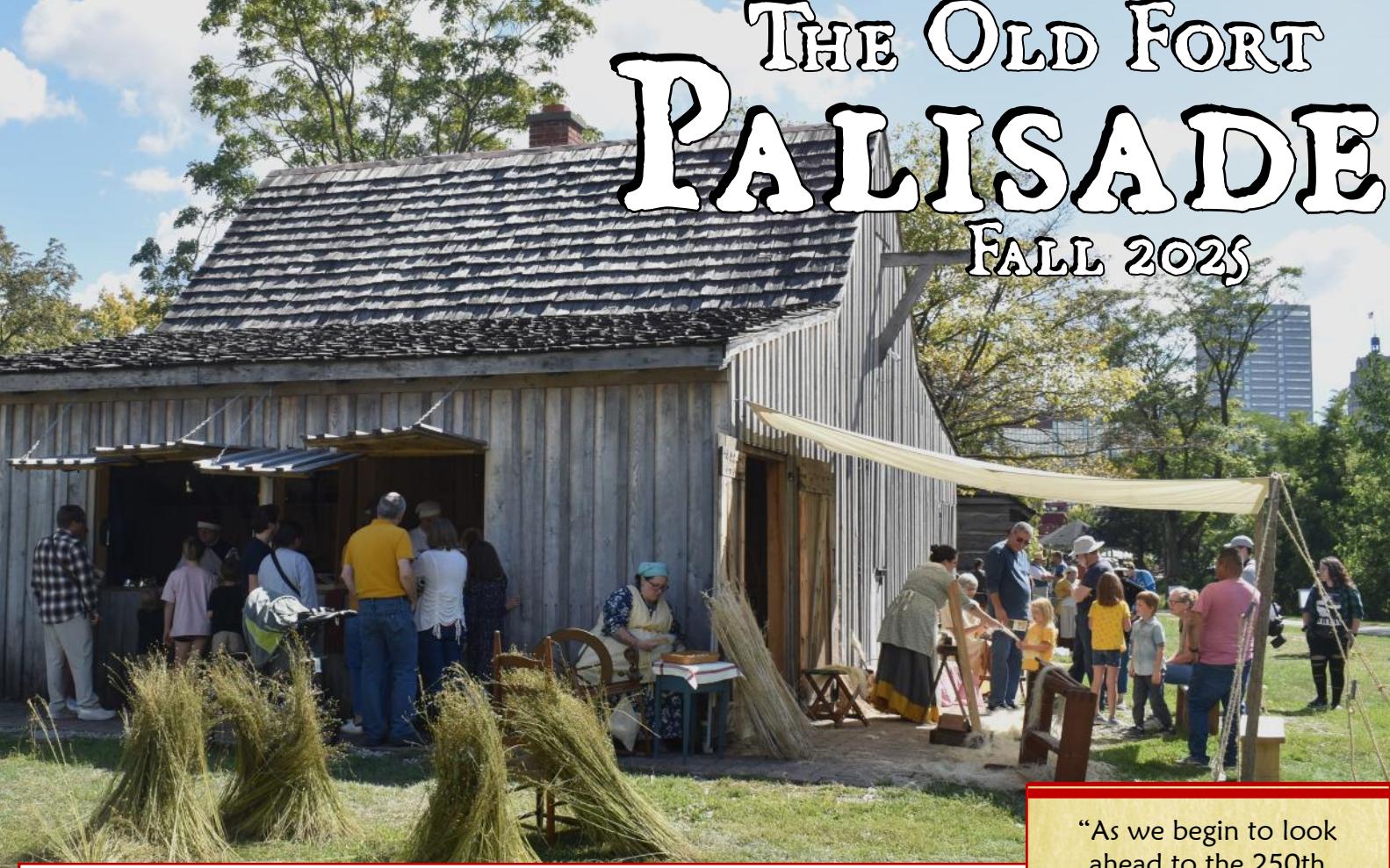


# THE OLD FORT PALISADE

FALL 2025



## Greetings From the Board President

Fall Greetings!!

As I'm sure most of you are aware, autumn is reenacting season. Every weekend you can find some kind of festival or reenactment in your surrounding neighborhoods...except at the Fort until the end of this year!

"As we begin to look ahead to the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, we must also turn our attention to the lesser-heard voices — those that seem to have been swallowed up by time."

*Unnoticed Heroines*  
Pg. 3

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Those of you who follow our Facebook page already know that we have had to cancel our fall events. The why is simple, it's for your safety. We have been undergoing an aggressive, rebuilding project and find ourselves in a time crunch.

The JOQ (Junior Officers' Quarters) is our next building to be replaced. First, we need to empty the furnishings and then gut all the good stuff (doors, windows, etc.). Next, we will securely support the chimneys before the building is demolished. This has to happen before new logs can be delivered (end of September) due to storing them on the parade grounds. Because this is our largest building so far, we anticipate the parade grounds to be overflowing! This particular building poses a lot more difficulty in the rebuilding process as it has plumbing, the main power panel for the entire fort, plus a fake

*Continued next page*

chimney! All of this needs to be put back in place as it's rebuilt. With winter nearing, we feel this crunch even more!

It's our belief that these new structures will remain viable for the next 75 to 100 years, because of the intentional materials and building methods utilized. We really prefer not to postpone/cancel our events, but feel you will understand when you realize the results. However, our Christmas event is still planned for Saturday, Dec. 6th and will be a great time for you to see the completed Hospital and Commanders Quarters while enjoying some Christmas cheer.

Enjoy your fall!

Norm Gable

President Historic Fort Wayne Inc.

## Tourism Showcase

Jennifer Balkenbusch

On Monday, July 28, Historic Fort Wayne participated in a Meet and Greet session at the Indiana Society of Association Executives Conference that ran July 28-30 in Fort Wayne. The ISAE is a professional organization focused on supporting and strengthening the success of association professionals and the associations they serve. The associations the members work at include many types of professions, industries, societies, and social organizations. Visit Fort Wayne sponsored the session at Parkview Field. We were one of six organizations represented. Johnny Tincap led the group into the ballpark from the Convention Center. The group enjoyed beverages, dinner, and ice cream while exploring the ballpark and visiting with the Fort Wayne organizations represented. They visited venues such as the Bradley Hotel, the Embassy Theatre, the Pearl Street Arts Center, and the Memorial Coliseum earlier that day.

ISAE serves its members by:

- ◆ Developing programs and services designed to support the career of association professionals.
- ◆ Serving as a knowledge broker to benefit the member.
- ◆ Developing leadership skills.
- ◆ Developing partnerships with appropriate entities to increase resources and access.

We always appreciate the opportunity to help showcase all that Fort Wayne has to offer, and to encourage tourists to visit our city. Thank you to Visit Fort Wayne for inviting us to participate.



# Unnoticed Heroines

Josh Grubaugh

As we begin to look ahead to the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, we must also turn our attention to the lesser-heard voices—those that seem to have been swallowed up by time. In this short series of articles, we aim to see the Revolution through a different lens. We'll begin by exploring the lives of some of the “silent” members of society: the women who played critical roles during those dark and uncertain days. Nancy Hart, Sybil Ludington, Deborah Sampson, and Prudence Cummings Wright were giants among heroes, and their contributions deserve to be remembered.

According to the American Battlefield Trust, Nancy Hart was truly one of the most warlike women of the Revolution. Standing over six feet tall, she was a towering figure in both stature and reputation. A cousin of Daniel Morgan, she was known for her fiery red hair and equally fiery temper. By the time the Revolution began, she had given birth to eight children. The Cherokee people, who were familiar with her, even gave her the name *Wahatche*, meaning “war woman.”

Hart once wandered through a British camp disguised as a mentally ill man, secretly gathering intelligence while blending into the chaos. She later relayed that information accurately to the Patriots. She once threw boiling lye in the face of a known British spy, but she is best remembered for her role in what has come to be known as the “Battle of Kettle Creek.” When six British Loyalists demanded she prepare food for them, she complied—while secretly collecting and hiding their weapons. She then held them at gunpoint, shot two of them, and, with the help of neighbors, secured the rest. Her loyalty to the cause of freedom was unquestionable.

Sybil Ludington is another heroine whose bravery is often overlooked. She repeatedly risked her life by riding through the countryside to warn residents of advancing British troops. Often likened to the “female Paul Revere,” Ludington successfully raised the local militia and ensured the countryside was ready to defend itself against invasion.

Deborah Sampson is widely considered the first female soldier in the United States Army. In the early days of the Revolution, she worked as a teacher under an indenture. But in the 1780s, she disguised herself as a man and enlisted under the name Robert Shurtliff. In doing so, she was able to fight alongside male soldiers and even took part in the final battle of the war at Yorktown.

Prudence Cummings Wright, like Nancy Hart, was truly warlike in nature. She organized a group of women in her community—thirty to forty strong—who called



*Old Fort volunteer Kip Lytle shared the story “Sybil Ludington’s Midnight Ride” by Marsha Amstel in 2020 for our local PBS weekly Facebook event called “Fort Wayne Celebrities Read to Kids!”*

*Continued next page*

themselves the “Minutewomen.” After the men of the town had gone off to war, these women donned men’s clothing and stationed themselves at a strategic point called Jewett’s Bridge. There, they successfully defended the area against a group of Loyalists, capturing several of them. The prisoners were handed over to the Patriot militia, and afterward, the women returned quietly to their daily lives.

These patriots deserve to be remembered just as much—if not more—than their more well-known counterparts. The Revolution was a time of monumental change, and these women not only helped shape the world they lived in, but also took responsibility for defending it.

### Learn more!

"Nancy Hart." *American Battlefield Trust*. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/nancy-hart>

"Nancy Hart." *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/nancy-hart-ca-1735-1830/georgiaencyclopedia.org>

"Sybil Ludington." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sybil-Ludingtonbritannica.com+1britannica.com+1>

"Sybil Ludington." *American Battlefield Trust*. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/sybil-ludington>

"Deborah Sampson." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Deborah-Sampsonbritannica.com+1britannica.com+1>

"Deborah Sampson: American Revolutionary War Hero." *Massachusetts Government Website*. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/deborah-sampson-american-revolutionary-war-heromass.gov>

"Prudence Cummings Wright." *American Battlefield Trust*. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/prudence-wright>



*Joshua Grubaugh is a frequent demonstrator at Historic Fort Wayne. He grew up in the area and has bachelor degrees in education, history, and anthropology. He loves to do demonstrations including cooking and pewter casting.*

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## The Old Fort Palisade

Fall 2025  
Published quarterly

Kathleen O'Connell  
Editor

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# SUMMER AT THE OLD FORT



Student Tours



Be a Tourist  
In your own  
Hometown



Parks and Recreation  
"Fun in the Fort"  
PODS camp!

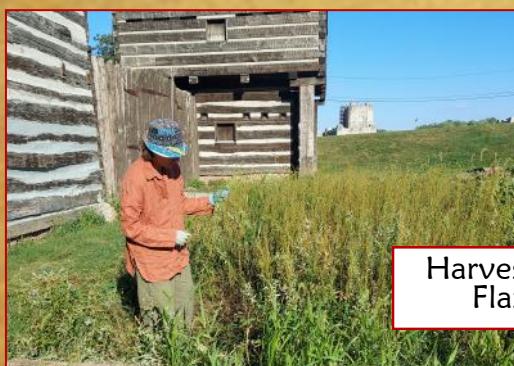
STEAM Park at  
Taste of the Arts



Civil Air  
Patrol Tour



Napoleonic  
Days



Harvesting  
Flax

# Reconstruction Update

Tom Grant

**Phase 2—Doctor's Quarters:** Having completed the exterior spraying and chinking, efforts were next focused on the interior. Electrical service to the building required pulling 135 feet of wire, four separate cables, through 50 year old conduit buried beneath the parade ground. The building has functioning electrical service with only the selection and installation of stairway lighting fixtures as per the original 1976 construction. Upon completion of the wiring, the interior was "white washed" in keeping with what was standard practice for period log structures.

**Phase 3 - Commander's Building:** Upon completion of the shell of the building, volunteers proceeded to apply the preservative spray and chink the majority of the building, leaving a small portion on the upper east side undone due to lack of materials. The interior was recently "white washed" and furnishings restored to their appropriate positions. Electrical work is scheduled to begin shortly.

**Phase 4 - Junior Officers' Building:** Momentum and esprit de corps being so important, especially in a 100% volunteer organization, it was decided to move ahead with the demolition and reconstruction in spite of this phase not yet being fully funded! The timber package is currently being processed with delivery expected late September. Demolition is anticipated to begin shortly with volunteer participation

required to remove remaining furnishings and the stripping of shutters, doors and other reusable materials. This phase is complicated by two unique items: the plumbing for restrooms on both the first and second floors and a faux chimney above the areas containing the restrooms. This massive masonry faux chimney is supported by a steel super structure which will be removed. The plan is to replace this masonry chimney with a structure mimicking the other two yet constructed of a wooden framework faced with a faux brick veneer, thus eliminating the need for the steel support structure and at an enormous cost savings.

"Fortune Favors the Bold" so we are proceeding to complete Phase 4 in spite of it not being fully funded. You can help us 'Keep the Fort in Fort Wayne' by donating at <https://oldfortwayne.org/get-involved/donate/>.



*The Commander's Kitchen was whitewashed and back in use for Be A Tourist In Your Own Hometown*

# Fun and Games

Natalie Stark

“Idle hands are the devil’s workshop”, “Video games will rot your brains”. Over the years, there have certainly been many things said concerning boredom. Whether one agrees that it is good or troublesome, humans have a gift for filling empty time with all sorts of things other than work. Games have existed in many forms since the start of civilization, and they are as essential to who we are as the clothes we wear or the food we eat. While it may be impossible to cover all the games from the last several millennia at the Old Fort, we do have quite a selection.



*Old Fort Visitor playing Graces*

Perhaps one of the most famous children's games of the colonial era was Graces, specifically designed for girls. Through a modern lens, fashion from the 18th and 19th centuries often seems restrictive, with multiple petticoats, stays, and bonnets, but that did not stop children from playing. Graces is a game of catch where a hoop takes the place of a ball, and one catches with two long sticks. Instead of throwing the hoops with their hands, children place the hoop on the sticks, cross, and then quickly uncross them, which sends the hoop flying to the other player. It is designed with skirts in mind because the sticks make it easy to catch the hoop and pick it up off the ground without bending over completely. Graces was an “acceptable” game for young ladies as it promoted gracefulness and refinement.

Although our most frequent visitors are children, who are fascinated by the mini cooking sets or wooden toys, a handful of our more well-known games were historically for adults. Any games that involved cards or dice, so most games of chance, were for adults because they

could be bet on. The more one looks into colonial pastimes, the more one realizes how many things were gambled upon. For instance, one of our games is nine-pin, which is similar to bowling, most people recognize. There are nine pins set up in a diamond shape, and the player has three chances to knock down all the pins for nine points or all but the center for twelve. In fact, nine-pin is the predecessor to modern-day bowling, which has ten pins, and came about as a loophole because nine-pin was outlawed due to excessive gambling.



*Old Fort Visitor playing Nine-pin*

One of the soldiers' games we have is called Nine Men's Morris, and like most things about military life, it was designed to be simple and transportable. Much like tic-tac-toe, it does not have a set playing board and is instead a pattern that can be drawn anywhere. The game uses nine black stones and nine white stones, and the players take turns placing their stones until they have all been placed. They then try to form three in a row, not including diagonal placements, by sliding their color stones along the dots. When someone gets three in a row, which can be done while they are placing or sliding the stones, they can take one of their opponent's stones off. The first person down to two stones loses the game. However, to make the game slightly

more interesting, when someone gets down to three pieces, they can pick their stone up on their turn and put it on any open dot instead of sliding it. Unlike tic-tac-toe, this game is guaranteed not to end in a tie.

Nine Men's Morris originated in Egypt around 1400 BC, with the diagram being found carved in an Egyptian temple. It's not known exactly when the game made its way into English culture, but it was widely played in the Middle Ages along with its variations: Three, Six, and Twelve Men's Morris. We know for sure that the settlers in America would have played this game, as one of the two surviving crates from the Boston Tea Party has Twelve Men's Morris carved into the bottom of it! Twelve Men's Morris is the same game as Nine Men's Morris except with additional lines connecting the dots diagonally as well.



Given that most of the settlers were English or French, one might think that the games we have are of European descent, but that is not always the case. While Nine Men's Morris may seem fairly old, there are two games significantly older than that which we display. The Royal Game of Ur was a board game from ancient Mesopotamia and was believed to have been played in the third millennium BC. The British Museum holds one of the boards, and it is dated between 2600-2400 BC, making it one of the oldest games in the world. However, this game was largely forgotten well before the Middle Ages, possibly being eclipsed by the rise of backgammon, and remained that way for several centuries until its rediscovery in the 20th century.

Another game that has withstood the test of time is Mancala. Mancala may have been invented in 6000 BC in Jordan, but there is no solid evidence of it until 700 AD in East Africa. As with any game, there are many variations of Mancala depending on which part of Africa one looks at. The popular version today has two rows, but historically, there could also be games with three or four rows. Mancala was brought to the United States during the Atlantic Slave Trade and would have been played mainly among the enslaved population.

We also have replica dice and playing cards from the 1700s, and while dice are not technically a game, they predate any other game by a couple of millennia, with the oldest

known cubic dice being from 2400 BC. Before that, people used animal knuckle bones (Astragals), hence the expression "roll the bones", with bone dice from Scotland dated 3100-2600 BC. Throughout history, dice have been made of wood, ivory, and bone, and also some less common materials like bronze, agate, onyx, jet, alabaster, marble, amber, and porcelain.



*The Children's Tent offers visitors of all ages an opportunity to try these games.*

The standard 52-card playing deck originated in the sixteenth century in France, and it has changed little from the card decks we know and love today. There are, however, a couple of notable

differences that make the playing experience challenging. The cards are not waxed, which is a small but impactful difference, meaning they stick together a lot more frequently. Additionally, there are no designs printed on the card backs, which makes them see-through from certain angles. Lastly, there are no numbers, or for the face cards, letters, printed in the corners, meaning one cannot fan the cards because one needs to be able to see the whole card to figure out its value. When numbers were placed on the cards in the mid-18th century, the knave got renamed to the jack for fear of players mixing up the K for king and the K for knave. Poker would not have been readily played in colonial America. Rather, the popular game at the time was Whist, which is a trick-taking game similar to Bridge or Euchre. My personal favorite is Cribbage, an English game invented in the 1600s, known for its intricate scorekeeping boards.

**Natalie Stark** is a freshman at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, where she is studying Economics and is on the dive team. She's been volunteering at the Old Fort for 8 years, and is often found staffing the Children's Tent. In her free time, she enjoys sewing and baking, hobbies that have definitely come in handy during her time volunteering.



## New in the Old Fort Gift Store

Own a piece of the original reproduction Fort. You can help support our renovation of the Old Fort for its 50th anniversary, and keep a piece of its history for yourself. Cut from original floorboards in the Commander's Quarters, these commemorative oak blocks are available for \$25.

## 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,

### 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.



## Volunteer Advance

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

Cooks, weavers, spinners, and tour guides seldom get the opportunity to fire a flintlock musket. Volunteer Advance provides new volunteer orientation, VIP tours, and opportunities to learn historic hand arts. For those who have never fired a musket, now's your chance. If you are not a volunteer, follow the link at the end and sign up today.

**October 11 and 12:** The Manual of Arms - Learning basic training essential for a soldier reenactor and the feeding and care of a flintlock musket are the order of the day. Safety, safety, safety! Fourteen steps from "Handle Cartridge" to "Fire!" and "Recover". The full training for new recruits involves fourteen steps to safely load and fire the musket. The final steps are equally important, cleaning the musket. One of the routine fatigues of the soldiers of the garrison was rolling cartridges. This, too, is a skill to be practiced and has, you will learn, practical applications for the twenty-first century as well.

**November 8 and 9:** Music, Games, Letters, and Quills – While studying the original Orderly Book Fort Wayne 1810 to 1813 and noticing how differently the handwriting appeared, I was puzzled. It was then that someone explained that the commander who signed the page had orderlies who took down dictation, not all of whom were equally skilled. You can see for yourself if you come for the November session. Making and maintaining a quill pen was the equivalent of keeping your smart phone, tablet pc, or laptop charged and optimized. I prefer to order turkey feathers from a familiar online provider of goods from rare to ordinary. Occasionally I pick up goose flight feathers there on the grounds of the Fort and no geese were harmed in the procuring of these feathers. Disinfected and cleaned properly they make fine quills. Games popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have a place in living history including Nine Men's Morris and those who attend can make a version of the game they can keep. Playing Farkle or Whist can while away the hours more enjoyably than scrolling YouTube shorts.



**December** is such a busy month so we will not meet until January of 2026. In the new year we are returning to meeting Saturdays only. Watch the Historic Fort Wayne's Facebook pages for information regarding Volunteer Advance. Your comments and suggestions will be welcomed as is your involvement and support of programs and events Historic Fort Wayne.

Follow the link to sign up to volunteer at Historic Fort Wayne. Volunteers help in so many ways, enjoy living history, help us keep the Fort in Fort Wayne.

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

Thank you  
Bob Jones  
Event Manager and Co-Volunteer Manager

## Volunteer Profile: Derrick Zecca

Meet Derrick. He began volunteering at the Old Fort in 2017. At that point, he was too young to fire a musket for safety reasons, so he was put to work as a drummer. In fact, one of his favorite Fort memories is the drum drills in the Blockhouse.

Now that he's older, he focuses on reenacting the 1812/1816 time period, and is a regular part of the Fort guard. He enjoys his role as an Historical Interpreter. He especially appreciates the opportunity to learn about history, including the diversity of the original Fort, and sharing what he has learned with our visitors.

Derrick lives in Columbia City with his parents and younger brother. He is a student at Ivy Tech studying Industrial Engineering. He has one more year there until he completes his Associate's degree, and then he'll be moving to Purdue Fort Wayne to work on his Bachelor's degree.



When he's not at the Fort, Derrick is an avid Lego enthusiast. In fact, at the 2024 Napoleonic Days event, one of Derrick's Lego creations depicting a period battle was on display, to the delight of many of our visitors.

We asked Derrick "what would help us know you better. He says, "I like to joke around a lot, and I like to dress up in very warm wool and sweat outside a lot!" Sounds like a perfect fit for the Old Fort. Next time you're visiting us, be sure to say hi to Derrick!



# 2026 Schedule

- Jan. 24-25: Nouvelle Annee
- Feb. 28-Mar. 1: Rev. War Garrison
- May 8: Education Day at the Fort
- May 9-10: Muster on the St. Mary's
- June TBD: Siege of Ft Wayne 1812
- July 4: US 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration
- Sept. 6: Be a Tourist in Your Hometown
- Oct. 17: Fright Night Lantern Tours
- Oct. 24-25: Wayne's Legion Garrison
- Dec. 5: Christmas at the Fort

Additional event dates may still  
be announced



[OldFortWayne.org](http://OldFortWayne.org)

## 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  
Winter Palisade will be  
December 1, 2025