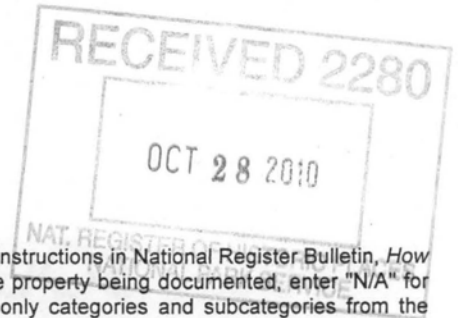


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1022



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Segment

other names/site number Hull's Road, River Road, West Jefferson Avenue

### 2. Location

street & number [36000] West Jefferson Avenue  not for publication

city or town Brownstown Township  vicinity

state Michigan code MI county Wayne code 163 zip code 48173

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national      statewide      local

Brian D. Amick 10/15/10  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

MI SHPO  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register      determined eligible for the National Register

     determined not eligible for the National Register      removed from the National Register

     other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

For Nelson H. Beall 12.13.10  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
		site
1	1	structure
		object
1	1	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation/road-related (vehicular)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation/road-related (vehicular):  
(archaeological feature beneath current highway)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Corduroy road remnant  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A  
walls: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: N/A  
other: Wooden logs  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The feature consists of a partially buried remnant of corduroy road, constructed by setting unsquared logs closely together at a right angle to the axis of the roadway. The exposed portion of the feature emerges from the northwest side of the embankment supporting a modern roadway, and extends in a discontinuous sequence over a distance of approximately 380 meters. The logs appear to be resting directly on the soil substrate, although a single log has been observed in the position of a lengthwise stringer supporting several crosswise logs at their outer ends. The logs are at or near water level, as the roadway and its embankment border a canal. Fluctuations in the water level of nearby Lake Erie cause variations in the submersion or exposure of the logs.

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### Narrative Description

The feature underlies West Jefferson Avenue, once known as the U. S. Turnpike and also as the Dixie Highway. The road of which it forms a part was surveyed and built along the shoreline connecting Detroit with Maumee, Ohio, often using existing pathways, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the location of the feature, West Jefferson Avenue is a two-lane asphalt highway. The embankment supporting the present roadway forms the overburden covering the feature. This embankment varies in thickness from approximately one meter at the northeast end of the feature to approximately two meters at its southwest end, where the roadway rises in approaching a bridge over the Huron River. The logs are well preserved, especially those that have remained submerged or buried in silt. Some clearly show marks of felling by axes. A total of 590 logs have been counted to date. The feature likely has been damaged since the digging of the Silver Creek Canal along part of the northwest side, by erosion of both the substrate and the overburden, with resultant exposure of the feature.

The character of the immediate area is rural and residential. Across the canal to the northwest from the feature is a small residential island with approximately twenty dwellings. Directly across Jefferson Avenue to the southeast from the feature is the River View unit of Wayne County Parks. It contains a boat ramp, fishing pier, and gazebo. South of the Huron River bridge, located just beyond the southwest end of the feature, is a marina with eighty slips. Immediately south of the marina is the Point Mouille State Game Area. Three miles northeast of the feature is Lake Erie Metropark, featuring a nature and interpretive center.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Military

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Engineering

---

Archaeology: Historic-Non-Aboriginal

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**Period of Significance**

1812-1825

**Significant Dates**

1812

---

1813

---

1825

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Period of Significance (justification)**

Date of initial construction to final date of road-building at the site under federal jurisdiction.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The corduroy road segment beneath Jefferson Avenue just north of the Huron River meets national register criterion A at the national level as a remnant – the only one thus far identified – of "Hull's Trace" or Road, a 200-mile long military road hastily built in the summer of 1812 by troops under the command of American General William Hull to convey his army with its military supplies from southwestern Ohio north to Detroit. Hull's march to garrison and resupply Detroit was to be followed by an attack on Fort Malden, the British stronghold downstream across the Detroit River from Detroit, part of a broader American plan developed at the beginning of the War of 1812 for a three-pronged invasion of British-held Canada. The corduroy road segment, built by Hull's forces in late June or early July 1812, played a role in major events in the War of 1812 in the Old Northwest. It carried Hull's supply wagons on their way to Detroit on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1812. It likely carried the British force, with its equipment, that defeated the Americans in the second Battle of Frenchtown January 22, 1813, from and back to Fort Malden. It also likely carried Col. Richard M. Johnson's force of mounted Kentucky riflemen, with their baggage wagons and artillery, on their way from Fort Meigs in Ohio to Detroit in late September 1813 to support Gen. William Henry Harrison's attack on the British in western Ontario in the wake of Commodore Oliver H. Perry's defeat of the British fleet controlling Lake Erie on September 10. The road segment meets national register criterion C as an intact example of corduroy road construction that may be unique in its overall length and meets criterion D for its potential to provide important information about corduroy road construction, about the pre-deposition landscape in the area, the structure's use during the War of 1812, and the improvement and evolution of the feature into a modern roadway.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Congress approved an act to establish the Territory of Michigan from Indiana Territory on January 11, 1805. President Jefferson appointed William Hull, a Revolutionary War hero, governor of the territory in March 1805. By 1807 the *Chesapeake* affair, the continuing impressments of seamen from American ships to serve the British navy, and the British Orders in Council that regulated trade by neutral powers with the European Continent raised tensions between America and Britain to new heights. In October 1807, because of the growing threat of war with Britain and with the Indians perceived to be allied with them, the secretary of war, William Eustis, appointed Governor Hull military commander of the territory, with authority over both the territorial militia and the regular army forces at Detroit.

When Michigan territory was created, there was no formal road connection between the new territory and the settled eastern and southern parts of Ohio. In December 1808 the territorial Legislative Council authorized the governor to appoint three commissioners "to lay out a road from the city of Detroit to the foot of the rapids of the river Miami [on the Maumee River south of present-day Perrysburg, Ohio], which enters into Lake Erie, of the width of one hundred and twenty feet, in the best and most convenient route, and to have the same surveyed under their direction by such surveyor as shall be appointed by the Governor..." (*Laws of the Territory of Michigan*, IV, 35-36). An 1812 document concerning "making and repairing the road on the course laid by the Commissioners, between the Rapids and Detroit," makes it clear that the road was laid out (*Pioneer Society*, 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 625). Nevertheless, it seems clear that little beyond marking a route took place. Farmer (925) describes the route between Detroit and the future site of Toledo prior to the War of 1812 as "a sort of a bridle-path which ran along the west bank of the Detroit and through the swamps...."

As the U. S. moved toward war with Britain early in 1812, the conquest of Canada was seen as a key objective. Prior to the American declaration of war on June 18, 1812, President Madison had approved a plan developed by General Henry Dearborn that called for "a three-pronged campaign against Montreal, the Niagara frontier, and the Detroit frontier" (Hickey, 80). Governor Hull was selected to command the western army. He received a formal appointment as a brigadier general in the U. S. Army in April 1812 (*Territorial Papers*, X, 5-7, 9-10, 136, 385 (note 62), 733). His orders were to raise a force to resupply and defend Detroit and to invade Canada.

Hull, who had spent the winter of 1811-12 in the east, arrived in Dayton, Ohio, on May 23 to take command of an army of about 2000 militia and regulars from Ohio and Kentucky. Through June and early July of 1812 the force cut a road

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northward for conveying military supplies to Detroit, building blockhouses and garrisoning troops as they went. When necessary, at water crossings and swampy sections, the roadbed was stabilized using a common military engineering expedient – laying logs across the route and covering them with brush and earth. The army reached the rapids of the Maumee River, south of today's Toledo, Ohio, on June 29 and arrived at the River Raisin at Frenchtown (now Monroe, Michigan) on July 2 (Lucas, 17-18).

There is ample evidence that Hull's forces built segments of corduroy road as needed to cross swampy lands on the Michigan section of the road. An 1885 article, "The City of the Straits," by Henry A. Griffin in the *Magazine of Western History*, an early journal of military history, stated:

The evidences of this primitive and hurried engineering work are frequently revealed by the more perfect improvements of the present times. In draining, dredging, and railway construction sections of this, the first turnpike in the state of Michigan, are often brought to the surface. A new growth of timber has obliterated this highway where it followed the hard wood ridges, but the ash, elm, sycamore, and other soft woods felled to fill up the bogs and approaches to the streams, can easily be found to-day a few feet below the surface by those familiar with the route – almost as sound at heart as when they fell before the axes of Hull's hardy pioneers. And what a road it was when finished? A horseman of the present day would shrink in terror from its contemplation! But it served to convey the stores and ammunition that perforce must go on wheels, while the men who made up the expedition scorned roads of any kind for their personal convenience (Griffin, 580).

Dr. E. P. Christian in an 1888 article on early Wyandotte and vicinity reported the existence then of a corduroy crossing of Monguagon Creek south of Wyandotte that was believed to be part of Hull's road.

Across this creek on Mr. Payne's land are still to be seen the remains of a corduroy crossing said to have been constructed by Hull's army on the way from Dayton to Detroit, through a then almost unbroken wilderness. There can be little doubt that this is the case, as it is within an enclosed field back from the wide and deep water and flanking marsh nearer the mouth of the creek, and is where a crossing could more readily be constructed. Besides this, Mr. George Payne Sr., lately deceased at an advanced age, came to the Monguagon in 1831, when the facts connected with the history of the campaign and the war would be familiar with the numerous resident Indians as well as the comparatively few whites (Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Historical Collections*, XIII (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 314).

This location is in section 5 of what was once Monguagon Township but is now Riverview.

Hull's army reached the Huron River during July 4, 1812. The journal of Robert Lucas, a participant in the campaign (and later Governor of the state of Ohio) states that the army that day had "marched but six miles being detained throwing a bridge over the river" (Lucas, 20), which McAfee's history described as only "40 feet wide, but very deep" (*History of the Late War in the Western Country*, 57).

William H. Powell, in an account of Hull's campaign published in *The United Service. A Monthly Review of Military and Naval Affairs* in 1889, stated that at the time, "The Indians from Brownstown came to the river [the Huron] in considerable numbers, appearing very friendly. Seeing heavy wagons cross the bridge, while the main body of the army was screened from their view by a piece of woods, they expressed their surprise that General Hull should think of capturing the Canadas with so many wagons and so few men; and were very curious, examining the wagons to ascertain if the army was packed away in them. ... The command crossed the bridge and encamped the same day..." (Powell, 244).

The nominated corduroy road segment crosses the swampy terrain just north of the bridge site. The army's camping place would likely have been on the dry ground north of the swamp rather than in it. For the wagons to have crossed the bridge on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the segment of corduroy road across the swamp just north of the bridge must have already been built. Hull's forces coming north may have built this piece of corduroy road as part of the work done on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

However, the corduroy road segment could also have been built a few days earlier by troops from Detroit under Captain Hubert LaCroix. On June 14, 1812, Major James Witherell, commandant at Detroit, ordered LaCroix to "cause a Detachment of at least one Subaltern, two Sergeants, two Corporals and thirty privates to be daily employed" in opening up the road between the Maumee rapids and Detroit to expedite the arrival of Hull's forces. "Perhaps it would be convenient for those stationed at Otter Creek to work in that direction, while the remainder are employed between the

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River Raisin and the River Huron." He added, "As the pressure of so many loaded wagons will require a firm foundation, the bridges and causeways ought to be proportionally strong" (Pioneer Society, 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 625). LaCroix's reports to Major Witherell note difficulties in prosecuting the work due to lack of tools and in locating the route laid out by the commissioners. In a report dated June 26 he stated, "I have had fifty men employed in cutting the road since Monday last, and from that this day I shall have eighty toward Detroit and thirty toward the Miami" (*Ibid.*, 630-31). Thus Captain LaCroix's forces could also have built the corduroy road segment during the latter part of June or early in July.

If it is unclear which troops built the road segment, it is clear the structure was built by or on July 4<sup>th</sup> since Hull's forces camped that evening north of the river. Rumors concerning a possible attack by the British from nearby Malden or by the Indians during the night arose "a little past sunset" on the 4<sup>th</sup>, and the troops remained under arms "by turns" throughout the night. The army marched early the next day, July 5, reaching Springwells, two miles short of Detroit, that day (Powell, 244; McAfee, 58).

Only a week after arriving in the Detroit area, on July 12, 1812, General Hull began his invasion of British territory with the intention first of capturing Fort Malden. The invasion accomplished little. Late in July news arrived that a force of 200 militia from Ohio commanded by Capt. Brush had arrived at Frenchtown, thirty-five miles south of Detroit, to reinforce and resupply Hull. They were waiting for reinforcements from Hull before proceeding further because of the threat from nearby British and their Indian allies. Gen. Hull sent 150 men under Major Thomas B. Van Horne August 4 to meet Brush's troops. The force was attacked by a larger force of Indians led by Tecumseh on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Brownstown, an Indian village located a short distance west of today's Gibraltar several miles north of the Huron River, and forced back to Detroit. On the 8<sup>th</sup> Hull sent a larger force totaling about 650 men under the command of Lt. Col. James Miller to meet Brush's troops. This force encountered British and Indians near the Indian village of Monguagon, south of today's Wyandotte. Following this second action on August 9, the American troops retreated to Detroit, carrying the wounded back in wagons brought from Detroit (presumably along Hull's road, but a part of it well north of the Huron crossing). Hull's army had already abandoned the invasion of Canada, evacuating British territory on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> (Hickey, 81-82; Lucas, 28-57). With Lake Erie controlled by the British and land communication between Detroit and territory to the south under American control also cut off, Hull's forces received no reinforcements or supplies. General Hull surrendered Detroit and the entire Michigan Territory to the British August 16, 1812 (Hickey, 81-84).

The nominated corduroy road segment north of the Huron probably played no role in these battles of Brownstown and Monguagon, since those battles took place north of the Huron, but it likely did see service in connection with British troop movements related to the second Battle of Frenchtown. The two Battles of Frenchtown on January 18 and 22, 1813, were the culmination of an unsuccessful American campaign of August 1812 to January 1813 to retake Detroit. In the wake of an initial American victory on the 18<sup>th</sup>, a force of 578 British troops from Fort Malden on the Canadian shore of the Detroit River (part of a larger force that also included Indians and Canadian volunteers) marched to Brownstown, crossing the river on the ice, on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, and, presumably using the road, reached Frenchtown early on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> (Naveaux, 126-27). Attacked at about daybreak on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Americans were caught unprepared and surrendered by the early afternoon (Naveaux, 154-58, 197), suffering in the two battles 398 deaths, including a reported thirty massacred by the Indians after the surrender – the largest American casualties of the War of 1812 (River Raisin Battlefield NHL draft, 9, quoting statistics from T. H. Palmer, *The Historical Register of the United States, Part II*, 195). The British troops began their march back to Malden with those prisoners able to walk on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, again presumably over Hull's road, including the corduroy section north of the Huron, arriving on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (McAfee, 216-22). Detroit and all of Michigan Territory remained firmly in British hands for much of 1813.

On September 10, 1813, Commodore Oliver H. Perry's fleet defeated a British squadron under the command of Capt. Robert H. Barclay in western Lake Erie, leaving the lake under American control. "The battle was the most important fought on the Great Lakes during the war. It changed the balance of power in the West and enabled the United States to recover all that it had lost in 1812" (Hickey, 135). Perry's action was part of a new American plan for retaking Detroit and invading Upper Canada via Fort Malden that was well under way by July 1813.

In the wake of the British defeat on Lake Erie, British forces in the Detroit region withdrew into Upper Canada (Ontario). By late September Gen. William Henry Harrison, who had replaced Hull as the American military commander in the Northwest, recruited an army of about 4500 men, including regulars plus Kentucky militia, that gathered near today's Sandusky, Ohio. Using Perry's ships, the force sailed from Middle Sister Island September 27 and camped that evening at Fort Malden, already abandoned and destroyed by the British (McAfee, 362-70). Part of the army crossed over to Detroit

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on the 29<sup>th</sup> and "on the same evening general Harrison issued his proclamation for re-establishing the civil government of the territory" (McAfee, 374). Leaving troops to protect Detroit from the threat of Indian attack, the larger part of Harrison's forces set out October 2<sup>nd</sup> after the retreating British force, catching up with them near Moraviantown, Upper Canada, about eighty miles east of Detroit. On October 5, 1813, the Americans defeated the British at this Battle of the Thames, leaving most of the Northwest in American hands (McAfee, 381-96).

A second part of Harrison's force, 500 mounted Kentucky riflemen under Col. Richard M. Johnson quartered at Fort Meigs, south of today's Toledo, Ohio, received orders from Gen. Harrison September 25 to march to Detroit via the River Raisin to participate in the operation with the other American force that would be landing on the opposite (Canadian) shore. Johnson's troops marched on the 26<sup>th</sup> and reached the Raisin two days later (McAfee, 377; Gilpin, 218-19). The next morning, according to Capt. Robert McAfee, who was there as part of the force, "A detachment of 100 men was now sent in advance to the river Huron; to throw a bridge over that stream for the passage of the troops; who arrived, and partly crossed it in the evening; and the balance, with the baggage wagons and artillery, crossed in the morning, on the floating bridge which had been prepared for them" (McAfee, 378). The force reached Detroit on the 30<sup>th</sup> and two days later joined in the pursuit of the British troops retreating from Fort Malden (McAfee, 377-82). Presumably Johnson's troops, with their baggage wagons and artillery, would have used Hull's road, with its corduroy passage through the swamp north of the Huron River. It is not unreasonable to think that whatever temporary bridge across the Huron Hull's troops hurriedly built in late June or early July 1812 might have already disintegrated or been intentionally destroyed.

### The Road Segment after the War of 1812

Rather than creating a true highway between Detroit and today's Toledo area, Hull's troops made only minimal improvements over the old bridle path described by Farmer, and much of that work probably soon became unusable. With the war over, troops from Detroit began work on a new military road connecting Michigan Territory with Ohio. A report in the *Niles' Register* of January 3, 1818, quoted "A letter from Detroit, of 28<sup>th</sup> November last, that nearly fifty miles of the military road have been made since August last, by the troops stationed at that place. This road extends from Detroit to within about ten miles of the Black Swamp. Notwithstanding the obstacles which opposed, many good bridges have been built, and the immense labor performed is said to reflect much credit on the officers and soldiers who were engaged in the arduous undertaking." This road reused at least parts of Hull's road, including the corduroy road segment north of the Huron River. The work done in the 1816-17 period may have included the first filling operations that have since raised the road surface of today's Jefferson Avenue a meter and more above the corduroy.

The glowing report in *Niles' Register* may have been overly optimistic. Farmer (925) claimed that only thirty miles (i.e. as far as Monroe) were actually built. In 1824 in response to a new round of complaints about the road being impassable, Congress appropriated \$20,000 to construct a new road. The route was surveyed by November 1824, and contracts for part of the work made the following spring. The work then done included the twenty-one miles commencing two miles north of Brownstown south to "four or five miles past the River Raisin," thus including the section north of the Huron River encompassed by the corduroy road (*Michigan Herald* 1825).

Territorial governor Lewis Cass, in requesting additional funds to complete the work, explained its importance: "It is the connecting link between the territory of Michigan and the more settled portion of the Union. It is essential to the prosperity of the country in peace, and to its security in war." Congress appropriated another \$12,000 in the spring of 1827 (Dain, 43). This road mainly followed the 1816-17 military road, the River Road, or Jefferson Avenue. This location has remained the right of way of Jefferson Avenue down to the present. Responsibility for maintaining "the turnpike" was turned over to local control in 1828. Successive improvements at the corduroy road location north of the Huron River have added more fill, raising the road level, while leaving Hull's corduroy road intact beneath.

### Engineering Significance of the Corduroy Road Segment

Historical accounts make clear that Hull's Road included various segments of corduroy road in today's Ohio and Michigan, perhaps adding up to miles of it. Corduroy road construction was recognized by early road-building authorities as a serviceable expedient for opening roads through swampy ground in newly settled areas, and was likely extensively used in the early days of settlement in Michigan. But nineteenth-century road-building manuals such as W. M. Gillespie's *A Manual of the Principles and Practice of Road-Making* (1847) barely touch on the technique and did not encourage its use as more than a temporary expedient. The following is the entirety of Gillespie's discussion of the subject:



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When a road passes over soft swampy ground, always kept moist by springs, which cannot be drained without too much expense, and which is surrounded by a forest, it may be cheaply and rapidly made passable, by felling a sufficient number of trees, as straight and as uniform in size as possible, and laying them side by side across the road at right angles to its length. This arrangement is well known under the name of a "Corduroy" road, of which the figure gives a top and end view. Though its successive hills and hollows offer great resistance to draught, and are very unpleasant to persons riding over, it is nevertheless a very valuable substitute for a swamp, which in its natural state would at times be utterly impassible. But necessary and desirable as these roads may be to accomplish such an end in the infancy of settlement, their retention upon a great thoroughfare is a disgraceful proof of indolence and want of enterprise in those who habitually travel over them; though several instances might be specified (228).

Another manual, Q. A. Gillmore's *A Practical Treatise on Roads, Streets, and Pavements*, published in 1876, after prefacing its discussion of corduroy roads with the statement that such "scarcely deserve the name of roads," provides more specifics on construction techniques. It explained that a corduroy road should usually be about fifteen or sixteen feet wide,

so that two vehicles can pass each other upon it without interference. The logs are all cut to the same length, which should be that of the required width of the road, and in laying them down such care in selection should be exercised, as will give the smallest joints or openings between them. In order to reduce as much as possible the resistance to draught and the violence of the repeated shocks to which vehicles are subjected upon these roads, and also to render its surface practicable for draught animals, it is customary to level up between the logs with smaller pieces of the same length but split to a triangular cross-section. These are inserted with edges downward, in the open joints, so as to bring their top surfaces even with the upper sides of the large logs, or as nearly so as practicable. Upon the bed thus prepared a layer of brushwood is put, with a few inches in thickness of soil or turf on top to keep it in place (79-80).

Gillmore, a lieutenant-colonel in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, was presumably describing state-of-the-art construction for the time that would have provided a far more finished road surface than Hull's forces, building hurriedly in an emergency situation, could have accomplished. The structure of the nominated segment of corduroy road beyond the large logs laid crosswise – whether smaller logs between the larger ones, brush, and fill on top were used – is not currently known.

The nominated feature represents a rare known surviving, and accessible, example of the corduroy road building technique in the Great Lakes region. These roads represented a very early stage of road improvement. By their very nature, corduroy roads built across marshy ground usually rot away, are buried under subsequent filling and paving, or are removed altogether during the course of later roadway improvements. Current-day road-building standards would not permit retention of such wooden structures when new construction is undertaken at their sites. Most corduroy road structures were probably destroyed in the course of past road reconstruction projects that did not require compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In Michigan only one other piece of corduroy road, a ten-meter long section underlying Grand River Avenue in East Lansing uncovered in 1997, has been discovered and studied in recent years (Dunham et al. 1997). Known surviving examples elsewhere in the Great Lakes region are also rare. One short example in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin, constructed in the 1830s as part of a federal military road, has been studied (Behm 1991). The nominated approximately 380-meter long section of corduroy road underlying Jefferson Avenue north of the Huron River is a remarkable survival and possibly unique in its length.

### Archaeological Significance

As recently as 1915, remnants of Hull's Road or Trace were observable in Ohio (Kennedy 1915). All are described as being in open and dry country, where special techniques such as corduroy would not have been used. Enquiries to the State Historic Preservation Office in Ohio, as well as to county historical associations along Hull's route in Ohio, produced a total of eight commemorative markers associated with Hull: one each in Hancock and Logan counties, two in Champaign, and four in Hardin. None of these commemorative sites actually preserves the road itself in an exposed or interpretable condition. It appears that only the nominated segment represents an example of the original construction, where the materials and the process of their deposition may be studied and interpreted.

Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment

Wayne Co., MI

Name of Property

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No previous formal survey or excavation of the feature has been undertaken, although it has been referenced in popular literature as long ago as 1936 (Hines 1936; Halsey 2000). The 1991 Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin (Behm 1991), and 1997 East Lansing projects (Dunham et al. 1997) appears to be the only formally documented excavations of corduroy road segments in the Great Lakes region. Prior to the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1996, such excavation and site destruction would have proceeded routinely and without scientific documentation. An extensive literature search produced only one other documented instance of the excavation of a corduroy road since the NHPA: a six-log segment discovered in Annapolis, Maryland, in 2008, and currently being investigated under Dr. Mark Leone of the University of Maryland.

The key elements of the nominated feature are the substrate, the logs themselves, and the overburden, especially the lower layers. Individually and collectively, they offer the potential to reconstruct the pre-deposition landscape, the process of initial site formation, and the improvement and evolution of the feature into a modern roadway.

*Landscape reconstruction:* Minimally destructive techniques such as soil core analysis may shed light on the original landform of the Huron River mouth. The intermittent deposition of logs suggests multiple channels separated by raised hummocks or sandbars, very different from today's configuration. Soil type and vegetation analysis may provide data on the hydrology and ecology of the zone. Comparison of substrate cores between corduroy and non-corduroy areas may provide insight on the factors influencing the decision to employ the corduroy technique.

*Initial site formation and subsequent developments:* Additional minimally destructive or non-destructive techniques such as ground penetrating radar, tool mark analysis, tree speciation, and dendrochronological dating should provide data on the full extent and structure of the feature and the process of site formation.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment  
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Wayne Co., MI  
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Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment  
Name of Property

Wayne Co., MI  
County and State

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.3  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 316759 4656941  
Zone Easting Northing

3 17 316960 4657259  
Zone Easting Northing

2 17 316910 4657287  
Zone Easting Northing

4 17 316804 4656905  
Zone Easting Northing

Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment  
Name of Property

Wayne Co., MI  
County and State

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is an elongated rectangle, 1250 feet by 150 feet, with its long sides oriented along West Jefferson Avenue, on a bearing of 23 degrees (true). The southwest corner (point "1") is formed by the western end of the southernmost log in the structure. The northwest point (point "2") is formed by the western end of the northernmost log in the structure. Point "3" is defined as that point directly opposite point "2" across West Jefferson Avenue, and of equal distance from the centerline of West Jefferson Avenue as point "2." Point "4" is defined as that point directly opposite point "1" across West Jefferson Avenue, and of equal distance from the centerline of West Jefferson Avenue as point "1."

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries selected enclose all visible remnants of the historic structure, and allow for the presence of additional structural elements under the overburden formed by the West Jefferson Avenue embankment.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Daniel F. Harrison, M.A., M.L.S., Librarian and Historian  
Robert O. Christensen, national register coordinator

organization Henry Ford Community College/MI SHPO

date August 2010

street & number 28803 Nine Mile Road

telephone 248/476-7148 & 517/335-2719

city or town Farmington Hills

state MI

zip code 48336-4911

e-mail dharrison@hfcc.edu christensenr@michigan.gov

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Segment

**City or Vicinity:** Brownstown Township

Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment

Wayne Co., MI

Name of Property

County and State

County: Wayne State: MI

Photographer: Daniel F. Harrison

Date Photographed: August 19, 2009

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

1 of 6: Southern end of feature looking SW. Logs in foreground are part of corduroy road remnant of Hull's Trace. Logs are emerging from embankment supporting West Jefferson Avenue (outside frame on left). Additional logs are submerged. Ridge in background is Harbin Drive over Silver Creek. Huron River is visible beyond bridge.  
Michigan\_Wayne\_HullsTrace\_0001.tif

2 of 6: View of feature looking NE from Harbin Drive bridge. Emergent logs visible above waterline. Logs are emerging from heavily vegetated embankment supporting West Jefferson Avenue, on right. Additional logs are submerged. Bridge visible in upper-left corner is Leeland Street crossing Silver Creek.  
Michigan\_Wayne\_HullsTrace\_0002.tif

3 of 6: View of a group of emergent logs, looking E towards heavily vegetated embankment supporting West Jefferson Avenue, in background. Scale bar is 50 centimeters in length. Flagging tape is part of a non-destructive archaeological survey in progress at time of photograph.  
Michigan\_Wayne\_HullsTrace\_0003.tif

4 of 6: View of a pair of submerged logs, looking SE across the feature from Silver Creek. Logs are emerging from heavily vegetated embankment, visible in background, supporting West Jefferson Avenue. Scale bar is 50 centimeters in length.  
Michigan\_Wayne\_HullsTrace\_0004.tif

5 of 6: View of River View Park, a unit of Wayne County Parks, looking SE from West Jefferson Avenue east towards Lake Erie. Park entrance drive is on left. Structure in center is a picnic shelter with two flush toilets. Seawall along shoreline is topped by wooden boardwalk with railing. Two-ramp boat launch is on right, outside of frame.  
Michigan\_Wayne\_HullsTrace\_0005.tif

6 of 6: View of mouth of Huron River, emptying into Lake Erie, looking SW from parking lot of River View unit of Wayne County Parks. Boat launch ramps in foreground, Lake Pointe Marina (private) in distance, across river. Boardwalk/fishing access on left and right.

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Robert Conrad, Director, Roads Division, Wayne County Commission

street & number 415 Clifford Street

telephone

city or town Detroit

state MI

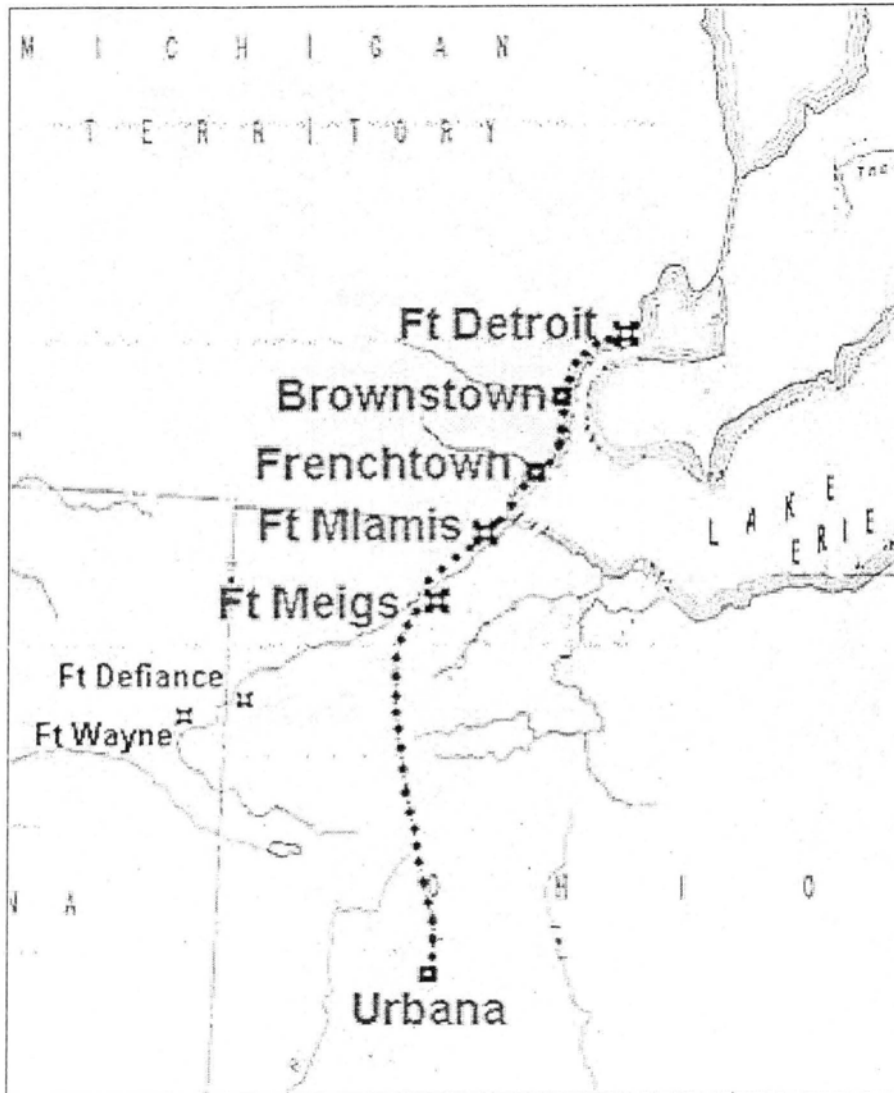
zip code 48226-1518

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment  
Name of Property

Wayne Co., MI  
County and State



Route of Hull's Trace (created by Daniel Harrison)

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

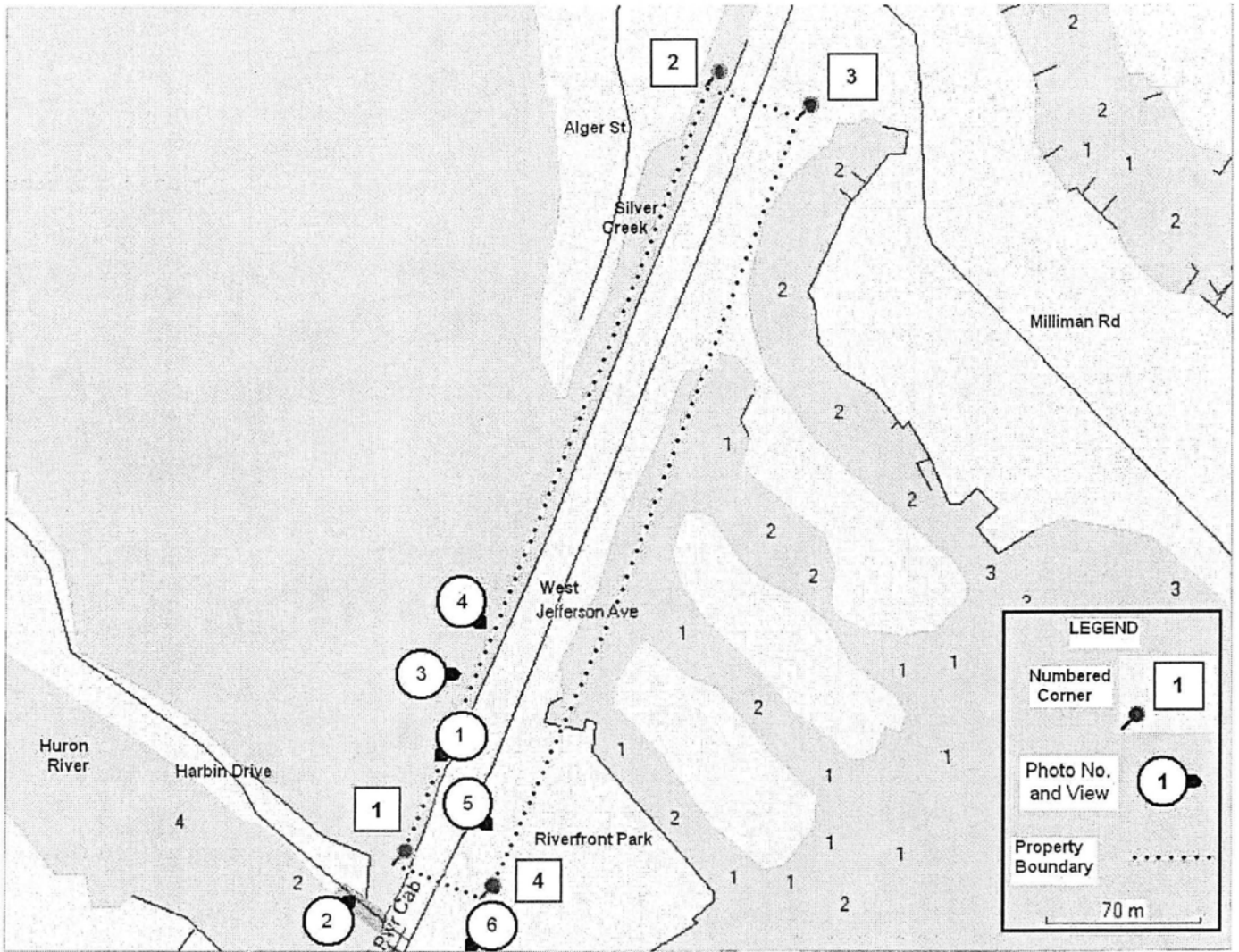
name Robert Conrad, Director, Roads Division, Wayne County Commission

street & number 415 Clifford Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Detroit state MI zip code 48226-1518

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Sketch map of property. "Numbered Corner" refers to Section 10, "Geographical Data." "Photo No." refers to Photographs 1 through 6. "View" is indicated by direction of arrow

Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Segment  
 Brownstown Township, Wayne County, Michigan





A880840 1/6 <> <Michiga..001.jpg>  
<> 07/07/10

Photograph 1 of 6

Mi\_Wayne County\_Hulls Trace\_0001



A880840 2/6 <> <Michisa..002.jpg>  
<> 07/07/10

Photograph 2 of 6

MI - Wayne County - Hulls Trace - 0002



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Photograph 3 of 6

M1 - Wayne County - Hulls Trace - 0003



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<> 07/07/10

Photograph 4 of 6

MI - Wayne County - Hulls Trace - 0004





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<> 07/07/10

Photograph 5 of 6  
MI Wayne County - Halls Trace - 0005



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<> 07/07/10

Photograph 6 of 6

MI - Wayne County - Halls Trace - 0006



Hull's Trace  
North Huron  
River  
Corduroy  
Road Segment  
Wayne Co.  
MI

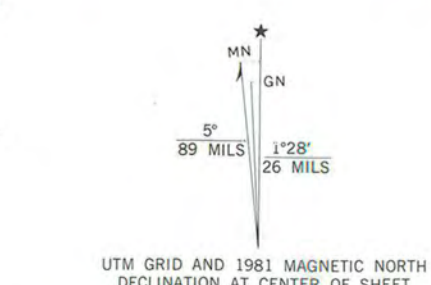
1 17 316759  
4656741

2 17 316910  
4657247

3 17 316960  
4657259

4 17 316804  
4656905

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with State of Michigan agencies  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, U. S. Lake Survey, and Wayne County Highway Commission  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
Topography by planetable surveys 1940. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from U. S. Lake Survey Chart 41 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum, 10,000-foot grid based on Michigan coordinate system, south zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS RIVER SURFACE AT FOLLOWING STAGES: LAKE ST. CLAIR-571.7 AND LAKE ERIE-568.6

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 AND BY THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DIVISION  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
Interstate Route ○ State Route ○

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROCKWOOD, MICH.—ONT.  
N4200—W8307.5/7.5  
1967  
PHOTOREVISED 1981  
DMA 4368 II SW—SERIES V862



# National Register of Historic Places

## Note to the record

Additional documentation: 2015

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Segment

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Wayne

DATE RECEIVED: 11/28/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/14/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10001022

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Additional Documentation Approved**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Edson Beall

DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 1-14-15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment  
Name of Property

Wayne Co., MI  
County and State

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The corduroy road segment beneath Jefferson Avenue just north of the Huron River meets national register criterion A at the national level as a remnant – the only one thus far identified – of "Hull's Trace" or Road, a 200-mile long military road hastily built in the summer of 1812 by troops under the command of American General William Hull to convey his army with its military supplies from southwestern Ohio north to Detroit. Hull's march to garrison and resupply Detroit was to be followed by an attack on Fort Malden, the British stronghold downstream across the Detroit River from Detroit, part of a broader American plan developed at the beginning of the War of 1812 for a three-pronged invasion of British-held Canada. The corduroy road segment, built by Hull's forces in late June or early July 1812, played a role in major events in the War of 1812 in the Old Northwest. It carried Hull's supply wagons on their way to Detroit on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1812. It likely carried the British force, with its equipment, that defeated the Americans in the second Battle of Frenchtown January 22, 1813, from and back to Fort Malden. It also likely carried Col. Richard M. Johnson's force of mounted Kentucky riflemen, with their baggage wagons and artillery, on their way from Fort Meigs in Ohio to Detroit in late September 1813 to support Gen. William Henry Harrison's attack on the British in western Ontario in the wake of Commodore Oliver H. Perry's defeat of the British fleet controlling Lake Erie on September 10. The road segment meets national register criterion C as an intact example of corduroy road construction that may be unique in its overall length and meets criterion D for its potential to provide important information about corduroy road construction, about the pre-deposition landscape in the area, the structure's use during the War of 1812, and the improvement and evolution of the feature into a modern roadway.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Congress approved an act to establish the Territory of Michigan from Indiana Territory on January 11, 1805. President Jefferson appointed William Hull, a Revolutionary War hero, governor of the territory in March 1805. By 1807 the *Chesapeake* affair, the continuing impressments of seamen from American ships to serve the British navy, and the British Orders in Council that regulated trade by neutral powers with the European Continent raised tensions between America and Britain to new heights. In October 1807, because of the growing threat of war with Britain and with the Indians perceived to be allied with them, the secretary of war, William Eustis, appointed Governor Hull military commander of the territory, with authority over both the territorial militia and the regular army forces at Detroit.

When Michigan territory was created, there was no formal road connection between the new territory and the settled eastern and southern parts of Ohio. In December 1808 the territorial Legislative Council authorized the governor to appoint three commissioners "to lay out a road from the city of Detroit to the foot of the rapids of the river Miami [on the Maumee River south of present-day Perrysburg, Ohio], which enters into Lake Erie, of the width of one hundred and twenty feet, in the best and most convenient route, and to have the same surveyed under their direction by such surveyor as shall be appointed by the Governor..." (*Laws of the Territory of Michigan*, IV, 35-36). An 1812 document concerning "making and repairing the road on the course laid by the Commissioners, between the Rapids and Detroit," makes it clear that the road was laid out (*Pioneer Society*, 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 625). Nevertheless, it seems clear that little beyond marking a route took place. Farmer (925) describes the route between Detroit and the future site of Toledo prior to the War of 1812 as "a sort of a bridle-path which ran along the west bank of the Detroit and through the swamps..."

As the U. S. moved toward war with Britain early in 1812, the conquest of Canada was seen as a key objective. Prior to the American declaration of war on June 18, 1812, President Madison had approved a plan developed by General Henry Dearborn that called for "a three-pronged campaign against Montreal, the Niagara frontier, and the Detroit frontier" (Hickey, 80). Governor Hull was selected to command the western army. He received a formal appointment as a brigadier general in the U. S. Army in April 1812 (*Territorial Papers*, X, 5-7, 9-10, 136, 385 (note 62), 733). His orders were to raise a force to resupply and defend Detroit and to invade Canada.



Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy  
Segment

Wayne Co., MI

Name of Property

County and State

Hull, who had spent the winter of 1811-12 in the east, arrived in Dayton, Ohio, on May 23 to take command of an army of about 2000 militia and regulars from Ohio and Kentucky. Through June and early July of 1812 the force cut a road northward for conveying military supplies to Detroit, building blockhouses and garrisoning troops as they went. When necessary, at water crossings and swampy sections, the roadbed was stabilized using a common military engineering expedient – laying logs across the route and covering them with brush and earth. The army reached the rapids of the Maumee River, south of today's Toledo, Ohio, on June 29 and arrived at the River Raisin at Frenchtown (now Monroe, Michigan) on July 2 (Lucas, 17-18).

There is ample evidence that Hull's forces built segments of corduroy road as needed to cross swampy lands on the Michigan section of the road. An 1885 article, "The City of the Straits," by Henry A. Griffin in the *Magazine of Western History*, an early journal of military history, stated:

The evidences of this primitive and hurried engineering work are frequently revealed by the more perfect improvements of the present times. In draining, dredging, and railway construction sections of this, the first turnpike in the state of Michigan, are often brought to the surface. A new growth of timber has obliterated this highway where it followed the hard wood ridges, but the ash, elm, sycamore, and other soft woods felled to fill up the bogs and approaches to the streams, can easily be found to-day a few feet below the surface by those familiar with the route – almost as sound at heart as when they fell before the axes of Hull's hardy pioneers. And what a road it was when finished? A horseman of the present day would shrink in terror from its contemplation! But it served to convey the stores and ammunition that perforce must go on wheels, while the men who made up the expedition scorned roads of any kind for their personal convenience (Griffin, 580).

Dr. E. P. Christian in an 1888 article on early Wyandotte and vicinity reported the existence then of a corduroy crossing of Monguagon Creek south of Wyandotte that was believed to be part of Hull's road.

Across this creek on Mr. Payne's land are still to be seen the remains of a corduroy crossing said to have been constructed by Hull's army on the way from Dayton to Detroit, through a then almost unbroken wilderness. There can be little doubt that this is the case, as it is within an enclosed field back from the wide and deep water and flanking marsh nearer the mouth of the creek, and is where a crossing could more readily be constructed. Besides this, Mr. George Payne Sr., lately deceased at an advanced age, came to the Monguagon in 1831, when the facts connected with the history of the campaign and the war would be familiar with the numerous resident Indians as well as the comparatively few whites (Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Historical Collections*, XIII (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 314).

This location is in section 5 of what was once Monguagon Township but is now Riverview.

Hull's army reached the Huron River during July 4, 1812. The journal of Robert Lucas, a participant in the campaign (and later Governor of the state of Ohio) states that the army that day had "marched but six miles being detained throwing a bridge over the river" (Lucas, 20), which McAfee's history described as only "40 feet wide, but very deep" (*History of the Late War in the Western Country*, 57).

William H. Powell, in an account of Hull's campaign published in *The United Service. A Monthly Review of Military and Naval Affairs* in 1889, stated that at the time, "The Indians from Brownstown came to the river [the Huron] in considerable numbers, appearing very friendly. Seeing heavy wagons cross the bridge, while the main body of the army was screened from their view by a piece of woods, they expressed their surprise that General Hull should think of capturing the Canadas with so many wagons and so few men; and were very curious, examining the wagons to ascertain if the army was packed away in them. ... The command crossed the bridge and encamped the same day..." (Powell, 244).

The nominated corduroy road segment crosses the swampy terrain just north of the bridge site. The army's camping place would likely have been on the dry ground north of the swamp rather than in it. For the wagons to have crossed the bridge on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the segment of corduroy road across the swamp just north of the bridge must have already been built. Hull's forces coming north may have built this piece of corduroy road as part of the work done on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

However, the corduroy road segment could also have been built a few days earlier by troops from Frenchtown under Captain Hubert LaCroix. On June 14, 1812, Major James Witherell, commandant at Detroit, ordered LaCroix to "cause a Detachment of at least one Subaltern, two Sergeants, two Corporals and thirty privates to be daily employed" in opening

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up the road between the Maumee rapids and Detroit to expedite the arrival of Hull's forces. "Perhaps it would be convenient for those stationed at Otter Creek to work in that direction, while the remainder are employed between the River Raisin and the River Huron." He added, "As the pressure of so many loaded wagons will require a firm foundation, the bridges and causeways ought to be proportionally strong" (Pioneer Society, 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 625). LaCroix's reports to Major Witherell note difficulties in prosecuting the work due to lack of tools and in locating the route laid out by the commissioners. In a report dated June 26 he stated, "I have had fifty men employed in cutting the road since Monday last, and from that this day I shall have eighty toward Detroit and thirty toward the Miami" (*ibid.*, 630-31). Thus Captain LaCroix's forces could also have built the corduroy road segment during the latter part of June or early in July.

If it is unclear which troops built the road segment, it is clear the structure was built by or on July 4<sup>th</sup> since Hull's forces camped that evening north of the river. Rumors concerning a possible attack by the British from nearby Malden or by the Indians during the night arose "a little past sunset" on the 4<sup>th</sup>, and the troops remained under arms "by turns" throughout the night. The army marched early the next day, July 5, reaching Springwells, two miles short of Detroit, that day (Powell, 244; McAfee, 58).

Only a week after arriving in the Detroit area, on July 12, 1812, General Hull began his invasion of British territory with the intention first of capturing Fort Malden. The invasion accomplished little. Late in July news arrived that a force of 200 militia from Ohio commanded by Capt. Brush had arrived at Frenchtown, thirty-five miles south of Detroit, to reinforce and resupply Hull. They were waiting for reinforcements from Hull before proceeding further because of the threat from nearby British and their Indian allies. Gen. Hull sent 150 men under Major Thomas B. Van Horne August 4 to meet Brush's troops. The force was attacked by a larger force of Indians led by Tecumseh on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Brownstown, an Indian village located a short distance west of today's Gibraltar several miles north of the Huron River, and forced back to Detroit. On the 8<sup>th</sup> Hull sent a larger force totaling about 650 men under the command of Lt. Col. James Miller to meet Brush's troops. This force encountered British and Indians near the Indian village of Monguagon, south of today's Wyandotte. Following this second action on August 9, the American troops retreated to Detroit, carrying the wounded back in wagons brought from Detroit (presumably along Hull's road, but a part of it well north of the Huron crossing). Hull's army had already abandoned the invasion of Canada, evacuating British territory on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> (Hickey, 81-82; Lucas, 28-57). With Lake Erie controlled by the British and land communication between Detroit and territory to the south under American control also cut off, Hull's forces received no reinforcements or supplies. General Hull surrendered Detroit and the entire Michigan Territory to the British August 16, 1812 (Hickey, 81-84).

The nominated corduroy road segment north of the Huron probably played no role in these battles of Brownstown and Monguagon, since those battles took place north of the Huron, but it likely did see service in connection with British troop movements related to the second Battle of Frenchtown. The two Battles of Frenchtown on January 18 and 22, 1813, were the culmination of an unsuccessful American campaign of August 1812 to January 1813 to retake Detroit. In the wake of an initial American victory on the 18<sup>th</sup>, a force of 578 British troops from Fort Malden on the Canadian shore of the Detroit River (part of a larger force that also included Indians and Canadian volunteers) marched to Brownstown, crossing the river on the ice, on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, and, presumably using the road, reached Frenchtown early on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> (Naveaux, 126-27). Attacked at about daybreak on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Americans were caught unprepared and surrendered by the early afternoon (Naveaux, 154-58, 197), suffering in the two battles 398 deaths, including a reported thirty massacred by the Indians after the surrender – the largest American casualties of the War of 1812 (River Raisin Battlefield NHL draft, 9, quoting statistics from T. H. Palmer, *The Historical Register of the United States, Part II*, 195). The British troops began their march back to Malden with those prisoners able to walk on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, again presumably over Hull's road, including the corduroy section north of the Huron, arriving on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (McAfee, 216-22). Detroit and all of Michigan Territory remained firmly in British hands for much of 1813.

On September 10, 1813, Commodore Oliver H. Perry's fleet defeated a British squadron under the command of Capt. Robert H. Barclay in western Lake Erie, leaving the lake under American control. "The battle was the most important fought on the Great Lakes during the war. It changed the balance of power in the West and enabled the United States to recover all that it had lost in 1812" (Hickey, 135). Perry's action was part of a new American plan for retaking Detroit and invading Upper Canada via Fort Malden that was well under way by July 1813.

In the wake of the British defeat on Lake Erie, British forces in the Detroit region withdrew into Upper Canada (Ontario). By late September Gen. William Henry Harrison, who had replaced Hull as the American military commander in the Northwest, recruited an army of about 4500 men, including regulars plus Kentucky militia, that gathered near today's

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Sandusky, Ohio. Using Perry's ships, the force sailed from Middle Sister Island September 27 and camped that evening at Fort Malden, already abandoned and destroyed by the British (McAfee, 362-70). Part of the army crossed over to Detroit on the 29<sup>th</sup> and "on the same evening general Harrison issued his proclamation for re-establishing the civil government of the territory" (McAfee, 374). Leaving troops to protect Detroit from the threat of Indian attack, the larger part of Harrison's forces set out October 2<sup>nd</sup> after the retreating British force, catching up with them near Moraviantown, Upper Canada, about eighty miles east of Detroit. On October 5, 1813, the Americans defeated the British at this Battle of the Thames, leaving most of the Northwest in American hands (McAfee, 381-96).

A second part of Harrison's force, 500 mounted Kentucky riflemen under Col. Richard M. Johnson quartered at Fort Meigs, south of today's Toledo, Ohio, received orders from Gen. Harrison September 25 to march to Detroit via the River Raisin to participate in the operation with the other American force that would be landing on the opposite (Canadian) shore. Johnson's troops marched on the 26<sup>th</sup> and reached the Raisin two days later (McAfee, 377; Gilpin, 218-19). The next morning, according to Capt. Robert McAfee, who was there as part of the force, "A detachment of 100 men was now sent in advance to the river Huron, to throw a bridge over that stream for the passage of the troops; who arrived, and partly crossed it in the evening; and the balance, with the baggage wagons and artillery, crossed in the morning, on the floating bridge which had been prepared for them" (McAfee, 378). The force reached Detroit on the 30<sup>th</sup> and two days later joined in the pursuit of the British troops retreating from Fort Malden (McAfee, 377-82). Presumably Johnson's troops, with their baggage wagons and artillery, would have used Hull's road, with its corduroy passage through the swamp north of the Huron River. It is not unreasonable to think that whatever temporary bridge across the Huron Hull's troops hurriedly built in late June or early July 1812 might have already disintegrated or been intentionally destroyed.

### The Road Segment after the War of 1812

Rather than creating a true highway between Detroit and today's Toledo area, Hull's troops made only minimal improvements over the old bridle path described by Farmer, and much of that work probably soon became unusable. With the war over, troops from Detroit began work on a new military road connecting Michigan Territory with Ohio. A report in the *Niles' Register* of January 3, 1818, quoted "A letter from Detroit, of 28<sup>th</sup> November last, that nearly fifty miles of the military road have been made since August last, by the troops stationed at that place. This road extends from Detroit to within about ten miles of the Black Swamp. Notwithstanding the obstacles which opposed, many good bridges have been built, and the immense labor performed is said to reflect much credit on the officers and soldiers who were engaged in the arduous undertaking." This road reused at least parts of Hull's road, including the corduroy road segment north of the Huron River. The work done in the 1816-17 period may have included the first filling operations that have since raised the road surface of today's Jefferson Avenue a meter and more above the corduroy.

The glowing report in *Niles' Register* may have been overly optimistic. Farmer (925) claimed that only thirty miles (i.e. as far as Monroe) were actually built. In 1824 in response to a new round of complaints about the road being impassable, Congress appropriated \$20,000 to construct a new road. The route was surveyed by November 1824, and contracts for part of the work made the following spring. The work then done included the twenty-one miles commencing two miles north of Brownstown south to "four or five miles past the River Raisin," thus including the section north of the Huron River encompassed by the corduroy road (*Michigan Herald* 1825).

Territorial governor Lewis Cass, in requesting additional funds to complete the work, explained its importance: "It is the connecting link between the territory of Michigan and the more settled portion of the Union. It is essential to the prosperity of the country in peace, and to its security in war." Congress appropriated another \$12,000 in the spring of 1827 (Dain, 43). This road mainly followed the 1816-17 military road, the River Road, or Jefferson Avenue. This location has remained the right of way of Jefferson Avenue down to the present. Responsibility for maintaining "the turnpike" was turned over to local control in 1828. Successive improvements at the corduroy road location north of the Huron River have added more fill, raising the road level, while leaving Hull's corduroy road intact beneath.

### Engineering Significance of the Corduroy Road Segment

Historical accounts make clear that Hull's Road included various segments of corduroy road in today's Ohio and Michigan, perhaps adding up to miles of it. Corduroy road construction was recognized by early road-building authorities as a serviceable expedient for opening roads through swampy ground in newly settled areas, and was likely extensively used in

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the early days of settlement in Michigan. But nineteenth-century road-building manuals such as W. M. Gillespie's *A Manual of the Principles and Practice of Road-Making* (1847) barely touch on the technique and did not encourage its use as more than a temporary expedient. The following is the entirety of Gillespie's discussion of the subject:

When a road passes over soft swampy ground, always kept moist by springs, which cannot be drained without too much expense, and which is surrounded by a forest, it may be cheaply and rapidly made passable, by felling a sufficient number of trees, as straight and as uniform in size as possible, and laying them side by side across the road at right angles to its length. This arrangement is well known under the name of a "Corduroy" road, of which the figure gives a top and end view. Though its successive hills and hollows offer great resistance to draught, and are very unpleasant to persons riding over, it is nevertheless a very valuable substitute for a swamp, which in its natural state would at times be utterly impassible. But necessary and desirable as these roads may be to accomplish such an end in the infancy of settlement, their retention upon a great thoroughfare is a disgraceful proof of indolence and want of enterprise in those who habitually travel over them; though several instances might be specified (228).

Another manual, Q. A. Gillmore's *A Practical Treatise on Roads, Streets, and Pavements*, published in 1876, after prefacing its discussion of corduroy roads with the statement that such "scarcely deserve the name of roads," provides more specifics on construction techniques. It explained that a corduroy road should usually be about fifteen or sixteen feet wide,

so that two vehicles can pass each other upon it without interference. The logs are all cut to the same length, which should be that of the required width of the road, and in laying them down such care in selection should be exercised, as will give the smallest joints or openings between them. In order to reduce as much as possible the resistance to draught and the violence of the repeated shocks to which vehicles are subjected upon these roads, and also to render its surface practicable for draught animals, it is customary to level up between the logs with smaller pieces of the same length but split to a triangular cross-section. These are inserted with edges downward, in the open joints, so as to bring their top surfaces even with the upper sides of the large logs, or as nearly so as practicable. Upon the bed thus prepared a layer of brushwood is put, with a few inches in thickness of soil or turf on top to keep it in place (79-80).

Gillmore, a lieutenant-colonel in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, was presumably describing state-of-the-art construction for the time that would have provided a far more finished road surface than Hull's forces, building hurriedly in an emergency situation, could have accomplished. The structure of the nominated segment of corduroy road beyond the large logs laid crosswise – whether smaller logs between the larger ones, brush, and fill on top were used – is not currently known.

The nominated feature represents a rare known surviving, and accessible, example of the corduroy road building technique in the Great Lakes region. These roads represented a very early stage of road improvement. By their very nature, corduroy roads built across marshy ground usually rot away, are buried under subsequent filling and paving, or are removed altogether during the course of later roadway improvements. Current-day road-building standards would not permit retention of such wooden structures when new construction is undertaken at their sites. Most corduroy road structures were probably destroyed in the course of past road reconstruction projects that did not require compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In Michigan only one other piece of corduroy road, a ten-meter long section underlying Grand River Avenue in East Lansing uncovered in 1997, has been discovered and studied in recent years (Dunham et al. 1997). Known surviving examples elsewhere in the Great Lakes region are also rare. One short example in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin, constructed in the 1830s as part of a federal military road, has been studied (Behm 1991). The nominated approximately 380-meter long section of corduroy road underlying Jefferson Avenue north of the Huron River is a remarkable survival and possibly unique in its length.

### Archaeological Significance

As recently as 1915, remnants of Hull's Road or Trace were observable in Ohio (Kennedy 1915). All are described as being in open and dry country, where special techniques such as corduroy would not have been used. Enquiries to the State Historic Preservation Office in Ohio, as well as to county historical associations along Hull's route in Ohio, produced a total of eight commemorative markers associated with Hull: one each in Hancock and Logan counties, two in Champaign, and four in Hardin. None of these commemorative sites actually preserves the road itself in an exposed or

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interpretable condition. It appears that only the nominated segment represents an example of the original construction, where the materials and the process of their deposition may be studied and interpreted.

No previous formal survey or excavation of the feature has been undertaken, although it has been referenced in popular literature as long ago as 1936 (Hines 1936; Halsey 2000). The 1991 Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin (Behm 1991), and 1997 East Lansing projects (Dunham et al. 1997) appear to be the only formally documented excavations of corduroy road segments in the Great Lakes region. Prior to the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1996, such excavation and site destruction would have proceeded routinely and without scientific documentation. An extensive literature search produced only one other documented instance of the excavation of a corduroy road since the NHPA: a six-log segment discovered in Annapolis, Maryland, in 2008, and currently being investigated under Dr. Mark Leone of the University of Maryland.

The key elements of the nominated feature are the substrate, the logs themselves, and the overburden, especially the lower layers. Individually and collectively, they offer the potential to reconstruct the pre-deposition landscape, the process of initial site formation, and the improvement and evolution of the feature into a modern roadway.

*Landscape reconstruction:* Minimally destructive techniques such as soil core analysis may shed light on the original landform of the Huron River mouth. The intermittent deposition of logs suggests multiple channels separated by raised hummocks or sandbars, very different from today's configuration. Soil type and vegetation analysis may provide data on the hydrology and ecology of the zone. Comparison of substrate cores between corduroy and non-corduroy areas may provide insight on the factors influencing the decision to employ the corduroy technique.

*Initial site formation and subsequent developments:* Additional minimally destructive or non-destructive techniques such as ground penetrating radar, tool mark analysis, tree speciation, and dendrochronological dating should provide data on the full extent and structure of the feature and the process of site formation.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

An Act for laying out and opening a road from the city of Detroit to the foot of the rapids of the Miami, which enters into Lake Erie (Dec. 15, 1808). *Laws of the Territory of Michigan*, 4. Lansing, 1884. 35-36.

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Catlin, George B. "Michigan's Early Military Roads." *Michigan History Magazine*, Vol. 13, no. 2 (1929). 196-207.

Behm, Jeffery A. "The Raube Road Site (47-FD-282): A Remnant of the Military Road in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin." *Fox Valley Archaeology*, No. 17. Oshkosh, WI: Robert Ritzenthaler Chapter, Wisconsin Archaeological Society, Jan. 1991. 1-8.

Carter, Clarence Edwin, ed. *Territorial Papers of the United States. Vol. X: The Territory of Michigan, 1805-1820*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942.

National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Segment

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Wayne

DATE RECEIVED: 10/28/10      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/30/10  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/15/10      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/13/10  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10001022

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Very rare surviving example of a military log road constructed & used in the War of 1812. Archeological potential. Nominated at the national level of significance

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A, C, & D

REVIEWER Patrick Anders      DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 12/10/2010

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



STATE OF MICHIGAN

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



October 12, 2010

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed is a national register nomination for the Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Road Segment in Wayne County, Michigan. This property is being submitted for listing in the national register. No written comments concerning this nomination were received by us prior to the submission of this nomination to you.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Robert O. Christensen, national register coordinator, by phone at 517/335-2719 or by email at [christensenr@michigan.gov](mailto:christensenr@michigan.gov) (note the change from christensenro).

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway  
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC:roc







# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

December 13, 2010

Notice to file:

This property has been automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This is due to the fact that the publication of our Federal Register Notice: "National Register of Historic Places: Pending Nominations and Other Actions" was delayed beyond our control to the point where the mandated 15 day public comment period ended after our required 45 day time frame to act on the nomination. If the 45<sup>th</sup> day falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the property will be automatically listed the next business day. The nomination is technically adequate and meets the National Register criteria for evaluation, and thus, automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Edson Beall  
Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
Phone: 202-354-2255  
E-mail: [Edson\\_Beall@nps.gov](mailto:Edson_Beall@nps.gov)  
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STATE OF MICHIGAN

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

GARY HEIDEL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



January 13, 2011

Mr. Patrick Andrus  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Patrick:

Enclosed are several replacement sheets for the recently listed Hull's Trace North Huron River Corduroy Segment, Wayne County, Michigan. On page 5 in the summary paragraph we referred to Lt. Col. James Johnson's force of mounted Kentucky riflemen. In re-reviewing the source information we realized this was a mistake. In fact, the mounted riflemen were led by Col. Richard M. Johnson, James' brother. We made this change in the summary paragraph and on page 8 in the second paragraph.

You had also requested a diagram showing the route of Hull's Road be included in the nomination. Daniel Harrison, who began the work on this nomination, had just what we needed. We have reprinted the last two pages of the nomination to include his diagram following the photo list.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Robert O. Christensen, national register coordinator, by phone at 517/335-2719 or by email at [christensenr@michigan.gov](mailto:christensenr@michigan.gov) (note the change from christensenro).

Sincerely yours,

Robert O. Christensen  
National Register Coordinator



# National Register of Historic Places

## Note to the record

Associated with 2015 additional documentation



10001022

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

WAYNE WORKMAN  
ACTING-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



November 20, 2014

Mr. Patrick Andrus  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Patrick:

Another inaccuracy in the history presented in the Hull's Trace North Huron Corduroy Segment (Wayne County, MI) has been brought to my attention. At the bottom of significance page 5/top of page 6, in the first sentence of the paragraph beginning "However, the corduroy road segment could also have been built a few days earlier," I had the troops coming from Detroit, when they actually were to be sent from Frenchtown (Monroe). In going back to the source material, I find Frenchtown is correct. Thus I changed that. In reprinting that page, I found I had to reprint pages 5-10. Thus I'm enclosing those pages (I also caught and corrected a simple typo on page 10). Please replace with the new pages 5-10. That's it – nothing of cosmic significance. But there are historians around that take this War of 1812 stuff seriously!

As always, contact me at 517/335-2719 or [christensenr@michigan.gov](mailto:christensenr@michigan.gov) with any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Robert O. Christensen  
National Register Coordinator