

THE OLD FORT PALISADE

SUMMER 2024



Greetings from the Board President:

To say a lot has been happening at the Fort would be an understatement! I'm sure you all have seen pictures of the Blockhouse rebuild by now. No, it's not exactly like the original but is far stronger and will last far longer. Give it some time to age. Our next building is the Hospital and you can read about that in another article (page 3).

The Muster was a success with over 700 school children attending Education Day on Friday, May 10th, and anyone that attended the Siege event would have had to enjoy it.

A group of Firefighters from Ft Wayne's sister city in Gera, Germany stopped in for a tour on May 5th with their local counterparts. It was the first day for our summer interns and they got a rousing round of applause from the group after their tour. These young tour guides really know their stuff! Stop in and meet them.

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"Purslane can be added to soup or stew as a vegetable or cooked and eaten by itself. Chicory roots can be roasted and used as a coffee substitute."

Foraging at the Fort

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On a more somber note, we dedicated the Randy Elliot memorial bake oven protective roof. Many of Randy's family and friends were able to attend the dedication. Randy gave many years of his life to the preservation and telling of the history of Fort Wayne.

Please stop in and say "Hi" when you're in the area. Give our interns a workout!!

Norm Gable
President, Historic Fort Wayne

Welcome New Board Member: Brian Kilmer

Brian joined the Historic Fort Wayne, Inc. Board of Directors this spring. He was born in Fort Wayne and was raised in Middlebury, IN. He has been a history buff from a young age, and has been reenacting over half his life now, focusing on time periods from the 12th century Normans, to the French and Indian War. Brian moved back to Fort Wayne in 2017, and shortly thereafter, he became a volunteer at the Old Fort, where he became the Master Tinsmith.



In Memory Karen Gongwer Grant

Sept. 5 1950—May, 23, 2024

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Karen Grant. Karen was a longtime Fort volunteer. She served in many areas, including organizing the bake sale where she was committed to “saving the Fort, one cookie at a time!”. She was also an accomplished seamstress, and especially passionate about making clothing for living history. Many of our volunteers got their start in clothes loaned or created by Karen!



Our hearts are with Karen's husband, Tom, and her family.

Karen's preferred memorials are to:

Historic Fort Wayne
PO Box 12650
Fort Wayne, IN
48864

Who's Who

Board Members: Norm Gable, President
Bob Jones, Vice President
Tom Grant, Treasurer
Nancy Stansberry, Secretary
Members: Josh Grubaugh, Andi Hahn, Brian Kilmer, 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. 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

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

Deadline for submissions to the Fall Palisade will be September 1, 2024

Fort Reconstruction Project

The Old Fort, a recreation of the Fort that stood here in 1816, was built 50 years ago. Time and weather have taken their toll! Major repairs are needed. We are currently working toward raising 1.9 million dollars for the project. A Capital Campaign is in progress. The project will proceed in phases. As enough funding is secured for each phase, work will begin. Phase I kicked off on March 19, 2024, with the South Blockhouse.



Phase I is nearly complete! The timbers still need to be treated to prevent weather damage, protect against insect infestation, and provide a colorant. Once the sealant is completed, chinking the timbers will complete the project. Phase I was fully funded.

Phase II is moving forward! It is a reconstruction from the ground up of the Doctor's Quarters and Hospital Building. To cut costs, we plan to salvage as many reusable parts as possible. This includes doors, windows, shutters, interior walls, stairs, and flooring. We also hope to preserve the existing fireplaces and chimneys.

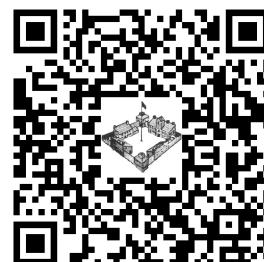
Upon completion of the Doctor's Quarters and Hospital Building, the Commander's Quarters will be next, followed by the Junior Officers' Building, and finally the Barracks.

We need your help. This is a major undertaking! Assistance is needed to help salvage the reusable parts. These parts and all interior furnishings will need to be relocated to a secure and weatherproof location. Keep an eye on our Facebook page (*see below*) for upcoming workdays.

Historic Fort Wayne, Inc. does not receive state or federal funding, but relies on generous donations from members of the community like you. Please consider supporting us to help keep the Fort in Fort Wayne for another 50 years!

Donate Here:

<https://oldfortwayne.org/get-involved/donate/>



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

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.



SPRING AT THE OLD FORT



Education Day



Civil War Garrison



Siege of Fort Wayne 1812



Tour Groups



Memorial Day Parade



Muster on the St. Mary's



Blockhouse Reconstruction

Disability In the 18th Century

Jennifer Henline

Content Warning: This article will contain slurs used against the Disability Community in quotes from historic sources.

Disability is not a modern phenomena. For most people, it is not a matter of *if* one will become disabled, but *when*. Chances are if you live long enough, even accident and illness free, you'll age into disability. As more people find themselves needing to make the reenactment hobby fit their changing bodily needs, we can look to the past to learn how our disabled ancestors navigated their world. Disability history is everyone's history, just as disability rights affect everyone.

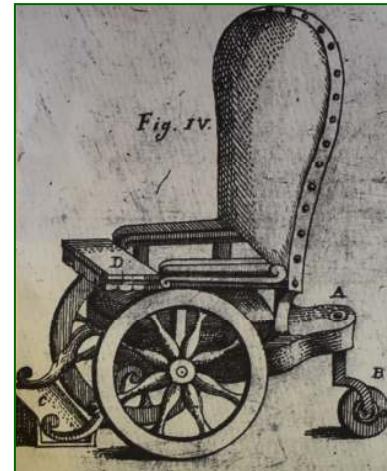
“Monstrous” “Lame” “Cripple” “Idiot”



These are common words used to describe various kinds of disability in the 18th century, in English speaking countries. You may still hear some of these words in use today, among the general public. However, the modern Disability community considers all of these words to be slurs.

The 18th century is considered an age of enlightenment. This by no means leaves out the notion of disability. The dawning of the 1700s began to show a marked change in the thought surrounding the condition of the Disability community; moving away from the common 17th century thought that the sins of their parents or some other moral failing had caused their condition, and toward an understanding that sometimes - through the means of birth, illness, or bodily injury - people's bodies or ability to function were simply different. It wasn't until midway through the century that the prevailing belief that someone who is pregnant seeing something "unsightly" or "horrifying", (which often included those with disabilities) would cause the infant to be born with similar conditions. Older attitudes from the late 1600s took a slow burn to dissipate. But by the middle of the century, things began to change in earnest; at least for the aristocracy.

Then as now, how easy one's life was as a disabled person greatly depended on your status, wealth, your gender, what condition(s) you may have, and how the disability was obtained. Those injured in military service received a stipend and care paid for by the government. Men often, based on written personal accounts, seemed to find the confinement



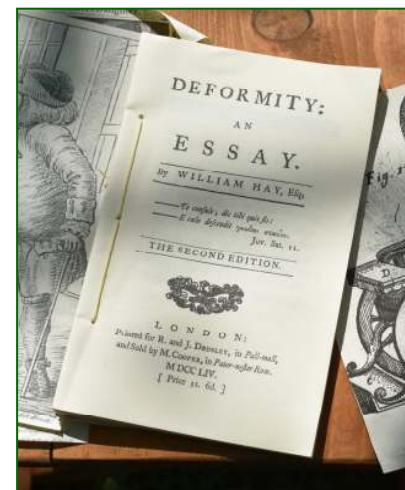
Assistive technology was rare. Wheeled chairs were an uncommon mode of transportation for wealthy disabled people of the 18th century. More common were canes, crutches, sedan chairs like the one pictured above, and prosthetic limbs.

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created by certain conditions which limited their ability to go out into society to be “infantilizing”, whereas women commonly received guests in the home whether they were disabled or able bodied. While their impairments may have been troubling or painful, wealthy women seemed to have an easier time socially. For the well to do, being disabled could hinder one’s ability to participate in society. Many wealthy men complained about fear of deafness as they would face ostracization in general society due to the lack of assistive technology or a shared means of communication.

For the disabled poor it could leave them destitute and hungry, reliant solely on charity for every part of their life including medical care. Those who were born into disability, and whose bodies appeared different enough, could bill themselves as curiosities and make a living on the spectacle of how they moved through the world: the very tall, people with dwarfism, conjoined twins, and those with limb differences are the main groups of people that made their living this way.

In 1754 William Hay penned the pamphlet, “Deformity: An Essay” which was considered a groundbreaking piece of work, and still is today among disability scholarship. It was the first time English speaking society had seen a narrative claiming the identity of disability. It was a first hand account of how Mr. Hay, a gentleman with severe curvature of the spine who called himself “humpbacked”, navigated the world and society. During the time period however it was seen as a read for entertainment or a treatise on how disabled people should act. Like many popular disabled figures of the time, Hay suggested that he, “should bear it like a Man; (...) And his Triumph will be complete, if he can exceed others in Pleasantry on himself. Wit will give over, when it feels outdone: and so will Malice, when it finds it has no Effect: and if a Man's Behaviour afford no Cause of Contempt, it will fall upon those, who condemn him without Cause.”



This trope was often called “the merry cripple”. It was the overarching thought that those who are disabled ought to be content with their lives and bring joy to others where their appearance might lend itself to “pity” and “sorrow”. As it is also today, there was a steady undercurrent among the able bodied public to see the disabled overcoming obstacles whether physical or social in order to make themselves feel better in their own lives, an enduring example of tokenism.

There were also jest books, rather like the historic version of Mad Magazine, which were quick to make jokes at the expense of the disabled community as easy, low hanging fruit. They joke of how deafness can ease a man’s marital life to avoid a wife who nags him, or a blind wife who does not see her husband’s wandering eye - which is seen problematic in multiple ways today. An excerpt from ‘Joe Miller’s Jests’ (1742) echoes this thought in saying, “if a man walk lame he is pity’d but if he dance lame he is laugh’d at: the one is unavoidable the other not.” Disabled people could either be the subject of pity, humor, or wonderment at how they live their everyday lives - usually never looked at as fully fledged people except by those who know them personally.

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Just as today, the Disability community had to get creative to navigate a world that was not made with them in mind. There were women in England, Mrs. Morell and Miss. Hawtin, who had limb differences; born without arms and hands. They cut the papers that go inside pocket watches to protect the gears by using scissors with their feet. They sold their labor and themselves as a spectacle in order to make a living.

Another example is that of European courts often purchasing children or adults with Dwarfism from their families, calling them simply "Court Dwarves". These people were enslaved and treated as pets and curiosities; not quite seen as human.

The more popular of these people were akin to modern celebrities. They were often given clothing that was the height of fashion, had furniture made to their stature, but that was where the glitter and glamor often ended. These people were not free to leave. They were entertainment for the rich elite and often the butt of jokes and ridicule. For some, the extravagant lifestyle made all of the debasement worthwhile; for others, their endings were far from pleasant.

The poor generally lived in fear of becoming disabled more so than the rich. They often engaged in physical labor as means of employment, just as today, and becoming disabled would take away their ability to work and function in society as they had before. It was expected, as it largely is today, that the families of those who are disabled would provide and care for them. But many poor families, similarly as in the modern day, were unable to afford their care and upkeep, so through no fault of their own, the disabled and their families suffered. They often were forced to go begging, hoping that some benevolent, wealthy person might see fit to give them some coin as an act of charity. This attitude would continue for much longer. From 1867 to 1974 cities in the United States would create "Unsightly Beggar Ordinances", later called "Ugly Laws", which targeted the poor and disabled, keeping them from the rest of society. In San Francisco, as an example, the ordinance stipulated that it was illegal for "any person, who is diseased, maimed, mutilated, or deformed in any way, so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object, to expose himself or herself to public view."

Gender, social status, where they lived, and the type of disability a person had all played a role in how they were received in society. It was the luck of the draw, a cosmic lottery, which would determine how one's life played out. While we have come a long way as a society, we still have a long way to go toward true equality for the Disability community.

Jennifer Henline is a disability advocate who has been volunteering with Historic Fort Wayne since 2010. Her area of study is the 18th century (1760-1789), with a focus on colonial American women's history, social customs, material culture and the intersection of disability. She is a self taught seamstress who adheres to historical methods as her disability allows.



Meet Our Summer Interns

The primary focus of HFW is to educate. For four years HFW has been able to hire interns over the summer to offer tours, answer questions, conduct research and allow the Fort to be open to visitors five days a week. Previous interns have gone on to be docents at various living history sites around the country. Thanks to the generosity of donors, we are able to continue the program. This year we have three excited young people to introduce to you.

Although Asa Jones is relatively new to the Fort and reenacting, he has a wealth of reenacting knowledge in his family. His father, Matt, and grandfather, Bob, are both active at the Old Fort. He enjoys baking and is looking forward to firing up the bake oven this summer. Although his favorite period to reenact is the American Revolution he is comfortable portraying the Seven Years War and the early 1800s. His plans include learning some tin smithing, blacksmithing, and woodworking as part of his internship.

Our other rookie intern is Lily Hahn. Lily is a third-generation reenactor and attended her first event at the Fort at the early age of 18 months and spent most of the day in a 19th century cradle. She can be found at Fort events in the company of her mother, Andi, and father, Rick. She enjoys reenacting multiple time periods, but her favorite is WWII. She enjoys kitchen work, sewing, and giving tours. Last year she got to fire a flintlock for the first time in a tactical demonstration. She is currently looking at a future career in hospitality management.

Kyle Stark is our third summer intern. As the veteran of the group (this is his third summer giving tours at the Fort), his expertise is a valuable asset. Kyle is a Computer Science major at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. His favorite part of giving tours is seeing the reaction on visitors' faces when they learn some new tidbit of historic trivia. Working with the artillery crew and preparing & firing the cannon are activities he's hoping to experience this summer.

All are invited to tour the Fort this summer. The interns are available Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 until 5:00 and Sundays from noon to 4:00, through mid-August. Groups of more than 8 are requested to contact the Fort at (260) 437-2836 to schedule a convenient time.



Kyle Stark



Lily Hahn



Asa Jones

Foraging and the Fort

Rick Hahn

Foraging was a way for soldiers to enhance the sometimes less than edible rations that were issued to them. There are some wonderful videos on the food available and how soldiers supplemented the rations, especially from Townsends' cooking channel. One area that is often overlooked is variety of forage that was available in the form of wild plants, both those that were native and those brought to the area by the French for their gardens. The latter became some of our first invasive species.

In the eighteenth century, the banks of the river and surrounding woods would have had a variety of native plants available to forage, such as cattail, fiddleheads, morels, huckleberry, blueberry, wild gooseberry, blackberry and raspberry, elderberry, fox grape and may apples. The types of fruiting trees in the area would have included choke cherry, pawpaw, American plum, crab apple, black cherry, staghorn sumac, and persimmon. These are now scarce.

Meadows and fields would have a variety of native edibles such as sheep sorrel, chicory, purslane, wild ginseng, burdock and other types of dock, chickweed, amaranth, Jerusalem artichoke, clover, black chokeberry, wild bergamot, knotting onion, wild ginger, ramps or wild leek, and meadow garlic.

Plants that were brought in by the French which spread rapidly to become wild, included dandelions, plantain (both broad and narrow leaf), and stinging nettle. If you would like, you can forage at home and bring these in for your demonstrations during event.

Plants still found on the Fort grounds that can be used for foraged food demonstrations include service berries, purslane, both types of plantain, dandelion, chicory, fox grape (*below left*) and crab apples (*below right*).



There are two service berry trees on the fort grounds. The fruit is reddish, blueberry shaped, and rather bland.



There are fox grapes and crab apples growing near the modern building. The leaves of the grape are edible as well as the fruit.

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Around the garden are purslane and chicory. Purslane (*left*) can be added to soup or stew as a vegetable or cooked and eaten by itself. Chicory (*center*) roots can be roasted and used as a coffee substitute. Plantain (*right*) and dandelions can be added to salads or cooked and eaten as vegetables.. The dandelion roots can be used the same as chicory and the flowers can go in a salad or used in wine making.



If you don't like your vegetables, you don't need to add these to your meal, but as a display, they can supplement your impression as a soldier, habitant, refugee, or voyageur. A word of caution—wash anything you plan to eat thoroughly as the parks department does spray the Fort grounds frequently.

Rick Hahn was raised on the edge of the Manistee National Forest in Western Michigan and learned to forage from his father and grandfather. He has been involved in reenacting for 17 years, since meeting his wife at Feast of The Hunters Moon. His 1st reenactment was Locust Grove Market Fair as part of Francois Charleville's company of the Illinois Regiment of Virginia.



Summer Hours

Wed - Sat: 10 - 5
Sun: Noon - 4



2024 UPCOMING EVENTS

Public hours as listed below. If you are interested in participating as a reenactor or vendor, please contact events@oldfortwayne.org for registration forms, or visit our website.

All events are free admission, unless specifically stated. Donations welcome.

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.

If available, we post a schedule of activities prior to each event.

Always check our Facebook page and webpage for any updates or schedule changes.

Volunteer Advance

Bob Jones

This summer, volunteers are needed for several events - Napoleonic Days, Post Miami, and Be A Tourist In Your Own Hometown. Whether you are an experienced demonstrator or are new to volunteering, you can play a vital role at the Fort. Greeting at the gate, helping in the gardens, assisting with a demonstration, welcoming at the information table, having a position at the Children's Tent, serving as a storyteller, and providing traditional music all make Historic Fort Wayne a memorable visit for our guests. Do you have retail experience? Perhaps you can help in the Old Fort Store. Do you have experience in food service? Perhaps you can help with the Old Fort Bake Sale.

Volunteer Advance meetings will resume Sunday, August 11 from 2:00PM to 4:00PM and continue through the fall. There is no meeting planned for December. Should you have an interest in a specific topic ,send your request with Volunteer Advance in the subject to:

events@oldfortwayne.org

or call the Fort Phone during normal business hours Monday through Saturday.

(260) 437-2836

Thank you for helping us *Keep the Fort in Fort Wayne*. See you at the Old Fort.

Volunteer Profile: Getting to Know Lindsey Arnold

I've been visiting Fort Wayne since I was little because my grandparents lived here, but I only just moved here in 2020 from Fishers, Indiana.

I first decided to get involved at the Fort when I went to an event last summer and saw the wonderful community of people. It looked like a lot of fun and I wanted to get into volunteering. I play music at the Fort on my violin and I try to help out in other areas when I can.

I am very new to reenacting, so I haven't figured out which time periods I like best yet. So far, all the ones I've tried out seem to have interesting stories and beautiful music.

I haven't been a part of an event I didn't have a great time at, but if I had to choose one memory it would be the experience I had at Fright Night. I had a lot of fun playing creepy music. (*editor's note—Her version of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" played in a minor key was definitely haunting!*)

I am blessed with a really great family. My mom and dad are very supportive and I have a fun younger brother. I am just now getting to the age where I might get a job soon, but I haven't got one yet. I am in 9th grade at Homestead Highschool where my favorite classes are Orchestra, English, and Latin. Along with playing the violin, I'm a cross country and track runner at my school. But, I really love to draw pictures and write poems, stories, and songs.

I like trying new things all the time; it's what got me into the Fort community. I think the people here are amazing and I am so happy to be a part of this.

Thank you!



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Editor

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