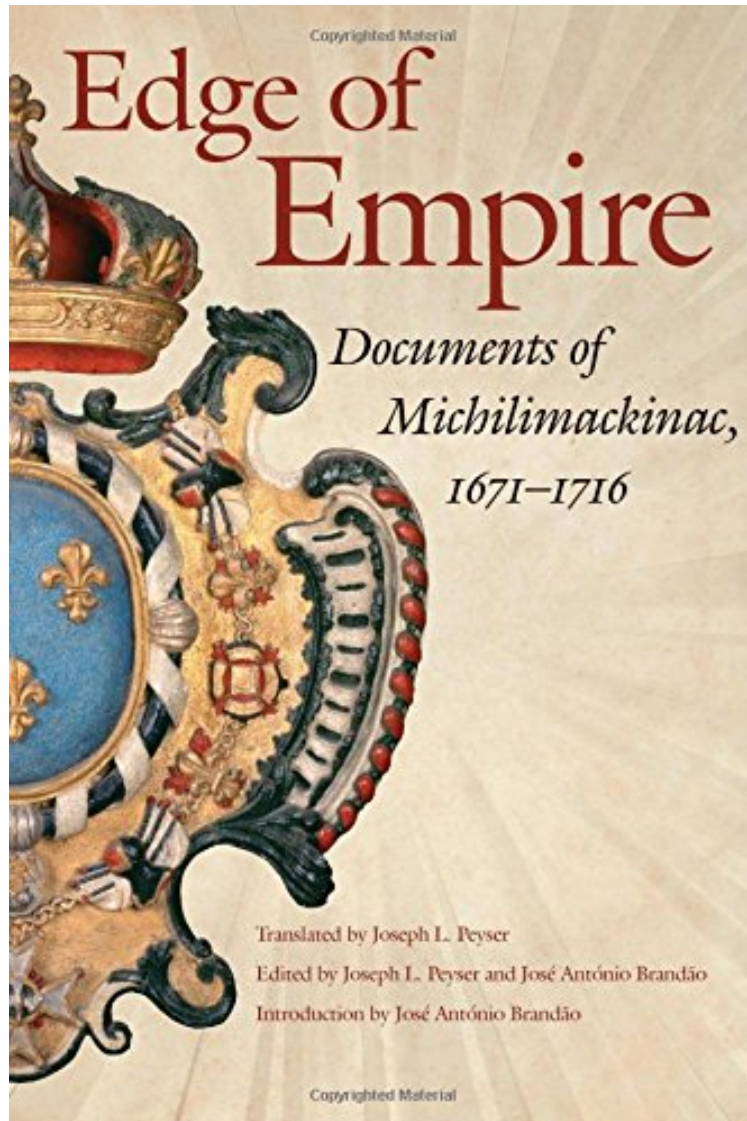


[Free] Edge of Empire, 1671-1716: Documents of Michilimackinac (Copublication with Mackinac Island State Park Commission)

Edge of Empire, 1671-1716: Documents of Michilimackinac (Copublication with Mackinac Island State Park Commission)

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From Brand: Michigan State University Press : Edge of Empire, 1671-1716: Documents of Michilimackinac (Copublication with Mackinac Island State Park Commission) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Edge of Empire, 1671-1716: Documents of Michilimackinac (Copublication with Mackinac Island State Park Commission):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Jerry L. EnglandWell done.6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. historical French documents of early Michigan settlementBy Henry BerrySixty-two documents translated from the French arranged chronologically give a picture of the fur-trading center at the point of the present-day state of Michigan's lower peninsula at the junction of the Great Lakes Huron and Michigan. The documents are a part of Mackinac State Historic Parks' French Michilimackinac Research Project Collection. Most have not been previously published. The few which have been included for the sake of uniquely providing specifics on the colonial North America topic; and they have been newly translated to correct errors. Texts in the original French would have been a further step in recording the documentation and in scholarly usefulness and historical research for the volume. But this step left out is made up to a considerable degree by footnotes for each document and by two glossaries in the appendices, one for 17th and 18th century French legal terms and the other for untranslated French terms. In the time period of the collected documents, Michilimackinac was little more than an outpost of rough huts and mixed population. Yet as the documents indicate, it was a main commercial and trading center for the fur trade run mostly by the French which had a leading part in settlement of the American Midwest and western Canada. The documents illustrate not only relationships and operations of the fur trade, but also how conditions and activities in the New World changed traditional social roles. Women and in some cases Native Americans had legal recognition and rights not granted them elsewhere. Such recognition and rights were related to substantive roles in the fur trade. Upper-class Frenchmen entered into binding legal agreements with laborers and tradesmen. The dry, legalistic titles of the documents belie their informative, frequent colorful material. Documents titled such as Petition by Charles de Couagne against Marie Felix, Judicial Investigation against Loisel and Villedieu, Statement of court expenses, and Death and inventory of Jean Gay (or Laurent) dit Cascadet relate the history of early Michilimackinac.

Few places were as important in the seventeenth-century European colonial New World as the *pays den haut*. This term means "upper country" and refers to the western Great Lakes (Huron, Michigan, and Superior) and the areas immediately north, south, and west of them. The region was significant because of its large Native American population, because it had an extensive riverine system needed for beaver populations essential to the fur trade and because it held the transportation key to westward expansion. It was vital to the French, who controlled the region, to be on good terms with its peoples. To maintain good relations through trade and diplomacy with the nations in the *pays den haut*, the French built a number of posts, including one at Michilimackinac and one on the St. Joseph River (near Niles, Michigan). These posts were garrisoned by French troops and run by French commanders who contracted with merchants to manage business matters. *Edge of Empire* provides both an overview and an intensely detailed look at Michilimackinac at a very specific period of history. While the introduction offers an overview of the French fur trade, of the place of Michilimackinac in that network, and of what Michilimackinac was like in the years up to 1716, the body of the book is comprised of over sixty French-language documents, now translated into English. Collected from archives in France, Canada, and the United States, the documents identify many of the people involved in the trade and reveal a great deal about the personal and professional relations among people who traded. They also reveal clearly the process by which trade was carried out, including the roles of both Native Americans and women. At the same time, the documents open a window into French colonial society in New France.

The *Edge of Empire* portrays little known details of the fur trade that took place at Montreal, Michilimackinac, and the western Great Lakes region during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Most of the documents, enhanced by informative annotations, are being published in English translation for the first time. *Edge of Empire* introduces us to men and women who played key roles in the governance and administration of New France, military expeditions, and the contentiousness of the fur trade. -- Keith Widder
About the Author
The late Joseph L. Payser was Professor Emeritus of French at Indiana University South Bend and co-director of the French Michilimackinac Research Project. Joso Antnio Brando is Associate Professor of History and Associate Chair of the Department of History at Western Michigan University. He is co-editor of *The Iroquoians and Their World*, an ongoing series of publications related to the history and culture of the Iroquoian linguistic group. He is also co-director of the French Michilimackinac Research and Translation Project, of which the translated documents in this volume are a part.