

# THE OLD FORT PALISADE

## SPRING 2025



### Greetings From the Board President

I hope you have survived the winter in good shape! As normal, this winter threw a little bit of everything at us. The weather sure slowed down the new construction, but we're getting ready to move onto the next building (*see page 2 for more details*). Exciting times!

I spent yesterday at the Kalamazoo Living History Show, held indoors at their County Fairgrounds. For those of you who have never heard of it...well, if it has anything to do with being a reenactor, you'll find it there somewhere! This was the last year for Leslie and Rick Conwell as show managers. They have done a wonderful job and we thank them! Ethan and Paisley Yazel will be taking over all the headaches and joys of running a show like this. We here at Fort Wayne want to wish them all the luck and good fortune we can as they start this new chapter in their busy lives.

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The best part of Kalamazoo is getting to see and visit with old friends. Yes, we get to see them at reenactments from time to time, but this just seems different. Maybe it's because it's kind of the beginning of a new reenacting season, but this year seemed different. Everyone wanted to talk. Everyone is really looking forward to this year. The energy was contagious! All the vendors I talked with were having a

*"Because many of the early traders and residents of Fort Wayne were French Catholics, the parish registers of St. Anne's Church in Detroit are a useful source for vital records."*

*Sources for Research  
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great event. I met some new recruits to our hobby and they were being guided by some older, more experienced folk. You know... "buy this, not that." I came away with a warm feeling that our hobby is strong and safe and being led by some amazing people.

Please plan to come to the Fort this year and experience what we have to offer. It's always changing and honestly we could use your help, so volunteer! Well, stay dry, don't get stuck in the mud, and get your gear ready for a great new season.

Norm Gable  
President Historic Fort Wayne

## Fort Reconstruction Phase Two: Doctor's Quarters

Tom Grant

Winter construction is never easy, but when compounded by two bouts of sickness and arctic-like temperatures, it can grind to a halt. Those issues delayed the project start date and plagued it during construction, eventually pushing the project almost eight weeks behind schedule. But, the results speak for themselves and what stands there today is a building that will last for decades, one the we can be proud of, and one that is a beacon of our resolve to the reconstruction of the entire Fort!

Going forward with Phase Three, the plan is to move the contents of the Commander's Building into the Doctor's Quarters, setting up a useable kitchen, a command office, and dining area. This provides us with the shortest move, thus saving volunteer capital, and will facilitate the setup of the Commander's Building once its reconstruction is completed. Second floor beds and accessories will be moved to the second floor of the Doctor's Quarters. The stripping of all reusable materials will begin soon thereafter.

Phase Three is fully funded but we are behind on our fund raising goals for the Junior Officers' Building and we need everyone's efforts.

Who do YOU know that loves history, loves Fort Wayne, and that loves the Old Fort ?

Reach out to those persons ....remember "if you don't ask you won't get!" Thank you for helping to support the Old Fort.



## Indiana Tourism Association Comes to Fort Wayne



*Harrison and Will with Johnny,  
the Tincap's Mascot*

The Indiana Tourism Association held their annual conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana, March 3 – 5, 2025. The Indiana Tourism Association is a proactive and influential group that advocates tourism investment and promotion as economic development in the state of Indiana. Over 250 Indiana tourism professionals had the opportunity to experience Fort Wayne, hear the latest tourism trends, receive tangible ways to grow tourism and be inspired by all that the Indiana tourism industry can accomplish.

As a partner with Visit Fort Wayne, Historic Fort Wayne was invited to participate in the opening session held in La Vetta on the 25<sup>th</sup> floor of the PNC Building. This session allowed the attendees to meet representatives of the major attractions in the Fort Wayne area and learn about the attraction through an interactive activity. Kip

Lytle (Board Member and Woodwright), Harrison Snyder and Will O'Brien (reenactors of the 1st US Infantry, Fort Wayne Garrison), and Jennifer Balkenbusch (Media Contact) represented Historic Fort Wayne. Kip and Jennifer invited attendees to test their knowledge of the history of Fort Wayne. Harrison and Will "recruited" new regiment members, assisting them in signing enlistment papers, and educating them on the history of the Fort. Dressed in full uniform, they also provided the perfect photo opportunity!

### Who's Who

**Board Members:** Norm Gable, President  
Josh Grubaugh, Vice President  
Tom Grant, Treasurer  
Nancy Stansberry, Secretary  
**Members:** Andi Hahn, Bob Jones, 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, 2025



# Old Fort Trades at Work

Brian Kilmer and Kip Lytle

Pie safes were developed in the early 1700s by German immigrants in Pennsylvania (aka Pennsylvania Dutch) as a way of temporarily storing food and keeping it safe from pests and vermin. Sizes, wood types, and styles varied from maker to maker but the safe quickly became a standard furniture piece. Since Major Whistler employed two German cooks, it is reasonable to assume that the kitchen in the Commander's Quarters had a pie safe.

Kip Lytle, the woodwright, had been looking for a project that would be a collaboration between his and one of the other trades shops. Inspiration came from Colonial Williamsburg's annual woodworking conference in 2020.

One of the projects that the joinery shop was reproducing that year was a pie safe, basically, a cupboard with punched tin door panels. Kip asked Brian Kilmer if he was interested, and he accepted. They dithered, procrastinated, and avoided Covid for a couple of years before settling on a design. Talking to reenactors who use the Fort's kitchen, it was decided to go with a two door design, three panels vertical on each door for a total of six panels. and a drawer.

The design on the tin panels was one that was found in period on the east coast. Brian used two styles of punches, a prick punch to make small holes, and a lantern punch to make long holes. This process took a little over two years to complete as he was mainly punching the sheets at events to show the process. In real time, it would have only taken a couple of days to complete. Once the tin sheets were punched they were to be fitted in the doors.



The decision on the type of wood to use for the carcass was made using the historically accurate method of "what do I have on hand?" It turns out that Kip had quite a bit of air-dried, rough sawn walnut planks. These were finish milled to make boards  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick. They were then sawn and planed to  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide boards for the rails (horizontal stretchers) and stiles (verticals) of the doors. No battle plan survives initial contact with the enemy; it is at this point that the design changed.

The finished lumber was not long enough. The doors were changed from a 3x2 vertical arrangement to a 2x2 horizontal one with the 2 left over panels framed into the side of the safe.



*Pie safe from the Colonial Williamsburg collection.*



*Brian Kilmer, Master Tinsmith, working on the punched tin panels (here and left)*



*Making the first pass of cutting a mortis, a rectangular socket in the stiles that accepts a tenon cut on the ends of the rails.*

The pieces selected for rails were given narrow (1/8") grooves, one for the top and bottom rails, two for the middle ones, using a plough plane set to make a 1/4" deep cut.

Since the stiles are joined to the rails using a mortis and tenon joint, the pieces were cut 2" longer than the completed length. A mortis is a rectangular hole that is cut into the stile using a mortising chisel and mallet. A tenon is the pared down end of the rail that fits the mortis. With the mortises cut, the plough plane cuts a similar 1/8" groove in the stiles, keeping the groove between the top and bottom mortises. At this point, the mortises are numbered.

The tenons were cut using a tenoning saw on both ends of each rail. Once cut, the fit was tested in the mortis, and adjustments were made to the tenon (not the mortis). When the fit was deemed satisfactory, the tenons were marked with the number of the mortis it fits. One of the stiles was removed from each door and one of the punched tin panels was slid into each slot and the stile put back in place, ensuring that the tin fits into all four panel spaces of the frames.

There are two ways to secure a mortis and tenon joint: glue or peg. When it is considered that the tin panels may need to be repaired or replaced, pegging the joints was chosen. The frames were disassembled and a hole was bored through each mortis. Matching holes in the tenons were bored 1/32" closer to the shoulder of the tenon. This ensures that the peg will draw the tenon tightly into the mortis. The pegs were made from leftover poplar scrap by driving them through an iron pegging plate. They were made about 1 1/2" long and flush cut to the frame once they were in place.

Kip intends to make the rest of the safe (carcass and drawers) throughout the summer. The horns (the parts of the mortis and tenon joint that stick out from the frame) will be flush cut before fitting to the carcass. Knobs for the drawers and doors will be turned on the spring pole lathe and glued in place. Feel free to stop by events this summer and check his progress. Once Phase III of the Fort reconstruction (the Commander's Quarters) is completed, the new pie safe will be installed and ready for use!



*Dry fit complete. Time to take it apart and drill peg holes.*



# WINTER AT THE OLD FORT

Nouvelle  
Annee



Revolutionary  
War Garrison



1812  
Training  
Garrison



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

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

Follow us on Instagram  
[historic\\_ft.wayne](https://www.instagram.com/historic_ft.wayne)





## Sources for Research

*In January, Bob Jones hosted the monthly Volunteer Advance meeting at the Allen County Public Library's Genealogy Department. He gave the participants an introduction to many primary sources for Old Fort research that can be found there. We asked him to share some of his favorite sources.*

When I became a volunteer for Historic Fort Wayne I was familiar with the basics of American History, Indiana History, World History, and Ancient History. I was not prepared for questions about the War of 1812, and life in the Fort in 1800s.

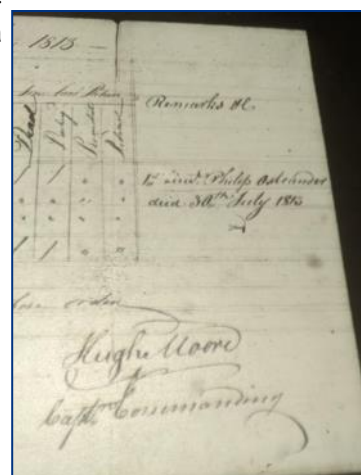
So, I began my search through the internet and visits to archives and libraries. The following is only the tip of the iceberg and I verified all of those links below. You can tune your research to specific questions and the answers are out there.

The Allen County Public Library (ACPL) has many resources. Start with any of these:

- ◆ Microfilm: Fort Wayne Returns 1810—1819
- ◆ Letter Book of the Indian Agency: John Johnson
- ◆ John Johnston and the Indians in the Land of the Miamis
- ◆ Fort Wayne: Gateway to the West 1802—1813
- ◆ Five Forts Ankenbruck
- ◆ Wells Manuscript
- ◆ History of the Maumee Vallee (Knapp, Horace S.)
- ◆ Biographies of People Who Lived In and Near Old Fort Wayne—1816 (Brian Dunnigan)
- ◆ Letters and Journals Moravian Mission on the White River
- ◆ Bayonets in the Wilderness (Gaff)
- ◆ Outpost in the Wilderness (Poinsette) - This book is the definitive account of early Fort Wayne.
- ◆ [A Pictorial History of Fort Wayne Vol. 1](#) If you study only one source, this is it. I have a bound copy and it is also available in the Genealogy Dept. Allen County Public Library and through a searchable online version.

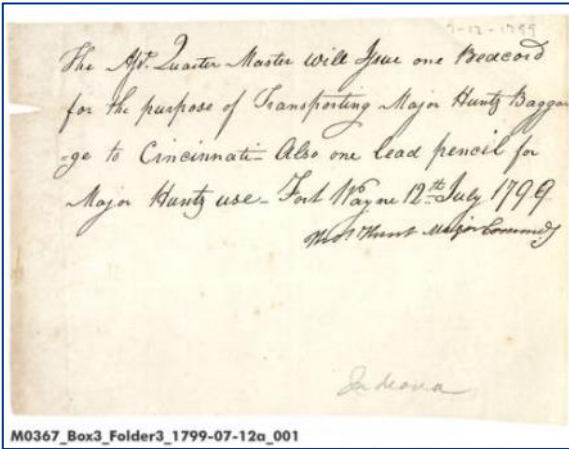
Because many of the early traders and residents of Fort Wayne were French Catholics, the parish registers of St. Anne's Church in Detroit (under whose jurisdiction Fort Wayne was located in the late 18th and early 19th centuries) are a useful source for vital records. Christian Denissen's *Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit River Region 1701-1936* contains many references, though they are not always distinguished by their location. Also useful is Martha Faribault-Beuregard's *La Population des forts françois d'Amerique*, which also contains numerous references to French inhabitants.

There is also a wealth of primary sources that can be accessed on line. This site holds a [collection of links](#) to research sites and



*A daily report from 30 July, 1813, signed by Capt. Hugh Moore (ACPL)*

*Continued next page*



*From Maj. Thomas Hunt to the Quartermaster, 12 July 1799*

bibliographies far too lengthy to include in its entirety. It is well worth many hours of study.

[History of the Diocese of Vincennes](#). History of the first Europeans in the vicinity of the three rivers, which is now Fort Wayne.

[This letter](#), written by an anonymous author to an unknown correspondent, vividly depicts the life of an American soldier on the western frontier during the War of 1812.

[Library of Western Fur Trade](#). Historical Source Documents: Diaries, Narratives, Letters.

[Indiana Historical Society](#). Images and primary sources, such as the one above left. A visit is essential as much of the collection including letters from Fort Wayne Commander Captain Rhea to Kingsbury were not digitized at the time of my research.

The first research field trip I made was to [The Burton Collection Detroit Public Library](#) to read The Orderly Book Fort Wayne 1810-1813; a stunning experience to examine the actual documents.

[The William L. Clements Library](#) is a rare book and manuscript repository located on the University of Michigan's central campus in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Among their holdings are the Kingsbury Papers: Jacob Kingsbury (1756-1837) letters to and from Fort Wayne including Lt. Philip Ostrander letters.

[Archaeological Investigations of Fort St. Philippe des Miamis](#) is a valuable document, downloadable and readable on line, which sheds light on the Fort Wayne's archeological heritage.

[Orderly Book Fort Knox](#). Military records that shed light on life at the Fort.

[The Journal of Ebenezer Wild - 1776 - 1781](#)

[Letters and Journals Moravian Mission on the White River](#). The daily life of missionaries to the Delaware tribe in what is today Anderson, Indiana in the early 1800s. The resource records their work with the Delaware. There are several references to the Delaware traveling to Fort Wayne.

[Re-evaluating "The Fort-Wayne Manuscript"](#). A fascinating first person account attributed to William Wells' life with the Miami. William Wells and the Manners and Customs of the Miami Nation.

[Journal](#) of Surgeon's Mate Joseph Gardner Andrews, Fort Defiance 1795, in Three Installments.





## Volunteer Profile: Meet Joe Saunders

We asked Joe to help us get to know him better, and to share how he got involved at the Old Fort. Here's his story!

"I have a friend named Dennis who kept asking me to participate at the Fort. That was about eight years ago. Where else can a grown man dress up and have fun for a weekend? I've been coming ever since.



Dennis and I demonstrate primitive fire making—flint and steel for the most part. I also work with leather with the kids and some adults at the September *Be A Tourist In Your Own Hometown* event. It is one of my favorite days at the Fort. Their smiles are the thing that makes it all worth it.

I prefer doing 1812 - 1870s. There are a lot of similarities through these time periods. The history of our nation was defined through these years—freedom and a nation together despite our differences.

My family moved to Huntington, IN from Muncie, IN in 1997 for a job opening. We then moved to Fort Wayne. I am married with three children—all boys. My oldest passed about 4 years ago. He was an artist. He had a BA, MA, and a MFA. He was very talented. We have a seven year old grandson who lives in Chicago. He is the life of the party. My middle son makes custom guitars for a living. He also is a fantastic photographer. My youngest also is a talented young man. He draws and does some print making. My wife has been a dedicated mother and wife. She has worked in banking for 20 years.



I'm going to retire this year from General Motors after thirty years. I have built trucks, made transmissions, and lighting for GM. I also worked in a bakery for seventeen years. I paint, draw, sculpt, do metal working and leather fur working. Wood working is fun and saves us a lot of money. I love to work with my hands.

I love to teach, both young and old. I feel like I have knowledge that needs passed on. By doing things and talking about our history and about how we lived, good and bad, I like to think that I give a positive influence on people, and set an example to every one I meet in general, just being a good guy."

Be sure to keep an eye out for Joe at events and stop by to say 'hi'.

## 2025 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.



### **MAY 9: EDUCATION DAY**

Fourth and fifth grade classes welcomed,  
pre-registration required

### **MAY 10-11: MUSTER ON THE ST. MARY'S**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm  
Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **JUNE 7-8: SIEGE OF FORT WAYNE 1812**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm  
Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **AUGUST 9-10: NAPOLEONIC DAYS**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm  
Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **SEPTEMBER 7: BE A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN HOMETOWN**

Sunday: Noon–5pm

### **OCTOBER 18: FRIGHT NIGHT LANTERN TOURS**

Saturday: 6 pm–10 pm  
Admission is \$5.00. Nine and under free when accompanied by an adult.

### **OCTOBER 25: WAYNE'S LEGION GARRISON**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm  
Sunday: 10 am–4 pm

### **DECEMBER 6: CHRISTMAS AT THE FORT**

Saturday: 10 am–5 pm

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.

## **An Easy Way for Extra Giving Kroger Rewards**

Are you a Kroger customer?

You can now support the Old Fort through your regular shopping! We are one of the organizations that you can designate under their "Community Rewards" program. When you do, we automatically receive a rebate based on each purchase. What an easy way to help out!  
To enroll, go to

[www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards)

The directions are there to take you through the sign up process.  
Thank you!

Historic Fort Wayne Inc Organization number TG790





## Volunteer Advance

Saturday 10AM to 2PM and Sunday 2PM to 4PM

Historic Fort Wayne needs you. Whether you are considering volunteering, are a recent volunteer, or have years of experience, Volunteer Advance is intended to give you a window into living history and an opportunity to preview and discuss historic hand arts and daily skills of the past. Volunteer Advance offers a chance to meet and network with other volunteers. Historic Fort Wayne, Inc. operates the Old Fort on behalf of the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department City of Fort Wayne. We are an all-

volunteer organization. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for recent updates and announcements. Thank you for your interest in our mission to *Keep the Fort in Fort Wayne*. We need your help. Join us when you can. Dates and topics are subject to change without notice.

To register as a volunteer navigate to: <https://oldfortwayne.org/get-involved/volunteer/> Fill in the few blanks that apply and "SUBMIT".

Thank you  
Bob Jones, Co-Volunteer Manager

**April 12, 13:** New Volunteer Orientation, Review of New Volunteer Handbook for both recent and long standing volunteers including VIP tour of the Fort Complex. Meet at the Moden Building. Note: This is a change to the schedule previously posted.

**May 10, 11:** Music, Games, Distractions – If you play a stringed instrument, we invite you to join us for traditional music.

**June 14, 15:** Care and feeding of a Quill Pen, writing practice, letter folding and sealing.

No Volunteer Advance meeting in July or August. Sessions with topics of interest will resume in September. In the meantime, watch for information regarding Fort Wayne's new Big Fort Fest, The General Mad Anthony Wayne Parade and Historic Fort Wayne's role in these events.

### Historic Fort Wayne, Inc.



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Editor

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