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Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project Annual Report, 2012-2013

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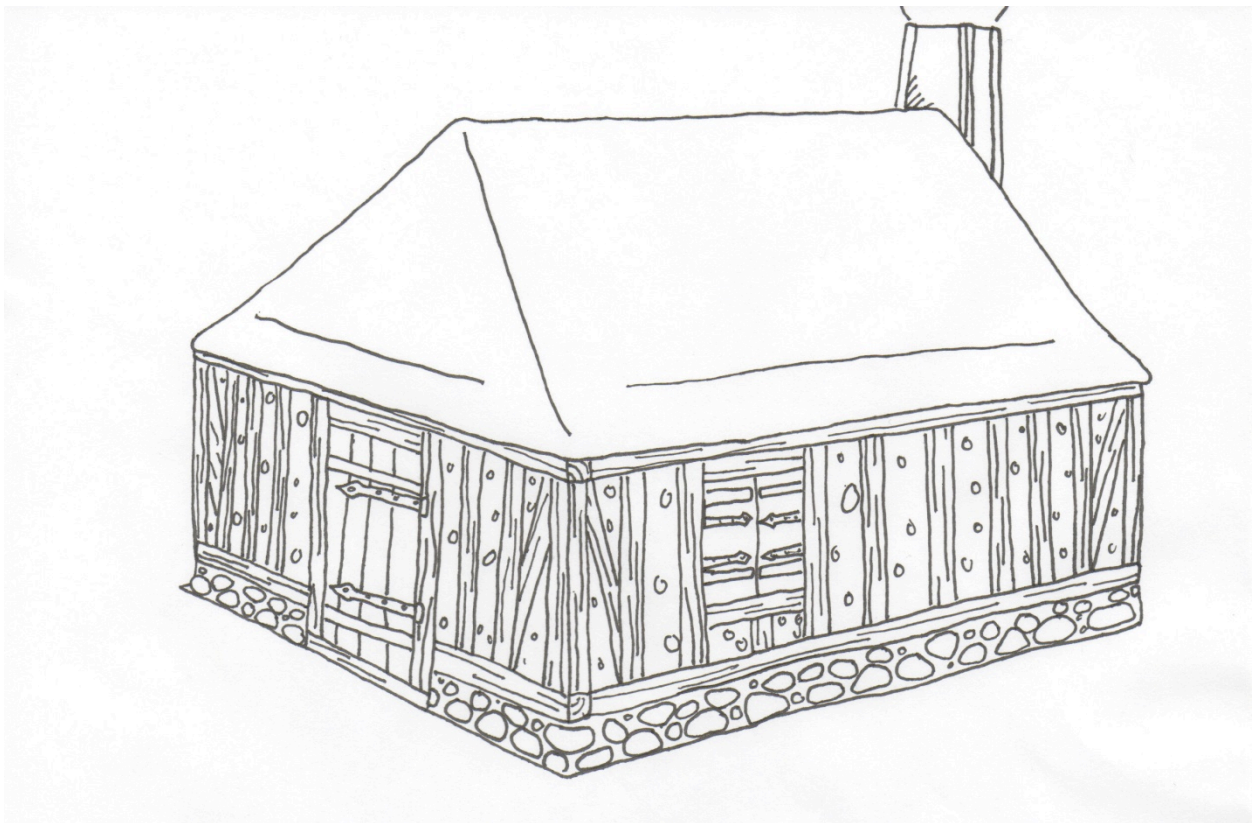


Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project Annual Report, 2012-2013

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December 4, 2013



An artist's conception of what House 2 may have looked like at Fort St. Joseph based on archaeological evidence recovered during the 2013 field season. Drawing by John Cardinal.

Introduction

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project (hereafter the “Project”) continued to maintain its high standards in research, teaching, and public outreach in the examination of the fur trade and colonialism in southwest Michigan under the auspices of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee. Over the past year (September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013) Western Michigan University (WMU) students and faculty, along with interested stakeholders and community volunteers, collaborated in both the archaeological investigation of Fort St. Joseph as well as the dissemination of information to an expanding audience. The highlights of the past year include:

- The newly released DVD, “Militia Muster,” was given the 2013 Golden Aurora Award for excellence in Social Studies-related educational films.
- Our highly successful blog was updated throughout the academic year and field season. It has reached nearly 25,000 views since its inception in 2011 (<http://fortstjosepharchaeology.blogspot.com/>).
- Among the many interesting and unique artifacts uncovered was a hewn beam found in relation to House 2. Further exploration of this building will provide clues to the identity of its occupants.
- The 2013 summer camps provided a hands-on archaeology experience for 23 participants of all different ages and backgrounds.
- The 2013 Open House hosted over 1,500 visitors to experience and learn more about daily life, archaeology, and the theme of “Foodways” at the Fort.
- The fifth annual summer archaeology lecture series was held in cooperation with the Niles District Library and Niles Senior Center and featured prominent speakers who discussed history and archaeology relevant to Fort St. Joseph and the fur trade.
- John LaMore was named the winner of the third annual Volunteer of the Year Award for his service to the Project.
- The fourth annual issue of the *Fort St. Joseph Post* newsletter was distributed.
- A film crew visited the site to collect footage for a new PBS series titled *America: From the Ground Up!*
- Living history members of the Project team participated in the New France Festival in Quebec City, Canada, showcasing frontier life at Fort St. Joseph to hundreds of international visitors.

The Project benefits from the generous support of various partners, sponsors, and donors who contribute time and resources to further our goals. Particularly noteworthy are the efforts of WMU faculty, administrators, staff, and students; City of Niles public officials; the Fort St. Joseph Museum; members of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee (FSJAAC), which is responsible for recommending and promoting the course of action for site development; and countless other supporters who assist us in realizing our mission.

This report describes the 2012-2013 activities of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, a collaborative research and service-learning partnership between Western Michigan University, the City of Niles, and various community partners. (See Appendix A for a list of our sponsors and supporters and Appendix B for a list of Project outcomes).

Project Activities and Personnel

In 2013 we began the 11th field season of excavations and interpretations at arguably one of the most important eighteenth-century French trading posts in the western Great Lakes region—Fort St. Joseph. In conjunction with Western Michigan University's 38th annual archaeological field school, over 50 students and summer campers expanded previous excavations in order to locate architectural remains that would help to ascertain the size, orientation, construction methods, and contents of the buildings associated with a series of fireplaces situated along the Fort St. Joseph River. Members of the field school included 16 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled for academic credit, 23 campers, and 5 staff members in paid positions under the direction of Dr. Michael Nassaney, Principal Investigator. Staff members in paid positions include: Skylar Bauer, teaching assistant; Michelle Letang, public outreach coordinator and house manager; Tim Bober, public education coordinator; Alexander Brand, site logistics and laboratory coordinator; James Dunnigan, field intern; and Katelyn Hillmeyer, intern photographer.

Public outreach has always been the cornerstone of the Project and is executed in a variety of forms. The annual open house attracted over 1,500 visitors to the site, while the 5th annual summer public lecture series attracted its largest audience yet with an average of 75 people at each lecture. The annual summer camps allowed 23 participants the opportunity to become archaeologists for a week, and our booth at French Market provided regular updates on excavations and events to the public. Our blog was regularly maintained and provided reports on a variety of activities related to the project, including discussions of findings from the field.

Field Investigations

Fieldwork was conducted in July and August under the auspices of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project. Excavations began at the Lynn site (20BE10) on the terrace above the fort. A total of six 1x1 m excavation units were placed adjacent to the river in a location that previously yielded 18th-century archaeological materials contemporaneous with occupation at the Fort. As with the rest of the terrace, this area was plowed in the 19th century, resulting in mixed deposits of significant quantities of archaeological materials representing ancient, colonial, and modern activities. Materials of interest include low-fired Native American earthenware (pottery), lithic debitage, lead shot, and fire-cracked rock.

With our 5-year permit approved by the DEQ last season, the dewatering system was up and running the first week of our arrival in Niles to allow investigations in the floodplain. The goals were to determine the southern and western boundaries of the site and expand excavations in the vicinity of previously identified architectural features to ascertain the size, orientation, construction methods, and contents of the buildings situated along the Fort St. Joseph River. A total of eight excavation units (five 1x2 m units and three 1x1 m units) in three loci were selected for further work. All but the three 1x1 m units were excavated down to undisturbed 18th century deposits. The 1x1 m test units were closed prior to completion due to time constraints.

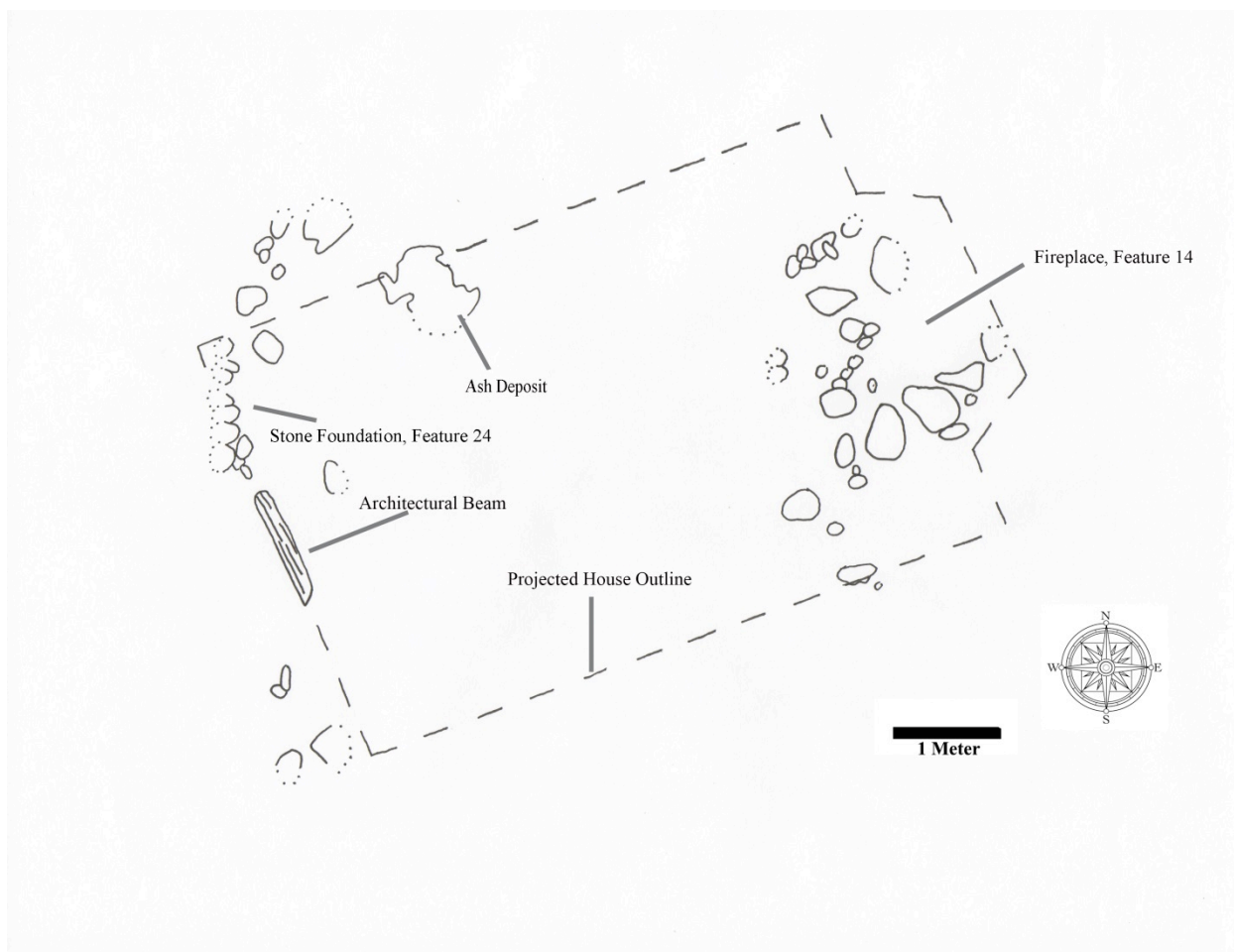


Figure 1. Hypothesized size, orientation, and outline of House 2 based on archaeological excavations conducted in 2013. Drawing by John Cardinal.

Several features were investigated or newly defined during the 2013 field season, in association with a variety of artifacts of interest. Feature 22, which was first identified as a large pit feature in a 1 x 2 m unit in 2011, was explored further in an adjacent unit to determine its size. Feature 24 was newly identified as a stone foundation with mortar, that likely supported a wall associated with House 2 (see Figure 1). A hewn wooden architectural element aligned with Feature 24 also appears to be associated with the house and may be an 18th-century doorsill marking the entry point to the building opposite the fireplace. An area of oxidized soil and ash that is commonly associated with burning activities where sediments were altered due to exposure to high temperatures was noted in another loci and designated Feature 25. Although no large structural stone were found suggesting the presence of a hearth, this feature may have served as a specialized area of production during the 18th century.

Artifacts of interest recovered from this field season include a glass “raspberry” bead; a “S”-link chain (identical to one recovered from Fort Michilimackinac); rosary beads; a possible bone gaming piece with red pigment; a chert stone drill; Micmac smoking pipe fragments; a lead cloth seal with a crest; and a variety of flintlock gun parts, including an ornate serpentine side plate.

In addition to excavations, Alexander Brand and a community volunteer devised a new method of testing the southwestern boundary of the site. A soil corer was designed and utilized to dig a total of 14 shovel test pits extending from the west boundary of the dewatering system to approximately 100 m from the terrace. The results suggest that the deposits in the floodplain extend an additional 50 m southwest of the current excavation area, with 18th-century cultural materials found at a depth of 30-70 cm below the surface. This significantly expands the area of interest and demonstrates that there is still considerable work needed to examine this area of the site.

Public Education and Outreach

The Project continued to engage the public with education and outreach opportunities. Our membership program has reached 100 Fort Followers who receive special benefits including access to publications and regular updates on Project activities and events. The fourth issue of our newsletter, the *Fort St. Joseph Post*, was compiled and edited by Alexander Brand who served as the 2012-2013 Fort St. Joseph Museum intern. The newsletter provides a variety of updates on Project activities and was released digitally in order to disseminate the information as widely as possible. We continued to update our website (<http://www.wmich.edu/fortstjoseph>), Facebook page, and blog to keep visitors informed of current developments. Weekly posts continued on the blog after the conclusion of the field season to report on lab findings, conferences, and outreach events attended by team members.

Our annual summer camp training program is coordinated through the Fort St. Joseph Museum under the directorship of Carol Bainbridge. The camps continue to attract middle school students, teachers, and lifelong learners who are interested in archaeology and the preservation of the past. Under the direction of public education coordinator, Tim Bober, 23 students learned how to excavate properly, take field notes, and identify artifacts. Several local volunteers and members of Support the Fort (STF) also provided assistance during the field season in a variety of ways. The Fort St. Joseph Museum also provided programs to 348 students and teachers on the history of Fort St. Joseph and the fur trade.

A number of organizations and individuals provided meals for the field school members including Barb Cook, Stephanie Layman, Margaret and Mary Ellen Drolet, Janine Frizzo-Horrigan, the Kiwanis Club, Martha Wilczynski (Lavender Hill), Daughters of the American Revolution, the Fort St. Joseph Historical Association, Dorilee Schieble, and the Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce. These community events enhance the program and our partnerships providing an opportunity to strengthen relationships, facilitate information exchange, and create friendships and lasting bonds.

In 2013 the Project held its fifth annual summer archaeology lecture series at the Niles District Library and the Niles Senior Center. The series highlighted topics related to the colonial history and archaeology of the region and featured presentations by Dr. Keith Widder (author of *Beyond Pontiac's Shadow*), Dr. Ben Secunda (NAGPRA Project Manager, University of Michigan); Joseph Hearn (WMU graduate student); and Dr. Michael Nassaney and Bob Myers (Berrien County History Center). The presentations were so well attended that we were forced to move to a larger space. All the lectures were very well received and evoked lively discussions.

The 2013 Open House examined the theme of “Foodways” over the weekend of August 10-11. Michelle Letang, a WMU student in anthropology, served as our open house coordinator. Media day (August 8) alerted local newspapers and television stations of the upcoming event and served as a venue for special greetings, announcements, and community speakers. The event featured a welcome and introduction by Dr. Michael Nassaney, Principal Investigator; Michael McCauslin, Mayor of Niles; Dr. José A. Brandão, Chair, Department of History, WMU; Dr. Alex Enyedi: Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, WMU; Dr. John Dunn, President, WMU; and Robert Myers, President of the Historical Society of Michigan. Seth Allard, a student of the Fort St. Joseph Field School, shared his experiences during the field season. Candace Myers discussed living history and its contribution to the project. Dr. Nassaney presented the Volunteer of the Year Award to John Lamore and began the ribbon cutting to open the site to the public.

In addition to these events, the Open House included a local book dealer, children’s crafts, period food, descendants of fort occupants, and re-enactors. Participants at the Open House included Larry Horrigan (a voyageur who prepared a beaver tail for consumption), Jeff Pavlik (baker), Janine Frizzo- Horrigan (Tea Tent food vendor), Noel Bash and her ensemble of colonial dancers, Daughters of the American Revolution, Support the Fort, and Dr. Terry Martin (Project zooarchaeologist). Presentations at the Open House included Dr. Terry Martin, “Fort St. Joseph Foodways” and “Animals at Fort St. Joseph;” Terry Sorchy, “Person of the Past;” Dr. Nassaney, “Fort St. Joseph Archaeology,” “The Discovery of Fort St. Joseph,” and “The Future of Fort St. Joseph;” Noel Bash, “Dance in the 18th-Century;” Jeff Pavilk, “An 18th-Century Baker;” and Alexander Brand “Experiences and Growth as a Participant of the Project.”

Over the past year, information about the Project was disseminated to both the public and scholarly audiences. The DVD “Militia Muster” was released free to the public through *YouTube*. Sponsored by the Michigan Humanities Council, the DVD highlights living history enthusiasts who demonstrated typical events that took place at Fort St. Joseph in 1775 on the eve of the American Revolution. Lectures on the history and archaeology of Fort St. Joseph were presented at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield (September), Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, Leicester, UK (January), the Canadian Roundtable, Western Michigan University (March), the National Center for Great Lakes Native American Culture, Portland, IN (April), the French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan, Mt. Clemens Public Library (April), The McNeil Center for Early American Culture, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (April), and the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Marquette (May). Two publications were also prepared that featured Fort St. Joseph: “North America During the European Contact Period” appeared in *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by C. Smith and J. Smith. Springer, NY (Nassaney 2013) and Nassaney submitted “The North American Fur Trade in Historical and Archaeological Perspective” to *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Archaeology*, edited by J. Symonds, Oxford University Press for review (2013). For further information on Project outcomes, see Appendix B.

Laboratory Analysis and Collections Management

Fort St. Joseph researchers stayed busy over the past year conducting analysis, organizing collections, and attending conferences and other public outreach opportunities. A complete list of

Project outcomes can be found in Appendix B. A total of 6 undergraduate students participated in laboratory analysis for academic credit. Five field seasons worth of soil samples were sorted in order to identify both cultural and organic materials from Fort St. Joseph. Students were trained under the direction of Dr. Michael Nassaney and Alexander Brand in the use of database management systems, collection management, labeling of artifacts, and the sorting and identification of artifacts recovered from previous field seasons. Several lab students are now employed in archaeological investigations across the country after completing their training under the Project. They will be featured in our newsletter this Spring, 2014.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

The Project has garnered local, regional, national, and international attention as a model for community service learning in archaeology and a collaborative partnership since it was initiated 15 years ago. Considerably more is now known about life on the frontier of New France and much of this information is being disseminated to the public. Over 100,000 objects have been recovered from the excavations adding to the curation crisis in archaeology in which artifact repositories are filling up. As the Project gains greater recognition, researchers are requesting opportunities to examine the collections. Space for artifact study is also needed, along with personnel to manage the collection, develop research priorities, and arrange artifact loans for exhibits and specialized analyses.

In order to meet the needs for space and personnel, the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee is advocating for a dedicated space for artifact storage, artifact study, and exhibits. A proposal was prepared and submitted to the City Council and on Media day the Council announced a willingness to work with the Committee to ensure adequate space is located and secured. Current efforts are underway to determine precisely what is needed and how the needs can be met. In addition, discussion is underway between WMU and Niles city officials on the possibility of a joint hire for a WMU staff archaeologist based in Niles. The responsibilities of the position would include, but not be limited to, conducting research on the history and archaeology of the fur trade and colonial relations in the western Great Lakes region; securing external support; and directing a vibrant public archaeology and community service learning program to enhance WMU's reputation nationally and internationally and showcase Niles's leadership in heritage preservation.

In an effort to arrive at best practices for the future investigation and interpretation of Fort St. Joseph, the Advisory Committee has endorsed the idea for a conference on "The Future of the Past at Fort St. Joseph, Niles, Michigan" to be held in Fall 2014. The purpose of the conference is to assemble a broad contingent of historic preservation and economic development experts to assess the progress of the Project, its potential to stimulate heritage tourism, and recommendations for future actions. Public input will be invited and we particularly hope that our members will attend and present their viewpoints.

APPENDIX A
Project Sponsors and Supporters, 2012-2013

Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee

Robert Ahrens, *Fort St. Joseph Historical Association*
 Carol Bainbridge, *Fort St. Joseph Museum*
 David Bainbridge, *Northern Indiana Center for History*
 Barbara Cook, *Niles Historian and Educator*
 Mary Ellen Drolet, *Support the Fort, Inc.*
 Juan Ganum, *Niles City Planner*
 Larry Horrigan, *Support the Fort, Inc.*
 John Lamore, *Berrien County*
 Michael Nassaney, *Western Michigan University*
 Candace Scalla, *Silverbrook*
 Dorilee Schieble, *Volunteer*
 Larry Sehy, *Fernwood Botanical Garden.*

Cash Donations

Lifetime Members (\$10,000+)

Anonymous
 City of Niles, MI
 Leighton-Oare Foundation
 Ms. Gale McCarty
 Michigan Humanities Council
 Michael & Nadine Nassaney
 The Peyser Family
 Western Michigan University

Commandant (\$500-\$9,999)

Anonymous
 Richard and Nona Barron
 Ms. Barbara Cook
 French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan
 General Society of Colonial Wars
 Neil Hasslinger
 Lowell Mason and Elizabeth Upjohn Mason
 Barbara Schwaderer and Craig McGire
 Support the Fort, Inc.

Explorer (\$250-499)

Dr. Sharon Lee Carlson & Mr. Thomas Dietz

Ms. Mary Ellen Drolet
Kiwanis Club of Niles

Voyageur (\$100-249)

Alliance Française de Kalamazoo
Dr. & Mrs. John Carter
Mary Ann Chellman
Mr. James T. Clark
Ms. Lisa Donaghe
David Ikerd
Mrs. Nancy Johnson
Denton Keith Kime
Dr. & Mrs. Terry Martin
Michael & Lucy McCauslin
Herb and Donna Ochenryder
Father David Otto
Susan Reichert
Lawrence Sehy
Marybeth Janei Smith
Society of Colonial Wars State of Michigan
Fred and Diane Williams

Friend (\$1-99)

Robert Ailes & Laura Van Valck-Ailes
Christine Ballard
Dean Barnum
Lesley Bookout
Karen Brininstool
Erin and Greg Claussen
Barbara Cornette & Stan Smeed
Robert and Stella Cottini
Neil Coulston
Denis Fortin
Mrs. Barbara J. Groner
Russell Holm
Partick Hudson and Gina Frasson-Hudson
Charles Louis Hurtubise, Jr.
Rachel Kaufman
James and Karen Newman
Mr. John Pugh
Mr. Ted Ream
Barbara Sherbino
Roni Sionakides
John Spenner

Douglas Stickney
James Teall
Mrs. Judy Truesdell
Theresa & Theodore Turnquist
Brian & Constance VandePolder
Alison Vollrath
Dale Wiars

Volunteers and Gifts

Candace Skalla
Tim Skalla
Dale Wiars
John Mittleburn
John Ripley
Carla Ripley
Larry Sehy
Emily Egan
Sue Armstong
Mike Armstrong
Joy Rolston
John Pugh
Gail McCarthy
Elizabeth Kerton
Cara Mosier
Lisa Frucci
Norman Guentert
Pat Guentert
Bob Ahrens
Bob Nightingale
Kelly Nightingale
Neil Hasslinger
John Lamore
Ted & Marie Majerek Family
Brew Ha-Ha! Coffee, Teas, & More
Jazzercise Fitness Center
Red Star Gas & Welding Supply
Fisher Innovative Technology, Inc.
Pizza Transit
Niles Style
Veni's Sweet Shop
Salon Artistry
Inner Journey Healing Arts Center
Trailhead Mercantile
Olfactory Hue Bistro
Massimo's Pizzeria

YMCA of Niles
Anonymous

APPENDIX B

Project Outcomes: 2012-13

September 2012

*The project blog was updated throughout the academic year, reaching nearly 25,000 unique views.

*Dr. Michael Nassaney presented “Public Archaeology at a Long Lost Trading Post in Southwest Michigan: The Continuing Saga of the Fort St. Joseph Investigations” in the Paul F. Mickey Science Series at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield.

*Dr. Michael Nassaney, Dr. William Cremin, and LisaMarie Malischke published a chapter on Fort St. Joseph in *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700-1850* (Michigan State University Press, 2012).

*Cathrine Davis was awarded a \$2,500 scholarship from the Lee Honor’s College for her study of lead seals in New France.

*Alexander Brand was named the 2012-2013 Fort St. Joseph Museum Intern.

October 2012

*Students from the Project participated in Michigan Archaeology Day in Lansing, MI.

*Members of the Project attended the annual meeting of the Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference held at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

November 2012

*The annual report was completed and distributed.

*Nassaney received an Instructional Development Travel Grant Award from Western Michigan University for research on the fur trade (\$1162).

January 2013

*Alexander Brand prepared a summary of the 2012 field season in *Le Journal*.

*Erica D’Elia presented a paper entitled "Educational Benefits of Collaborative Youth Archaeological Programs" which examines the Fort St. Joseph summer camp programs at the 46th annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, Leicester, UK.

*Nassaney presented the paper, “The Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade,” at the 46th annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, Leicester, UK.

*Sue Reichart’s submissions in the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology’s annual photo competition garnered one First Place, two Second Place, and one Third Place awards.

February 2013

*Nassaney completed the manuscript, “North America During the European Contact Period” for the *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by C. Smith and J. Smith. Springer, NY.

March 2013

*Nassaney discussed the ongoing work at Fort St. Joseph as the featured speaker at the Sunday Supper Club in Colon, MI.

*Nassaney discussed "Archaeological Contributions to the Study of New France: The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project" as the featured luncheon speaker at the Canadian Studies Roundtable, Western Michigan University.

*The most recent video production, "Militia Muster at Fort St. Joseph," was released free of charge and can be viewed on Youtube. The film received the Golden Aurora Award for its excellence in both production and message.

*The Project received a \$1,500 grant from Western Michigan University's Cultural Events Committee to support the 2013 Open House.

April 2013

*Brand prepared a summary of the 2012 field season for the Society for History Archaeology *Newsletter* (Spring 2013).

*Nassaney presented "Prelude at FSJ" at The War Called Pontiac's, a conference sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

*Nassaney presented "The Discovery and Investigation of a French Trading Post in Southwest Michigan" to the French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan, Mount Clemens Public Library.

*Nassaney presented "Making the Past Come Alive: Public Archaeology at FSJ" at the Antwerp Sunshine Library in Mattawan, MI. This event was sponsored by the Friends of the Antwerp Sunshine Library.

*Erika's Mammen successfully defended her Honor's thesis, "Investigations at Fort St Joseph: Unit N25 W9."

*Nassaney presented "Who Lived at FSJ? The Archaeology of a Multi-Ethnic Community in Eighteenth-Century New France" at the John Jay Center for Learning in Portland, Indiana, for the Current Research in Great Lakes Native American Culture academic conference, presented by the National Center for Great Lakes Native American Culture.

May 2013

*Nassaney and Brand began work on a new booklet in the series tentatively titled *Fort St. Joseph Revealed*.

*Nassaney discussed Fort St. Joseph at the 33rd Annual Statewide Preservation Conference on the campus of Northern Michigan University, organized by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. Nassaney took part in the section "Archaeology: It's About People-Past and Present."

June 2013

*Nassaney presented “Fifteen Years of Archaeological Investigations at Fort St. Joseph” at the Niles District Library in Niles, MI.

* Scott MacPherson displayed informational panels and artifacts from Fort St. Joseph at the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association’s Spring National Shoot, Friendship, IN.

*Nassaney presented “The Discovery and Investigation of a French Trading Post in Southwest Michigan” at the Paw Paw District Library, Paw Paw, MI.

July 2013

*Barb Cook, May Ellen Drolet, Nassaney, and Candace Skalla participated in the Boulder Rededication Event, Niles, MI.

*The 2013 field season began, with students arriving in Niles, MI for the 38th annual archaeological field school.

August 2013

*The annual Open House took place with an emphasis on foodways at Fort St. Joseph and provided a variety of activities for all to enjoy. Over 1,500 people attended the event and provided positive feedback.

*Nassaney prepared the manuscript “The North American Fur Trade in Historical and Archaeological Perspective” for publication in *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Archaeology*, edited by J. Symonds. Oxford University Press, Oxford.