

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic River Raisin Battlefield Site (20MR227)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Parts of Private Claims 64, 81, 96, 177, 214, and 236 — not for publication

city, town Monroe — vicinity of

state Michigan code 26 county Monroe code 035

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status N/A	Present Use	
— district	— public	— occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	— museum
— building(s)	— private	— unoccupied	— commercial	— park
— structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	— work in progress	— educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	— entertainment	— religious
— object	— in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	— government	— scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	— yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		— no	— military	— other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town Monroe — vicinity of state Michigan

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Offices of the City Assessor

street & number City Hall, 120 E. 1st St.

city, town Monroe state Michigan

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Monroe Historical Survey has this property been determined eligible? — yes ☒ nodate 1979 — federal ☒ state — county — local

depository for survey records Michigan History Division

city, town Lansing state Michigan

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Union Camp Corporation
1220 East Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Detroit & Toledo Shoreline Railroad Company
131 W. Lafayette St.
Detroit, MI 48226

City of Monroe
120 S. Macomb St.
Monroe, MI 48161

William M. Johnson
1264 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Louis F. Randazzo
1241 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Cecil and Evelyn Hamlin
1249 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Walter H. Norman
1257 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Homer H. Sharp
1236 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

William C. Salkey
1244 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Martie L. Britten, Jr.
1252 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Randall and Lois Courts
1265 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Harley Giles
1381 Hurd Road
Monroe, MI 48161

Consolidated Rail Corporation
15 N. 32nd St.
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Michigan Department of Transportation
425 W. Ottawa St.
Lansing, MI 48909

Anthony J. Satkowski
1260 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Gary Klemz
1268 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

William D. Brooks
1245 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Laura J. Kerschner
1253 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Raymond and Helen Kroeger
1232 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Fred E. Kranz
1240 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Billy Valentine
1248 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Fred and Shirley Brooks
1256 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Johnny Carter Braden
1261 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Lonny Rafko
4932 Frary Lane
Monroe, MI 48161

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Donald L. Ayers
5349 Kay Dr.
Monroe, MI 48161

Pauline E. Brannon
1025 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

Robert K. Shingledecker
Rte. 2, Box 502
Roscommon, MI 48653

Gary Klemz
3145 S. Grove
Monroe, MI 48161

Lucille Folk
1026 E. Elm Avenue
Monroe, MI 48161

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7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent

☐ deteriorated

☐ good

☐ ruins

☒ fair

☒ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The River Raisin Battlefield site encompasses the area where most of the events of the First and Second Battles of the River Raisin took place during the War of 1812. Although altered by modern development, the area retains much of its historical and archaeological integrity. The site preserves military relics, the bones of battle casualties, and the archaeological remains of early 19th century residences present before and after the battles. Prehistoric occupations are also represented. The boundaries of the River Raisin Battlefield Site are Mason Run to the north, Detroit Street on the east, the River Raisin on the south, and the Union Camp Corporation property line west of Dixie Highway. The western boundary line lies slightly west of and parallel to the eastern boundary of Private Claim 177. These boundaries were set to include British artillery placements during the Second Battle of the River Raisin, the part of Frenchtown where most of the action took place, and the 17th Infantry bivouac area (see below).

Historic Description

The first white settlers in the Monroe area of Michigan were French Canadians who came in the 1780s. Their settlement on the River Raisin was known as Frenchtown. The French lot system of long, narrow landholdings, all with river frontage, is still reflected in property boundaries in Monroe today and gives the city a distinctive pattern rare in the Midwest.

By 1812, the eastern part of Frenchtown was enclosed by a puncheon fence which protected six homes with their gardens and outbuildings. The fence line corresponds to the present boundaries of Private Claim 236. In that year, the American General Hull built a road through the fenced area of Frenchtown to Detroit. In more recent times, this road became incorporated into Elm Avenue and the Conrail right-of-way within the site boundaries. The road and the fenced area became key strategic elements in the River Raisin battles. Cleared fields extended to Mason Run. There were a number of homesteads to the east and west of the fenced area of Frenchtown.

In 1813, Frenchtown was occupied by British troops and their more numerous Indian allies who were defending their Michigan homeland. On January 18, an American force of 660 men, most of them of the Kentucky Volunteer Militia, assisted by local French Canadian residents, attacked the British from the south. The British and Indians retreated from the American charge. The retreat took both armies across what are now Private Claims 96 and 81, and into the forest beyond Mason Run. At this point, the Americans withdrew to the fenced part of Frenchtown, while the British continued northward.

On January 20, the Kentuckians were joined by 250 men of the U.S. 17th Infantry Regiment. The 17th Infantry camped in a field on what is now P.C. 81. The Kentucky Volunteer Militia was camped within the fenced part of Frenchtown, in and around the homes and barns of Gabriel Godfroy, Jean Baptiste Jerome, George McDougall, Jean Baptiste Beaugrand, Hubert Lacroix, and Jean Baptiste Couture.

On January 22, Frenchtown was attacked by 525 British troops and about 800 Indians, mostly Potawatomi and Wyandot. This was the Second Battle of the River Raisin. The British and Indians approached down the Hull road and established their positions south of Mason Run across what are now Private Claims 177, 214, 64, 96 and 81. Taken by surprise, the 17th Infantry attempted a stand on the bank of the river, but were driven across the river, where they were decimated by companies of Indians. Only 33 of these men escaped death or capture.

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Protected by the puncheon fence, the Kentuckians held on longer. Eventually depletion of their ammunition and orders from their captured commander forced them to surrender. Those prisoners able to walk were immediately marched to Canada by British troops. Sixty-five wounded Americans, along with about 30 others, remained in the houses in Frenchtown. The following day, at least 60 of the wounded were killed by the Indians in revenge for their own serious losses. Many died when the Godfroy and Jerome houses, which were serving as hospitals, were set on fire. The bones of the dead lay unburied until fall, and bones were still being recovered from the underbrush as late as 1820. These remains were buried in several mass graves and in scattered unmarked individual graves among the ruins of the Frenchtown settlement.

For detailed historical accounts, see Wing, 1890; Au, 1981; Clary, 1981; and Monroe County Historical Commission, 1977. Maps 1 and 2 show the major events of the battles in relationship to the site boundaries.

Archaeological Description

Archaeological investigations on the River Raisin Battlefield site have been sponsored by the Monroe County Historical Commission in 1976-1977 and 1980-81. The 1976 project was partially funded by a survey and planning grant from the National Register grant program. Workmen and local residents have reported numerous finds of artifacts and human remains relating to the events of 1813. The evidence to date suggests that many areas within the battlefield site have the potential of producing significant archaeological and historical information. The site's state archaeological site number is 20MR227.

Human remains. According to contemporary sources, the remains of some of those killed during and after the River Raisin battles were buried where they lay. Others were buried in mass graves. Most of the dead lay unburied for at least 9 months; animals scattered the bones, and some were still being found in the underbrush as late as 1820. It is safe to assume that some bones were never recovered. Some of the remains in mass graves were later exhumed and eventually returned to Kentucky. In the 20th century, bones have been observed frequently during construction within the boundaries of the battlefield site. In 1904, parts of four bodies were discovered during construction of a monument commemorating the battle. This was in the vicinity of the early 19th century Godfroy and Beaugrand homes. When the River Raisin Paper Company plants were being constructed in 1915, skeletons, cannonballs, military buttons, tomahawks, and other artifacts were found. At least one of the skeletons was that of an Indian. These burials may have been part of an Indian cemetery not directly connected with the battle. The 1904 and 1915 finds were located near the southwestern corner of P.C. 214. In later years, several episodes of construction at the southeastern end of an industrial building within P.C. 236 uncovered bones and artifacts. All these areas lay within what had been the fenced part of Frenchtown in 1813.

Given the haphazard conditions of burial, the number of dead concentrated within the fairly restricted zone of battle, and the fact that human bones have been encountered frequently during construction over a long period, it is reasonable to assume that human remains still exist within the battlefield site.

Prehistoric Occupations. Archaeological excavations and amateur surface collections have revealed evidence of prehistoric occupation within the battlefield site. Debitage and other prehistoric artifacts have been found in P.C. 96 and in P.C. 81. Excavations in P.C. 236 were not deep enough to reach prehistoric levels, and no test excavations have been done on P.C. 214 or P.C. 177. Diagnostic artifacts indicate occupation during the Late Archaic and Late Woodland periods. The Late Archaic occupation (ca. 3000-1000 BC) is represented by a Brewerton point and ground stone implements, including a plummet and a gorget. The Late

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Woodland period (ca. AD 800-1600) is represented by a Madison point and untyped ceramics. All artifacts were found in plowed soil zones. No prehistoric features were located.

Early 19th Century Occupation and Battle Relics. Military artifacts have been collected by workmen and local residents ever since the River Raisin battles took place. These relics include cannonballs, musket balls and uniform buttons. Some were found during construction of the industrial buildings in P.C. 214 and P.C. 64. The Monroe County Historical Museum in Monroe has a collection of battle artifacts, as do several local residents.

Recent archaeological investigations have revealed more evidence of the battle and of early 19th century occupation under controlled conditions. In 1976, a controlled surface collection of a large field in P.C. 81 confirmed the presence of a concentration of lead shot noted by a local collector. Other military artifacts include a brass button and brass hat ornament. These finds pin down the location of the attack on the 17th Infantry encampment.

In 1977, a telephone cable trench north of Elm Street in P.C. 64 was examined by archaeologists. Three house foundations were revealed. Only the deposits disturbed by the trench were observed; these did not extend to the base of the fill in and around these foundations. On the basis of archaeological observations and extensive historical research, these foundations were identified as those of:

- 1) the LaCroix-LaFountain house, built in 1817 on the site of the original LaCroix house (burned in 1813 after the battle) and demolished in 1912 (recovered artifacts from fill date from 1890-1910);
- 2) the Jean Baptiste Jerome house, used as a hospital and burned during the massacre in 1813, never rebuilt (recovered artifacts date from 1830-1910);
- 3) the George McDougal house, also burned in 1813 by the Indians and never rebuilt (recovered artifacts date from 1810-1850).

These foundations remain intact, except for some additional disturbance of the Jerome house by utility trenches. The 1813 living surfaces were not disturbed by the 1977 trench and can be assumed intact. Artifacts which date to the late 18th - early 19th centuries recovered from fill include a door latch from the McDougal house, a military button, and a British-manufactured pistol gun flint.

Archaeological efforts to locate remains of the puncheon fence and the Godfrey barn, a structure used and eventually burned during the River Raisin battles, have thus far been unsuccessful. These efforts included 9 test pits in likely areas of P.C. 96. These pits revealed that the 19th century surface of P.C. 96 has been sealed under early 20th century cinder and ash fill from 5" - 36" deep. This is in itself an important finding which demonstrates that a large portion of the battlefield site has been protected from modern disturbance.

Investigations near the southwestern corner of P.C. 81 north of Elm Avenue provided evidence of other early 19th century occupation within the battlefield site. Surface collection in a garden in 1976 recovered a ceramic assemblage dating from 1830-1880. This is probably associated with the Reaume house which may have been present prior to 1813. Maps show buildings on or near this garden until 1901. In 1980 and 1981, excavations closer to Elm Avenue uncovered artifacts and two features which predate 1850. The features, a house foundation and a drain tile ditch, both date to the 1840-1850 period. Artifacts from the associated sheet midden fall into the 1825-1880 range.

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The above information has been abstracted from archaeological reports of the Monroe County Historical Commission (1977 and 1981).

Post-1813 History

Many of the houses and barns burned in 1813 were never rebuilt. Their open foundations were visible at least into the 1850s. Until the 20th century, the land within the battlefield site was farmed. The largest house was the LeCroix house, the foundations of which were located during archaeological inspection of a telephone cable trench in 1977 (see above).

In the early 20th century, most of the site was acquired by the River Raisin Paper Company. The industrial complex in P.C. 214 was completed in 1915; expansion into P.C. 64 was completed in 1918. A silicate soda plant was added in 1919, and additional facilities were built in P.C. 96 in 1920. Very little industrial development has taken place since 1920. The silicate soda plant has been demolished. A row of eight houses were built by the company along Elm Avenue in P.C. 96 for worker housing. Three other houses and a complex of barns were built in P.C. 81, but of these only one house remains. Some of the foundations are still visible. In 1937, the southern end of P.C. 81 was used by the Michigan militia during the Newton Steel Company strike. Their actions left behind tear gas canisters and other debris. In 1960, the Union Camp Corporation bought the River Raisin Paper Company, including the houses as well as the industrial complex on the battlefield site.

Modern Intrusions and Present Land Use

All the existing buildings on the site are considered non-contributing intrusions. None are of historical or architectural interest. Other intrusions include Elm Avenue, Dixie Highway, and the Conrail and Detroit-Toledo railroad rights-of-way. The New York Central Railroad Bridge has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Monroe Multiple Resource nomination and is excluded from this nomination.

The land in P.C. 177, 214, and 64 is now covered by industrial buildings, sidewalks, parking lots, streets, railroads, and some areas of lawn. There are houses on both sides of Elm Avenue in P.C. 64 and P.C. 96, as well as one house on Detroit Avenue in P.C. 81. There is a large industrial building on P.C. 96, parking lots, and vacant land which has been covered by ash, cinder, and paper waste fill. Most of P.C. 81 is a cultivated field. Elsewhere in P.C. 81, refuse has been buried in a large pit along Mason Run, and near Elm Avenue there are garden plots, vacant land, and a few building foundations.

Integrity

Despite its present use as an industrial complex, the River Raisin Battlefield site has retained its locational and associational integrity. Unlike many other military engagements in the Northwest territory, the River Raisin battles took place on platted land rather than in wilderness. Several maps drawn by battle participants exist, including one documenting property lines and house locations used for verification of property damage claims in 1817. Depositions of local residents, eye-witnesses to the battles, were collected by Judge Woodward, Territorial Judge, in an effort to document reports of the massacre of prisoners and the burning of civilian homes. This evidence provides an unusually detailed record of the exact locations of the most prominent events of the battles and their aftermath. Archaeological evidence has pinpointed the locations of several houses and has located battle debris apparently associated with the British attack on the 17th Infantry encampment.

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Modern intrusions have had surprisingly little impact on archaeological deposits. The industrial buildings built on the western half of the site have crawlspaces rather than basements, and little or no grading was done on this essentially flat tract. Limited excavations for utility or machinery installation within or around the buildings have usually yielded artifacts and bones, as documented in newspaper articles, local tradition, and eyewitness accounts. This strongly suggests the presence of intact deposits of historical and archaeological significance beneath the buildings. Dumping of industrial debris in the eastern half of the site has sealed the original soil surface under one-half to three feet of fill, thus protecting the underlying deposits from disturbance. Archaeological investigations have confirmed the presence below of intact sheet midden and early 19th century features, including house foundations coeval with the events of 1813. Given the confused conditions of burial and the long history of finds of human bone within the site, it is extremely probable that both interred and scattered human remains yet exist. It is also highly probable that other as yet undiscovered house foundations and middens exist, some of them perhaps dating as early as the 1780s. Evidence of artillery lines, skirmish areas, conditions under which the troops lived and fought, and other aspects of the 1813 battles has been preserved beneath the industrial buildings, parking lots, and filled areas within the site.

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8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) see below

Specific dates 1813 **Builder/Architect**

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The River Raisin Battlefield site was the location of most of the events of the First and Second Battles of the River Raisin during the War of 1812. These were the largest battles which have ever occurred on Michigan soil. The Second Battle was one of the major defeats suffered by the American army during the War of 1812. The Second River Raisin Battle was also one of the last victories of the British-allied Indians of the Northwest Territory under the leadership of Tecumseh who were defending their homelands from encroaching American settlers, and it was the last Indian victory in Michigan. The massacre of wounded prisoners following the battle caused widespread outrage and "Remember the River Raisin" became a battle cry for the duration of the war. The battlefield today consists of archaeological deposits intact beneath industrial buildings, parking lots, and fill. Archaeological testing has revealed sheet midden and house foundations dating to the War of 1812 era. Some of the foundations are those of houses which figured prominently in the battles and their aftermath. Homesteads of this early period are virtually unknown in the archaeological record of Michigan, as are homesteads known to be French. Future excavations can be expected to yield significant information about early Michigan settlements, particularly French life of the very early eighteenth century. Further excavations could also clarify the placement of various structures and military positions which would aid historical study of the battles and enhance interpretation of the site for the public.

The River Raisin Battlefield site meets National Register Criterion A, in that it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; and Criterion D, in that it has yielded and is likely to yield further information important to history. It contributes to the themes of military history, historical archaeology, early Michigan settlements, Michigan Indian history, and French ethnic history.

Insufficient information is available about the prehistoric components on the site to determine if they also meet National Register criteria. As yet, all prehistoric finds have come from disturbed context. Undisturbed subsoil beneath the nineteenth century living surfaces and fields has not yet been examined. Extant structures on the site have been studied by the State Historic Preservation Office and are not thought to be of historic or architectural significance.

The River Raisin Battlefield is listed on the State Register of Historic Places. The site is marked with a large stone monument erected in 1904 and with a historical marker erected by the Monroe County Historical Society in 1955.

9. Major Bibliographical References

see attached sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 80.7
Quadrangle name Monroe and Stony Point
UTM References

Quadrangle scale 7.5

A	1 7	3 0 3 1 8 0	4 6 4 2 7 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 7	3 0 2 4 8 0	4 6 4 2 7 0 0
E			
G			

B	1 7	3 0 2 9 6 0	4 6 4 2 1 9 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 7	3 0 2 6 2 0	4 6 4 3 0 8 0
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The western boundary begins where Mason run intersects Noble Ave. and runs southwest to the River Raisin along a line parallel to and west of the boundary between Private Claims 117 and 214. The southern boundary follows the northern bank of the River Raisin to the eastern boundary of Private Claim 684. The eastern boundary follows

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Mead/Assistant Archaeologist
organization Michigan History Division date 9/15/82
street & number Michigan Department of State telephone 517/373-0510
city or town Lansing state Michigan

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Michigan History Division

date 11/1/82

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

aper of the National Register

attest:

Chief of Registration

date

91/01 P. 1159 No. 1159

Feb. 15, 2011 12:00PM

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Clary, D. A., with W. J. Miller and R. B. Hartzer, 1981, "River Raisin Battlefield and Massacre Site, Monroe County, Michigan," limited distribution report, Architectural Preservation Consultants.

Monroe County Historical Commission, 1977, "An Historical and Archaeological Investigation of the River Raisin Battle Site of 1813," unpublished report.

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Switlik, Matthew C., 1974, "River Raisin Battlefield Site, Monroe, Michigan," unpublished report of the Monroe County Historical Commission.

Wing, Talcotte E., ed., 1890, History of Monroe County, Michigan, Munsell & Company.

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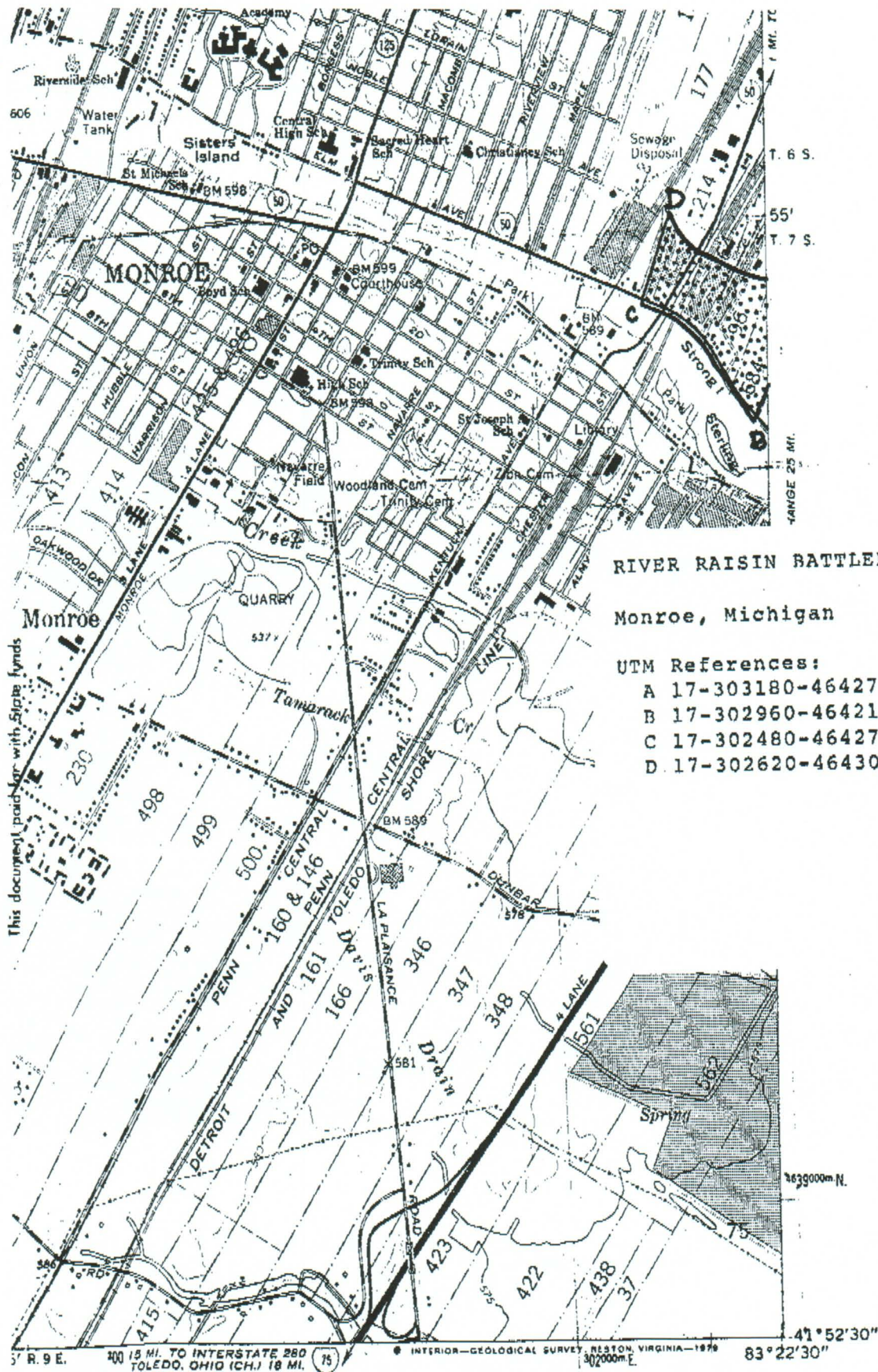
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the eastern edge of Private Claim 684 (Detroit Avenue) northward to Mason Run. The northern boundary follows the southern bank of Mason Run.

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ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———

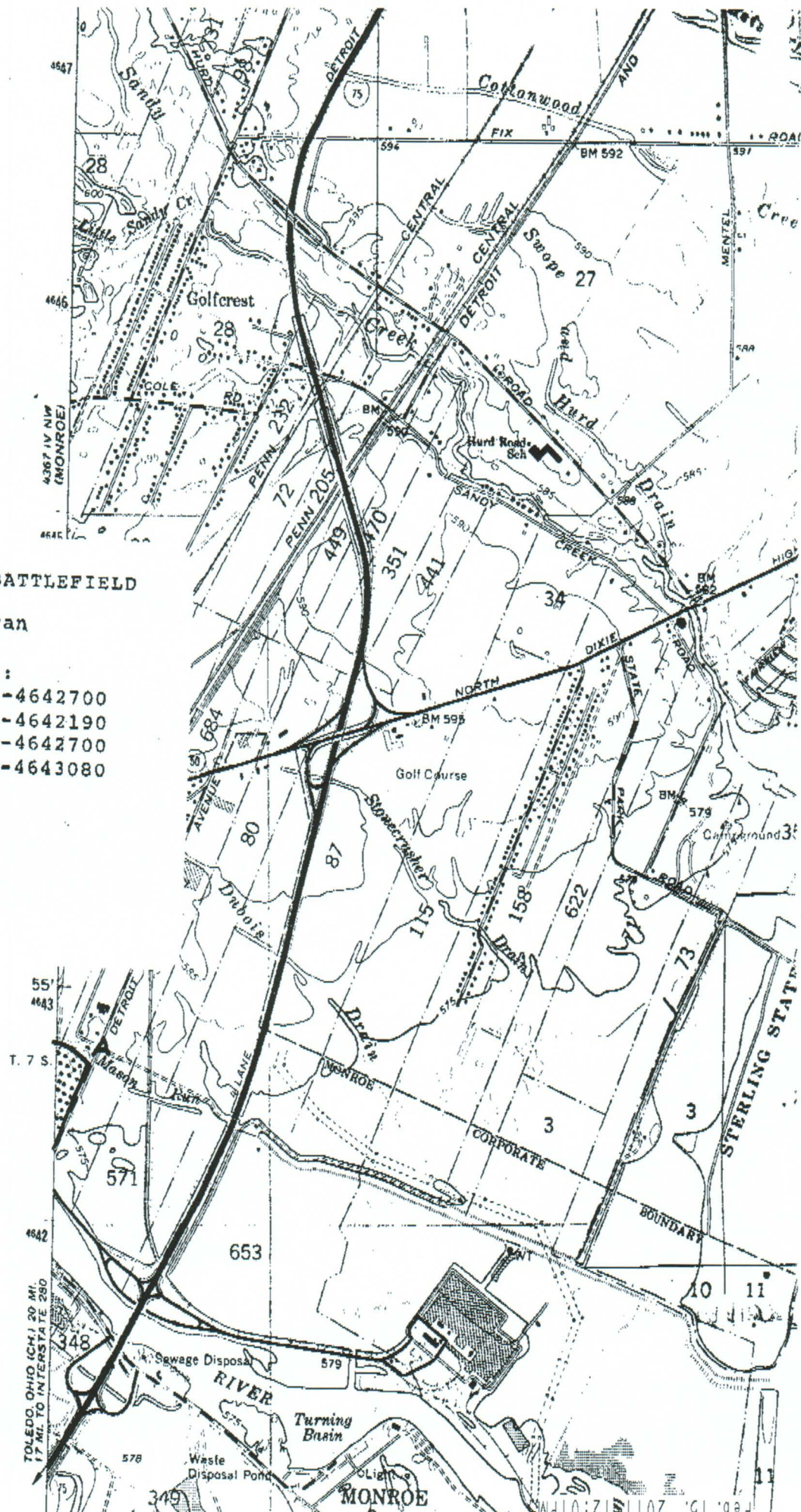
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———

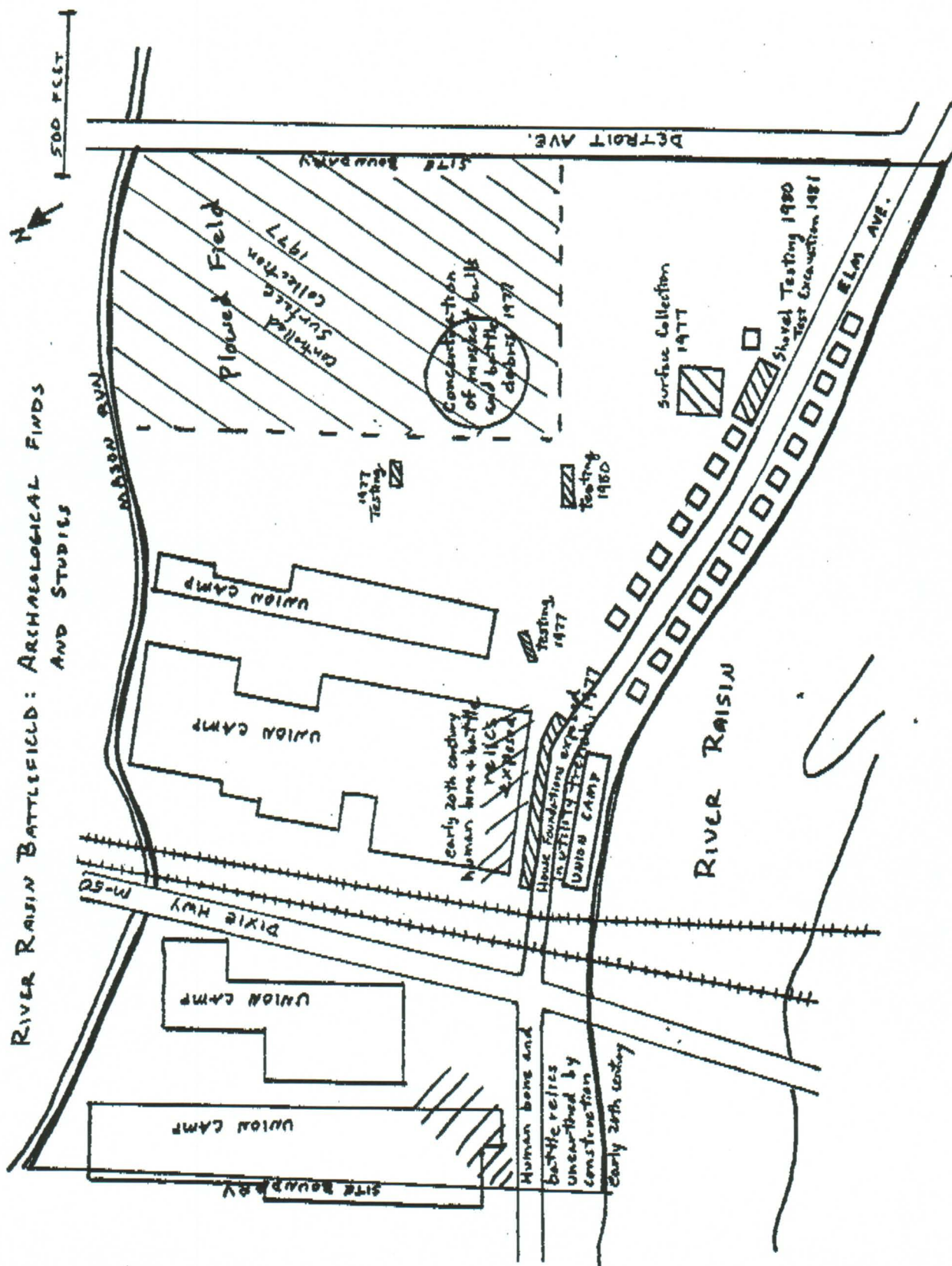
○ Interstate Route ○ U.S. Route ○ State Route

RIVER RAISIN BATTLEFIELD Monroe, Michigan

UTM References:

- A 17-303180-4642700
- B 17-302960-4642190
- C 17-302480-4642700
- D 17-302620-4643080





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