

Stockade Labryinth, David Barr



KEY IDEAS

- French Colonists created structures to separate themselves from the indigenous people
- Trade and land ownership were areas where European settlers and Native Americans had conflict

STORY

Stockades, forts and other structures were built by European explorers and settlers to separate the worlds of the immigrants and the indigenous people. Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, sieur de Cadillac (1658-1730) was a French explorer and adventurer who founded many forts in Michigan and beyond during colonization. He was the commander of Fort de Buade, modern day St. Ignace, Michigan, in 1694. In 1701, he founded Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit, the beginnings of modern Detroit, which he commanded until 1710. Cadillac was a controversial figure who was admired for his knowledge of the Great Lakes area but also criticized for trading furs with the Native Americans and for giving them alcohol.

BACKGROUND

Stockade Labryinth transports visitors back to the time when French explorers and American Indians collaborated through trade and commerce. War, trapping, mining, farming and spiritual quests are all referenced in the visitor's journey through the mazes. From the Stockade's ridge, the two societies could look out on the forested hills to experience a vision that each would interpret differently. To the American Indians, the vast wilderness was part of a heritage in which nature, left unaltered, would provide life's necessities. In Europe, land was scarce. The European explorers would impose their experience that land needed to be divided, cultivated, harvested and owned in order to provide life's necessities. The stories of these people and their conflicts are of what legends are made.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What images do you see in the stockade? What do you think they represent in Michigan's history?
- What emotions do you feel as you walk through the stockade? Do you feel connected to the landscape or a broader sense of nature or separated from it? Why?