

# THE OLD FORT PALISADE

## SPRING 2024



### Greetings from the Board President:

It's 52° out and spring seems just around the corner. That means only one thing in Indiana. It's not spring yet!

This weekend finishes the third of our winter garrisons with one more to go. As usual, they have been a great success and I want to thank the organizers of these events. Where else can you go in the winter and man a fort?

I'm just returning from a trip to Texas. There were several museums visited, both static and living, and I thoroughly enjoyed each and every one. As a frontier Fort in Indiana, we can become narrowly-focused on our own history. Most of us know of the national history, in general terms, but the local history of each area of our country can be fascinating.

*Throughout the day I had a lot of interested guests stop by and ask what I was making. I said it was a "curfew", and the general response was, "A what?!"*

A Day at the  
Tinsmith Shop  
Pg. 6

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I recently had someone ask me why we have all these small, dying towns in Indiana. The answer is simple. Towns were formed on the rivers so they could supply water for mills and provide transportation. Roads were then built between towns, promoting wagon traffic. However, a 20-mile journey and back again could easily take a full day to complete. When the railroads came through, grain elevators were built alongside them, allowing farmers to readily sell their grain and livestock. Soon towns sprung up around those elevators, along with shops, making it easier to purchase goods closer to home.

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They thrived until the automobile came around...and then everything changed again. Suddenly people didn't think twice about driving somewhere to buy something they wanted; 20 miles became a normal shopping trip. Today we can get on the internet and order whatever we want, from wherever it is, and have it delivered to our doorstep within a couple of days!

Very small towns are dying rapidly. Larger towns are struggling unless they've become a "bedroom community" supporting a larger city. Unfortunately, these very small communities will become ghost towns and their history will be lost. I saw this exact same story unfold all the way to Texas and back.

Live long and prosper,  
Norm Gable  
President Historic Fort Wayne

## Education Day

Education Day is one of our favorite and most popular events. Each year, we welcome students in grades 4-5 for a day of interactive learning as Indiana history (and more) comes alive. If you know students or teachers in those grades, please let them know about this wonderful opportunity. Homeschool groups are also welcome.

This year, Education Day will be Friday, May 10, followed on Saturday and Sunday by our Muster on the St. Mary's timeline event.

Pre-registration is required for classes, and space is limited but still available, so sign up soon! For more information, Contact Ken Sorg at:

[educationday@oldfortwayne.org](mailto:educationday@oldfortwayne.org)



## Who's Who

**Board Members:** Norm Gable, President  
Bob Jones, Vice President  
Tom Grant, Treasurer  
Nancy Stansberry, Secretary  
**Members:** Josh Grubaugh, Andi Hahn, Kip Lytle, Sean O'Brien

**Events Planning/School Demos:** Bob Jones

**Facilities Committee:** Sean O'Brien

**Maintenance:** Sean O'Brien

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Bob Jones

**PR/Marketing:** Jennifer Balkenbusch

**Social Media:** Kathleen O'Connell

Send your comments/questions to  
[info@oldfortwayne.org](mailto:info@oldfortwayne.org). Your message will  
be sent to the appropriate person.

Sign up to receive our quarterly  
e-newsletter

## THE OLD FORT PALISADE

Send your request to:  
[publications@oldfortwayne.org](mailto:publications@oldfortwayne.org)

We are looking for articles  
for future issues.

If you have an historically pertinent  
subject you'd like to write about,  
let us know at:

[publications@oldfortwayne.org](mailto:publications@oldfortwayne.org)

Deadline for submissions to the  
Summer Palisade will be  
June 1, 2024

# Allen County Bicentennial

William Ijams

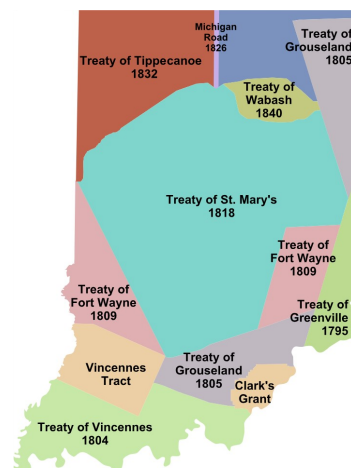
On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1824 Allen County was born. It had been in the works since December of the previous year, with boundaries that originally spanned to the northern and eastern state lines, the latter of which it still reaches today. A good portion of the land was yet to even formally be acquired by the United States, with large swathes of the county not ceded by the Miami Tribe until pressured to do so by the Treaty of 1826.

The population was small. According to the 1830 Census, the first to cover the fledgling Allen County, there were only 996 residents. Compared to Vanderburg County at 2,611 and Marion County at 7,192 (with the cities of Evansville and Indianapolis respectively), the northern parts of the state were slow to develop. While Indiana was no longer the frontier, the relatively low Anglo-American population of the Three Rivers area was no accident. Northern elements of the state had long been put aside for the region's Native Americans. Early treaties such as those signed at Greenville (1795), Vincennes (1804), and even at Fort Wayne itself (1809) had focused on areas south of where Indianapolis sits today. This emphasis on the Ohio River as a trade corridor was informally supported by settlers as well, who wished to avoid the destruction and instability that had been prevalent in the northern end of the state since the 1790s (due to the chaos caused by the Northwest Indian Wars and the War of 1812). In fact, the county's namesake himself was a casualty of war: Colonel John Allen of the Kentucky Militia, killed at the Battle of River Raisin in January of 1813. Counties in both Ohio and Kentucky share the name.

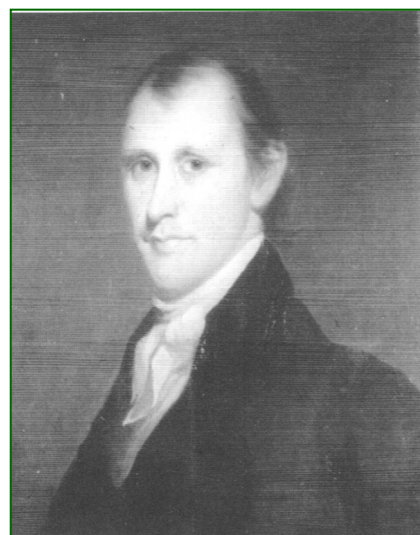
Abandoned just five years earlier by the Army (1819), the remains of the fort were still the center of the community. The barracks were transformed into classrooms under the direction of Reverend Isaac McCoy. Both he and his wife, Christiana, were devout Baptists who also started offering the first formal church services seen in the area. The congregation remained small at around eleven members, while the school flourished serving over forty students. The diversity of Fort Wayne's humble beginnings were evident, with students coming from Anglo-American, French, Miami, and African-American backgrounds.

Land in the area was highly sought after, both for its rich soil and access to abundant game. The first land office had opened just one year prior, in 1823, with many of the key players having come from fur trade backgrounds (including Samuel Hanna, James Barnett, and the Ewings brothers). Barnett's

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*Indiana's land was slowly parceled off through decades of treaties and the slow encroachment of Anglo-American settlement*



*This portrait of Colonel John Allen, the county's namesake, still hangs in the Allen County Courthouse to this day.*

house was reportedly the first brick house built in the area, the same year the land office opened.

While the Euro-Americans were busy parceling off land and turning a quick profit, the Miami looked on. The tribe had stopped participating in armed resistance since their defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. Since then, a determined stubbornness, using all avenues of diplomacy and political influence at their disposal, had been utilized to great effect. Just shortly after the formation of Allen County, delegates from the Miami and U.S. governments met in 1826 to cede a nearly million acre swath of Miami land. In exchange, the Miami received a twenty year period to prepare for removal and a local reserve for leaders that was around 14,000 acres. Homes were also to be built for several of the leading families of the tribe, including civil chief Jean B. Richardville. Construction was completed in 1827 with funding from both the treaty agreement and Richardville's personal wealth.

The county's growth was fueled in a major part by the arrival of the Wabash and Erie Canal, completed in 1843, and the railroads, with the connection to Chicago completed in 1856. Industrial growth, fueled by German and Irish immigration, was quick to follow. By 1920, Allen County had grown from 996 to 114,303 residents. In 2020, nearing this year's bicentennial celebration, the population was 385,410 residents strong.



*The Chief Richardville House today, restored to its original appearance in the early 2000s.*

Despite this growth, many connections to the "Fort Era" remain. The street leading to our reconstructed Fort bears the name "Spy Run," which, along with Wells Street, are named after William Wells, Indian Agent, scout, and pivotal early figure in the region's fighting around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. One of the city's earliest parks marks the spot where the Fort once stood. Old Fort Park, located next to Fort Wayne Fire Department's Station One, features a replica of the well that once serviced the garrison. Traces of the canal are even more readily apparent, with several houses still standing from that era and timber still visible at several points along the old right of way (which largely follows the rail line that passes through southern Fort Wayne today). The Miami also remain a persistent part of the community. Richardville's house is now the oldest standing structure in the county, and hosts a wide array of cultural programs put on by the descendants of the chief and other Miami who remain local to Allen County. Finally, our reconstructed Fort takes the place of the original namesake of the city. The last building of the original Fort came down in 1852. The land was situated in the center of a new and vibrant downtown which was growing at a rapid pace. The reconstructed Fort's positioning today is somewhat the same, yet its future is clear as reconstruction begins to maintain this central part of Allen County's two hundred years of history.

#### References:

Beatty, John D, Phyllis Robb, Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society. 2006. *History of Fort Wayne & Allen County, Indiana, 1700-2005*. Evansville, Ind.: M.T. Pub. Co.  
U.S. Census Bureau via <https://www.census.gov>  
Headings, Lois. "de Richardville, Chief Jean-Baptiste, House." National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form. Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indianapolis, June 27,1997.



# WINTER AT THE OLD FORT

The Amazing  
Winterval Race



Revolutionary  
War Garrison



1812  
Garrison



Nouvelle  
Annee





# A DAY IN THE TINSMITH SHOP

By Jason Winterrowd



*Covered by a “curfew”,  
the smoldering remains of a fire would survive  
to be quickly revived in the morning.*

I started my journey as a tinsmith a little over two years ago. I was at an event where a coppersmith was demonstrating and selling his creations. We got to talking and he said, “I will be teaching a class on how to make a copper cup.” I took the class in early March 2022. A week later I was up in Michigan at the Kalamazoo show and was asking about copper cups and showing what I had done. A stranger heard me talking and said, “I’m taking a tin smithing class at the Old Fort in Fort Wayne in two weeks.” At lunch time I sat down next to one of the Fort’s blacksmiths and he was pretty sure there were still openings. After taking that class I got to know the tinsmith at the Old Fort and started thinking that I would like to try this as a hobby and volunteer at the Fort. I have now been demonstrating for about a year and a half and having a lot of fun figuring out what to make at events.

Starting out my day at the Fort’s tin shop during the Napoleonic Days event, I was greeted with a beautiful morning and a round of inquisitive guests. I was wondering what I could make that day that could be done with no soldering of joints and would demonstrate some of the more commonly used tools that we have. I went to one of the books I had with me, *The Origins and Craft of Antique Tin and Tôle* by John Player, and found a picture of a project I could tackle.



Using the advice and training of our main Tinsmith, Brian Kilmer, I got out a sheet of tin and began the layout process. With only a picture to go by, and a semi-practiced eye, the layout work was done and I moved on to cutting the shape out and punching the holes. Next I worked on forming the main body and handle, and it was looking pretty good.



Then I needed to assemble the parts using a series of formed joints. Oh - and don’t forget the wire to help stiffen the thin tin sheets. The whole thing was done just in time to call it a day. Throughout the day I had a lot of interested guests stop by and ask what I was making. I said it was a “curfew”, and the general response was, “A what?!”

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A 'curfew' is a metal cover designed to enclose the embers of a fire at the end of the day. The holes in the sides and top of the curfew enabled the embers to keep smoldering at night, so the fire can be easily re-lit the following morning with a puff of the bellows. The word curfew comes from the Anglo-French words *coverir* ("to cover") and *feu* ("fire"), and the practice of covering the fires at night gave rise to our more familiar use of the word 'curfew' to denote a time for someone, especially a child or teen, to be inside for the evening.



My wife Trista has been very supportive of my hobbies. Along with tin and copper smithing I do a little blacksmithing and leather work. I have three children Alex, Andrew, and Kamryn, and three dogs Tank, Pippen, and Lucy. I have been working with sheet metal almost all my life, starting by working with my father welding and fabricating, and continuing to my current job where I design medical sterilization cases at Zimmer Biomet.

My interest in history probably comes from my mother who has been doing our family's genealogy. She has traced our family to Elizabeth (Boone) Grant, one of Daniel Boone's sisters and to Cornelius Washburn a spy for Anthony Wayne.

*Above: A curfew made in the Netherlands in the 17th century.*

*Below: Jason's finished curfew*

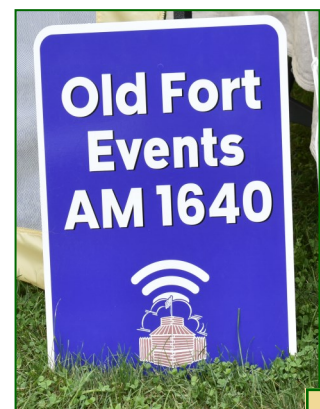


You can find us on Facebook  
for up-to-date event news and happenings!

[www.facebook.com/HistoricFortWayne](https://www.facebook.com/HistoricFortWayne)



And check out  
Old Fort Radio 1640AM  
for historic vignettes,  
invitations to events at the Old Fort,  
and announcements of coming events.





## Treasurer's Report

Tom Grant

I'm pleased to report that we were able to make the anticipated \$30,000 contribution to the Fort's endowment fund last year resulting in a \$6,000 match by the Community Foundation. Investment results for 2023 provided an additional \$19,360 of investment gains which provided an ending endowment balance of \$191,051. The investment gains are attributable to our fund being part of the huge investment portfolio maintained by the Foundation which yielded a whopping 14.1% return for the year.

Fifteen years ago when we began the endowment, we recognized that at some point in the near future the buildings would need to be rebuilt. We wanted to establish a fund that, once the buildings were reconstructed, would provide those who follow us with the funding to properly maintain that investment. This need had not been anticipated during the initial planning and construction of the Fort in 1976, but we are committed to looking to the future.

The process of reconstructing the buildings is beginning this spring. The first one we are working on is the Spy Run Blockhouse. A crew from Don R Fruchey arrived on site on March 11<sup>th</sup> with a small crane to install the steel beams and rigging to the upper roof section of the blockhouse, which will be removed so the second floor can be rebuilt. The log beams have been delivered on site so that the reconstruction can proceed once the demolition of the remaining portion is completed. We anticipate having the larger crane on site this coming week, and plan to lift the roof off of the blockhouse on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Watch our Facebook page for photos and updates.

The plan is to utilize this event to focus community attention to the planned reconstruction and the launch of our Capital Campaign to fund the renovations needed. Currently we are estimating between two and two and a half million dollars to reconstruct all the buildings of the Fort. After the completion of the Blockhouse, the Doctor's Quarters and Hospital building will be next, followed by the Commander's Building, then the Junior Officers building and finally the Barracks. Work will begin as funding is secured, both from grants and donations. If you would like to help support the Fort, you can use the donate button on our website or send a check to P.O. Box 12650, Fort Wayne, IN 46864.



*Left: beams are delivered for the reconstruction.  
Above: roof is prepped for removal.*





# Volunteer Advance

Bob Jones

As a volunteer, you are a Historic Fort Wayne customer service ambassador! Our philosophy supports ensuring the best experience is received by all public visitors and reenactor participants. Volunteer Advance is intended to help both new and experienced volunteers be prepared for meeting the public in a confident and effective manner. The content of sessions involves becoming aware of historic hand arts and lost skills, familiarity with the early history of Fort Wayne and the surrounding regions, and ways to effectively communicate with visitors and participants. Thank you for your interest in Historic Fort Wayne. As an all volunteer organization, we rely on you to help us Keep the Fort in Fort Wayne.

## **Saturday, April 13, 2024 10AM to 12PM**

TOPIC - The Manual of Arms

Rolling cartridges, firing a musket, becoming aware of field safety, and artillery firing procedures are all included in April's activities. Non-combatants - this is your opportunity to handle a musket in a soldierly fashion. We'll have rounds available for those who have never fired a musket and would like to do so. As for the artillery, we do what we call a "faux fire" as we all shout, "Boom!" Artillerists were a part of the garrison and essential to the defense of the region. New volunteer orientation topics, VIP tour of the Fort Complex, and Q&A also included. Light refreshments will be available.

## **May 11, 2024 10AM to 12PM**

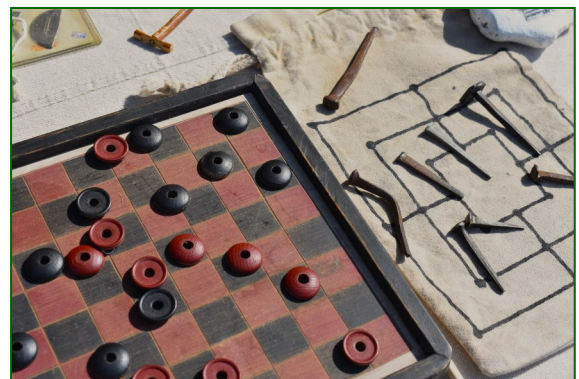
TOPIC – Muster on the St. Mary's a Timeline Event

Yes, this is the opening of our premiere weekend events. We had on an earlier notification said Volunteer Advance would be on May 18, but that is now not possible due to a private event. So, make your plan to be a part of the Muster, and volunteer in the ways you usually do. If this is your first time at an event there are many ways to help. We always need someone at the gate, welcoming visitors, checking in with vendors, making an ice run, helping with the Children's Tent, occupying a place at the Welcome Table, and more. If you need assistance with historic wardrobe, let us know well in advance.

## **June 15, 2024 10AM to 12PM**

TOPIC – Music, Games, Distractions

We are hopeful that our traditional musicians will make a special effort to be available Saturday, June 15. There are songs for us to learn, and games like Graces, Whist, and Nine Men's Morris to play. Materials will be available for those who wish to make-it and take-it. You will have an opportunity to become familiar with what I call, "What Did They Do Before Batteries?" If you have an idea, examples, or materials of your own, bring to share.



*Continued next page*

We need volunteers for all areas from living history to facilities and more. Send us your application today <https://oldfortwayne.org/get-involved/volunteer/> or call the Fort Phone: (260) 437-2836.

## Volunteer Advance 2024

Subject to change

April 13	Manual of Arms, rolling cartridges, fire a musket, field safety, cannon college
May 11	Muster on the St. Mary's - volunteers needed
June 15	Music, Games, Distractions
July 13	Hearth Cooking and Baking - Special Mystery Guest
August 10	Musket ball casting, make a "lead" pencil
September 14	Textiles, twining, weaving, wool and flax
October	No Meeting
November 9	Flint and Steel Fire Lighting - Special Mystery Guest
December	No Meeting



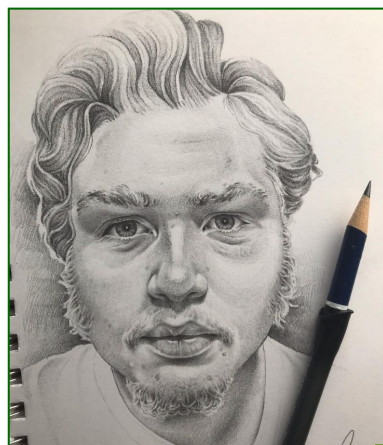
*February's gathering focused on textiles and hand sewing*

## Volunteer Profile

### Meet Kaiden Thacker

Kaiden is a lifelong Fort Wayne resident. He is 21 and has been volunteering at the Old Fort since 2016. He reenacts multiple time periods, and he can be found during events drilling with the troops and helping out as an historical interpreter. He has especially enjoyed the opportunity travel with the representatives from Historic Fort Wayne to participate in the Mississinewa 1812 reenactment each fall.

Kaiden works at Big City Cars, located here in Fort Wayne. When he's not helping out around the Old Fort, Kaiden's other hobbies are snowboarding and drawing. He says "to know me better, you could follow my Instagram page kaiden\_art. All my art work is posted here!" He is a very gifted artist and it is worth taking a look at what he has posted. His self portrait from his Instagram page is pictured to the right. Keep an eye out for Kaiden at events and be sure to say 'hello'!





## 2024 UPCOMING EVENTS

Public hours as listed below. If you are interested in participating as a reenactor or vendor, please contact [events@oldfortwayne.org](mailto:events@oldfortwayne.org) for registration forms, or visit our website. All events are free admission, unless specifically stated. Donations welcome.

### **MARCH 23: CIVIL WAR GARRISON**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm

### **MAY 10: EDUCATION DAY**

Friday: 9 am–2 pm

Pre-registration required

### **MAY 11-12: MUSTER ON THE ST. MARY'S**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm

Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **JUNE 8-9: SIEGE OF FORT WAYNE 1812**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm

Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **AUGUST 3-4: NAPOLEONIC DAYS**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm

Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **AUGUST 24-25: POST MIAMI**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm

Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **SEPTEMBER 8: BE A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN HOMETOWN**

Saturday: Noon–5pm

### **OCTOBER 19: FRIGHT NIGHT LANTERN TOURS**

Saturday: 6 pm–10 pm

Admission is \$5.00. Nine and under free when accompanied by an adult.

### **DECEMBER 7: CHRISTMAS AT THE FORT: A TIMELINE EVENT**

Saturday: 10 am–4 pm

Always check our website, Facebook, or Fort radio for event times and schedule updates.



*The above photo and the cover photo are both from Education Day 2023.*

## Historic Fort Wayne, Inc.



1201 Spy Run Ave.  
Fort Wayne, IN

Mailing address:  
P.O. Box 12650

Fort Wayne, IN 46864

Phone: (260) 437-2836

[www.oldfortwayne.org](http://www.oldfortwayne.org)

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Kathleen O'Connell  
Editor

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