



THIS BOOK DOES
NOT CIRCULATE

1990

**Nineteenth-Century
River Landing Settlements in the
Grand River Valley,
Ottawa County, Michigan**



LH REF
977
.415
0891

Donald W. Linebaugh
University of Kentucky
Program for Archaeological Research
1020A Export Street
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-9854

Steele's Landing is listed on the 1856 "Map of the Southern Part of Michigan" (Farmer 1856). On April 3, 1856, the Village of Lamont was platted (Lillie 1931). The original plat states that Lamont was "formerly Steele's Landing." A commercial directory in the *Weekly Clarion* (Aug. 6, 1861) lists eight businesses in Lamont; cabinet maker, sash and door manufacturer, cabinet maker and manuf., doctor (2), general merchant (2), and stoves and tinware. A map of 1864 (Gross 1864) (Figure 14) shows the "city" of Lamont with the P.O., dock, 2 sawmills, blacksmith, and church. A business directory on this map lists a merchant, carpenter, cabinet maker, engineer, doctor, blacksmith, and H. Steele Farm, and grocery. Lamont P.O. is listed on the 1874 Atlas of Michigan (Winchell 1873).

The county plat maps of 1876 and 1897 show the growth of Lamont in area. The plat map of 1876 (Belden 1876) (Figure 15) shows the platted town and a bridge across the Grand River. The population of Lamont in 1876 was 400 and there were "two churches, two general stores, a sawmill, and sash and door factory" (Belden 1876). This bridge is not shown on the 1897 plat map (Ogle 1897).

Stoddard's Landing

The site of Stoddard's Landing is located on the northeast bank of the Grand River across from the mouth of Ottawa Creek (Figure 1, No. 14).

This location is on property listed to A. Stoddard in 1864, H. A. Stoddard in 1876, and Wm. Stoddard in 1897. Chrysler (1975) lists Stoddard's Landing between Lamont and Blendon Landing. As the Stoddard property across from Ottawa Creek is the only property between Lamont and Blendon belonging to a Stoddard, this is the most likely site for Stoddard's Landing. A small Creek enters the Grand River on or very near this property, and a road from Tallmadge to Lamont runs across the land. One house is shown along this road on Stoddard's property.

Blendon Landing

Blendon Landing was located on the southwest bank of the Grand River on a high bluff cut with deep ravines. The landing is approximately one and one-quarter miles upstream from the mouth of Ottawa Creek (Figure 1, No. 15). Many intermittent streams flow down these ravines into the river.

Adams (1957) states that a sawmill was located at the base of the bluff along the river and describes the village:

The village contained a large boarding house, general store, schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, a saloon and a number of cabins. From the bluff top a long stairway led down to the landing below and to the sawmill and shipyard.

A steam engine tramway ran from Blendon Landing approximately eight miles to the town of Blendon. A commercial directory in the *Weekly Clarion* (Aug. 6, 1861) lists under "Blendon Landing"; Blendon Co., Dealers in Lumber and Litchfield & Co., Manufactures of gang sawed lumber. Some four schooners were built in the shipyard at Blendon around 1864. Among them were the "Wright, Eveline, Lumberman, and Geo. W. Wescott" (Adams 1957:18).

Blendon Lumber Co. was owned by Messrs. Brainard, Leonard, and Whipple and was managed by Alvin C. Litchfield. An article in the *Grand Haven News* in 1864 (May 4, 1864) discusses the ownership of the sawmill:

The Blendon steam sawmill, formerly owned by Lieut. Col. Litchfield, has passed into the hands of the Lansingburg Lumbering Co., and has just commenced operations under the superintendence of Capt. Noyes, agent of the Company. There is no mill in Western Michigan

Civil War

with a greater capacity for the manufacture of lumber than this mill with its gang, circular, and other saws in constant operation.

The "Map of the Counties of Ottawa and Muskegon... "(Cross 1864) shows Blendon Landing. It was a small settlement with numerous buildings including a schoolhouse and steam sawmill (S.S.M.). The map also shows a road connecting Blendon Landing with Ohio Dock and Haire Landing. This road grade can still be seen along the river.

The 1876 plat map (Belden 1876) shows "Blendon Landing" as a small settlement. The road connecting Blendon Landing and Ohio Dock is not shown on this map. The land around the landing no longer belongs to the Blendon Lumber Co. as it did in 1864. Adams (1957:19) states that the landing was abandoned prior to 1882:

Mr. J. W. Reister, now eighty-two years old, who used to be a blacksmith at Allendale came from Germany with his parents in 1882, via boat to Blendon Landing, from where they walked to a place near Allendale. He remembers the buildings which were still standing at Blendon, but which, when he saw them were very old and dilapidated, and were occupied by a few Indian families and their horses.

The 1897 plat map (Ogle 1897) shows no trace of the landing or the road to Ohio Dock.

Luke Lowing Landing or Hubbards Landing

The site of Luke Lowing Landing is located on the south bank of the Grand River approximately one mile downstream from the mouth of Sand Creek (Figure 1, No. 16). This location is about halfway between Blendon Landing and Ohio Dock along the road connecting

these landings. A creek flows into the Grand River at Luke Lowing Landing. Luke Lowing, a brother of S. L. Lowing of Ohio Dock, came to Ottawa County in 1844 (Lillie 1931). On the 1864 map of Ottawa County (Gross 1864) there is one building shown at Luke Lowing Landing and the property belongs to S. L. Lowing.

The 1876 plat map (Belden 1876) shows the property as belonging to Luke Lowing. There are no buildings shown on this plat map. The 1897 plat map (Ogle 1897) shows part of the land belonging to L. Lowing and part to Mrs. N. Hubbard (Hubbard's Landing?). A road runs down to the landing and one building is shown on the Hubbard property.

Ohio Dock or Lowing Landing

Ohio Dock is located on the south bank of the Grand River opposite the mouth of Sand Creek (Figure 1, No. 17). Lowing Landing was situated between two small creeks with Luke Lowing Landing to the west and Haire's Landing just to the east.

In 1837 Stephen L. Lowing arrived in Ottawa County from New York and purchased 80 acres of land across from Sand Creek. In 1838 he had the purchase recorded in Ionia and then returned to New York. In September of 1841 Lowing returned to the Grand River valley by boat and landed at Sand Creek. He brought with him a team of oxen, household goods, and farming and lumbering equipment (McGee 1973:40).

A letter written by E. Franklin Bosworth (McGee 1973:41-42) describes the early Lowing house:

The nearest house is Stephen Lowing's. It is about two miles and a half there. I put my initials on a tree by the side of the road, so that I could find it again without tracing the lines, then started for

Lowing's house, where we arrived about sundown. We staid there until morning. He lives in a little hut made of logs and covered with boards, with blankets for doors and windows. This is in the woods about half a mile from the river, and when I was there he had not a single tree cut except those cut to make his house and cow pen.

An excerpt from the Michigan Lowing History describes the mills and buildings at Lowing Landing (McGee 1973:42-43):

Stephen lumbered and drew his logs hoping to earn money by selling his logs in Grand Haven, but in the 1840s logs barely brought in enough money to pay expenses, usually not more than \$5.00 per M, and often less. Hoping to sell board to the settlers for their cabins, he dammed up a creek near his hut, and put in a waterwheel, to which was attached pails. These were filled from the race at the top, and made an impetus which turned the wheel, and made enough power to run the saw. It was crude. The mill-pond emptied too rapidly, but Stephen and his neighbors used it until 1846, when he built a larger mill. In 1850, he built his third mill which sawed 6,000 feet in twenty-four hours, having an eight inch bore, 26 in. stroke, and a boiler about 16 ft. by 36 in., in diameter with number 13 inch flue. At this time, Stephen had thirty or forty men working for him, so he built a lumber camp near the river, consisting of a boarding house, a store, in which he installed a Post-Office and became the first post-master in Georgetown, serving from 1850-4 when it was moved to the home of E. F. Bosworth. He built a jail, several cabins, and a large building that had so many projections that the lumbermen dubbed

it the Bee Hive. For many years he did an extensive lumber business.

An enlargement of the 1864 map of Ottawa Co. (Gross 1864) shows the location of Lowing Landing, which it lists as Ohio Co. Dock (Figure 16). The map shows a group of about six buildings clustered at the end of the road running between the two creeks. A railroad is shown running down to the river and is identified as "Lumber Railroad". A road running to the left goes to Luke Lowing and Blendon Landings and a road to the right connects with Haire's Landing.

The 1876 plat map (Belden 1876) (Figure 17) shows Lowing Landing with seven buildings. A sawmill is identified on the creek to the east side of the landing and the word "landing" appears on the left or west side of the landing. The road to Blendon and Haire landings doesn't appear on this map.

By 1897, the plat map (Figure 18) (Ogle 1897) shows that the landing has all but disappeared as only one house is left. The roads to Blendon and Haire Landings are gone.

Sand Creek Landing

The site of Sand Creek Landing is on the north bank of the Grand River at the mouth of Sand Creek (Figure 1, No. 18).

Two early references appeared in the *Grand River Times* about Sand Creek Landing:

The committee on ferries and bridges reported a petition for a ferry across the Grand River, at Sand Creek, which report was accepted and the committee were directed to prepare a table of rates of ferriage, at said ferry. (Oct. 10, 1853).

and an advertisement for the steamer Olive Branch in 1855 lists Sand Creek as a stopping place on the trip from Grand Haven to Grand Rapids.

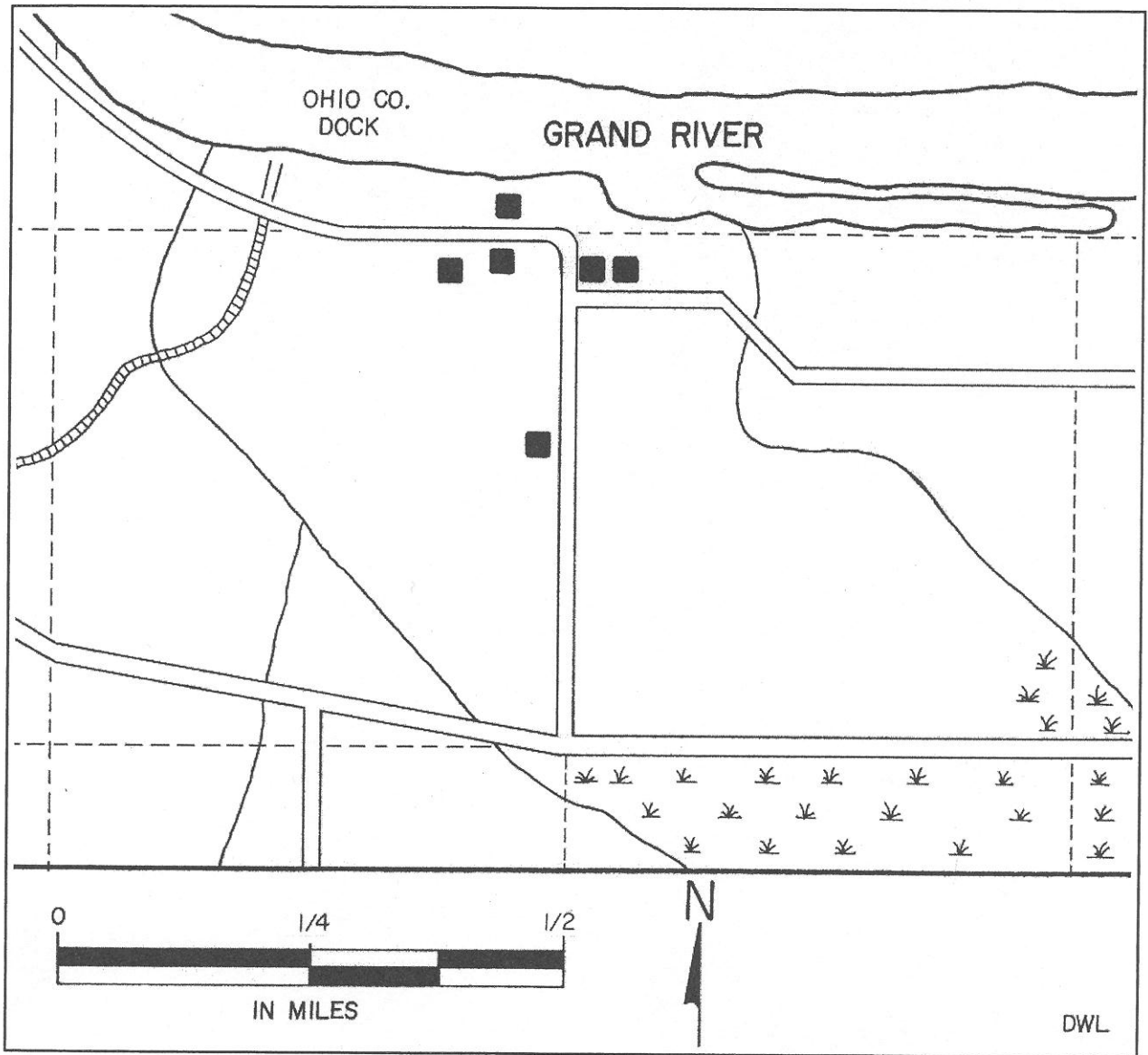


Figure 16. Map of Lowing Landing, 1864.

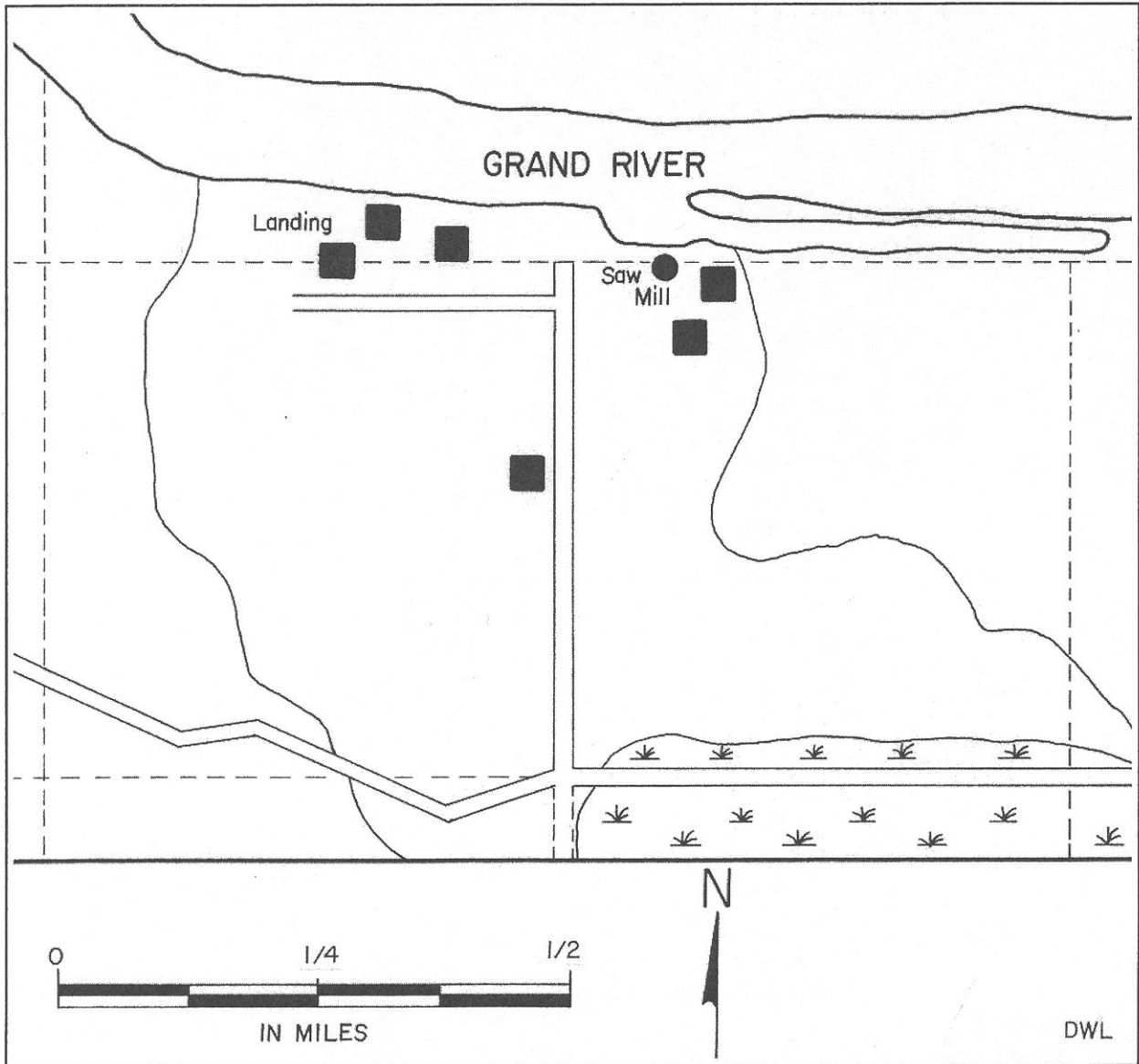


Figure 17. Map of Lowing Landing, 1876.

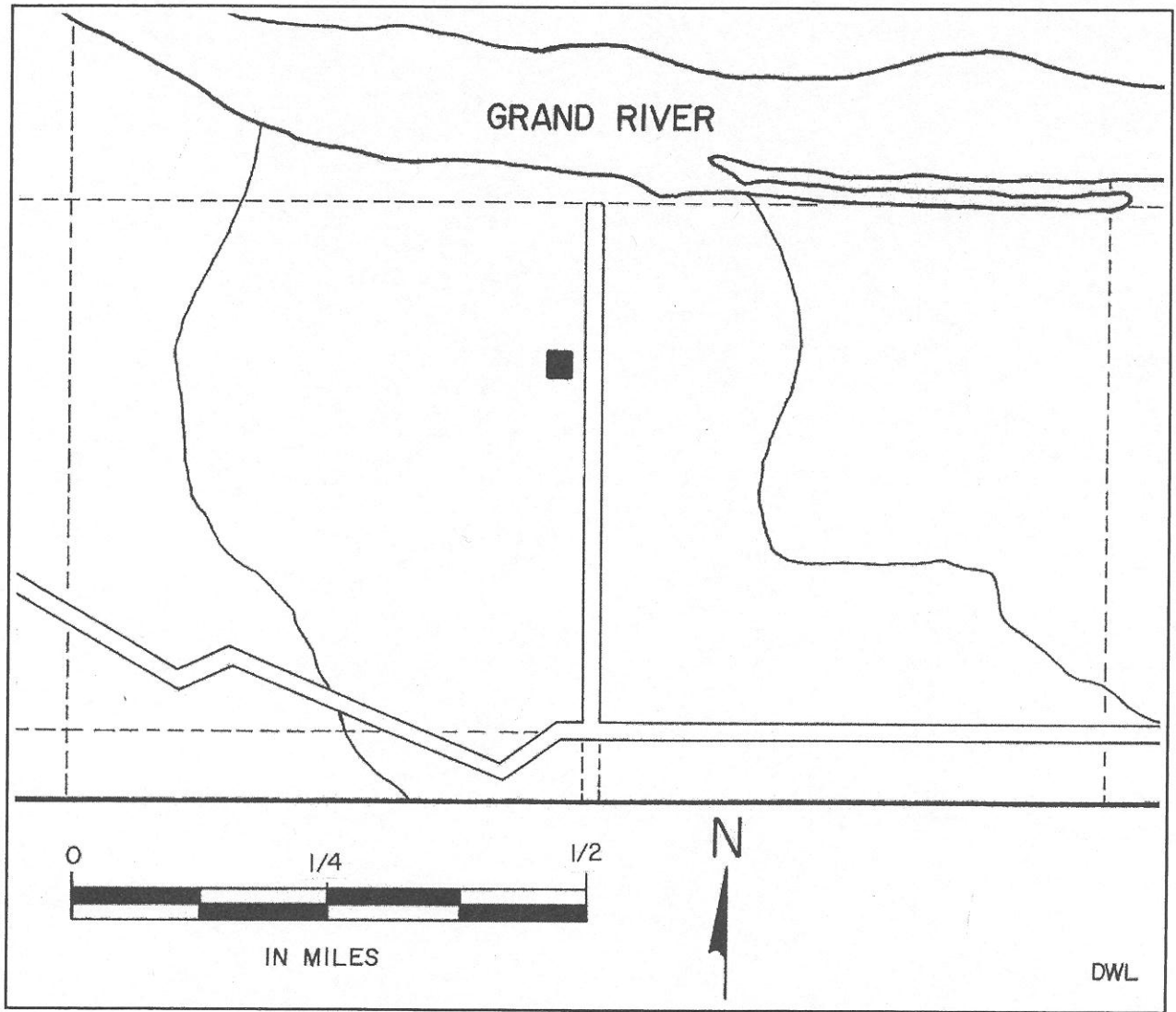


Figure 18. Map of Lowing Landing, 1897.

The 1864 map of Ottawa Co. (Gross 1864) shows Sand Creek Landing (Figure 19). A road runs along the creek down to the Grand River. Four buildings are shown on the map including a sawmill along the creek. This settlement is listed as Tallmadge P.O.

The 1876 plat map (Belden 1876) (Figure 20) lists "Sand Creek Landing" at the mouth of Sand Creek. The road down to the river is shown on the 1864 map and runs along the west side of the creek. Two buildings are shown and one is the sawmill. A mill pond is shown above the sawmill along with a cemetery.

The 1897 plat map (Figure 21) (Ogle 1897) shows five buildings, a school house and the mill pond. The sawmill is no longer shown and the road still runs down to the mouth of Sand Creek.

Haire's Landing

The site of Haire's Landing is located on the south bank of the Grand River approximately one mile upstream from the mouth of Sand Creek (Figure 1, No. 19).

John Haire bought land in Sec. 3 in 1851 (McGee 1973:64). In 1856 Haire and his family built a steam sawmill. He also built a large boarding house, some tenant houses, a store, and some barns. The sawmill was destroyed by fire in 1864, rebuilt in 1872, and burned again in 1877 (McGee 1973:64). Adams (1957:20) states that at first Haire built a log cabin for his house, but he later built a large cement house with a dining room seating twenty-five people.

A commercial directory in the *Weekly Clarion* (Aug. 6, 1861) lists Haire's Landing and John Haire as General Merchant and Manufacturer of Lumber. The 1864 map of Ottawa County (Gross 1864) shows thirteen buildings, a school house, and graveyard at Haire's Landing (Figure 22). Of the thirteen buildings four are identified: a steam sawmill, store, blacksmith (B.S.) and wheelsmith

? (W.S.) or whitesmith (tinsmith). The map also shows the road going west to Lowing Landing or Ohio Dock.

The 1876 plat map (Belden 1876) (Figure 23) shows 14 buildings at Haire's Landing. This includes a sawmill, store, schoolhouse, and graveyard. On the 1876 map the road no longer runs to Lowing Landing. The 1876 plat book contains an engraving of the large cement house built by John Haire (Figure 24). The engraving presents the Haire's "estate" with a large cement house, fenced in grounds, and landscaping around the house, along with people playing croquet, someone gardening, and a farm worker.

The plat map of 1897 (Figure 25) (Ogle 1897) shows only four buildings at Haire Landing along with the school house and graveyard. The sawmill, having burned in 1877, is not shown on this map. The road to Lowing Landing or Ohio Dock is not shown on this map.

Harris Landing

The site of Harris Landing is located on the north bank of the Grand River approximately one and a quarter miles upstream from the mouth of Sand Creek (Figure 1, No. 20).

Very little information is available on the history of Harris Landing. The 1864 map of Ottawa Co. (Gross 1864) shows the area of Harris Landing (Figure 26) and there is no trace of the landing. A new road down to the river appears on the 1876 plat map (Belden 1876) (Figure 27), and a house is located along this road next to the river. The name "Harris Landing" is printed on the map at the foot of this new road. By 1896 (Figure 28) the road down to the river and the house have disappeared (Ogle 1896).

Mac's or Chilson's Landing

The site of Mac's or Chilson's Landing is located on the northeast bank of the Grand River

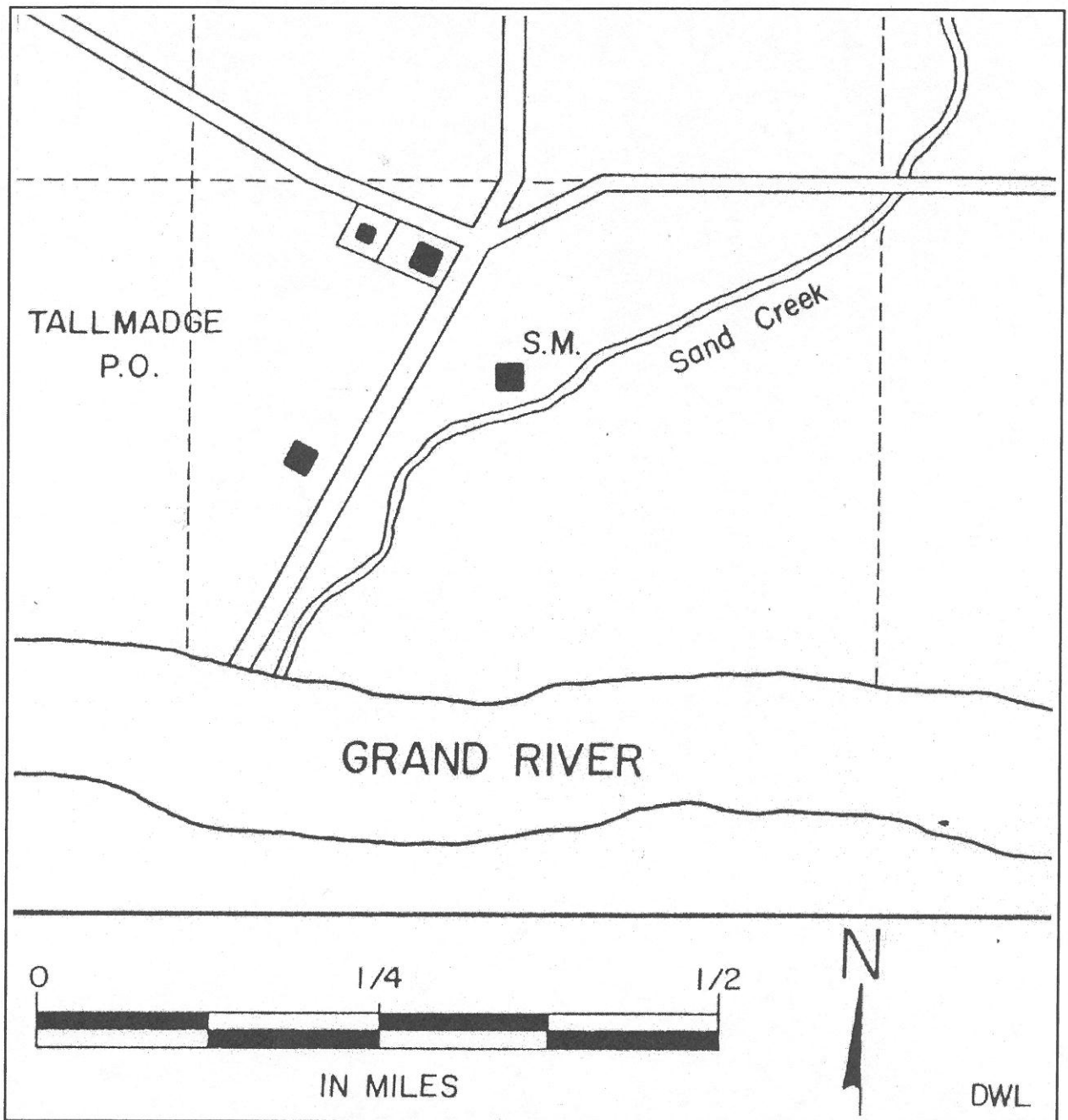


Figure 19. Map of Sand Creek Landing, 1864.

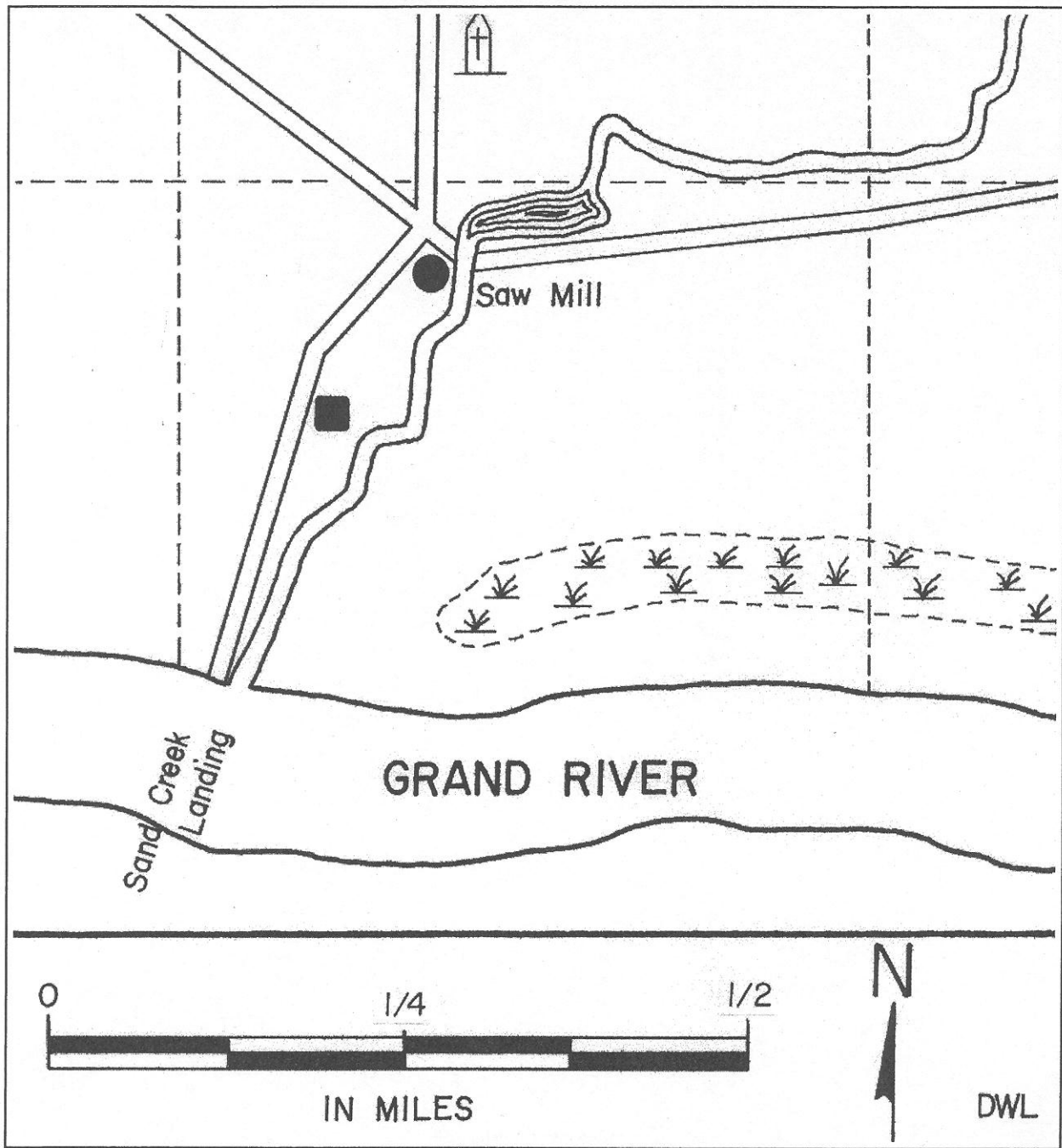


Figure 20. Map of Sand Creek Landing, 1876.

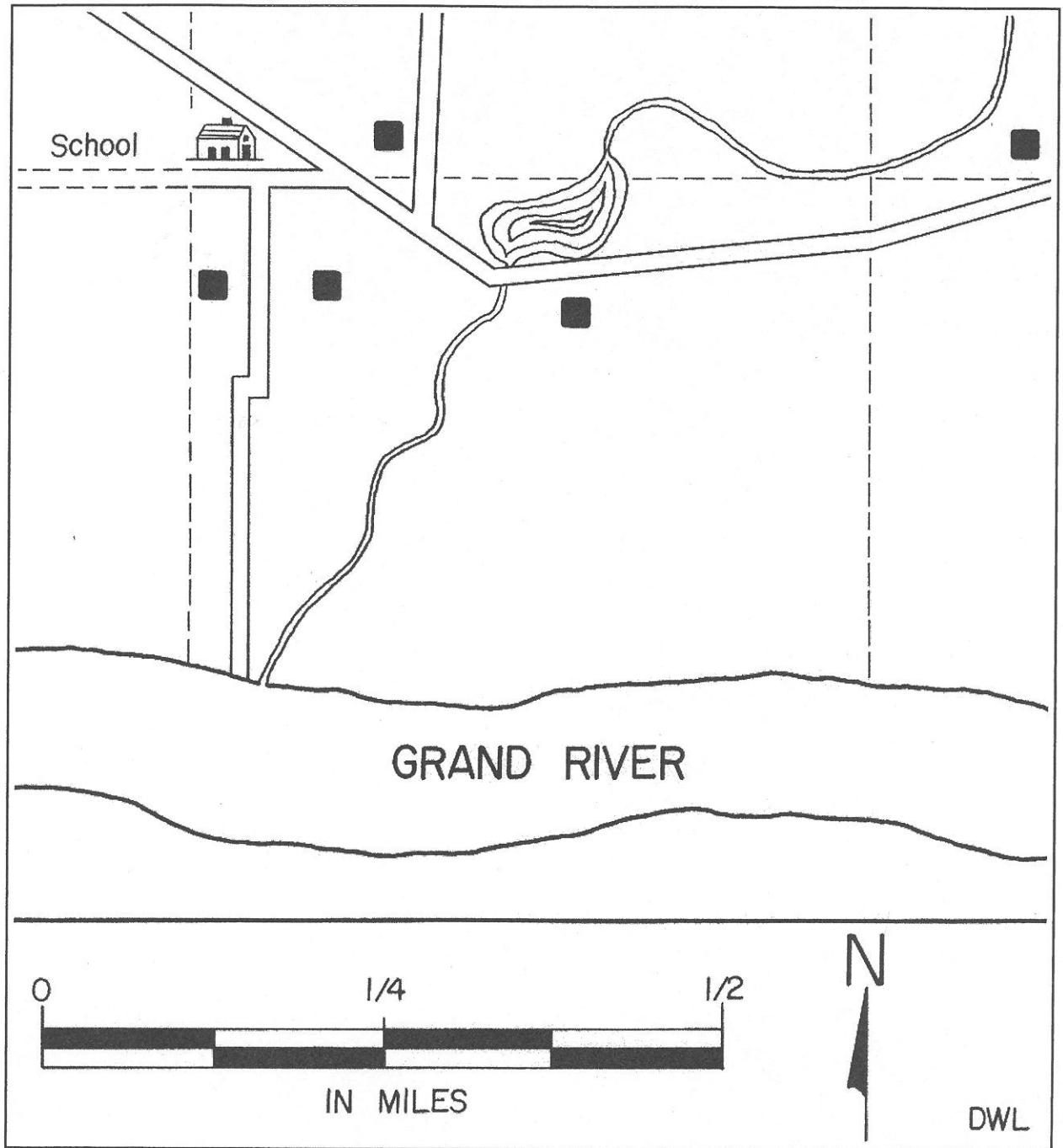


Figure 21. Map of Sand Creek Landing, 1897.

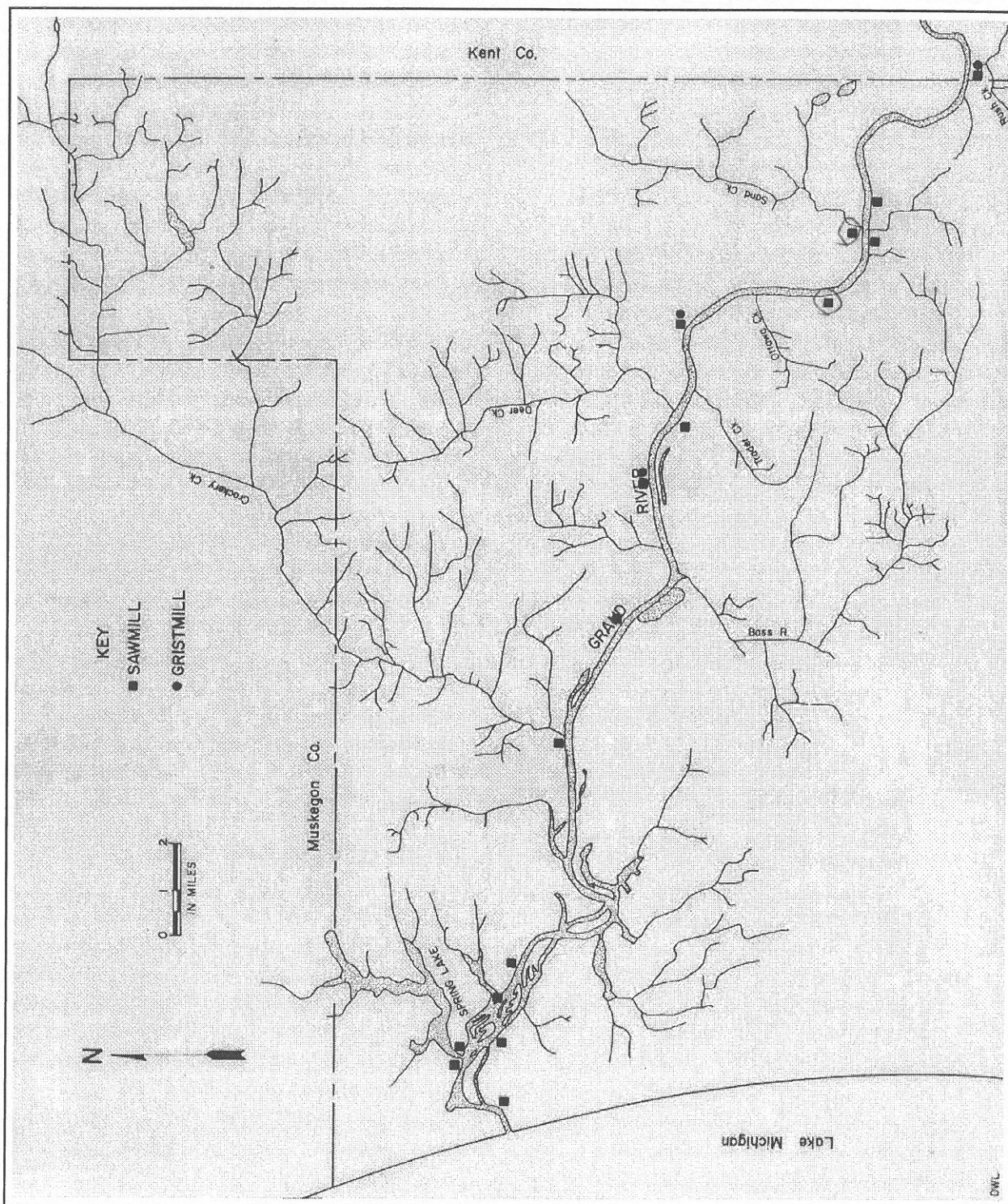


Figure 38. Sawmills and Gristmills along the Grand River.