—ongoing, Box 1), the John Monteith Papers, and the Gabriel Richard papers, all held at the Bentley Historical Library. Since I am not trained in reading or transcribing 19th century handwriting, my involvement with these papers was unfortunately limited. I should note that some snippets of Monteith’s diary are transcribed in Records of the University of Michigan, 1817—1837 in the appendices. I would suggest a more thorough examination of these records, as I was not able to painstakingly comb through them. Further, it might be worthwhile to more closely examine the Board of Trustees minutes from 1821 onwards, some of which are transcribed in the Records of the University of Michigan, as to determine in greater detail the proceedings of the University at that time.
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Archive organized and document compiled by:
Jina Kim (English and Women’s Studies)

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"An Act to Institute a University within the Territory of Michigan." Draft, 1825.

A draft of a new act to "institute a University within the Territory of Michigan." Dated August 26, 1825. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.


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Note: I drew from all of the secondary titles and a few of the primary sources.
This act, referred to as "The Organic Act of 1837," followed the original Catholepistemiad act, authored on August 26, 1817 by Judge Augustus B. Woodward, and the Territorial Act of April 30, 1821 ("An Act for an establishment of an University). It was passed when Michigan officially became a state and the University was re-located to Ann Arbor. Located in the Board of Regents records, 1817—ongoing.

"Laws regarding the University of Michigan." 1817—1911.

Transcription of laws of the Legislature regarding the University, 1817--1911. Located in the Board of Regents records, 1817—ongoing.

"Minutes of the Trustees' Meetings, 1821--1837." Minutes.

Trustees Minutes of the University of Michigan dated from 1821—1837, which was the supervisory board of the University until their replacement in 1837 by the Board of Regents. Includes "An Act to establish a University," which names the power and function of the Trustees. Located in the Board of Regents records, 1817—ongoing.

Ashley, House of Representatives. H.R. 686: An Act to Authorize the Sale of Certain Lands Belonging to the University of Michigan. 23d Congress. 2d, 1835.

A house bill authorizing the sale of certain lands belonging to the University of Michigan. These lands are designated as follows: "lying near Toledo, on the Maumee river of Lake Erie, to wit: tracts number three and four, the southeast quarter of section number two, and the west half of section number three, in township number three, within the 'Twelve Mile Reservation,' at the foot of the rapids of the said Maumee river." Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.


An enactment by the University of Michigan that subscribers should not be required to pay more than fifty dollars a year; passed September 12, 1817, formally signed by John Monteith, President, and attested by J.L. Whiting, Registrar. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.


Enactment signed and attested in Detroit on October 3, 1817. Note from Bentley Historical Library: A fund had been raised for the sufferers of the fire of 1805 in Detroit, Montreal, and elsewhere. The money had not been paid to the sufferers, and this act was to indemnify the holders of the money if they paid it to the University. Signed by John Monteith, President, and attested by J.L. Whiting, Registrar. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.
———. "An Appointment by John Monteith, President, of George McDougall as Trustee and Visitor of the Classical Academy of Detroit." Appointment, 1818.

An appointment by John Monteith, President, of George McDougall as Trustee and Visitor of the Classical Academy of Detroit, February 26, 1818. Appointment reads: "The University of Michigania, To all whom these Presents shall come: Be it known, that, reposing special confidence in the integrity, fidelity, and literary taste and judgment of George McDougall, we appoint him Trustee and Visitor of the Classical Academy of Detroit, to have and to hold the said office during the pleasure of the University."

Located in the John Monteith Papers.

———. "Diary, 1808--1819." Diary.

I was unable to read the handwriting in the diary, but am noting the item so that someone more trained in 19th century penmanship might transcribe it in the future. John Monteith was the first president of the University of Michigan, and as such, these diaries that partially span the years of the Catholepistemiad (1817--1821) might lend greater insight into the University's origins. Excerpts from these diaries are transcribed in the appendices of the Records of the University of Michigan, 1817—1837. Located in the John Monteith Papers.

———. "Diary, 1819--1821." Diary.

I was unable to read the handwriting in the diary, but am noting the item so that someone more trained in 19th century penmanship might transcribe it in the future. John Monteith was the first president of the University of Michigan, and as such, these diaries that partially span the years of the Catholepistemiad (1817--1821) might lend greater insight into the University's origins. Located in the John Monteith Papers.

———. "Fragments of Diaries, 1815, 1818--1819." Diary.

Same note as above. Located in the John Monteith Papers.

———. "Laws and Ordinances of the University of Michigania." Collection of statutes, 1817.

A bound collection of primary documents penned by President John Monteith regarding the operation of the early University of Michigan. Acts address the seal of the University, the course of instruction, the appointment of Trustees, and other primary and foundational aspects of the University. Some photocopies of these statutes are available in the Burton Historical Collection as well. Located in the Board of Regents records, 1817—ongoing.

———. "Letter to Wm. Woodbridge Accepting several Commissions of Professorships." Letter (transcription), 1817.
Letter to William Woodbridge dated Sept. 10, 1817 accepting several commissions of Professorships at the University of Michigania: Professorships of Literature, of Natural History, of Chemistry, of Economical Science, of Ethical Sciences and of Historical Sciences. Original in State Department, Executive Acts, Box 536.

———. To the Governor and Judges of the Territory of Michigan: The First Annual Report of the University of Michigania. Detroit, 1818.

First annual report penned by President John Monteith that addresses the lack of demand in the Territory for "extensive literary establishments" and so, the University's focus on the "primary parts of education." Monteith elaborates upon the educational structure of the University and its accompanying primary school and classical academy, as well as the University's finances, instruction, and suggestions for future developments. Dated 1818, November 16th. Located in the John Monteith Papers.

Reid, Duncan. "A Receipt to Judge A. B. Woodward for His Subscription to the University for the Year 1817." Receipt, 1817.

A receipt to Judge Woodward for his subscription to the University for the year 1817, signed by Duncan Reid, collector. Receipt reads: "Received of A.B. Woodward twelve dollars and fifty cents, if being his subscription to the University of Michigania for the year 1817." Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.

Walker, Charles I. "A Brief History of the University of Michigan." 1869, sec. Our Special Contributor.

A newspaper article penned by Charles Irish Walker, University of Michigan law professor, providing a brief historical overview of the university's early days. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.

———. "Letter to James B. Angell Donating these Early Letters." Letter, 1885.

A letter from Charles Irish Walker donating early letters connected to the University of Michigan to James B. Angell. Refers to the contents of the Charles Irish Walker papers, which include original drafts of the legislation establishing the Catholepistemiad. Written in Detroit on February 11, 1885.


Three letters from the Judge B. F. H. Witherell to Judge Woodward, which call upon him to pay his subscription to the University. The balance was $87.50. The letters are dated, respectively, June 24th 1825, August 8th 1825, and September 6th 1825. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.

This letter makes reference to those who should be chosen President and the Professors at the opening of the Catholepistemiad. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.

Woodward, Augustus B. "An Act to Establish the Catholepistemiad, Or University, of Michigania." Draft, 1817.

The original draft of the act to establish the Catholepistemiad, or University of Michigania, in the handwriting of its author, Judge Augustus B. Woodward. The act describes the curriculum and structure of the newly established University, as well as the University’s function. A transcription of this act can be found in Records of the University of Michigan, 1817—1837. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.

———. "An Act to Incorporate A University within the Territory of Michigan." Draft, 1817.

Contains a memoranda of proposed amendments to Woodward's Catholepistemiad act draft. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.

———. "An Act to Provide for the Election of Regents of the University of Michigania, and for their Purposes." Draft, 1818.

A draft of an act prepared in 1818 to provide for the election of Regents of the University, signed by Judge Woodward. Located in the Charles Irish Walker Papers.

———. "Explanation of the Epistemic System as Applies to a University." Table of knowledge classification system, 1817.

The table explains Woodward’s knowledge classification system as follows:
I. The nearest familiar and elegant names, adapted to the English language.
I. Literature II. Mathematics III. Natural History IV. Natural Philosophy V. Astronomy VI. Chemistry VII. The Medical Sciences VIII. The Economical Sciences IX. The Ethical Sciences X. The Military Sciences XI. The Historical Sciences XII. The Intellectual Sciences XIII. Universal Science

II. The epistemic names, which may be engrafted, without variation, into every modern language.
I. Anthropoglossica II. Mathematica III. Physiognostica IV. Physiosophica V. Astronomia VI. Chymia VII. Iatrica VIII. Economica IX. Ethica X. Polemitactica XI. Diegetica XII. Ennoeica XIII. Catholepistemia

Also contains a table explaining certain auxiliary terms (i.e. "A Science," "a University," etc.)

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A rough draft of the act of 1821 amending the act to establish the Catholepistemiad, and providing for Regents. Located in the Charles Irish Walker papers.

**Burton Historical Collection**

"Notices to John. R. Williams Re: Meeting of Trustees of University." Notices, 1825.

Three notices dated April 30, 1825; May 6, 1825; and September 3, 1825. Signed by Charles C. Trowbridge. Located in the John R. Williams Papers.

"Professorships Held by John Monteith." 1817.

A list of professorships held by Monteith, which are as follows: Universal science, Literature, Natural History, Chemistry, Economical science, Ethical Science and Historical science. Dated September 10, 1817. Located in the Gabriel Richard papers.

"Memorandum Re: Amount Owed by Solomon Sibley to the University of Michigan." Memorandum, 1824.

Dated November 9, 1824. Solomon Sibley was a U.S. Attorney and congressional delegate for the Michigan Territory. Located in the Solomon Sibley Papers.


Written on September 25, 1817, this memoranda is relative to subscriptions for building a college at Detroit, Sept. 25, 1817, which include his own subscription ($150), the lodge subscription, and the relinquishment of the Detroit fire fund. Located in the Campau family papers.


Letter dated June 9, 1827 to Lewis Cass regarding the impossibility of granting U-M certain lots at Miami Rapids because they have been sold; tract marked 'Shipyard' sold. Note by Wm. Woodbridge that trustees meet June 25 and 26, 1827. Located in the William Woodbridge Papers.


Letter dated July 27, 1827 to Lewis Cass regarding the reservation of certain lands for the use and benefit of the University of Michigan. Located in the William Woodbridge Papers.

Hickey, Edward J. *Pere Gabriel Richard, The Leader in the Educational and Cultural Life of Early*

A brief biography of Father Gabriel Richard, one of the co-founders of the Catholepistemiad and revered educator and Catholic priest. Located in the Gabriel Richard papers.

Monteith, John. "Commission of Lemuel Shattuck as Instructor in the First Primary School, Commission, 1818.

Commission of Lemuel Shattuck as instructor in the first primary school, dated October 31st, 1818. Located in MS | L. Shattuck.

———. "An Act Prescribing the Course of Instruction in Primary Schools." Statute, photostatic copy, 1817.

An act authored by John Monteith, president of the University of Michigania, prescribing the course of instruction for pupils in primary schools. The principal categories of learning are as follows: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English, Grammar, and Elocution. Enacted on September 12, 1817. Located in the University of Michigan archives, 1817—21. Original located in the Bentley Historical Library.

———. "An Act to Establish the First Primary School in the City of Detroit." Statute, photostatic copy, 1817.

An act authored by John Monteith, president of the University of Michigania, to establish the first primary school in Detroit. Other primary schools were also established in Monroe and Michilimackinac (now named Mackinac Island). Located in the University of Michigan archives, 1817—21. Original located in the Bentley Historical Library.

———. "Commission to Benjamin Stead as Trustee and Visitor of the First Primary School of the City of Detroit." Commission, 1818.


With this letter, dated February 16, 1818, and signed by John Monteith and J.L. Whiting, register of the University of Michigania, Solomon Sibley was commissioned as trustee and visitor of the Classical Academy of Detroit. It also announced the next meeting of the trustees and visitors. Located in MS | Sibley, Solomon.

———. "Diary Excerpts, 1817." Photocopies of diary, 1817.

Copies of diary excerpts dated August 20, 1817, and September 9, 1817. They read: “Judge Woodward invites me to an interview on the subject of a University,” and “A
Bill has just been passed by the Territorial Legislature, establishing a University. In order to carry out its provisions commissions have been made out for its officers. That for the office of President and six other embracing so many Professorships have been offered to John Monteith; and six commissions embracing so many other Professorships are offered to Gabriel Richard, the Catholic Bishop of Michigan. The Commissions have been accepted, and the institution is ready to go into operation.” Located in the John Monteith Papers. Originals located at the Bentley Historical Library.


Letter dated September 9th, 1817, accepting the office of president and the professorship of Universal Science in the University of Michigan. Located in the William Woodbridge Papers.


Letter of William Oliver to William Woodbridge regarding his plan to have Congress change University lands because their bulk and location is detrimental. Dated October 26, 1834. Located in the William Woodbridge Papers.


Located in the John R. Williams Papers. Note: Charles Trowbridge was secretary of the Board of the University of Michigan.


Letter of John. R. Williams to John Monteith, President of the University of Michigan, regarding, 1) classical teacher for the University, 2) anticipation of statehood and 3) a “college township” to aid finances. Dated July 29th, 1824. Located in the John R. Williams Papers.


John R. Williams letter to Stephen Van Rensselaer regarding his plea that a portion of money derived from sale of public lands be used to support a seminary. Located in the John R. Williams Papers.


Receipts for payments made by John R. Williams for his son’s (named Thomas) tuition at University of Michigan. Signed by C.C. Sears. 1827, July 28; 1827, Oct. 27, and 1828, Jan. 25. Located in the John R. Williams Papers.

Austin Eli Wing, one of the delegates to the Michigan Territory prior to statehood, writes a letter to Lewis Cass: "The President has signed...the Bill granting to Townships of land to the University, amended however (much to my disappointment) so as to allow the creation in tracts not less than one Section..." Dated May 20, 1826. Located in the Lewis Cass Papers.

Woodbridge, William. "Appointment of the Rev. Gabriel Richard to be Professor of Astronomy [in and of the University of Michigania, Detroit]." Appointment, photo negative of original, 1817.

Signed by William Woodbridge, dated September 17, 1817. Located in the Gabriel Richard papers.

———. "Appointment of the Rev. Gabriel Richard to be Professor of Intellectual Sciences [in and of the University of Michigania, Detroit]." Appointment, photo negative of original, 1817.

Signed by William Woodbridge, dated September 17, 1817. Located in the Gabriel Richard papers.

———. "Appointment of the Rev. Gabriel Richard to be Professor of Mathematicks [in and of the University of Michigania, Detroit]." Appointment, Photo negative of original, 1817.

Signed by William Woodbridge, dated September 17, 1817. Located in the Gabriel Richard papers.

———. "Memorial to Senate and House of Representatives Re: Proper Assignment of Public Lands." Memorial, 1824.

Memorial, by William Woodbridge, to Senate and House of Representatives, regarding proper assignment of public lands for the support of the University. Located in the William Woodbridge Papers.
**PRELIMINARY FINDING AID**

History of the University of Michigan in Detroit, 1817—1837

Archive organized and document compiled by:
Jina Kim (English and Women’s Studies)

**Bentley Historical Library**

Board of Regents records, 1817—ongoing
Call number: 8722 Bimu B2 2
Box 1
Summary: Box contains record of laws of the Legislature regarding the University, 1817—1911; act establishing Catholepistemiad or University of Michigan, 1817 (photostatic copy); bound copy of the *Laws and Ordinances of the University of Michigan*, authored by John Monteith; minutes of the Detroit Classical Academy, 1818—1829; University of Michigan Trustees Meetings minutes 1821—1837; also contains University laws, 1883—1914, passed by the board; executive committee minutes 1845—51; constitutional and statutory provisions re: U-M (1837).

John Monteith Papers, 1797—1885
Call number: 852041 Aa UAx Vault
Archive, manuscript, mixed material
2 linear ft.
--Presbyterian minister in Elyria, Ohio, Detroit and Blissfield, Michigan; professor at Hamilton College and first president of University of Michigan
Summary: The collection contains correspondence between Monteith and other family members, 1817—1885; an annual report, Nov. 1818, of John Monteith to governor and judges of Michigan Territory concerning the University; his diaries, 1808—1838, notes on his library; also files pertaining to his work as both a minister and a professor, including sermons and sermon outlines, speeches, and notes on class lectures. Also contains a folder of documents containing Monteith’s signature, many of which are acts to further specify the operations of the university, i.e. the course of instruction, the types of books to be used in the Primary School, and the maximum cost of subscription to the University.

Gabriel Richard Papers, 1792—1832.
Archive, manuscript, mixed material
2 linear ft.
Call number: Bentley Historical 89219 Aa 2
--French priest and missionary in Detroit, Michigan, co-founder of the Catholepistemiad (or University of Michigan)
Summary from the Bentley: Copies of documents, transcripts of letters, microfilm of papers, and scattered original documents collected from various sources and related to Richard's activities; also inventory of his library.

Charles I. Walker Papers, 1814—1895.
Call number 874 AC (Bentley Historical Library)
1 oversize volume
--Professor of Law at the University of Michigan, 1858—1887
Summary from the Bentley: Papers collected relating to the founding of the University; include original draft of the act to establish the Catholepistemiad, table explaining meaning of names of professorships, various drafts and amendments, receipts, correspondence, and related documents; contains papers drafted or signed by Augustus B. Woodward, John Monteith, and William Woodbridge.

**Burton Historical Collection**

Campau family papers.

Dates: 1715—1928

21 linear ft. (42 boxes, 4 wallets, 1 large manuscript)

--Early French family and merchants of Detroit, Mich.

Summary from the Burton: Correspondence, genealogy, business records, deeds, speeches and other papers of Joseph Campau (1769—1863) and other members of the Campau, Marion, and related families, including Alexis Campau, Barnabas Campau (1775—1845), Denis Campau, George Throop Campau (1847—1879), Adolph N. Marion (b. 1859), Archange (Campau) Marion, and Sylvester T. Marion. Related to activities of the Campau family as French government officials, merchants, fur traders, and real estate dealers.

Includes material relating to the activities of a Franco-American committee participating in the Detroit bicentenary celebration of 1901. Also includes deed for Hog Island (Belle Isle) from Indians to George McDougall, May 5, 1769.

Cass Papers (Lewis, 1782—1866)

Date: 1780—1907

6.0 linear ft. (11 boxes, 5 large manuscripts, 1 microfilm)

--Lewis Cass was born on Oct. 9, 1782, in Exeter, NH. He served under General Hull in the War of 1812 and was governor of Michigan Territory from 1813—1831. Appointed Secretary of War in 1831, he also served as U.S. Minister to France, was several times elected U.S. senator from Michigan and served as U.S. Secretary of State under President Buchanan. He died June 17, 1866.

Summary from the Burton: Consists in part of typewritten transcripts, photocopies and microfilm made from originals in the possession of Duke University, other repositories and individuals. Covers political and personal correspondence, deeds, documents pertaining to Cass’ real estate transactions and other papers relating to Cass’ military and political activities, fur trade in the far West and survey of the Grand River road in Michigan. Includes letters (1878—79) of George Stephens of Dubuque, Iowa concerning the estate of his father, Lewis Cass, Jr. Correspondents include James Buchanan, Daniel S. Dickinson, Samuel Houston, Zachary Taylor and Austin Eli Wing.

Fraser Papers (Alexander David, 1796—1887)

Dates: 1766—1888

2 linear ft. (4 boxes, 1 wallet, 3 volumes, 5 large manuscripts)

Identification: 00942

--Alexander Fraser was a native of Inverness, Scotland, who studied law, came to America, and settled in Detroit in 1823. He became a prominent citizen of the city, as well as a successful lawyer.

Summary from the Burton: Comprised chiefly of papers pertaining to Fraser’s domestic and legal activities. Includes many papers (ca. 1797—1827) from the estate of James May (d.
papers (ca. 1783—1825) of the Detroit merchant firm of George Meldrum and
William Park; and papers (ca. 1806—25) relating to the estate of Jacques Lasselle of River
Raisin (now Monroe), Mich; together with roll of an Election at Detroit on January 14—15,
1799.

Monteith Papers (John, 1788—1868)
Date: 1808—1821
2 items and 2 vols.
--Presbyterian minister in Elyria, Ohio, Detroit and Blissfield, Michigan; professor at
Hamilton College and first president of University of Michigan
--Summary from the Burton: The items comprise photostat copies of letter to William
Woodbridge, Sept. 9 1817, accepting Presidency and Professorship of Universal Science in
University of Michigan; and letter, same to same, May 8, 1817, concerning purchase in
New York of books for the Detroit Library. The volumes comprise photostat copies of
extracts from diary kept by Monteith, June 1, 1808—Dec. 26, 1821, from originals in library
of University of Michigan.

Richard Papers (Gabriel, 1767—1832)
Dates: 1784—1833
Identification: 02032
2.6 linear ft.
--Richard was a priest and educator who was born at Saintes, France on October 15, 1767.
Father Richard sailed to Baltimore and was sent by Bishop Carroll as a missionary to the
Indians in the Northwest Territory. In June 1789, he arrived in Detroit and became pastor
of St. Anne’s Church. He was a professor of mathematicks, intellectual sciences, and
astronomy at the University of Michigania, and developed the first printing press in the
Northwest Territory.
Summary from the Burton: Papers include correspondence, memorandum book, marriage
certificates, deeds and other items related to Richard’s ministry at St. Anne’s parish, and
Indian missions, his scholarly activities with the University of Michigan where he was a
professor, the Richard Press, and his term in Congress.

MS | Sibley, Solomon
Dates: 1750—1918
38 linear ft.
--Solomon Sibley was born in Sutton, Mass. on October 17 1769. He was a practicing
lawyer in Marietta, OH, and moved to Detroit, MI in 1797. Sibley was elected to the first
legislature of the Northwest Territory in 1799. He became a delegate to Congress from the
Territory of Michigan, 1820—1823 and served as a judge of the Supreme Court of Michigan
until 1836. He died in Detroit on April 4, 1846.
Summary from the Burton: Papers contain legal cases, family items, docket books, cash
book, accounts of Pontiac Mill Company, Pontiac, Michigan, and Robinson & Martin of
Albany, New York. Also included are papers of the James Henry estate; daybook of Detroit
Reading Club, and journal of transactions and correspondence as delegate to Congress.

MS/ University of Michigan Archives, 1817—21
Legislation and Papers in re U. of M.
1 folder
This folder contains copies of primary documents relating to the establishment of the University of Michigania authored by John Monteith, the first President of the University, and Augustus Woodward, as well as the establishment of an educational system in the city of Detroit and prescriptions for courses of learning.

Contains copies of statutes 1, 2—6, 12, and 15 written by John Monteith regarding the establishment of the first primary school in Detroit, a classical academy, the first College of Michigania; the establishment and description of the University of Michigania seal; prescriptions for the course of instruction in both primary schools and classical academies, a prescription for the use of certain books in the primary schools. Statutes 1, 2—6 and 12 were penned on September 12, 1817, whereas 15 was penned on October 3, 1817 (Call number LMS | 378M5 1817 Oct. 3). Also contains the second draft of an act to “provide for the election of Regents of the University of Michigan, and for other purposes.” written in 1818 by Augustus B. Woodward (Call number LMS | 378M5 1817—1818). Contains a copy of Woodward’s table detailing the “Explanation of the Epistemic System as applies to a University.” Contains a copy of a document authored by John Monteith appointing Lemuel Shattuck to the post of instructor of the first Primary School, city of Detroit (LMS | 378M5 1818 Oct. 31). Contains a copy of the appointment of George McDougall as Trustee and Visitor of the Classical Academy of Detroit by John Monteith on Feb 26th, 1818. Contains an act to incorporate a university within the Territory of Michigan. Contains a copy of correspondence between Augustus Woodward and William Woodbridge. Finally, contains a copy of the resolution for the repeal of the law establishing the Classical Academy, penned on February 19, 1821.

Williams Papers (John R.)
Dates: 1771—1909
15.5 linear ft.
--Williams was born in Detroit on May 4, 1782. He served as Captain of the artillery in the War of 1812 and was taken prisoner when Detroit fell. Williams later opened a general mercantile business in Detroit and was also a prominent figure in Michigan politics. He was one of the first trustees of the University of Michigan in 1821.
Summary from the Burton: Principally mercantile records and correspondence relating to the fur trade and Great Lakes shipping; also political and governmental subjects; personal correspondence and bills; property leases, sales, and purchases; correspondence regarding his commission in the Michigan Territorial Militia; Bank of Michigan vs. John R. Williams lawsuit; investigation of Henry Schoolcraft; altercation with Jacques Lasselle; War of 1812.

Woodbridge Papers (William Woodbridge, 1780—1861)
Dates:  1763—1919
Identification:  02883
56 linear ft.
--Attorney from Marietta, OH who came to Detroit in 1814 as Collector of Customs. Held various positions in the Michigan Territorial government and was governor of Michigan. 1840—41, and US Senator, 1841—1847.
Summary from the Burton: Contains correspondence, documents, family, legal and business papers, speeches and writings; account books (1805—1857); cash books (1813—1821); claim books (1804—1821); ledgers (1819—1822); index to appointments and resignations, Michigan Territory (1813—1826); Detroit Customs House reports (1802—1827); cash book
(1824—1826); day books (1816—1828); import book (1815—1823); account book of the Library of Congress (1843).

Zug Papers (Robert M, 1852—1914)
Dates: 1739—1910
1 wallet and 1 volume
Summary from the Burton: Miscellaneous papers which include autographic collection made by Zug. A number of the documents relate to the manumission and devising (by will) of slaves in Prince George Co., VA, 1739—86. The bound volume contains scores of autographs by American and Michigan characters of the middle nineteenth century. Included in the collection are the Henry W. Lord Papers, which are separately described under his name (q.v.); also appointment by John Monteith, President of the University of Michigania, Feb. 26, 1818, of Benjamin Stead as trustee and visitor of the “first primary school of the City of Detroit.”