

North West Company Entrepreneurs—the MacKintoshes

**Marine Soundings is sponsored by the Questors,
Essex CFDC, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, Windsor Charity Bingos, and Hbc**

The French and the British had legitimate claims to North America based on their explorations of North America. The British used Hudson Bay to get furs in Western Canada. The French used the Great Lakes to get into the Midwest. The French claim was based on the explorations of Samuel de Champlain, who pioneered several routes into Lake Huron. To cement their hold, the French established key fortifications at such strategic locations as Niagara, Michilimacinac and Detroit. Detroit was an especially favoured settlement because it had a moderate climate, fertile land, and was a key link which threatened Anglo-American interests in the Midwest. The British conquest of New France in 1760 gave control of the Midwest to Britain. Detroit became a British outpost and, as in the time of French rule, Detroit naturally used Montreal as its port. In Montreal, the French were replaced mainly by Scots and English traders who created the Northwest Company to compete with the Hudson's Bay Company. Angus Mackintosh, a Scots trader who arrived in Detroit around 1787 from Inverness, Scotland, became a partner with other traders in the fur trade and prospered.



By the treaty of Paris of 1783, at the conclusion of the War of Independence, Detroit was awarded to the Americans, and Macintosh knew he would have to choose between staying on the U.S. side of the Detroit River or crossing to Upper Canada which remained under British rule. In 1796 the British turned over the fortress. In 1797 he purchased a tract of land just near the site of present day Hiram Walker's. There he constructed a large wood frame building, called Moy Hall, which he completed by 1799. Moy Hall was the focus of fur trading along the Detroit River, and Macintosh himself became the chief representative of the Northwest company in this area. Moy Hall was named for the ancestral home of the clan Mackintosh in Scotland, but Angus bought the building we call the Park House as a business center in the Amherstburg area for his son Alexander. Moy Hall and the Amherstburg store were centres for the distribution of all kinds of trading goods such as blankets, kettles, tomahawks, knives, liquor and firearms. Macintosh traded with local farmers for grain and meat products, which were used in the fur trade to supply such an important link as Fort William at the head of the Great Lakes. Whisky distilling and the making of brandy created products of high value and small weight and volume. This was important when distances were great and all goods had to be transported by canoe over water. Macintosh also started a shipbuilding industry in the Walkerville area when he brought the Jenkins family in to construct some of the earliest sailing vessels on the Great Lakes. Angus remained in the area until 1828, when he assumed the title of the MacKintosh on the death of his elder brother. Moy Hall was demolished in 1912 to provide room for new residential development. But the Park House remains as a testament to our heritage. Alexander MacKintosh remained in the area until he succeeded to the title. (Above Peter Rindlisbacher's picture of the *Nancy* and Moy Hall)