

A History of 1242 Bagley Street Detroit, Michigan



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Part I: The Land

The United States formally occupied Fort Detroit on July 11, 1796. The government set up a land office in Detroit in 1804 so that residents could register their land claims, but proper title could only be established for a handful of properties. On March 3, 1807, Congress passed “An Act regulating the grants of land in the territory of Michigan,” ensuring that legal ownership would be recognized for applicants who testified that they occupied improved land before July 1796. When a claim was found valid, the applicant received a land patent.

On July 21, 1808, the Detroit land office received its 246th land claim application from Domiquie Jourdain dit Labrosse. He owned a riverfront farm west of the town, around Sixth Street today. It was three French *arpents* wide and forty *arpents* deep—or 561 feet wide by 7,611 feet deep. The land patent was finally issued on July 24, 1811. From then on, the farm was legally designated as Private Claim 246.

Dominique Labrosse and his wife, Jeanette, had no children to take care of them in their old age, and no heirs to inherit their farm. In December 1808, the Labrosses entered into an agreement with Josette Berthelet, stating that Berthelet would receive the farm upon their deaths if she provided for their needs for the rest of their lives. Jeanette died in 1814, followed by Dominique on November 17, 1816.

On June 20, 1833, Berthelet sold the farm to Lucius Abbott and Joshua Howard. In 1835, Abbott and Howard sold part of the farm to Charles Trowbridge and John Mullett. Mullett, a surveyor, drew the plat for subdividing the farm south of Michigan Ave.

1242 Bagley would later be built on lot 8 of block 57 of Trowbridge and Mullett’s subdivision. Robert Allen Forsyth purchased this lot on November 10, 1835. The vicinity, which had been part of Springwells Township, was annexed by the City of Detroit on February 20, 1849. The property was then passed from speculator to speculator before 1242 Bagley was built.

Early Owners of Lot 8, Block 57, Labrosse Farm

Grantor	Grantee	Date
Trowbridge & Mullett	Forsyth, Robert A.	Nov. 10, 1835
Forsyth, Robert A.	Russel, George B.	Jul. 20, 1849
Russel, George B.	Robertson, Arthur J.	Aug. 9, 1851
Robertson, Arthur J.	Crane, Flavius J.B.	Apr. 6, 1852
Crane, Flavius J.B.	Cole, William	Oct. 3, 1853
Cole, William	Buchanan, Patrick	Jan. 5, 1860
Buchanan, Patrick	Buchanan, Susan	Jul. 14, 1867



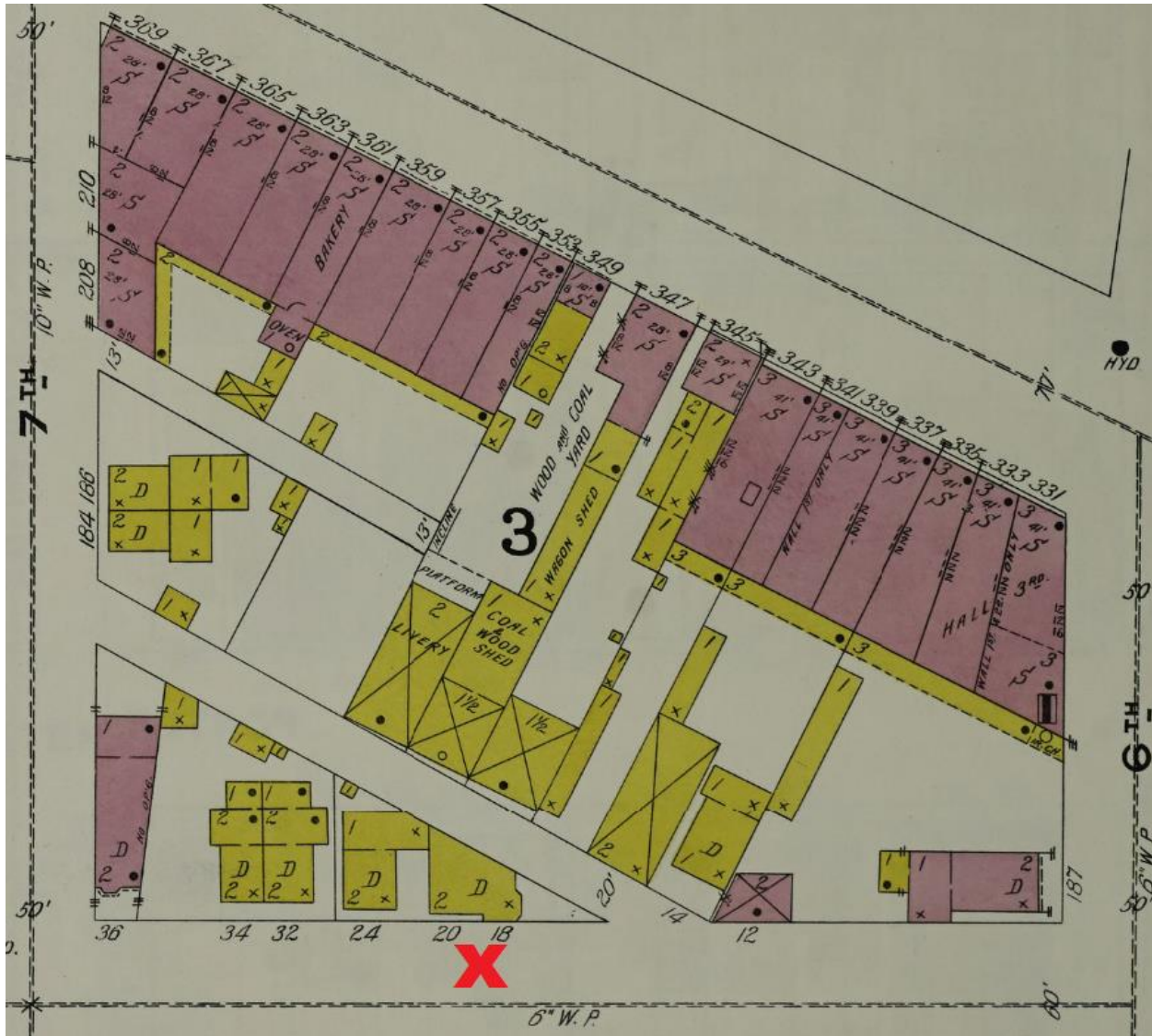
Berthelet's Farm South of Fort St. [sic] 1835.

Retrieved from Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs,
http://w1.lara.state.mi.us/PlatMaps/dt_image.asp?BCC_SUBINDEX=43265.
 (Accessed January 18, 2018.)

A simple wooden structure, attached to a home next door, was constructed on this site around 1855, but it was not the house that stands there today. It appears in the 1884 Sanborn fire insurance map, below. The X marks the location of 1242 Bagley today.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 1, 1884. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03985_001/. (Accessed January 18, 2018.)



1242 Bagley as it appears in an 1897 Sanborn fire insurance map. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan*. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 1, 1897. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03985_004/. (Accessed January 18, 2018.)



1242 Bagley as it appears in a 1950 anborn fire insurance map.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 9, - Feb 1950, 1950. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03985_055/. (Accessed January 18, 2018.)

Part II: The House

The First Owners & Occupants

Susan Buchanan was fourteen when she left Ireland with her mother and seven younger siblings to live in Detroit in 1851. On July 14, 1867, she purchased lots 7 and 8 in block 57 of the Labrosse farm from her brother, Patrick, for \$800. Lot 7, next to present-day 1242 Bagley, contained a home, then addressed as 24 Baker, where members of the Buchanan family lived. Susan never married, and by the 1890s she was living with three siblings: Catherine, Thomas, and Jane. Susan built 1242 Bagley as a home for herself and her siblings.

On July 13, 1896, the City of Detroit issued building permit number 591 to carpenter Peter D. Tallant to construct the home for an estimated cost of \$2,500. Tallant was born in County Roscommon, Ireland, in 1845 and immigrated to America around 1867. He also constructed the building that is now Nemo's Bar and Grill at 1384 Michigan Ave. The original address of the home was 20 Baker St. The number changed to 1242 on January 1, 1920, and the street's name changed to Bagley in 1930.

Catherine and Jane Buchanan spent the rest of their lives in this home, passing away here in 1900 and 1906, respectively. Catherine had married Cornelius Clancy in Most Holy Trinity Church on February 10, 1857, but her husband died two years later and she never remarried. Jane never married.

Thomas Buchanan was a marine engineer, a hazardous occupation when steamship boiler explosions were common. In February 1875, Thomas Buchanan was among ten delegates from around the country who met in Cleveland, Ohio to form the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, the first nationwide union for marine engineers. It is still in existence today and it's the largest and oldest maritime union in the United States. Thomas passed away in a boarding house in Port Huron on June 3, 1901.

Around 1913, Susan Buchanan left Detroit to live with her widowed sister, Ann Lennon, in Clayton Township, Genesee County, and 1242 Bagley was rented to boarders. Buchanan died in Clayton Township on July 31, 1919. She evidently signed over the house to Peter B. Lennon (her sister Ann's stepson) on April 7, 1919, but the deed was not recorded by Wayne County until one week after her death. Buchanan's heirs (several nieces and nephews) filed a claim in probate court (Cause No. 78978) and won. Lennon's deed was declared void. Buchanan's heirs continued to rent the home to boarders.

One additional member of the Buchanan family is worth mentioning. Margaret Frances Buchanan Sullivan (1847-1903) moved to Chicago in the 1870s and became a newspaper editor. She was sent by the Associated Press to cover the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, the event for which the Eiffel Tower was constructed, as the only American correspondent. She also wrote two books: *Ireland of To-day: The Causes and Aims of Irish Agitation* (1881), and *Mexico: Picturesque, Political and Progressive* (1888) with Mary Elizabeth McGrath Blake. Sullivan never lived at 1242 Bagley, but she did stay here when visiting Detroit.

Heirs of Susan Buchanan sold 1242 Bagley to Charles and Benvenuta Saliba on March 27, 1924. The Salibas had come to America from Malta in 1920 with their three young children, Agata, Lena, and Emmanuel. After moving to 1242 Bagley, the couple had three additional children: Joseph, Anthony, and Paul. The Saliba family rented out spare rooms in the house, mostly to fellow Maltese immigrants. Charles Saliba passed away on November 22, 1939. Benvenuta Saliba quit-claimed the house to her son, Joseph, on February 25, 1974. She passed away March 28 of that year. The home stayed with the Saliba family until 1981. ❖

Ownership History of 1242 Bagley (20 Baker St.)

Grantor	Grantee	Date
Heirs of Susan Buchanan*	Saliba, Charles & Benvenuta	Mar. 27, 1924
Saliba, Benvenuta	Saliba, Joseph	Feb. 25, 1974
Heirs of Joseph Saliba**	Saliba, Paul & Carmen and Saliba, Anthony & Sylvia	May 23, 1975
Saliba, P & C and Saliba, A & S	Kibler, Emma Alice	May 26, 1981
Heirs of Emma A. Kibler***	Kibler, Arthur	Apr. 29, 2000
Kibler, Arthur	Deutsche Bank Nat. Trust Co.	May 30, 2007
Deutsche Bank Nat. Trust Co.	Sewick, Andrew & Janet	Aug. 4, 2008
Sewick, Andrew & Janet	Sewick, Andrew & Paul	Oct. 22, 2009
Sewick, Andrew & Paul	Sewick, Paul	Oct. 4, 2014
Sewick, Paul	Hynes, Matthew J.	Oct. 28, 2014

* *Catherine W. Buchanan, Anna M. Buchanan, Frank W. Buchanan, James L. Buchanan, and Sarah Buchanan Hamilton.*

** *Antonia Farrugia, Agata Seguna, and Emmanuel Saliba.*

****Arthur Kibler, Thomas Kibler, Alice Polk, and Shirley Kibler-Cronin.*