

THE OLD FORT PALISADE

FALL 2026



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Greetings!

Early on May 27, 2014, I got a phone call from Tom Grant. Our blacksmith/wood shop was burning—talk about a gut punch! To be honest, it really wasn't laid out very well for either trade but it filled a need. What were we going to do?

Tom started organizing a rebuild, and a crew was put together to tear the old

structure down after salvaging as much as we could. Plans were drawn up, a contractor was found, timber was sourced, financing was acquired, and the rebuild was started.

Colonial Williamsburg was contacted because their blacksmith shop had just been rebuilt, and advice was sought on the construction of a new forge. They replied by sending us the blueprints of their new forges! Not only that, but they sent a full scale blueprint and twyre (nozzle) back with Tom after a visit. Today there are six of these forges in existence; five are at Colonial Williamsburg and we have #6.

Last weekend was the *Be a Tourist in Your Own Home Town* event and the shops were full. As I operated the forge I could hear the spinners and weavers next door talking to people and Kip our woodwright, with

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his apprentice Jaden, working on projects on the other side of my shop. When I took a break, there were the tinsmiths creating beautiful useful items and answering questions from the public.

I had to think about how it's been 13 years since we dedicated the new workshops and how we're able to bring these trades to life for all our visitors. The fire was hard to take but the result has been amazing.

Norm Gable
President Historic Fort Wayne Inc.

Mayoral Proclamation

As part of our 250th Celebration/50th Anniversary Celebration of Historic Fort Wayne on Saturday, July 4, Mayor Sharon Tucker officially proclaimed the day "Historic Fort Wayne Day". Thank you, Mayor Tucker, for joining us for this historic celebration, and helping to make the day even more special!



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. 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
Winter Palisade will be
December 1, 2026

Repairing a Musket

Josh Grubagh

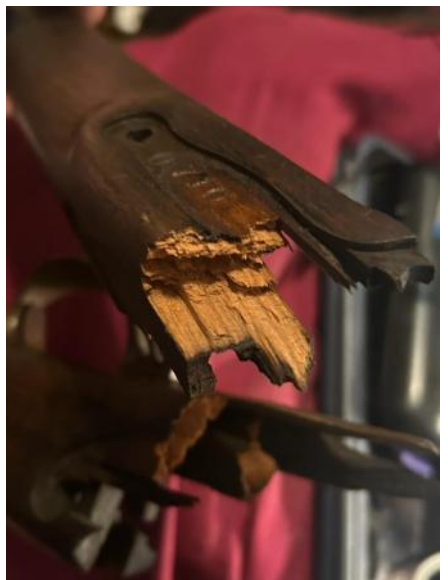
Sometimes we have to reenact events we would rather not experience, and in doing so, we gain a closer connection to history. Recently, one of the Fort's muskets was damaged during a reenactment and was only recently returned to us rusty and, unfortunately, cracked. When I first received the musket, the crack was visible, but I initially thought it might be minor and not severe enough to split the stock in half. My optimistic assumption was shattered as I disassembled the musket into its individual components and slowly pulled the pieces apart.

The stock had separated at the lock cavity and again near the end of the barrel. This area is particularly weak in muskets due to the limited amount of wood remaining to hold the stock together. The damage also presented a challenge that armorers have faced for centuries: how do you repair a cracked stock so that it remains strong and does not separate again later?

One fortunate aspect of this repair was that the stock had only recently broken. Some of you may wonder why I consider this fortunate, but it is simply because the break had not yet been contaminated by old glues, oils, or previous repair attempts. This meant that the stock could be returned to service with a much greater chance of success. We obviously do not have spare musket stocks readily available, so we must make do with the materials and resources at hand.

Traditionally, a repair of this nature would have been accomplished with pins and hide glue. In more desperate circumstances, the damaged area might have been reinforced with a copper cladding to provide additional strength. Some armorers would have removed the entire damaged section from the bottom of the stock and replaced it with a newly fitted piece of wood.

You can occasionally see these artfully executed repairs in old military stocks. However, neither a supply of walnut nor the time required for such a repair was available to me, so I chose a more modern approach than what would have been performed by gunsmiths of the past. I elected to use brass pins to reinforce the repair. Initially, I intended to install two pins longitudinally through the stock, both to provide additional rigidity and to increase the surface area available for the adhesive to bond. To accomplish this, I drilled matching holes



in both portions of the stock, slightly larger than the brass pins, and carefully aligned them. After installing the first pin, however, I could not find another suitable location for a second, so this repair would have to rely on a single reinforcing pin.

Using epoxy, which is far stronger than the hide glue traditionally used, I secured the stock halves together and applied a 30-pound weight to maintain constant pressure throughout the curing process. Once the main repair had set, the original crack was further reinforced with two short brass pins and additional epoxy. Finally, I noticed a hairline crack extending from the tang screw. Following the crack to its endpoint, I drilled a small stop hole to relieve the stress and prevent the crack from spreading further. This area was also filled with epoxy after drilling.

The metal components were rusty and in poor condition, requiring what amounted to a complete arsenal rebuild. This involved polishing all of the metal back to an armory-bright finish before reassembling the musket and applying a generous coat of bore butter to help preserve and protect the metal surfaces.

The end result is a musket that should provide several more years of service here at the Fort. Remember that this musket is already over fifty years old and it bears the evidence of such service. Every artifact that you see at the Fort has a story and this time, you know the story behind this old musket. Its history is not necessarily one written in words, but in the actual material that is made of and how it has been handled through the years.



Frigh Night Lantern Tours

Saturday, Oct. 17 6 pm – 10 pm

Tour the Old Fort at night! You will be guided by a historic interpreter who will present the Old Fort as it was in the early 1800s. Hear tales of encounters with the ill-fated Lieutenant Philip Ostrander, the Old Fort's resident ghost. Purchase a sweet treat from the bake sale and enjoy stories by the fire while you wait. If you would like to volunteer to help with this event, please message info@oldfortwayne.org.

Admission is \$5.00. Ages nine and under are free when accompanied by an adult.

Ticket sales begin at 5:30 p.m. and are available on a first come, first served basis. No tickets sold after 9:30 pm. All proceeds benefit the Old Fort.



Picture by Michelle Nichols

Fort Reconstruction: A Welcoming Hearth

During the demolition of the Junior Officers' Quarters and the Barracks, all six of the second floor fireplace hearths were destroyed, leaving only protruding concrete remnants of the pads which supported the bricks which comprised the 18"x70" hearths. Reconstruction of the hearths was complicated by the new floor's elevation being approximately 6" lower than the fireplaces. The fireplaces in the Junior Officers' Quarters had steel rebar imbedded in the remaining 6" thick concrete, and in one case had 3/8" thick steel plates. Concrete needed to be removed to access the steel, allowing it to be cut back flush with the fireplace.



Removal of the remaining concrete protruding from the fireplaces required using a carbide tipped bit in a hammer drill to make 6" deep holes every 3/4" across the entire 70" width of the fireplace. Then a diamond tipped masonry saw was used to cut a line connecting the holes. The resulting concrete dust produced clouds so intense that the process had to be done in sections. Once the cuts were completed, a hammer and chisel were utilized to break portions of the 6" thick concrete sections loose from the fireplace. Next the diamond tipped saw was used to cut off the remaining concrete to provide a smooth edge to accommodate the new bricks.

Due to the disparity in the level of the floors to the fireplace, it was necessary to build up a solid base to support the brick of the new hearths. This was accomplished using 6"x8" timbers that were "cut offs" from the beams which support the second floor porches. Those timbers were attached to similar timbers which comprised the structure of the second floors, utilizing 12" lag bolts. A sheet of OSB (Oriented Strand Board) was installed covering the entire 18"x70" hearth which was then topped with a sheet of cement board. Both the OSB and the cement board were screwed to the supporting 6"x8" timbers. This provided a level surface which would accommodate the 4"x8"x11/2" bricks used to surface the hearth.

The bricks, using a construction adhesive, were applied in a pattern similar to what was done originally. After allowing the adhesive to set for 48 hours the bricks were grouted using a high strength industrial mortar. The resulting hearth was then framed with 2"x6" boards to finish off the appearance of the hearth.



You can help us "Keep the Fort in Fort Wayne" by sending a check to Historic Fort Wayne, Inc. P.O. Box 12650 Fort Wayne, IN 46864, or [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who has helped with this immense project!

Volunteer Advance

*Our Mission: To preserve and maintain the Old Fort
as a historical education center for the Northeast Indiana area.*



Historic Fort Wayne, Inc. operates and maintains the Old Fort complex on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department of Fort Wayne. Led by a Board of Directors, we do this with all volunteer effort. You can help Old Fort Wayne continue its mission of education and preservation. Volunteering offers you the opportunity to become active in the community, meet fascinating people, and help keep the Old Fort a beautiful and exciting place to visit.

There are volunteer opportunities to fit every interest and schedule! Work days are scheduled to help maintain the Fort buildings and gardens. New opportunities include our Speakers Bureau and Honor Guard. We can put you in touch with those who are responsible for various specialized departments. Call the Fort phone Monday through Friday, 10:00AM to 4:00PM and

talk about how you would like to be involved. Register your interests at our website: <https://oldfortwayne.org/get-involved/volunteer/>

Volunteer Advance is an effort to address building, maintaining, and equipping a force of volunteers who together help us keep the Fort in Fort Wayne. It meets most months with behind-the-scenes VIP Tours, and hands-on workshops.

Upcoming Volunteer Advance Calendar:

October 18, 2026 2-4 pm

Theme: Hearth Cooking, Baking, Soldier Rations and Garden Planning, Making Char Cloth and using flint and steel.

November 15, 2026 Time TBD

Help prepare the rooms of the Fort for Christmas at the Fort and make door decorations for Christmas.

December: No Volunteer Advance session. Attend Christmas at the Fort on December 5th. Volunteers needed!

January 17, 2027 2-4 pm

Research Day at Allen County Public Library Main Branch (900 Library Plaza). Review historic documents behind the history of early Fort Wayne. RSVP text *Count Me In* to the Fort Phone: (260) 437-2836.

Bob Jones,
Event Manager and Co-Volunteer Manager



From the Bake Sale

Christa Brothers

Not all volunteers at the Fort are reenactors. I'd like to give you an update on one of those other ways to get involved. Bob asked me to manage the Bake Sale, and I have management experience. I was trained in servant leadership, worked in management, and love organizing. I like hearing people's ideas and trying to put them together into cohesive plans. I've enjoyed being able to do that in the bake sale. Even more, I have loved seeing the passion for history, especially our local history, and the dedication in preserving the Fort for another generation.

The Bake Sale is one of those traditions. Many of our visitors plan on stopping by the bake sale at the modern building. We provide a friendly snack of individually wrapped homemade items as well as beverages. We have souvenirs for sale, such as t-shirts, maps, and mugs. We also have an area for reenactors, that is closed to the public, with beverages, shade, and fans as needed. We have ear protection available to borrow for those sensitive to loud noises. We even may have your lost and found item. All the funds raised through the Bake Sale help support the Old Fort.



If you have an interest in hospitality, sales, or baking, come help at the bake sale. It's the perfect place if you want to volunteer at the Old Fort, but not in reenacting or don't want to make a full weekend commitment. Even if you can't come on the weekends but want to contribute by baking cookies, your help is needed. If you are interested or have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to get in touch with me. Stop by the Bake Sale building during the next event, or message your contact info to info@oldfortwayne.org. It will be forwarded to me.

2026 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.

October 17

Fright Night Lantern Tours

Saturday: 6 pm – 10 pm

Tickets Required

Admission is \$5.00. Ages nine and under are free when accompanied by an adult.

October 24

Wayne's Legion Garrison

Saturday: 10:00 am – 5 pm

December 5

Christmas at the Old Fort

A Timeline Event

Saturday: 10:00 am – 5:00 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.

SUMMER AT THE OLD FORT



July 4th



Taste of the
Arts



Siege of
Fort Wayne



Community Color
Guard Events



Battle of Cowpens
Reenactment



Be A Tourist in Your
Own Hometown



Wampum Belts

Monty Martin



*Presentation to the Commander at
Nouvelle Annee 2026*

The construction of wampum belts developed over time. Prior to the use of shell beads, beads made from feather quills and pieces of wood that were dyed black and white were used. These earlier "beads" were not woven into what are now known as belts, but were strung in single strands on plant cordage or leather. Those single strands were then tied into a small bundle, if that's what was needed.

Prior to European contact, quahog and whelk shells, which are found on the east coast, were found to make very nice shell beads. The shell of the quahog was struck with a rock or piece of antler to break the shell into small pieces. The quahog had two different color variations inside

their shell—purple and white. Purple became the most sought after. I won't say "valuable", because, as research has shown, there was no monetary value to the shell beads among the Indigenous People, as the Europeans thought.

To help source the white beads, as only so many could be produced from the quahog, the inner column of whelk shells were also used. These beads were manufactured in the same way as the quahog beads, both purple and white. The shards of the shells were collected and smoothed down on a grinding stone to remove the majority of the rough edges. The shards were then drilled using a bow drill with a flint drill point to create a small cone-shaped hole in one end of the shard. Then the shard was turned over, and drilled in the other end. Eventually, the pointed ends of the cones met inside the shard and a piece of plant cordage or leather could pass through. At that point, multiple unfinished beads were strung together on the cordage or leather and passed over the grinding stone again, to finish smoothing their edges.

Even though there is documentation that the beads held monetary value, it was one-sided. Only the Europeans gave wampum beads any monetary value. To the Indigenous People, the value was more out of respect. If something made of wampum beads was given as a gift to someone, the receiver of that item found something of equal gift-giving value in exchange. Purple was still the most sought after color for beads.



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The Belts:

The belts aren't just things. They are documents. To put it simply, if an important agreement, like a treaty, wasn't agreed upon over a belt, or belts, then, the agreement didn't happen. That's how important these documents are. It's been said, historically, that wampum belts carry messages. Messages were embedded into the belts in the form of the images woven. When it is said, a belt is "read", it is metaphorically. A

leader of the village would decide what the message "in the belt" was to be, then, he and the women who wove the belts would work together to establish the best images for the message. Then, the leader would call upon the person who had what we call a "photographic" memory, and he would work with the individual reciting the message over and over, until the belt reader knew the message without waiver. He would then carry the belt to leaders of other villages, holding the belt and reciting or "reading" the belt, word for word. As he finished "reading" one side of the belt, he would turn it over, and "read" the other side. Along with message conveyance, it is also documented that, if a foreign leader, whether European or leaders from a different village or Indian Nation, approached a village, someone needed to carry a belt or strings high so they were visible. No foreign emissary set foot in a village without presenting wampum. The leaders of the village being approached would ignore anyone who wasn't presenting wampum.



This is the Dish with One Spoon. It is a unifying belt, signified by the all white background. The "dish" in the middle represents a soup or stew that is eaten by members of various Nations, and using only one spoon. The message is they can come to this particular area to hunt. No one takes more than their share, and leaves plenty of game and other foods for the next person.



The Hodinoshoni and the Delaware were the predominant users and weavers of wampum belts. However, I was able to document their use in this area, which is why we are able to incorporate wampum strings or belts into our living history programs this far west. In Hodinoshoni language, the belts are called gas'wen:tha, which means, to lay something down. In Myaamiataweenki/Miami language, it's kilahkwaakani or kilahkwaakana, singular and plural, belt and belts.

Wampum belts and strings were, and still are, a living document that many Indigenous People highly regard and respect. Even though the messages within the belts are lost, with no readers to recite the messages, the symbolism is still very strong. That is why I've dug into researching wampum belts and strings, and began weaving them. I've told our

Indian Camp, "If anyone coming to our village is not carrying a belt, or even "just" strings, they do not set foot inside our village. No exceptions. If they want something from us, they had better have wampum when asking. Period."



Volunteer Profile:

Meet John Pryke

The Siege of Fort Wayne on June 10th, 2023, was my first encounter with the Fort. I witnessed this exciting event and I was instantly drawn to participate. From then I geared up and engaged with training at the Fort under Cory Balkenbush. My first official event as a participant was the 1812 Officer & NCO training garrison February 17th, 2024. Quite frankly, I came for the history and cannons/muskets but I stayed for all the wonderful people I've met!

I usually portray the 1st/3rd U.S. infantry regiment during and around the time of the war of 1812 as a garrison member of the Fort. I participate in any of the War of 1812 events that the Fort puts on, as well as I travel to other 1812 events to represent our Fort. I also reenact the United States Civil War. Both portrayals are fun and I do not favor one time period over the other.

I have lived in the Fort Wayne area since January 6th, 2022. I am originally from South Bend, Indiana. I have 5 brothers and 2 sisters and many nieces and nephews. On my father's side, my grandfather participated in World War II for the British Royal Air Force and my grandmother made munitions for the war effort as a citizen of Ireland. They married and emigrated to the state of Indiana shortly after the war. On my mother's side, her family emigrated from Germany to the US around the 1820's and settled in the Pennsylvania and Michigan area. I have many relatives who participated in the United States Civil War, in the 10th Michigan Volunteers and other units.

I am currently a software engineer. I engineer websites. I graduated from Indiana State University at South Bend with a degree in computer science. I am the owner of two wonderful dogs, Romulus and Remus. They are border collie/Australian shepherd mix. They are brothers that are four years of age. Honestly, I have more hobbies than time. I like to do woodworking, metal work, 3-D printing, playing with digital electronics, learn more about history etc. My number one interest in life is to live a life that is pleasing to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



You can find us on Facebook for
up-to-date event news and happenings!
www.facebook.com/HistoricFortWayne

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

We are now also on Bluesky:
[@historicfortwayne.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/historicfortwayne.bsky.social)

2027 Schedule

Jan.23-24: Nouvelle Annee*

Feb.6-7: 1812 Officers & NCO

Training Garrison*

Feb.27-28: Rev. War Garrison*

Mar.20-21: Napoleonic War Garrison*

April 3-4: Civil War Garrison*

May 14: Education Day at the Fort

May 15-16: Muster on the St. Mary's

June 19-20: Siege of Ft. Wayne 1812

Sept.12: Be a Tourist in Your Own

Hometown

Oct.16: Fright Night Lantern Tours

Oct.23-24: Wayne's Legion Garrison*

Dec.4: Christmas at the Fort

*Garrison weekends are open to the public
on Saturdays only

OldFortWayne.org

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