

TABLE 1
SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND HOMESTEAD CLAIMS MADE IN 1863

	FILING DATE	APP #	PROOF DATE	CERT #	OWNER NAME	PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	SIZE
1	9 Jan.	99	26 Aug. 1868	221	George Hutzler	T31N,R15W, S33,NE1/4	160ac
2	31 Jan.	133	17 June 1868	149	Thomas Kitchen* Mary Kitchen	T31N,R15W, S33,SE1/4	160ac
3	25 Feb.	153	26 Aug. 1868	220	Christopher Beck	T31N,R15W, S33,SW1/4	160ac
4	25 Feb.	154	26 Aug. 1868	218	George Haas	T31N,R15W, SEE,NW1/4	160ac
5	11 July	427	9 July 1870	457	Alfred T. Evans	T30N,R15W, S4,NE1/4	160ac
6	**	**	26 Aug. 1868	**	Richard Kitchen	T31N,R15W, S34,SW1/4	160ac

Sources: Homestead Applications for South Manitou Island, Traverse City Land Office, on file in National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

*Thomas Kitchen died before the proof for his claim was filed. His widow, Mary Kitchen, filed the proof.

**The homestead application for Richard Kitchen was not available.

Homestead claims for South Manitou Island land were filed in Traverse City. A trip to Traverse City in the 1860's was not an easy one, and accounts tell of island residents who walked the entire distance, which is over 30 miles, after they arrived on the mainland. The first claim for an island property was filed by George Hutzler on 9 January 1863. He was closely followed by Thomas Kitchen on 31 January. George Haas and Christopher Beck, who probably made the trip together, filed their claims on 25 February 1863. On 11 July, Alfred Evans made the last island claim for that year. A summary of information from the homestead applications for 1863 is provided in Table 1. Before the end of the decade, three more claims had been filed for island property: James Sheridan on 2 April 1868; Conrad Hutzler on 20 April 1868; and Thomas Armstrong on 24 May 1868. A summary of information from the homestead applications for 1868 is provided in Table 2. Later that year, the four original claimants of 1863 filed proofs and received property titles: Thomas Kitchen on 17 June, and George Hutzler, George Haas, and Christopher Beck, all on 26 August. The proofs contain detailed information regarding improvements made to the land. (More information from these documents may be found in the "Farmstead Inventory" section of this document.)

Other Island Activities

Also on the island during the homestead period were people who engaged in fishing, and others who practiced a number of trades. A 1854 newspaper clipping, for example, made the following reference to a cooper: "The search for pine for wooden ships and fish-kegs brought John Fisher and his friend John Dorsey to the mainland in 1854. John Dorsey, a cooper by trade, lived on South Manitou Island where he made fish kegs by hand."⁴⁵ Six different lighthouse keepers served during the 1847 to 1868 interim. George Clarke began on 6 August 1845; Benjamin Ross on 27 June 1849; Alonzo Slyfield on 9 September 1853; Patrick Glenn on 27 June 1859; P.W. Kirtland on 17 June 1861; and Aaron A. Sheridan on 21 July 1866.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Undated newspaper clipping in the Better Kramer Collection, Notebook #3, 49, Leelanau Historical Museum, Leland, MI.

⁴⁶Unpublished list, "South Manitou Island Lighthouse, Lighthouse Keepers and First Assistant Keepers," available at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Headquarters, Empire, MI.