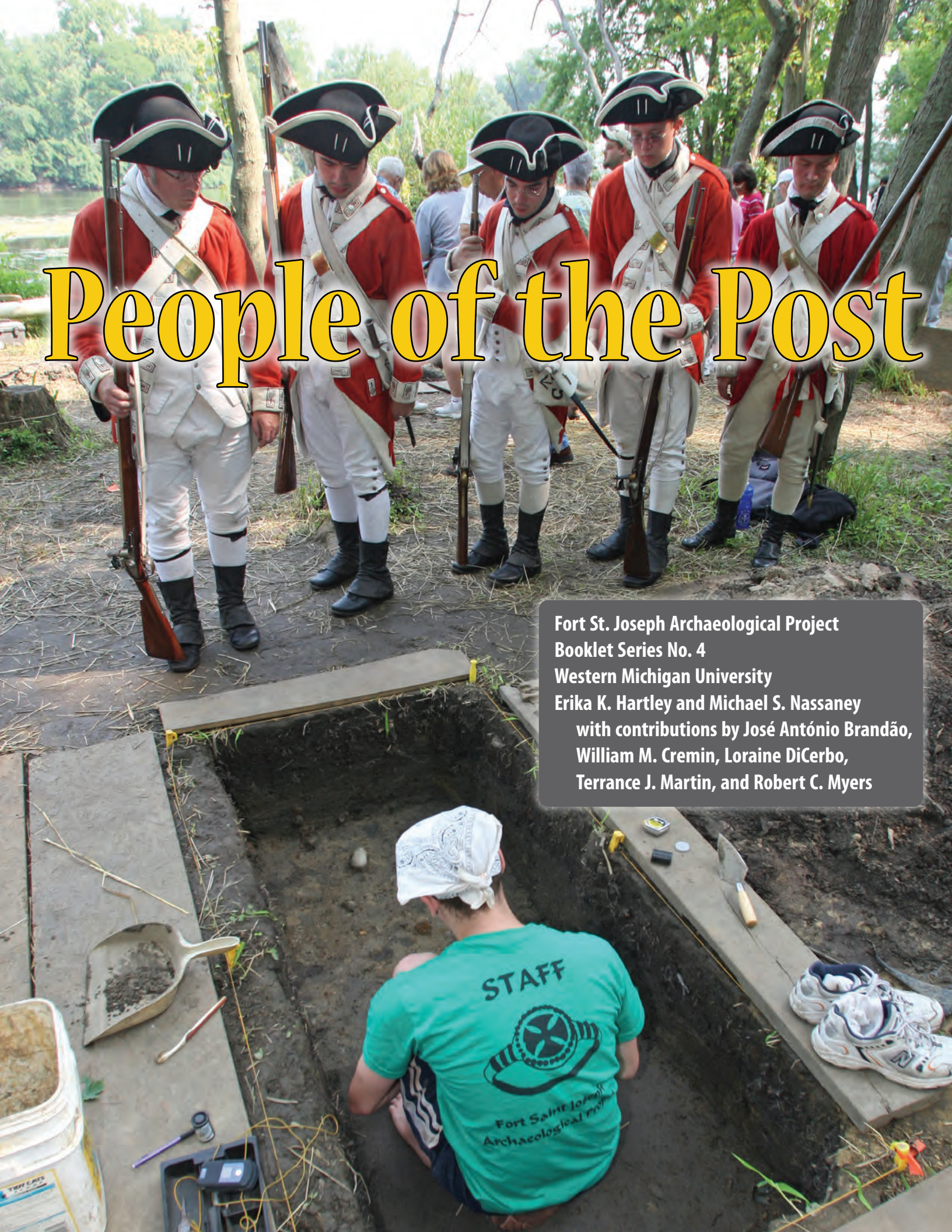


People of the Post

Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project
Booklet Series No. 4
Western Michigan University
Erika K. Hartley and Michael S. Nassaney
with contributions by José António Brandão,
William M. Cremin, Loraine DiCerbo,
Terrance J. Martin, and Robert C. Myers



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Preface

As an anthropological archaeologist who studies the material remains of the past, my focus for over two decades has been the people who lived and interacted at Fort St. Joseph in the eighteenth century and the activities they performed. My associates in the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project and I refer to the people in the St. Joseph River valley who occupied and frequented the fort as the Fort St. Joseph community, also known as the people of the post.

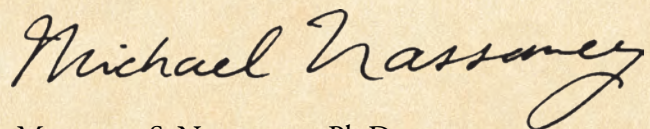
In this booklet, we aim to describe the population of the fort and its environs—a diverse community that varied by age, gender, ethnicity, race, occupation, status, and religion, to name some of their most salient social distinctions. Historical documents and archaeological remains are the essential data sources that historical archaeologists use to learn who these people were, what they did, how they did it, and sometimes even why. These sources complement each other, filling in gaps that exist due to the inherent biases of each line of evidence.

Archaeologists often say that “it’s not what you find, but what you find out.” I would amend that to read, “what you find out *about people*.” By highlighting the human experience, archaeology becomes relevant to the present. Who among us cannot empathize with our global brothers and sisters as they face daily challenges, joys, successes, sorrows, and triumphs? The people of the post were no different in regard to basic human needs, desires, and emotions that motivated them to wake up in the morning, celebrate the birth of a child, work to ensure the safety of their offspring, master a laborious task, welcome familiar faces and newcomers, struggle against societal and environmental challenges, care for the sick and infirm, and mourn the loss of cherished family members and friends.

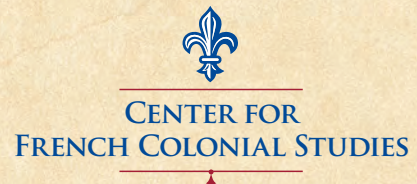
Thus, the Fort St. Joseph community serves as a metaphorical mirror that we can hold up to see ourselves, helping us focus on who we are, who we are not,

and who we hope to be. The people of the post were both different from and similar to all of us. I invite you to enter their eighteenth-century world, examine the community that we have reconstructed from the clues discovered in the ground and in the archives, and compare this legacy with your own way of living.

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, established in 1998, is a partnership between Western Michigan University, Support the Fort, Inc., the City of Niles, the Niles History Center, and many other community groups. The project has a longstanding commitment to engage and educate the public about the archaeology and history of New France through outreach events and activities. Part of that effort is the production of this booklet series meant to disseminate our findings about the Fort St. Joseph community to the public. We are pleased to co-publish this booklet with the Center for French Colonial Studies, an organization devoted to understanding the French colonial experience and its legacy in the midcontinent. I hope you enjoy this fourth installment and seek out other titles (*Women of New France*, *The Fur Trade*, and *Sheltering New France*) about Fort St. Joseph and its role in the French colonial world at <https://wmich.edu/fortstjoseph/about/resources/>. If you would like to stay informed about project events and activities, please like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/fsjarchaeology/>), follow our blog at <http://fortstjosepharchaeology.blogspot.com/>, search “fsjarchaeology” on Instagram, and subscribe to our monthly newsletter!



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**Institute for Intercultural
and Anthropological Studies**
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ON THE COVER
British soldiers viewing excavations
at Fort St. Joseph.

Introduction

The clang of a hammer hitting a piece of scalding hot metal on an anvil. The smoky fires that burn incessantly to cook food, provide light, heat a forge, and smudge deer hides to enhance their value before shipment to Montreal. The long-awaited canoes, approaching the shoreline, laden with goods from distant lands. The success of a peaceful trading encounter between two reliable exchange partners, each convinced that their needs and desires have been fulfilled. A crying baby abruptly awakened by a cold splash of water as a priest administers the rite of baptism amidst the nurturing smiles of loving parents, devout godparents, and supportive onlookers. The rhythmic song of an indigenous woman embroidering pliable moccasins with shiny white, blue, and black glass beads in front of a crackling fire on a cold winter night. A blast from a flintlock musket signaling that fresh meat will again be available to satisfy hunger among the people of the post. The savory aroma and hearty flavor of a seasoned venison stew (figure 1).

These are the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations that members of the Fort St. Joseph community became accustomed to after they established their mission, garrison, and trading post in the midst of a territory long occupied by indigenous peoples. The Native Americans of the region welcomed these French visitors as allies, occasionally with some trepidation, as they adopted new goods, engaged in the fur trade, and modified their lifeways during the turbulent eighteenth century. Today, we aim to understand the experiences of both Native Americans and newcomers to make sense of our own lives as we welcome new generations into the world; perform routine practices with little afterthought; interact with family, friends, and strangers in our communities and beyond; and reflect on our forebears. Indeed, we study the past to learn about ourselves.

Often, histories become buried and nearly forgotten. This erasure may be intentional, as was the case when the English attempted to displace Native peoples and later their defeated enemies, the French. Yet evidence of these groups often persists through the traditional stories their descendants recount, documentary sources like letters and trade lists, and the detritus of everyday life in the form of beads, broken pottery, rusty nails,



Figure 1 · Each year, living history reenactors gather at the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Open House to portray the people of the post.

and other “small things forgotten,” to use the words of the historical archaeologist James Deetz (see figure 2). By piecing together these clues, we can resurrect the people of the post, learning about and from their experiences as we navigate our own tumultuous times. We invite you to meet the members of the Fort St. Joseph community, experience life at a different time and place, and use this knowledge as a portal to the past, where you can see the world from the perspective of a blacksmith, young commandant, experienced trader, and Jesuit priest, among others. We promise that you will return to this world with a heightened sense of compassion and a new appreciation for people who might look and act differently than you and yet share in our basic humanity. And this is precisely the purpose of anthropological archaeology.

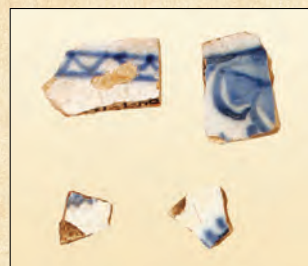


Figure 2 · The designs represented on these ceramic fragments recovered from Fort St. Joseph provide evidence for consumer choices in the eighteenth century.

A Brief History of Fort St. Joseph

When the French established Fort St. Joseph on what was then known as the River of the Miamis near what would become Niles, Michigan, in the western Great Lakes region, the area had been occupied by Native Americans and their ancestors for thousands of years. Ancient cultures, likely including ancestors of the Potawatomi, left behind material evidence, such as pottery and stone tools, of their presence in the region between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, before Iroquoian threats forced them to relocate to the area around Green Bay, Wisconsin (figure 3). Historical documents and oral accounts indicate the return of Native peoples, including both the Miami and Potawatomi, to the St. Joseph River valley in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Ultimately, the Miami, and later the Potawatomi, decided to reoccupy both banks of the river in the vicinity of the fort. When the French entered and settled in this region, the St. Joseph River valley became strategically significant, as Native Americans, *voyageurs*, and a variety of inhabitants interacted economically, politically, and socially for nearly a century (table 1).

The desire to convert Native Americans to Catholicism initially led Jesuit priests to establish missions across New France. In the 1680s, French Jesuits were granted a tract of land along the St. Joseph River in an area that would become known as Fort St. Joseph. Father Jean Claude Allouez was the Jesuit priest who established the Fort St. Joseph mission by 1686. He, along with other priests who traveled to the fort complex throughout its occupation, celebrated mass and performed baptisms, marriages, and other rites for the community as they sought to convert indigenous souls.

The French established Fort St. Joseph and many other trading posts in the late seventeenth century to secure the interior of the continent. In 1691, Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, governor-general of New France sent Augustin Legardeur de Courtemanche and a dozen



Figure 3 · Map of New France showing the locations of colonial-era forts and settlements.

soldiers to the St. Joseph River to build and command a fort. Frontenac aimed to solidify French relations with the local Miami peoples and other Native groups to the west and north of the area. He hoped that the post, garrisoned by French soldiers, would stimulate the fur

A likeable personality, [Courtemanche] combined a smooth and crafty diplomacy, effective with both white and red men, with the hardy spirit of this wild country. He was the sort of officer that Frontenac appreciated, and it is not surprising that the old governor made use of him.

A DESCRIPTION OF COURTEMANCHE
BY HISTORIAN DUNNING IDLE (1946)

A Brief History of Fort St. Joseph

• Table 1 •
Timeline of Notable Historical Events in Southwest Michigan

1400–1600	Potawatomi ancestors lived in the western Great Lakes region.
1640s	The Potawatomi relocated to the area of Green Bay, Wisconsin.
1680s	The Miami moved into the St. Joseph River valley.
1686	French Jesuits were granted a tract of land along the River of the Miamis (St. Joseph River) in an area that would become known as Fort St. Joseph.
1689	Father Jean Claude Allouez died in the night of August 27–28 at the St. Joseph mission.
1691	Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, governor-general of New France, sent Augustin Legardeur de Courtemanche and a dozen soldiers to the St. Joseph River to build and command a fort.
1695	Members of the Potawatomi returned to the Fort St. Joseph area.
Spring 1695	The Iroquois attacked the post.
May 21, 1696	A royal proclamation prohibited trade in the Upper Country.
1699	The French withdrew their military from Fort St. Joseph and trading declined.
April 28, 1716	French trade was reestablished in the region.
1717	The military and trading post of Fort St. Joseph was reoccupied.
1756–1763	The Seven Years' War, also known as the French and Indian War, was fought.
1760	Fort St. Joseph was surrendered by the French to the English with the capitulation of Montreal.
October 1761	England garrisoned Fort St. Joseph with a detachment of thirteen or fourteen soldiers of the 60th Royal American regiment under Ensign Francis Schlösser.
1762	Thomas Hutchins, an English cartographer, visited the area and drew a map recording various topographic features and the military strength of Native groups ("200 Potawatomi men").
May 1763	Supporters of the Odawa leader Pontiac attacked Fort St. Joseph and other posts in the Great Lakes region. The British garrison was captured and removed. French traders continued to occupy the fort.
1779	The British briefly reoccupied the fort.
June 1780	Fifteen households (about 45 settlers) were deported from Fort St. Joseph to Fort Michilimackinac.
1781	A small contingent of French and Native Americans supported by the Spanish governor at St. Louis raided Fort St. Joseph, claimed it for Spain, and remained at the site for a day.
1830s	American pioneer Squire Thompson plowed up material evidence of Fort St. Joseph.
1913	The Fort St. Joseph Historical Society commemorated the site by dedicating a stone boulder in the general location where artifacts were being recovered by Lewis Beeson and members of the Miami Cross Society.
1918	The Women's Progressive League of Niles erected a granite cross in the location thought to be the resting place of Father Jean Claude Allouez.

trade in the region and also check the expansion and power of the Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy and their British allies. The fort was placed within the sphere of the proclaimed mission area and close to the St. Joseph–Kankakee River portage that linked the St. Joseph River and the Great Lakes basin to the Mississippi drainage and adjacent to what would become known as the Sauk Trail, connecting Detroit and Chicago. For nearly a century, Fort St. Joseph served as a hub of commercial, military, and religious activity for local Miami and Potawatomi groups and European colonial powers in southwest Michigan.

The Fort St. Joseph complex is thought to have included a palisade, a commandant's house, and a few other buildings when it was first constructed (figures 4 and 5). By the early eighteenth century, a commandant, a small garrison of ten to fifteen officers and enlisted men, a blacksmith, an interpreter, a priest on occasion, and up to fifteen additional households

inhabited the post. For almost eighty years, French settlers, soldiers, and fur traders lived at Fort St. Joseph, interacting and coexisting with Native groups. French survival on the edge of the empire was dependent on close cooperation with their Potawatomi and Miami allies.

As an important link in the chain of frontier outposts, Fort St. Joseph facilitated the fur trade between the French and Native Americans in the western Great Lakes region. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Fort St. Joseph ranked fourth in volume of furs traded among all posts in New France. Its population would have more than doubled during the warm summer months when the *voyageurs* and Native Americans who were engaged in the trade used the post as a base of operations to perform their work. Even after the supply of furs exceeded market demands, the French government subsidized the fur trade, because it played such an important economic, political, and social role in

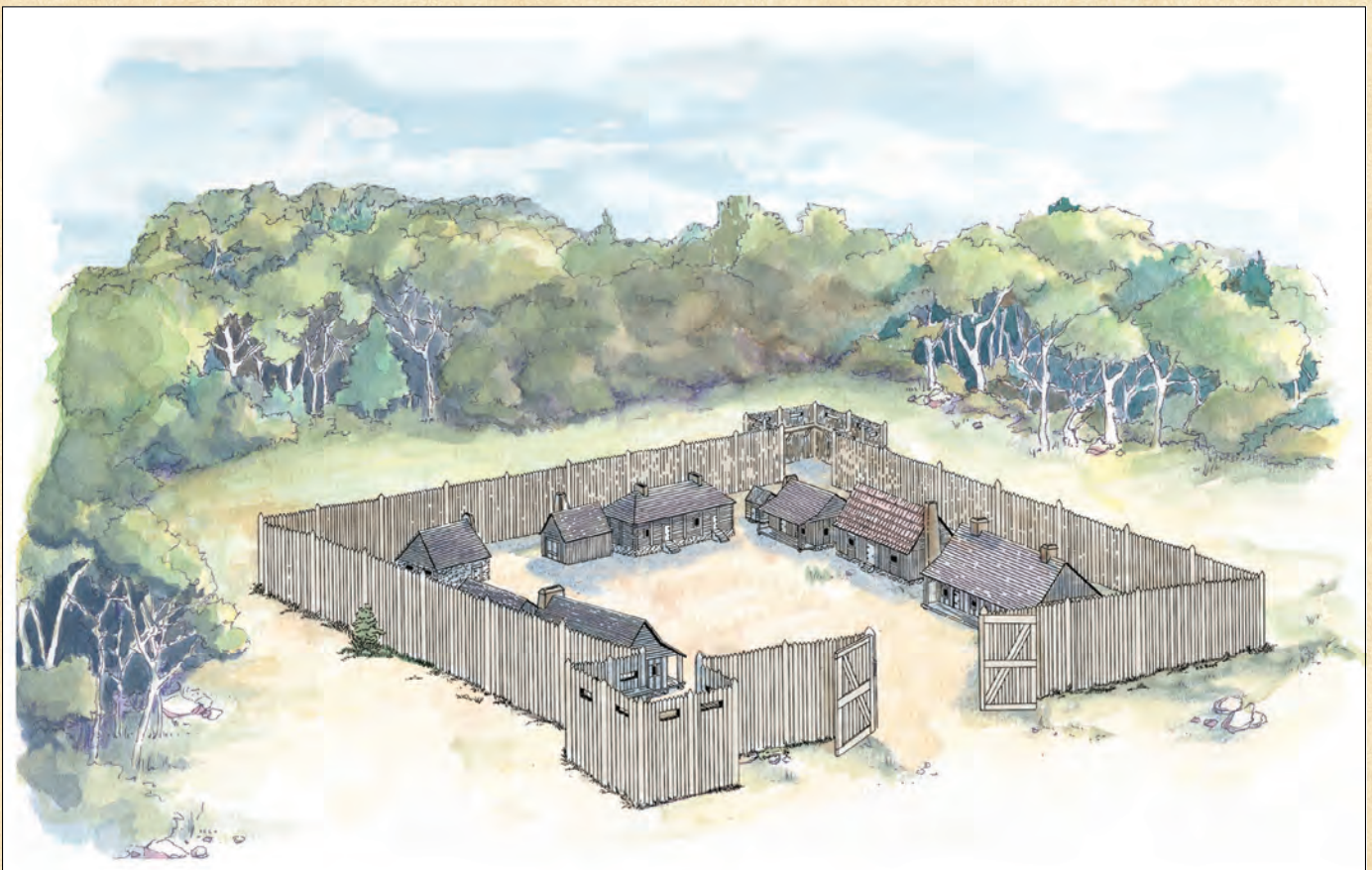


Figure 4 · An artist's reconstruction of Fort St. Joseph.

A Brief History of Fort St. Joseph

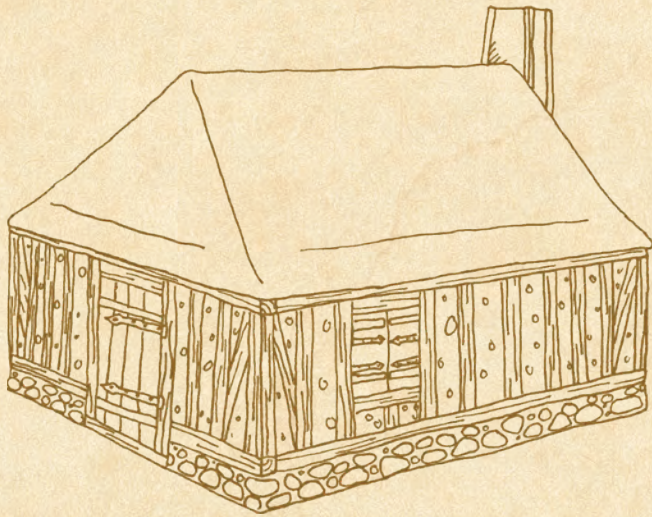


Figure 5 · An artist's conception of a typical French dwelling at Fort St. Joseph.

interactions with Native American groups. Through these alliances, the French used Fort St. Joseph to try to establish themselves in southwest Michigan and expand their influence across North America.

While the French cultivated Native American alliances through practices such as gift-giving and intermarriage, the British considered the fur trade a strictly economic relationship. In 1761, during the Seven Years' War, the British gained control of the fort. In the spring of 1763,

I have only to inform you that by the blessing of God and the help of M. Louison [Louis Thérèse] Chevalier I escaped being killed when the unfortunate garrison was massacred. Mr. Hambough and me being hid in the house of same Chevalier for four days and nights.

RICHARD WINSTON, A TRADER AT
FORT ST. JOSEPH, JUNE 19, 1763.
FROM DANIEL McCOY (1907)

supporters of the Odawa leader Pontiac attacked Fort St. Joseph and other posts in the Great Lakes region in order to force the British from the area and encourage the return of the French. Pontiac's Rebellion—as this

· Table 2 · Fort St. Joseph Census on the Eve of Deportation (June 1780)

In the house of M. Chevalier: Mr. Chevalier; Daujinné; Gibaut; Pieniche; Youtra Junior; Mde Chevalier; Md Youtra, her daughter; Raby Tany; Lizette Panize; Angelique panize & his child.

In the house of Seur Marcot: Marcot; Mad Marcot & four children.

In the house of Mad St Germain: Mad St. Germain her daughter & her son.

In the house of Sieur Morin: Morin; Md Morin three children boys.

In the house of Mr. Caron: Mr. Caron; Md Caron; Marianne Panize & her child.

In the house of M. Pre Hurtebize and his employees: Mr Pre Hurtebize; Rolle; Lognon; Gervais.

In the house of Pieniche Chevalier: Prche Chevalier, in war, His wife & three children.

In the house of Sieur Rode: Rode; His wife & child.

Names of private persons one in his house.

Joseph Hurtebize; Youtra; Dursan; La Douceur; Langloy; Duchenan; Counol.

From *Michigan Historical and Pioneer Collections* 1908: 406–7.

uprising became known—was a direct response to British efforts to treat Native peoples as customers rather than as partners in trade and politics. The British did not re-garrison the fort after this attack until a brief occupation in 1779; however, French traders remained in the area until 1780, when fifteen households were deported to Fort Michilimackinac. They comprised eight houses and seven shanties inhabited by 45 French (men, women, and children) and four enslaved Native Americans (table 2). In 1781, a small contingent of French and Native Americans supported by the Spanish governor at St. Louis raided the fort, claimed it for Spain, and remained at the site for only a day. This marked the end of the fort occupation, though the fur trade continued in this vicinity into the nineteenth century after the area had become part of America's Northwest Territory.

Getting to Know the People of the Post

Despite the importance of Fort St. Joseph in the political and commercial aspirations of the French empire, it was underreported and seldom referenced from the time of its abandonment well into the nineteenth century. Yet it lived in the collective memory of the people of Niles for decades. Collectors recovered artifacts from the location of the fort in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the site was under cultivation (figure 6). In 1913, the Fort St. Joseph Historical Society commemorated the site by dedicating a stone marker in the general location where artifacts were being recovered (figure 7). Limited documentation and twentieth-century landscape modifications subsequently made it difficult to determine the fort's exact location, and it was nearly forgotten.

Yet local interest in the fort and its occupants persisted throughout the twentieth century. A local group of history enthusiasts known as Support the Fort, Inc. invited Western Michigan University archaeologists to search for material evidence of the long-lost fort in 1998. Professor Michael Nasaney used background research conducted by Dr. Joseph L. Peyser to develop a survey strategy. His team initially had little success in locating the fort until a local collector showed the archaeologists an assemblage of artifacts he had found with the aid of a metal detector, including gunflints, flintlock hardware, tin-glazed earthenware ceramics (*faience*), and French clasp knife blades, along with other related materials.

The collector then led the team to the floodplain along the St. Joseph

River, where shovel test pits revealed dense deposits of eighteenth-century French and English artifacts consistent with remains of the old fort. Today, community interest in Fort St. Joseph and its occupants continues to drive site investigation and interpretation (figure 8).



Figure 6 · Lewis Beeson and members of the Miami Cross Society searching for artifacts related to Fort St. Joseph.



Figure 7 · This commemorative boulder was dedicated in 1913 to mark the location of Fort St. Joseph.

Getting to Know the People of the Post



Figure 8 · Thousands of visitors have attended the two-day Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Open House.

Documentary Sources

Some information regarding the occupants and their daily lives can be compiled through a close study of various historical documents related to the site (figure 9). But our limited written sources often have biases and large chronological gaps. Researchers depend



Figure 9 · Dr. Joseph L. Peyser spent many years transcribing and editing documentary sources related to Fort St. Joseph.

on the power of observation of those recording events and the vagaries of paper survival and preservation in archives. Even when there is a large body of material with which to work, the vast majority of the records remain at the “macro” level and focus on state affairs (for example, governance, diplomacy, military matters). The governor-general and intendant of New France each produced lengthy annual reports about events under their jurisdiction, but those reports rarely mention anyone but the most prominent men in the colony. Travel narratives, likewise, feature only leading individuals and focus on “exotic” encounters and practices, which writers believed would help sell their work in France.

The mundane activities of ordinary settlers rarely drew notice other than to comment, in general terms, about their behavior—usually cast negatively and rarely mentioning any one individual. Notarial documents, which record business contracts and legal proceedings for civil and other infractions, are better sources for understanding the daily lives of ordinary colonists in New France. Church records, which mark major rituals of Catholic life (that is, baptism, marriage, and death), can also bring researchers closer to understanding people’s interrelationships and experiences. Still, even if most documents do not offer specific information about individuals who lived at or visited Fort St. Joseph, they often reveal insights into their daily lives, including occupational roles, religious beliefs, styles of adornment and dress, food preferences, and architectural designs and appearance. Throughout, we draw on some of those records and supplement them with archaeological research to gain a better understanding of the people of the post.

Archaeological Evidence

Archaeological investigations have occurred regularly at Fort St. Joseph since 1998, when the site became the focus of a long-term, multidisciplinary, collaborative research and service-learning project in historical archaeology aimed at investigating the fur trade and colonialism in southwest Michigan. Over 300,000 artifacts have been recovered from Fort St. Joseph and are housed at the Niles History Center. Many of these items have been the subject of doctoral dissertations,

Figure 10 · The newly uncovered Feature 27 has been interpreted as another fireplace, providing evidence for the sixth building rediscovered at Fort St. Joseph.



master's theses, and other scholarly publications that have provided valuable insights into aspects of the inhabitants' lives (see References Cited and Further Readings). Ongoing archaeological work provides evidence of the routine activities that went unrecorded during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Excavation at Fort St. Joseph has been focused on learning about the physical appearance of the fort and the buildings that once stood there to aid in erecting a facsimile of the post (figure 10). Despite its importance to French imperial ambitions, no detailed descriptions, maps, and drawings of any kind are currently known to exist of Fort St. Joseph. Although several historical documents make explicit mention of a wooden palisade at the fort (similar to other contemporaneous French forts), no archaeological evidence of the palisade has yet been recovered.

It is imagined that the structures within the fort walls would have included a commandant's house, other residences including one possibly occupied by the priest, a jail, a gunsmith/blacksmith's workshop, a powder magazine, and storage buildings. Information collected thus far, along with associated artifacts, suggests the presence of several habitation structures, including one belonging to the blacksmith along the St. Joseph River.

Artifacts such as personal adornment items (for example, buckles, buttons, cufflinks), flintlock hardware, and metal debris allow us to make inferences about these structures, their occupants, and the fort in general.

In this booklet, we discuss what has been discovered about Fort St. Joseph and its inhabitants through historical research and archaeological excavation. While documents are essential to understanding the daily lives of the fort residents, the material culture left behind offers a more inclusive, nuanced, and direct look into what was occurring at this location during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

We begin by discussing the environmental setting, along with the Native Americans who first inhabited the area, interacted with the fort's residents, and left descendants who live in the region today. We then discuss the Europeans who traveled to Fort St. Joseph, detailing their motivations to settle in the area, occupational roles, and aspects of their daily lives such as adornment and dress, foodways, and religious practices. We close by discussing how the study of Fort St. Joseph, and more broadly New France, can provoke conversations about the similarities and differences in human societies across time and space.

Environmental Setting

Lying in the plateau highland physiographic division of southeastern Berrien County, the Niles landscape is glacial in origin, comprising gently sloping hills and plains. The St. Joseph River is the largest watercourse in the county and in southwest Michigan. After entering the county (and returning to the state) from Indiana, the river flows in a north-northwesterly direction before emptying into Lake Michigan at the City of St. Joseph (figure 11). While the St. Joseph River valley is marked by extensive bottomlands along its lower course, the river above Berrien Springs is often confined by high banks. Thus, there is little floodplain development in the Niles area.

Since AD 1000, clearing fields for maize horticulture has had an impact on the landscape of the St. Joseph River valley. Nonetheless, as recently as the early nineteenth century, the vegetation of this region could still be described as a rich mosaic of plants

in oak-hickory and beech-maple forests, prairies, oak openings, swamps, and marshes. These habitats afforded sap, greens, and tubers in spring; summer-ripening fruits and berries; and the autumn nut mast.

A broad range of animals was economically important to Native American and subsequent populations. Wapiti (elk) were attracted to the nutrient-rich prairie grasses, whereas white-tailed deer thrived in the abundant browse along the many wooded edges of this vegetative mosaic. Fur-bearing animals like beaver, mink, and muskrat were common in aquatic zones. Various waterfowl and upland birds like wild turkeys and passenger pigeons were plentiful, as were turtles and fish. Spawning lake sturgeon, which sought out the spring “shallows” of the St. Joseph River, were a notable subsistence resource. In sum, the Niles environs provided human residents a rich array of plant and animal foods.



Figure 11 · Fort St. Joseph is located in the lush St. Joseph River valley.

First Inhabitants of the St. Joseph River Valley

Until the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project began in 1998, professional archaeologists paid little attention to the Niles area, although several sites have been located and designated in the vicinity, including six historic Native American village sites within a mile of the fort. If we expand our scope to include the lower St. Joseph River valley of Berrien County, the broad outlines of Native American history before European arrival come into focus.

As in other areas of the upper Midwest, the region probably first became habitable at the end of the Pleistocene epoch. The last 14,000 years (terminal Pleistocene and Holocene epochs in geologic time) represent a period of great environmental change in southwest Michigan. The landscape was reconfigured in response to retreating glacial ice and changes in lake level and stream gradient. Variations in atmospheric circulation patterns also altered the distribution and composition of plant and animal communities occupying this evolving landscape. Environmental change over time figures prominently in the human history of the region, from the initial arrival of Paleoindians during the millennia immediately following the end of the Ice Age into the period of European settlement over three centuries ago (table 3; figure 12).

The lifeways of the earliest occupants in the region are poorly understood, as not a single site associated with them has been reported or excavated to date in Berrien County. However, the presence of fluted projectile points from farmlands along the St. Joseph River and its tributaries in St. Joseph County testify to the antiquity of humans in the area. These points suggest occupation as early as 11,000 BP (years before present); their distribution indicates a broad-based opportunistic foraging strategy rather than the specialized big game hunting associated with contemporaneous Clovis groups in western North America (figure 13).

A sparse archaeological record confounds our efforts to evaluate aspects of human occupation during much of the subsequent Archaic Period (10,000-3,000 BP).

• Table 3 •
Timeline of Geological and Cultural Periods
in Southwest Michigan

Date	Geological Period	Cultural Period
13,000–10,000 BP*	Pleistocene	Paleoindian Period
10,000–3,000 BP	Holocene	Archaic Period
3,000 BP–AD 1600		Woodland Period
AD 1600		Mississippian Period and European arrival

*Years before present



Figure 12 • Antiquarians donated hundreds of projectile points to the Fort St. Joseph Museum (now the Niles History Center). The shapes of these tools evolved over time and reflect cultural and technological changes in the region.



Figure 13 • Specimens similar to this fluted point from central Michigan also occur in the St. Joseph River valley and date to ca. 12,200–11,600 cal BP. The point broke during manufacture.

First Inhabitants of the St. Joseph River Valley

The rarity of Early and Middle Archaic sites in this region is likely due to slow post-glacial environmental amelioration and low population density. However, by Late Archaic times (ca. 5,000 BP), more moderate climatic patterns had significantly increased the plant and animal biomass, including mast-producing species in oak-hickory forests. Resource-rich aquatic and riparian habitats along the lake shoreline and in the lower river valley also expanded in response to periodic variations in lake levels. These factors probably led to a population increase during the Late Archaic, as documented by survey and excavation along the St. Joseph River near Berrien Springs. Here, in a narrow highway corridor crossing the valley, a series of four encampments along the bluff edge and on the terrace attest to the growing importance of plant foods in the Late Archaic diet. Processing and storage pits indicate repeated site visits and the intensive harvesting of various nuts, fleshy fruits, and edible seeds, including cultivated sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), during late summer and early fall.

The oldest pottery in the region, marking the onset of the Woodland period, was recovered from four sites

in the US 31 corridor about 5 miles (8 km) downstream from Niles. Ceramic styles, lithic artifacts, and radiocarbon dates place the occupation of these sites at 2600–2000 BP. Vessels found in association with pit features suggest a pattern of seasonal residence adjacent to both wetlands and stands of mast-producing species. These grit-tempered earthenware vessels were wide-mouth jars of medium size (20–25 cm in height) with straight walls curving to a flattened base. Their exteriors exhibit fine cord-marking on even, well-finished surfaces. These pots may have been used to extract and store nut oil.

The earliest earthen burial mounds appear in this region about 2000 BP. The most prominent Hopewellian Middle Woodland mound group in the entire St. Joseph region is located in nearby Cass County. The Sumnerville Mounds, which attracted the attention of area collectors for many years, was partially excavated in the 1980s and is currently owned and protected by the Archaeological Conservancy (figure 14). Middle Woodland subsistence practices involved the continuation and intensification of foraging strategies initially established during the Archaic,



Figure 14 · Each year, the students of the WMU archaeological field school visit the Sumnerville Mounds historical marker to learn about the site and the people who once occupied it.

with increasing reliance on the cultivation of native seed plants and, to a much lesser extent, tropical cultigens. A single maize kernel from the site has been radiocarbon dated to about 1,650 BP. The site also contains evidence of mortuary rituals that postdate major mound construction in the form of intrusive offerings.

The Late Woodland period, which began about AD 500 (1,500 BP), ushered in subsistence and settlement strategies similar to those observed at the time of European arrival in the seventeenth century. It is marked by the gradual shift from broad-based foraging undertaken from small seasonally reoccupied sites to increased reliance on the cultivation of the “Three Sisters” of corn, beans, and squash at summer agricultural villages concentrated in the lower valley. The settlement pattern also includes sites devoted to the specialized exploitation of certain natural resources like fish that were apart from main habitation areas.

Archaeologists recognize a significant cultural change around AD 1050 with the introduction of shell-tempered pottery and corn agriculture into the region. Notably, the new ceramics resemble styles prevalent in the American Bottom near St. Louis. This suggests direct connections with the heartland of Mississippian culture characterized by shell-tempered pottery, a dependence on maize agriculture, houses constructed using wall trenches, substantial mound building, and a system of ranked social statuses and hereditary political leaders. This inference is supported by the ubiquitous and abundant presence of eight-rowed corn—a dietary staple in the central Mississippi River valley—at the Wymer West Knoll site near Berrien Springs. Despite these connections, southwest Michigan remained on the margins of Mississippian culture.

The material culture associated with Native American sites in southwest Michigan immediately prior to French settlement (AD 1400–1600) is often designated the Berrien Phase, which exhibits similarities to other sites extending to northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin, southern Minnesota, and the eastern Great Plains. In addition to summer agricultural villages, archaeologists have identified several resource-collecting sites, including a contemporaneous lake

sturgeon fishery on the lower Kalamazoo River. The recovery of a fragment of European brass at a small seasonal Berrien Phase site on the lower Galien River extends this phase into the mid-seventeenth century. The distinctive ceramics from these sites, with decoration usually confined to the vessel lip, and the late appearance of several grit-tempered companion types, constitute the signature of this phase (figure 15).

Dr. William Cremin (1996), who investigated several of these sites during his long archaeological career in the region, suggested that the makers of this pottery could represent the arrival of people from the north into southwest Michigan at about AD 1400, bringing their grit-tempered ceramics with them. Once settled in the St. Joseph River valley, they expanded their inventory to include the shell-tempered pottery that was being locally produced at the time. The same grit-tempered ceramics occur later to the north in the absence of Berrien Series ceramics, which have yet to be identified north of the lower Kalamazoo River valley. Cremin suggested that this may indicate the flight of at least some of these same people from their southwest Michigan homeland in the face of Iroquoian incursions beginning about AD 1640. Similar grit-tempered pottery also occurs at seventeenth-century sites like Dumaw Creek on the Pentwater River of Oceana County, Summer Island in the northern Lake Michigan basin, and Rock Island II on an island in the mouth of Green Bay. Cremin concluded that the Berrien Phase people were likely ancestral to the Potawatomi.

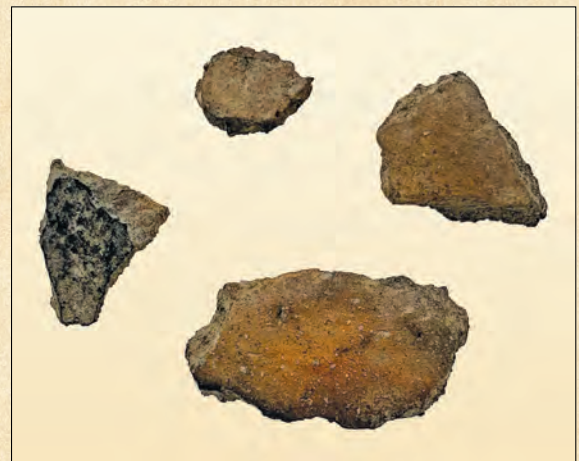


Figure 15 · A few sherds of low-fired earthenware have been recovered from Fort St. Joseph.

The Potawatomi in the St. Joseph River Valley

Native Americans and their ancestors occupied the St. Joseph River valley and, more broadly, the Great Lakes region for thousands of years. Evidence of Native American history and culture can be found in archaeological materials, historical documents, and oral traditions. As noted above, distinctive material remains attributed to the Berrien Phase (ca. AD 1400–1600) are believed to represent the culture of the Potawatomi, an Algonquian people. Oral traditions and historical documents also indicate that the Potawatomi were living in the region during this time, after they separated from their Ojibwe and Odawa kin at the Straits of Mackinac and before they relocated to the Green Bay area of Wisconsin in the mid-seventeenth century.

As with other groups who practiced a mixed subsistence strategy that included small-scale farming, Potawatomi peoples moved their villages on a seasonal basis within a larger homeland to take advantage of the shifting availability of resources. They subsisted on hunting and harvesting, supplemented with some domesticated plant foods. Men hunted deer, wapiti, bear, and beaver and harvested fish, reptiles, and waterfowl from nearby rivers. Women collected berries, nuts, edible and medicinal plants and roots, and cultivated the “Three Sisters” (figure 16). They cooked and ate outdoors as weather permitted.

Potawatomi groups did not spend much time in their homes, regarding them as shelters from the weather,



Figure 16 · The “Three Sisters”—maize, beans, and squash—were cultivated by Native Americans in southwest Michigan.

places to sleep, and storage areas. They lived in wigwams during late fall, winter, and early spring, and used a summer house for the rest of the year. During the winter, their homes were well positioned in protected valleys to shield them from the harsh weather. In the summer, the Potawatomi lived in larger agricultural villages near rivers, alongside relatives and members of their extended families. Farming distinguished the Potawatomi from their more northerly Algonquian neighbors, as did their mastery of framed, bark canoe technology that facilitated long-distance movement and transport of goods along waterways. Birchbark canoes proved to be critical for their success in the fur trade and warfare.

There appears to have been a settlement hiatus in the mid-seventeenth century when the region was partially abandoned due to threats, perceived or otherwise, from Iroquois groups in the east. The Potawatomi were temporarily displaced to the western shore of Lake Michigan in northern Illinois and Wisconsin. In 1695, members of the Potawatomi returned to the Fort St. Joseph area and settled along the river, having followed the Miami who returned there with Father Jean Claude Allouez in the 1680s. The Potawatomi and Miami coexisted in the vicinity of the fort until the mid-eighteenth century, when only the former remained. Thomas Hutchins, an English cartographer, visited the area in 1762, drew a map, and recorded the locations of Native American villages and their military strength. Hutchins noted 200 Potawatomi men immediately across the river from Fort St. Joseph (figure 17).

The Potawatomi settled throughout the lower St. Joseph River valley over the next eighty years. Their proximity to the fort suggests amicable relations with the French. The Potawatomi population size is uncertain, but various reports from the 1750s to 1830s indicate the villages contained as many as 2,000 people. Though reduced in number by years of warfare and a grave smallpox epidemic in the 1750s, nearly 800 Potawatomi were still living in six villages along the river in 1819.

Studies of the size, frequency, and distribution of Native American sites indicate that indigenous groups were generally small and widely dispersed, reflecting the seasonal round that nuclear and extended family units practiced prior to European arrival (figure 18). However,



Figure 17 · Hutchins's 1778 map of the St. Joseph River valley based on his 1762 visit, showing the location of the fort and an adjacent Potawatomi village.

sites grew in size and tended to cluster close to the fort once it was established, perhaps reflecting aggregations of multifamily units. Native American sites became widely dispersed again after the fort was abandoned (post-1781), but seem to have been located in proximity to new Euro-American sites in the region, perhaps indicating the continued importance of the fur trade and the desire to obtain imported and manufactured goods.

The Potawatomi actively sought political, economic, and social opportunities from the French when it benefited them. They supported the French in warfare against other Native groups, like the Fox (Mesquakies) and Chickasaw, who challenged French authority. They provided significant numbers of high-quality furs that made Fort St. Joseph among the most productive trading posts in New France. And Native Americans allied with the French sometimes intermarried to build and strengthen their relationships.

The St. Joseph baptismal register documents the marriage of at least three indigenous women to French-Canadian men, and we suspect that there were other unions that went unrecorded, as was common throughout New France. Those women who chose to marry French men received greater access to imported goods and could elevate their status in Native American society through these economic connections. The presence of Native-style artifacts and Native American practices in proximity to the European-style structures that we have identified at the fort suggests that Native American women wed to French-Canadian men may have inhabited some of these buildings. The bonds that formed in these unions were sometimes impermanent, because both traveled extensively. French-Canadian *voyageurs* often relocated from one year to the next, while Native American women scheduled activities and moved in accordance with the seasonal availability of resources and group customs.

The baptismal register also indicates that Native American women served as godmothers, suggesting that they were respected among the people of the post and perceived to be pious. While we cannot know all of the roles that women played at Fort St. Joseph, sources indicate they were critical in ensuring the functioning of fur trade society elsewhere in New France. In some instances, they became traders themselves. They also acted as “go-betweens,” or intermediaries, between French and Native American cultures in their roles as translators, business associates, and diplomats. Their unique language skills and familiarity with the values and practices of the two or more cultures in which they lived elevated their status.

Marie Catherine Ouékioukoué (formally, Sagatchioua), an Illinois woman at Fort St. Joseph, was married to Jean-Baptiste Baron, a *voyageur* from Quebec. The baptismal records reveal that their two children were baptized in 1729 and 1733. Marie Catherine was chosen

The Potawatomi in the St. Joseph River Valley

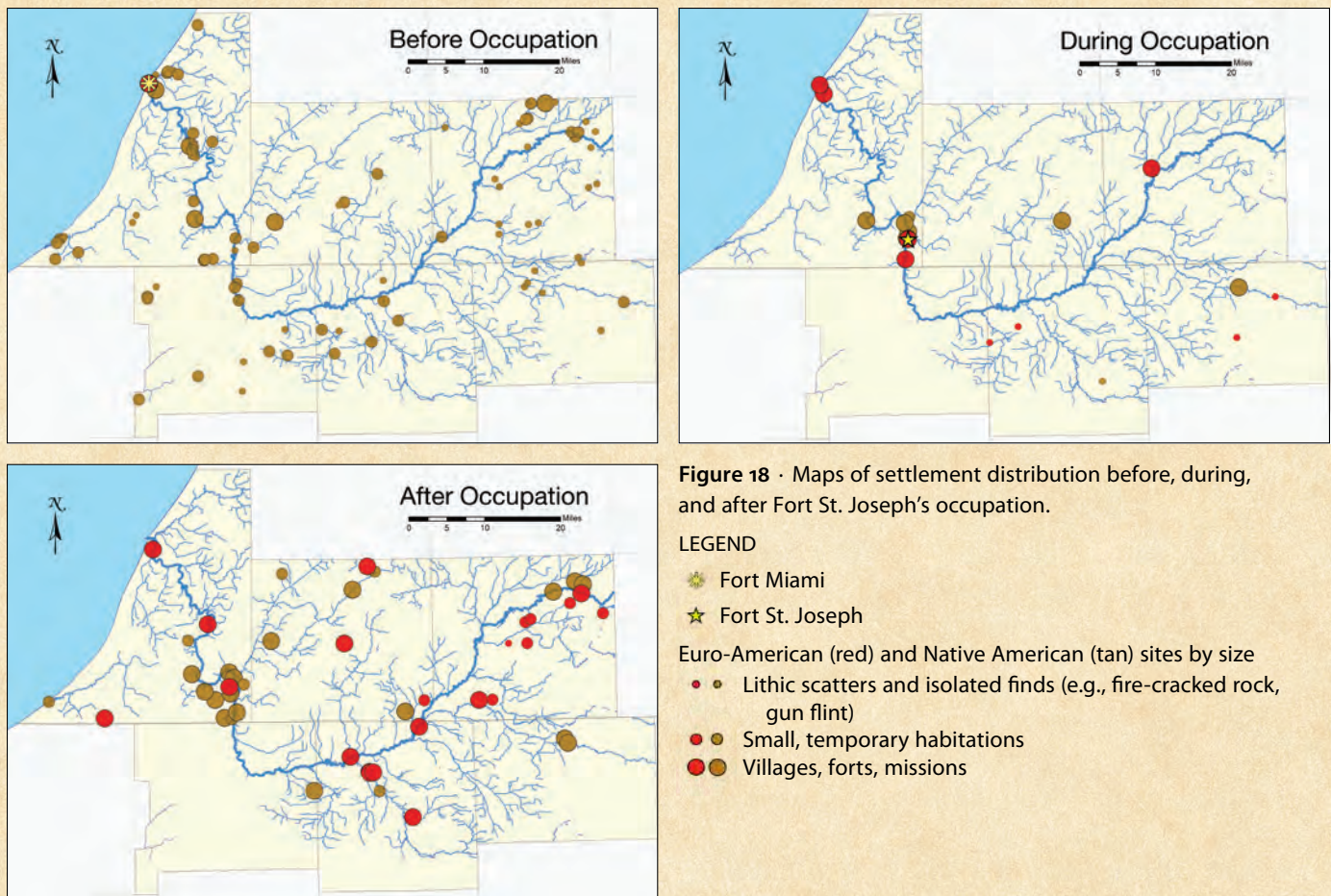


Figure 18 · Maps of settlement distribution before, during, and after Fort St. Joseph's occupation.

LEGEND

- ★ Fort Miami
- ★ Fort St. Joseph
- Euro-American (red) and Native American (tan) sites by size
 - Lithic scatters and isolated finds (e.g., fire-cracked rock, gun flint)
 - Small, temporary habitations
 - Villages, forts, missions

to serve as godmother to the child of the French couple Gabriel Bolon and Susanne Ménard, demonstrating her familiarity with French values and practices (figure 19). Most women, however, lived in traditional ways and raised children from their cross-cultural marriages according to the customs of their respective nations.

Native American men were also critical to the success of French endeavors in New France. Information about individual men often went unrecorded in historical records, yet careful scrutiny can reveal some of the roles they played. Official correspondence usually emphasizes individuals who were granted aid by the French in times of famine or war, even as the Potawatomi supported French objectives. Potawatomi men participated in the Fox and Chickasaw Wars of the 1730s. In these and other cooperative ventures, the French seldom centered Native American men in their narratives, instead choosing to highlight what they had done for Native Americans and treating them as passive participants.

Yet Native Americans had their own political aspirations and operated according to their own cultural logic, often underappreciated by the French. For example, Nanaquiba (Water Moccasin [also known as Aniquiba]) was among the most powerful Potawatomi leaders of the eighteenth century. He was a veteran of the French and Indian War, having fought with the Native American–French alliance at the siege of Fort William Henry. His bravery and leadership qualities earned him respect and were passed down to his sons, Topinabee, Chebass, and Shissahecon, who also played pivotal roles in Native American history.

Perhaps because Pierre Mekabikanga and a woman named Marie were wed in a Catholic service, more is known about him. Both he and his wife were Miami. In 1752, sometime after Marie had died, he wed Mari-*anne Piðassikø*, a 45-year-old Odawa woman who was baptized earlier that day. Pierre's children followed in their father's footsteps in becoming Catholic:

Marie (age 35) was baptized in April 1752, Susanne (age 16 or 17) in May 1752, and Marie Madeleine (age 25) in 1752. The latter baptized her two-year-old daughter, Angelique, that same year. From this account we know that Pierre, his wives, and members of his family appear in the records by both their “new” Christian baptismal names and those by which they had been known before conversion. This reflects that while they had converted, they lived their new faith within an existing Native American world context.

The fact that Pierre married twice in the Church speaks to his commitment to Catholicism.

He may have had a hand in bringing his wives and daughters to accept this new faith. Whatever prompted Pierre to adopt, practice, and perhaps encourage his family to embrace a foreign religion remains a mystery. While he seems to have been among the faithful, many Native peoples viewed Catholic teaching with suspicion and rejected Christianity. Native American religion had served them well for millennia, and many were not apt to adopt unfamiliar beliefs unless they were shown some clear benefits of Catholicism.

Archaeological Evidence of Native Peoples

Native Americans had developed distinctive forms of material culture for transportation; food resource extraction, preparation, and cooking; clothing; adornment; and spirituality, among other realms of daily life. Many of these objects were deposited in domestic spaces at Native American sites—fewer have been found at the fort. Often, Native Americans adopted imported goods like iron tools and brass kettles to enhance their tasks and create novel styles. On other occasions, they retained their own products when they were superior, had particular symbolic meanings, or had no available equivalents.

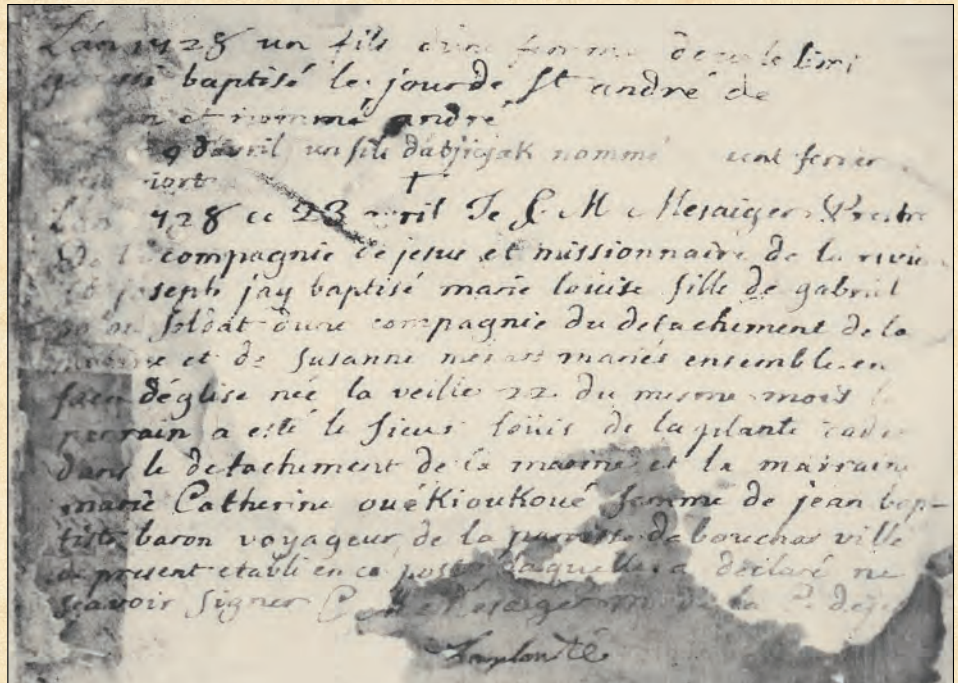


Figure 19 · The Fort St. Joseph baptismal record provides information about who was living at the post.

Several artifacts have been found at Fort St. Joseph that provide evidence for the presence of Native peoples, such as Micmac pipes, hematite and vermillion, tinkling cones, and wampum. Micmac pipes are stone smoking devices that had significant meanings in Native American culture (figure 20). Carved from a variety of pipestones, including a red variant known as catlinite from southwest Minnesota, the bowls and keels of these pipes are often elaborately engraved with decorative motifs and other sacred symbols. To smoke these pipes, Native peoples inserted a reed or wooden tube into the short stem of the pipe. The French also adopted the practice of smoking, though they transformed it from sacred to secular use and introduced white clay pipes produced in Europe. Numerous stone and clay pipe fragments have been recovered archaeologically at Fort St. Joseph, demonstrating their prevalence and importance to the French and Native Americans visiting, trading, and residing at the fort (figure 21).

For thousands of years, people across the world used minerals such as hematite and vermillion to create pigments, dyes, and paints for embellishment. By crushing these minerals into a fine powder and

The Potawatomi in the St. Joseph River Valley

ARTIFACTS IN FOCUS

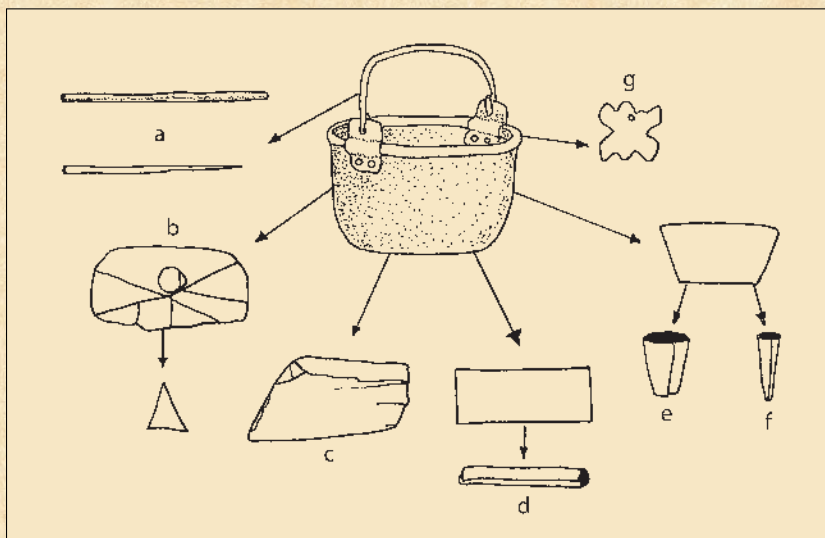
Tinkling Cones

Native groups desired objects for their utility, their appearance, and even their sound in some cases. They used natural materials like wood, seeds, stones, and animal parts such as bone, teeth, and hooves to express their social, cultural, and personal identities. When Europeans arrived, Native Americans sometimes replaced these objects with imported raw materials and used them in traditional ways. A most notable adoption was the use of brass and copper for tinkling cones—small, conical objects suspended from bags and garments. They are a distinctive form of material culture that is a by-product of interaction between the French and Native Americans.

These ornaments were produced from scraps of brass and copper derived from kettles, demonstrating how European goods were often refashioned to serve new purposes. Small, trapezoidal kettle scraps—rolled into a cone shape on a mandrel—

embellished the fringes of bags, moccasins, shirts, skirts, and other garments using a knotted string or horsehair threaded through the small opening at the apex of the cone. When these cones were hung in rows, they would hit each other upon movement, producing a pleasant tinkling sound, hence their name.

Tinkling cones have been recovered throughout the excavations at Fort St. Joseph. In addition to completed cones, many pieces of copper alloy scrap have been found that appear to be raw material intended for use in their production. Their wide distribution at the fort and the variation in their forms suggest that production was an opportunistic activity performed by many inhabitants. As in the case of face painting, tinkling cone use was probably not confined to the Native American occupants of the fort.



In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, kettles were recycled into a range of useful goods that included (a) awls, (b) projectile points, (c) knives, (d) beads, (e, f) tinkling cones, and (g) pendants.



Tinkling cones, like the one pictured here, provide insights on crafting culture at Fort St. Joseph.



Figure 20 · This Micmac pipe bowl was recovered through excavation at Fort St. Joseph.



Figure 22 · The presence of wampum, as shown here, is evidence of the importance of shell beads among the people of the post.



Figure 21 · Smoking pipes made from catlinite, a soft siltstone found in Minnesota, demonstrate the extensive trade network of Native Americans.

then mixing them with grease, people produced a stable-colored agent that could be used for artistic expression on their bodies, canvases, and rock surfaces. Vermillion appears in trade lists from Fort St. Joseph, and archaeological evidence of a piece of ground hematite has been recovered from the site, suggesting that pigments were used at the fort. Fort occupants—both Native American and French—likely used crushed minerals to produce decorative face paint. This stereotypical Native American trait was more widespread than thought if the observations of a French priest are to be believed. In describing the commandant of the French post of Natchitoches in Louisiana, the priest noted “many Frenchmen . . .

can scarcely be distinguished from the Indians . . . they imitate them not only in their nakedness, but even in painting their faces” (Hackett 1934, cited in Loren 2005:310).

Another distinctively indigenous practice was the use of hard-shelled clams and whelks to produce beads known as wampum in coastal New England and adjacent regions. Wampum was not only used for adornment, but also played an economic and political role in trade and building alliances. Initially, Native groups in coastal areas provided wampum to Europeans in exchange for imported goods until Europeans began producing it themselves. The French carried the beads inland to solidify political alliances with, and obtain furs from, Native groups. The presence of these beads hundreds of miles from their source testifies to their importance in colonial culture. While they may have been replaced by glass beads in some contexts, their purple and white color and raw material retained symbolic significance well into the eighteenth century (figure 22).

Consuming European Goods

Documentary sources contain information about the types of imported goods that the French supplied to Native Americans, many of which have been recovered archaeologically. Native Americans were discriminating consumers who desired trade goods to facilitate their activities: kettles replaced clay pots; fabric and clothing substituted for leather and fur; and metal knives, axes, and firearms were often used instead of stone implements for cutting and hunting.

The Potawatomi in the St. Joseph River Valley



Figure 23 · Copper kettles were extremely popular trade goods.



Figure 24 · Copper scrap, patches, and rivets served to prolong the use of kettles.



Figure 25 · Cloth fabrics like these replicas may have been among the styles brought to Fort St. Joseph.

Brass, copper, and iron kettles were popular trade items due to their durability and ease of transport during seasonal movements (figure 23). When they eventually wore out, owners could repair them with patches and rivets (figure 24) and later repurpose them for items such as pendants, projectile points, awls, and tinkling cones (see page 20). These sturdy cooking vessels were desirable additions to Native American housewares.

Native Americans as well as Europeans were consumers of imported clothing and textiles (figure 25). In his study of trade lists in New France, former Michigan State Archaeologist Dean Anderson noted that wool and cotton cloth were in great demand

and comprised a considerable proportion of the goods obtained by Native Americans as furs were diverted to the fur trade. Cloth offered greater comfort and warmth, an increased variety of styles due to the flexibility of fabrics, and a range of bright colors and textures. Women often produced clothing that resembled styles of their traditional garments, demonstrating creativity and practicality in the use of cloth. Although cloth is seldom recovered archaeologically, scissors, straight pins, and lead seals once attached to bolts of cloth testify to the importance of this commodity on the frontier (figure 26).

Iron objects for chopping (for example, axes, adzes), cutting (for example, knives, saws), and piercing (for



Figure 26 · This lead seal was stamped “B Foraine de Lille,” meaning that the cloth that this seal was attached to was inspected and taxed in Lille, France, before it was shipped to the New World.



Figure 27 · People across New France found iron axe heads such as this one to be extremely useful in their daily lives.



Figure 28 · Bone artifacts like the projectile point (a) and perforating tool (b) shown here represent some of the traditional tools used in the eighteenth century.

example, awls) were also essential tools in New France and found their way into both European and Native American hands (figures 27 and 28). While they had some clear advantages over their stone and bone counterparts, they did not completely replace traditional forms. The simultaneous use of bone, stone, and metal implements demonstrates that Native Americans selectively chose tools as needed for various tasks.

Several triangular projectile points recovered from our excavations indicate that bow and arrow technology had not been completely relinquished in favor of the early flintlock, which was not always an effective weapon. Firearms needed constant maintenance, cleaning, and repair; they often jammed; their pieces wore out; and they required a continual supply of

gunpowder and shot, leading some to debate their advantage in all contexts of use. However, the high frequency of gun parts suggests that flintlocks were indispensable for hunting and warfare by the eighteenth century. The French had perfected flintlock technology and traded and gifted guns to their Native American allies, as did the Dutch and English. *Fusils de chasse* (all French-made hunting guns, including those for the trade) were the most common type of gun in New France. Unlike military guns, a select few did not possess tested barrels and their decorations were often engraved, chiseled, or cast into the gun’s furniture (figure 29).

Despite their constant need for maintenance, consumer demand remained high. Payment vouchers indicate that the French Crown paid the Fort St. Joseph blacksmith to repair and maintain the guns of Native American allies. In addition, the French often gifted musket balls,

Figure 29 · This French side plate (ca. 1730–1760) features a hound on the chase, perhaps after a fleeing deer. The side plate is characteristic of the Type D trade gun, which was thought to be of high quality and “enjoyed wide acceptance among customers of the French” (Hamilton 1968).



The Potawatomi in the St. Joseph River Valley



Figure 30 · Projectile points, musket balls, and lead shot found at Fort St. Joseph are among the variety of munitions used by the people of the post.

lead shot, and gunpowder to the Native Americans, further evidence of the close alliance they shared (figure 30).

The Potawatomi from Fort St. Joseph to Today

After Fort St. Joseph was abandoned in 1781, some Potawatomi remained in the area. Boundary arguments and land cessions threatened their existence and way of life as U.S. citizens continued to move farther west and into Michigan. In 1830, one year after the village of Niles was founded, the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. This legislation eventually made about 100 million acres of land available for white settlement in the eastern U.S. by authorizing the expulsion of American Indians to areas west of the Mississippi River. Tensions and pressure mounted over the next eight years among Native Americans, land-hungry pioneers, and the U.S. government, culminating in the forced removal of many Potawatomi from southwest Michigan to Kansas and Oklahoma.

However, a small group of Native Americans led by Leopold Pokagon and other Potawatomi leaders made the case against removal, arguing that their practices of Catholicism and agriculture qualified them to remain (figure 31). Using money acquired through treaty negotiations, Pokagon purchased land for the group to settle near present-day Dowagiac, Michigan. The descendants of this group comprise the federally recognized Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, who continue to reside and thrive there today (figure 32).



Figure 31 · Potawatomi Chief Leopold Pokagon.



Figure 32 · Logo of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians.

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

The French began their exploration of North America along the Eastern Seaboard in the sixteenth century. French missionaries, explorers, and traders, and their English rivals, had different motivations for coming to the New World and ultimately settling at Fort St. Joseph. Some were driven by the search for the Northwest Passage, while others sought to profit from the sale of furs in Europe, gain notoriety by claiming land for the King, and make conversions to Catholicism. A closer look at the occupations and roles of the people of the post provides a better understanding of who they were, the activities they performed, and how they came to live at Fort St. Joseph.

Jesuit Missionaries

Converting Native peoples to Christianity was an important goal for the French in North America. Jesuit missionaries, an order of Catholic priests known formally as members of the Society of Jesus, were



Figure 33 · A living history reenactor portrays a Jesuit priest to inform members of the public about the mission of Fort St. Joseph during the Archaeology Open House.

trained in France to, among other duties, persuade Native peoples to convert. In their quest, Jesuits forged amicable relationships with Native Americans by learning their languages and adapting to their lifeways, finding themselves serving as powerful cultural mediators and liaisons between the Native Americans and French officials throughout New France (figure 33).

Founded by Ignatius Loyola and recognized by the Pope as an order in 1540, the Jesuits were among the first Europeans to come to New France in the early seventeenth century. They were charged primarily with converting as many Native Americans as possible and,

*The 5th day of the month of june 1745
I solemnly baptized a miami called
Mekabika8nga about fifty years old who
desired Holy Baptism and who seemed to
me to be sufficiently instructed and he took
the name of pierre. The godfather was Mr.
Marin de la perriere and the godmother
mde. Madelaine de Villiers his wife. (and
I baptized) conditionally a miami (woman)
likewise about fifty years old who took the
name of Marie. Her godfather was Louis
Metivier master carpenter and the
godmother Marie fafard his wife.*

GEORGE PARÉ AND MILO QUAIFFE, 1926

when necessary, serving the religious needs of the colonists. To fulfill these obligations, they established missions throughout the St. Lawrence and Mississippi River valleys and into the western Great Lakes region. Scores of Jesuits continued to administer the sacraments and help strengthen cultural ties between the French and Native Americans until the French Crown surrendered to the British in 1760.

Jesuit priests documented their work in baptism and marriage records during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They sought to convert Native Americans to Catholicism and undermine Native religious traditions. Native groups such as the Miami and Potawatomi

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph



Figure 34 · In 1918, the Women's Progressive League erected a stone cross to mark the assumed grave site of Father Allouez atop the bluff on Bond Street in Niles.

were not forced to adopt Christianity. Some converted willingly, perhaps out of curiosity, to strengthen alliances, or because they genuinely believed in the Christian teachings. Often, Native American religious specialists selected beliefs that were most consistent with their own worldview. Catholic conversion helped shape the destiny of some, like the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Indians, who avoided western removal and maintain a strong presence in the area to this day.

In the area now known as Fort St. Joseph, the Jesuits were granted a tract of land in 1686 measuring some twenty by twenty arpents (an area of about 34 acres [13.7 ha]) for a house, chapel, and fields fronting on the St. Joseph River. (An arpent is a French measure of distance equal to approximately 192 feet.) Father Jean Claude Allouez, a Jesuit priest, established the mission at Fort St. Joseph and was one of the most influential missionaries in New France (figure 34). Born in France in 1622, Father Allouez studied at Toulouse and was ordained in 1655, setting sail for Quebec just three years later. During his time in New France, Father Allouez

· Table 4 ·
Jesuit Missionaries and Their Dates of Service at Fort St. Joseph

Jean Claude Allouez	1687–1689
Claude Aveneau	1690–1707
Jean Mermet	1700–1702
Jean-Baptiste Chardon	1705, 1707–1712, 1729
Michel Guignas	1720–1721
Jean-Baptiste de Saint Pé	1721, 1734
Jean-Charles Guymonneau	1722–1723
Charles-Michel Mesaiger	1724–1731
Jean-Louis de la Pierre	1735
Pierre du Jaunay	1738, 1742, 1745, 1752
Jean-Baptiste de la Morinie	1740–1741, 1743–1744, 1752–1760
Pierre Potier	1761

traveled extensively to preach the Catholic faith among Native Americans and established several missions in the western Great Lakes region. A few years prior to the land grant, he arrived in the area of Fort St. Joseph from the Illinois Country with potential Miami converts.

From 1687 to 1760, numerous Jesuit priests visited Fort St. Joseph (table 4). Some, such as Father Pierre de Charlevoix, stayed only briefly while on their way to other destinations. Priests served the religious needs of the community by saying mass in addition to performing baptisms and marriages. The Fort St. Joseph baptism and marriage records indicate the timing of the visits, the names of the priests, and the sacraments they performed while in residence (see figure 19).

Objects of Devotion

Religious artifacts recovered archaeologically at Fort St. Joseph attest to the Catholic presence and Jesuit influence at the site during its occupation. These deeply personal, highly ornate, and symbolically charged objects include crosses, crucifixes, medallions, and rosary beads that testify to the sincerity of religious belief at the fort, as similarly conveyed in documentary sources. Material evidence confirms that many inhabitants of the fort, including the priests, French laity, and

Native Americans, owned rosaries, crucifixes, and other objects of religious devotion. While religious items are easy to identify at the fort, it is more difficult to ascertain their meaning to the people who used them. In a study that examined the distribution of these objects throughout eastern North America, Andrew Beaupré found that they occur in higher frequencies in areas where priests were present, suggesting that priests probably dispensed them to their flocks.

Rosaries consist of a series of beads, often ivory or bone, strung on a necklace and attached to either a crucifix or pendant. Beads are strung in groups of ten (decades) separated by a larger single bead for a worshipper to keep track of prayers. Typically, the main circlet of a rosary has fifty small plain round beads (five decades) separated by four larger convex or tubular beads, with two large and three small beads that link to the crucifix or pendant. This type of rosary is known as the standard Dominican rosary.



Figure 35 · Rosary found at Fort Michilimackinac.

Rosaries with extra decades are associated with specific religious orders. The main circlet of the Brigittine rosary, also used by the Carmelites, contains sixty small beads, or six decades (figure 35). In her study of religious belief at Fort Michilimackinac, Lynn Evans (2020:11) pointed out that “the extra decade is associated with an additional Joyful, Sorrowful or Glorious mystery to meditate on while praying, and the total of sixty-three small beads represents the number of years Mary is believed to have lived on Earth.” The main circlet of the Franciscan Crown Rosary has seventy small beads, or seven decades, to represent the Seven Joys of Mary. Although archaeological excavations have not revealed an intact rosary at Fort St. Joseph, numerous individual beads indicate their breakage and loss at the site.

Representations of the crucifixion unearthed at Fort St. Joseph also symbolize the inhabitants’ strong Catholic faith. The relatively small size of some crucifixes and crosses suggests that they would have been suspended from rosaries and used in daily prayer. Crucifixes, by definition, display prominently the outstretched body of Christ nailed to the cross (figure 36). In contrast, crosses depict the central mystery of Christianity in the absence of depictions of the corpus or body of Christ. Crosses, made of copper alloy, lead, or trade silver, are simpler than the elaborate crucifixes but likely carried similar meanings (figure 37).

More than a dozen complete religious medallions are attributed to Fort St. Joseph, including two that have



Figure 36 · Crucifix found at Fort St. Joseph.



Figure 37 · This crude Latin-style cross of trade silver was likely made by someone living at the fort.

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

been recovered in excavations. These medallions were often casts of Catholic saints and religious symbols, reflecting the owner's personality and patron saint.

One such copper alloy medallion depicts Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary with Latin inscriptions (figure 38). On the medal's obverse side is a representation of Christ and the Latin inscription "CLARIOR SOLE MISERE," which roughly translates as "you, who are brighter

than the sun, have mercy on us." On the reverse is an image of Mary with the Latin "MATER SALVATORIS"—"Mother of the Savior."

These religious items resemble those from other French posts, such as Fort Michilimackinac, indicating their wide distribution across New France. Their frequency and variety of forms is evidence for the piety of the people of the post (figure 39).

ARTIFACTS IN FOCUS

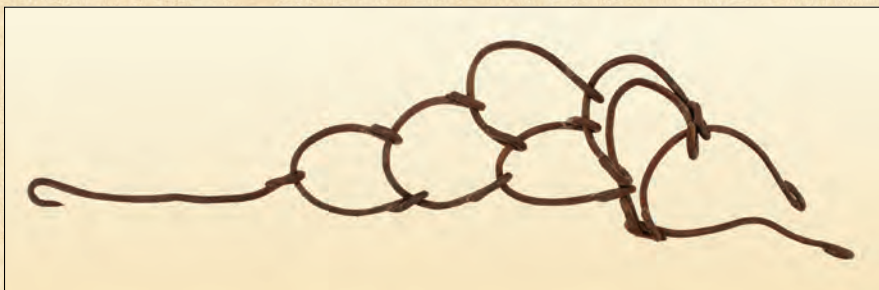
The Cilice

The discovery of an unusual artifact at the fort has the potential to shed light on Catholic devotional practices among the Native Americans and French-Canadians living at this frontier outpost. In 2004, Fort St. Joseph archaeologists recovered a cilice, an item of self-mortification that was worn covertly around one's arm or leg to inflict pain, emulate the suffering of Christ, and attain a state of grace. Although the artifact was incomplete, enough remained for its eventual identification. This cilice is a rare example from archaeological context in North America. Another cilice from Maryland is also associated with the Jesuits.

We may never know exactly who used the cilice, but it can be linked to three different groups: Jesuit priests, French-Canadian inhabitants, and Native

American converts. Jesuit priests were known to employ the cilice, and records indicate the Fort St. Joseph priests' depth of devotion. In conjunction with the written records, the recovery of the cilice—more so than any of the other religious items recovered—allows us to infer that at least some fort inhabitants were practicing Catholics and may have privately used the cilice.

The cilice could have also been used by any of the baptized Native Americans in the area who were practicing Catholics. Native American ideology often included acts of suffering (such as fasting or exposure to cold) as part of a spiritual quest, and the use of the cilice could have been easily grafted onto Native American beliefs. The cilice underscores the importance of Catholicism at this frontier outpost.



The Fort St. Joseph cilice.



Jesuits would fasten a cilice around their arm or leg to emulate the suffering of Christ.



Figure 38 · This religious medallion is a reproduction of one found at the fort. It is used to raise funds to support the investigation and interpretation of Fort St. Joseph.



Figure 39 · This iconographic plaque ring was recovered in archaeological excavations at Fort St. Joseph. The ring features the inscription “IHS”—the first three letters of the Greek name for Jesus—with a cross rising from the bar of the “H” and three nails below.

Military Personnel

A military presence at Fort St. Joseph reflects events occurring on the larger stage of North America. From 1691 to 1761, French military personnel sporadically occupied Fort St. Joseph. The garrison was withdrawn from the fort for nearly two decades (1698–1717), when the fort was officially closed due to a glut in the beaver market that had severe economic consequences for the Crown. The role of the military was to maintain the site’s strategic position on a major trade route near the portage between the St. Joseph and Kankakee Rivers, while upholding alliances with friendly Native American groups to facilitate the exchange of furs. The small garrison included a commandant and ten to fifteen officers and enlisted men. This contingent was no match for the large numbers of Native American men capable of engaging in warfare and was merely symbolic of the French Crown.

Officers often accepted an assignment as a commandant as a way to make money and earn promotions (table 5, page 32). The commandant’s benefits included



Figure 40 · At Fort St. Joseph, commandants and members of their garrison were often active in the fur trade.

permission to trade furs or lease out these rights, as well as supervising trade activity by granting permission to traders to conduct commerce at their forts (figure 40). The soldiers they commanded received food, clothing, and a good salary by the standards of the time. After their service for the Crown was completed, many soldiers established their own farms and received aid from the government for the first few years.

Text continues on page 32 ➤

The Poutuevatamis (Potawatomi) are of all the Indians the most faithful to our interests. Never have they soaked their hands in French blood. They have even warned us of plots formulated against us by the other nations.

UNSIGNED LETTER, 1717, FROM PEYSER 1978

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

PEOPLE IN FOCUS

French Adversaries and Allies

During the early 1730s, the French garrison at Fort St. Joseph helped lead campaigns intent on destroying the Fox (Mesquakie) and Chickasaw nations. The campaign against the Fox would succeed; that against the Chickasaw met with disaster and ended in a negotiated settlement and uneasy peace.

As the fur trade expanded westward, the Fox of the Wisconsin River area sought to prevent French traders from crossing their lands to deal directly with the Sioux tribes of the upper Mississippi River region. The Fox launched attacks on tribes allied with the French, but those assaults primarily impacted posts in the Illinois Country that the French Crown had, in 1717, placed under the authority of the governor in Louisiana. French traders there competed for furs with their counterparts from Quebec. The rivalry between Quebec and Louisiana may have accounted for the apparent reluctance of Governor-General Rigaud de Vaudreuil in Quebec to move against the Fox. By the early 1720s, however, a growing scarcity of furs in the Great Lakes region and a desire to find the Northwest Passage led the Crown to demand that the French military and their Native American allies breach the Fox barrier.

In 1726, Charles de la Boische, Marquis de Beauharnois, replaced Vaudreuil as the governor-general. A year later, the French constructed Fort Beauharnois at Lake Pepin (in present-day Florence Township, Minnesota) in the Sioux country to circumvent the Fox. Two years later, a force of 400 French and 1,200 Native American allies burned Fox villages and destroyed crops, although the Fox

themselves were forewarned of the invasion and managed to flee.

The success (albeit limited) of this expedition and Governor-General Beauharnois's exhortations to take up arms against the Fox had a powerful influence on Native American allies. Other nations abandoned the Fox, who in the summer of 1730 decided to flee eastward to seek sanctuary with their allies in the Iroquois Confederacy. About 350 Fox warriors and 650 other Fox men, women, and children trekked to a point east-southeast of Starved Rock near present-day LaSalle, Illinois. There, they dug in.

French soldiers and Native American warriors converged on the Fox position. Lieutenant Robert Groston de St. Ange arrived from Fort de Chartres with 500 men on August 17, soon reinforced by 200 more Native Americans; Lieutenant Nicolas-Antoine Coulon, Sieur de Villiers brought 300 men from Fort St. Joseph a few days later; and on September 1, Lieutenant Nicolas Joseph des Noyelles arrived from Fort Miami (present-day Fort Wayne, Indiana) with more reinforcements. De Villiers took command of the 1,400 men who surrounded the Fox.

On September 8, the Fox used the cover of a violent thunderstorm to attempt a breakout, but an informer and crying Fox babies revealed their escape. In the ensuing battle, the French and their Native American allies nearly exterminated the Fox. Only about 50 to 60 Fox men survived.

In January 1731, the Fox sent one of their surviving leaders to Fort St. Joseph to surrender and beg for

mercy. "If you truly want to have pity on me," he declared, "I shall remain with you from now on. You are truly the Master and if you wish, I shall bring all the rest of my village to be with you."

De Villiers took two Fox leaders to Montreal that summer, where Governor-General Beauharnois agreed to spare the surviving members of their tribe if they would remain at peace and send him hostages. Despite the agreement, Beauharnois allowed Iroquois and Huron warriors to undertake another campaign against the Fox during the winter of 1731–1732; another 300 Fox were killed. The Fox Wars ended with the virtual annihilation of the Fox Nation.

Conflict with the Chickasaw Nation erupted as the Fox Wars came to an end. The Chickasaw, who lived in present-day western Tennessee and northern Mississippi, were influenced by English traders from the Carolinas and made sporadic attacks against the French in their region, assaulting French-allied Native Americans and disrupting the movement of French goods on the Mississippi River. The French had checked the Chickasaw by pitting them against their traditional enemies, the Choctaws, but by the early 1730s the Choctaws were becoming dissatisfied with their French allies. In 1736, facing a possible rapprochement between the two tribes that would create a united British-allied front against the French, Louisiana Governor Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville dispatched an expedition against the Chickasaw.

The attack met with disaster. The French assaulted a fortified Chickasaw village and ran into devas-

tating musket fire from defenses designed and directed by the English. Scores of French and Native American allies were killed or captured, and the Chickasaw burned many of the captives to death at the stake.

In 1739, Bienville assembled a huge body of men to renew the campaign against the Chickasaw. The expedition included soldiers, militia, and allied Native Americans from Louisiana and others from the Great Lakes region under the leadership of French officers Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil and Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville. Fort St. Joseph served as a staging point for men and supplies headed south to participate in the expedition.

Fort St. Joseph's commander, Nicolas-Antoine Coulon, Sieur de Villiers (*fils*) bought goods from merchants Louis Hamelin and his associate, Louis Gatineau, that included food, cloth, black powder, musket balls, and lead shot. Fort St. Joseph's blacksmiths, Antoine Deshêtres and Michel Baillargeon *dit* Durivage, repaired muskets, tomahawks, and pikes for the men.

This second expedition against the Chickasaw achieved only limited success. Disease and reluctant Native American allies reduced the number of combatants, and after a few skirmishes the French found the Chickasaw willing to negotiate. Instead of dealing his enemies a knockout blow, Bienville settled for a peace treaty that obligated the French to prevent their Native American allies from raiding Chickasaw villages. The campaigns against the Chickasaw helped undermine French prestige with Natives throughout the region.

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

• Table 5 •
French Commandants of Fort St. Joseph

Augustin Legardeur, Sieur de Courtemanche Ensign, lieutenant in 1692	1691–1696, Winter 1701–1702
Jean-Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes Junior officer	1697–1699, 1705, 1713
Jean-Baptiste de St. Ours, Sieur Deschaillons Captain (fourteen-man garrison)	1717–1720
Martin Rémy, Sieur de Montmidy Second ensign, second in command under Deschaillons	1720–1722
Étienne de Villedonné Captain (ten-man garrison)	1722–1725
Nicholas-Antoine Coulon, Sieur de Villiers Lieutenant	1725–1731
Alexandre Dagneau, Sieur de Douville	1731
Jacques-Pierre Daneau, Sieur de Muy Second ensign	1731–1735
Paul-Louis d’Asmard, Sieur de Lusignan Lieutenant	1735–1738
Nicholas-Antoine Coulon, Sieur de Villiers Lieutenant (son of earlier commandant with the same name)	1739–1742
Louis Coulon, Sieur de Villiers Ensign (later known as Le Grand Villiers and famous at Fort Necessity)	1742–1745
Jean-Baptiste Céloron, Sieur de Blainville Ensign	1745–1747
François-Marie Picoté, Sieur de Belestre Second ensign, first ensign in 1748	1747–1750
Pierre-Jean-Baptiste-François-Xavier Legardeur, Sieur de Repentigny Captain	1750–1751
Pierre-Antoine de la Corne, Sieur de la Colombière Lieutenant, captain in 1753	1751–1753
Roch de St. Ours, Sieur Deschaillons Captain	1754–1756
Jean Leverrier, Chevalier of St. Louis Captain	1757–1759
Corporal Bontemps No officer present, Bontemps signed as commandant	1759–1760

Fort St. Joseph fell under British control during the Seven Years’ War, also known as the French and Indian War (1756–1763) (figure 41). In 1760, the post was surrendered to the English with the capitulation of Montreal. A year later, the fort was taken over and garrisoned by soldiers from the 60th Royal American Regiment led by Captain Henry Balfour (figure 42). Captain Balfour did not remain at the fort for long, and the young ensign Francis Schlösser was given command in 1761.

During Pontiac’s rebellion in 1763, allied Native groups protesting British rule attacked several forts in the western Great Lakes region (figure 43). On May 25, 1763, Native peoples surrounded Fort St. Joseph and took control of the fort. Ten British soldiers were killed, while Commander Ensign Schlösser and two others were taken prisoner, eventually being exchanged for Native American hostages at Detroit. A year later, Fort St. Joseph was returned to British control during peace negotiations. The British never permanently regarrisoned Fort St. Joseph, but a small detachment of the 8th Regiment of Foot from Michilimackinac briefly returned to occupy the fort in 1779 during the American Revolution. Although the British anticipated an attack on Detroit, the assault never materialized. Fort St. Joseph remained of British interest, even after American Independence.

Despite raids and wars settled by treaty, competing interests and struggles for control of the fort continued. In 1781, an expedition of French and Native peoples from Spanish St. Louis claimed Fort St. Joseph for the King of Spain. They plundered the fort, raised the Spanish flag for the commandant of St. Louis, Don Francisco Cruzat, and returned to St. Louis the following day (figure 44). Some of the


Text continues on page 36 

Figure 41 · British soldiers who garrisoned the fort after the Seven Year's War are portrayed by living history reenactors at the site.



Figure 42 · Found near Fort St. Joseph, this button most likely belonged to a member of the 60th Royal American Regiment.



Figure 43 · Chief Pontiac as imagined by nineteenth-century painter John Mix Stanley.

Figure 44 · The American, French, British, and Spanish flags have been raised during public events to represent the countries' presence at Fort St. Joseph.



European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

PEOPLE IN FOCUS

Ensign Francis Schlösser

Fort St. Joseph's first British commander, Ensign Francis Schlösser of the 60th Regiment of Foot, was a young man out of his depth. The post on the St. Joseph River at the southern end of Lake Michigan was a small community composed of newly arrived English traders, established French families, and surrounding Native American villages. To succeed at such a frontier post, a commanding officer required strength of character, intelligence, experience, and enormous diplomatic skills—all of which the new British officer sorely lacked.

During the French and Indian War, the 60th Regiment's ranks included two members of the Schlösser family: John and Francis. John Joseph Schlösser, a highly respected officer and engineer, had been commissioned a captain-lieutenant of the regiment in 1756 and was promoted to the rank of captain in 1758. A veteran of the Swiss Army, he supervised the rebuilding of Little Fort Niagara near the famous waterfalls in 1760.

Francis, Captain Schlösser's younger son, gained his commission in the regiment through his father's auspices and the death of Captain Thomas Jocelyn (1759), which started a chain of promotions. On August 13, Captain Schlösser, then at Fort Ligonier in Pennsylvania, wrote to Colonel Henry Bouquet and asked him to recommend Francis to fill the vacancy created as officers were promoted upward to take Captain Jocelyn's place. He penned, "Since you have done so much for his father I hope that you will help him by extracting his son from his present miserable condition." On August 29, Francis Schössler received his ensign's commission, the lowest commissioned officer's rank in the British Army.

In 1760, after the fall of New France, British Commander in Chief General Lord Jeffery Amherst ordered a portion of the 60th Regiment to garrison Britain's newly acquired posts in the western Great

Lakes region. In September 1761, Captain Henry Balfour of the 80th Regiment led troops from Detroit to take possession of the posts of Michilimackinac, La Baye (Green Bay, Wisconsin), and St. Joseph. Three officers of the 60th would command the posts and their garrisons. Lieutenant William Leslye would command Michilimackinac, the largest post, while ensigns James Gorrell and Francis Schlösser would command the two smaller posts, La Baye and St. Joseph, respectively.

Balfour's expedition arrived at Fort St. Joseph on November 9, 1761. Its new commander found the fort's oak palisade in good condition, although its bastions had no platforms on which he could post men to deliver defensive fire. Fort St. Joseph, however, was not situated with an eye toward defense. Ensign Thomas Hutchins, who surveyed the fort in 1762, observed that its position on low ground beside the river suggested that it was "intended more as a place for traders to put their effects in than as a work of defense to keep the [Native Americans] at a proper distance."

Schlösser occupied a house used by itinerant priests when they visited the post, there being no dwelling specifically designated for the fort commander. Balfour left him there with a sergeant and nine privates of the 60th Regiment, along with rations



(above) Portrait of a 60th Regiment of Foot soldier.

for their subsistence: twelve barrels of flour, four and a half barrels of pork, and three firkins of butter. During the next year or so, the British garrison apparently grew slightly in number: accounts vary, but by 1762, reports stated that the fort had a complement of fifteen to seventeen enlisted men.

Young, inexperienced, arrogant, and prone to drink, Ensign Schlösser lost no time in outraging Fort St. Joseph residents. In the spring of 1762, Captain Donald Campbell at Detroit wrote to his superior officer, Colonel Henry Bouquet, cautioning him that an unspecified individual had written to him to complain about Schlösser's conduct. Captain Campbell declared that he feared Schlösser would "never doe [*sic*] in that command," because the young officer lacked the requisite character and good judgment. The complaint must have come from a European trader at the post, because Campbell noted that the Native Americans had not protested yet, but he declared that he would relieve Schlösser of command if that occurred. Captain Campbell promised Colonel Bouquet that he would do all he could to support the young ensign. To save face for all concerned, however, he suggested that Bouquet have Captain Schlösser himself ask for his son to be relieved of command on the pretext that he would like to have the two of them reunited.

Captain Campbell put his finger on the problem when he observed that, "The French & Indians are so much connected that if you disoblige one of them, the other takes part." Over the years, the French and Native Americans had formed strong social and political ties, whereas the English were new arrivals who scorned fraternization with the Native Americans and were rarely fluent in either French or any of the indigenous languages. Keeping the peace might have exceeded the Fort St. Joseph commander's limited talents.

Concerned about the situation, Captain Campbell dispatched a "person" to Fort St. Joseph to investigate the complaints into Schlösser's conduct and give him advice. Schlösser promised Campbell that he would mend his ways and that the Captain would never again hear any grievances against him. Captain Campbell cautiously declared that "the whole affair was made up for this time."

Young Schlösser soon forgot his promise, and word of new offenses continued to find their way to his superior officers. In October 1762, one of Fort St. Joseph's traders, Frederick von Hambach, complained to Captain Campbell that Schlösser would often get "what you call merry." In one of several instances, a drunken Schlösser broke into a Frenchman's house while its occupant was sleeping and—using the startled man's nose as a handle—pulled him to his feet. The young officer called out the guard and cried that he had orders to burn the fort, kill its French occupants, and march the garrison away.

Schlösser's conduct did little to smooth relations between the British soldiers and traders on one side and the Native Americans and French on the other. The English treated the Native Americans and French with disdain, and the British Crown, under great financial pressure owing to the expenses of the French and Indian War, reduced the quantity of presents distributed.

In 1763, Native American resentment boiled over in the uprising that became known as Pontiac's War. Pontiac, an Odawa leader, encouraged Great Lakes tribes to rebel against the English and drive them from the region. That spring, Native American warriors fell on posts throughout the Great Lakes, including Michilimackinac, La Baye, Miami, and St. Joseph, killing or capturing their garrisons and the English traders. Of the forts in the region, only Detroit, Niagara, and Pitt averted capture.



European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph



At Fort St. Joseph, Schlösser received warning of the impending attack. On the morning of May 25, Louis Thérèse Chevalier, a senior and respected French trader with a *métis* wife, alerted Schlösser that a party of seventeen Potawatomi from Detroit had arrived at the post. They had ostensibly come to visit relatives, Chevalier told him, but they had “ill designs.” The ensign, with characteristic contempt for Frenchmen, paid no heed. The visiting Native Americans entered the fort and asked permission to bid the commander a good day. Schlösser belatedly realized the danger and ran to the barracks to order his sergeant to have the men take up arms.

Accounts differ as to the exact circumstances of what ensued. Schlösser himself reported later that he assembled some of the French residents in his quarters and went to speak with them, but that within a few minutes he heard a cry from the barracks and the Native Americans who were in the room immediately seized him. Other Potawatomi rushed the fort’s gate and overpowered the sentry. Within minutes, ten soldiers lay dead and Schlösser and two others were captive. The Potawatomi then plundered the stores of trade goods.

Schlösser fared better than most of his men. The Potawatomi herded him and the other captives to Detroit, which Pontiac’s warriors had under siege; on June 14, 1763, fort commandant Major Henry Gladwin exchanged two Native American captives for the three Englishmen.

Francis Schlösser remained at Detroit for at least the next year. In April 1764, he and ensigns John Christie and Christopher Pauli asked Colonel Bouquet to consider them for promotion due to the number of vacancies created by the deaths of higher-ranking officers. They also requested reimbursement for the loss of their baggage and goods; in Schlösser’s case, that amounted to 87 pounds, 10 shillings. No record survives of the Colonel’s reaction to their bold request, but Schlösser remained an ensign to the end of his short career.

In the late fall of 1764, Schlösser took command of the Royal Blockhouse at the juncture of Wood Creek and the east end of Oneida Lake in central New York. Schlösser commanded the three-story fort from November 22, 1764 until May 27, 1765. He then succeeded his father as commander of Fort Stanwix (present-day Rome, New York), where he served from November 16, 1765 to June 18, 1766.

In 1768, Schlösser was murdered by a *panis*, an enslaved Native American, in New York. It is stated that sometime earlier, Schlösser had allegedly killed a servant and then shot the *panis*’s dog. On April 18, a Daniel Jaqueri, who had left Montreal the prior month, reported that the *panis* had in turn killed Schlösser and hidden the body. His remains were recovered and taken to Montreal for burial. Francis Schlösser, for all his failings, would earn a place in history as Fort St. Joseph’s last commanding officer.

raiders were eager to plunder the English goods held at the fort, whereas others sought to avenge property losses suffered during earlier English attacks in the St. Louis area. In any event, the post was never reoccupied and American control of this area was ultimately established by the end of the eighteenth century. However, it was not settled by Euro-American pioneers until after the area was surveyed by the U.S. government in 1827. No obvious traces of the fort remained.

Material Traces of Military Occupants

Military personnel often occupied barracks and other buildings that set them apart from the civilian population. Barracks typically consisted of single-room structures or row houses composed of three to four rooms. While archaeologists have not yet unearthed evidence of a barracks or military supply houses, such as a powder magazine, at Fort St. Joseph, remains of military buildings unearthed across New France can



Figure 45 · Aerial view of Fort de Chartres in the Illinois Country, showing original and reconstructed buildings and features, including the palisade, bastions, powder magazine (the oldest standing building in Illinois), storehouses, officers' quarters, and barracks.

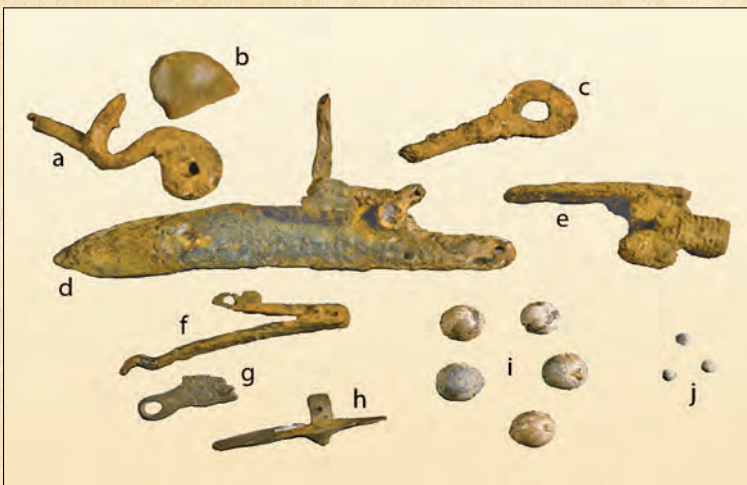


Figure 46 · Flintlock hardware and ammunition recovered from Fort St. Joseph include these artifacts: (a) gun cock, (b) honey-colored gunflint, (c) vise screw, (d) lock plate with frizzen, (e) breech plug, (f) main spring, (g) serpentine sideplate fragment, (h) trigger guard, (i) musket balls, and (j) lead shot.

provide insights on what these structures may have looked like (figure 45; see also *Shelting New France*). The overall paucity of military paraphernalia found thus far suggests that soldiers lived in areas of the site that have yet to be investigated.

Military firearms of various sizes were issued to soldiers stationed at forts and consisted of simple yet durable

locks and metal hardware (for example, side plates, butt plates, trigger guards) (figure 46). In the early eighteenth century, the French developed some of the earliest gun patterns and regulations for their armies (figure 47). The *fusil ordinaire* was the basic infantry musket. In general, iron parts were used on this firearm, although brass was substituted for officers. Its pattern persisted for all of the eighteenth century. The *fusil de chasse* was the common gun with plain hardware. The *fusil de traite* was, as its name indicates, used for trade and also had elaborate hardware including cast and engraved decorations. Officers, prominent explorers, and traders carried this type of firearm and presented them to high-ranking Native Americans as gifts.

Like the French, the English also developed a consistent line of firearms. The Long Land Pattern musket, more commonly known as the Brown Bess, was one of the first lines to be standardized and used through the eighteenth century. These firearms were fitted with brass furniture and varied slightly for officers and ordinary militia. Material evidence of the British military at the fort consists of several gun parts, including a lock plate, butt plates, gun cocks, and ramrod guides (figure 48).

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

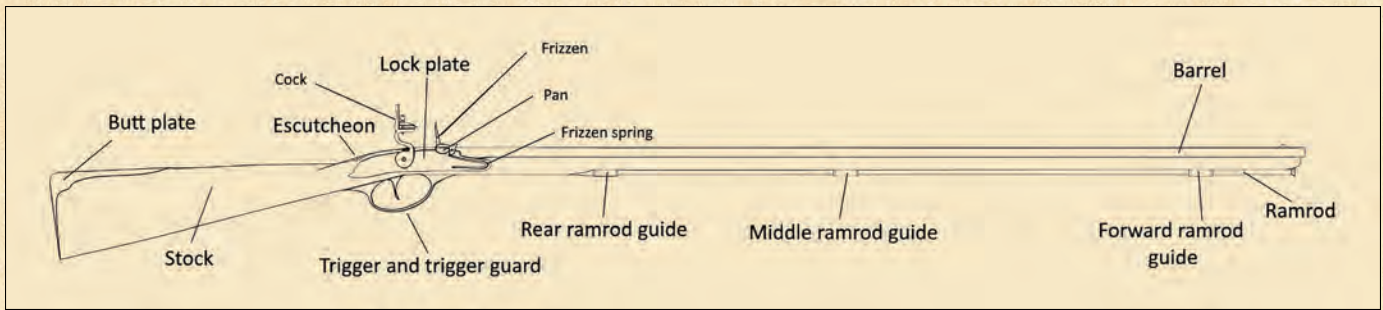


Figure 47 · An eighteenth-century French firearm and its many components.

Figure 48 · This copper alloy butt plate would have been fastened to an English trade gun in the mid-eighteenth century.

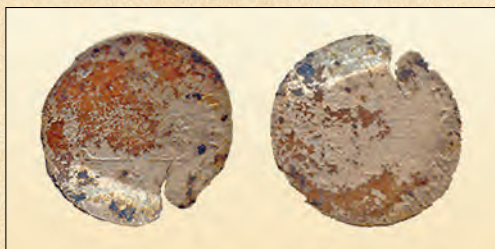


Figure 49 · Flintlock components recovered from the gunsmith's cache (Feature 4) at Fort St. Joseph.

Many of the flintlock-related objects from Fort St. Joseph are badly rusted and difficult to identify with certainty. In his study of the flintlock components in the archaeological collections, Kevin Jones was able to identify the date range and/or country of origin for thirty-six of the 176 sampled artifacts (table 6). His research demonstrates that the gun parts recovered from Fort St. Joseph fit the timeline of its occupation as expected. Of the thirty-six identified artifacts, Jones determined that twenty-one of the parts were from trade or civilian muskets, while only four were from military weapons (eleven were undetermined). While only a small proportion of the firearm components in the collection could be identified, these findings support the notion that Fort St. Joseph was an important trading post rather than a military stronghold.

A cache of gun parts recovered from Fort St. Joseph may be associated with Antoine Deshêtres, the resident blacksmith at the post during the 1730s and 1740s (figure 49). The cache included more than a hundred gun parts, including twenty-nine breech plugs, twenty-six gun cocks, twenty-two frizzens (steels), two lock plates, two mainsprings, and a trigger guard. Several pieces of cut brass, a tinkling cone, and a 30-*dernier* coin (*double sol*), minted in France from 1709 to 1713 for use in overseas colonies, were among the miscellaneous metal artifacts found in this cache (figure

Figure 50 · This 30-*dernier* coin found in Feature 4 dates from 1709–1713.



· Table 6 ·
Timeline of Military Artifacts Recovered from Fort St. Joseph

Artifact Number	Artifact Type	1680	1685	1690	1695	1700	1705	1710	1715	1720	1725	1730	1735	1740	1745	1750	1755	1760	1765
08-1-107.01	Butt plate	French	French																
02-1-182.07d	Cock			British	British	British	British	British											
02-1-182.06	Lock plate			British	British	British	British	British	British										
98-3-0.36a	Trigger guard					French	French	French											
98-3.0.36b	Trigger guard					French	French	French											
02-1-115.17	Trigger guard					French	French	French	French	French									
02-1-128.17	Sideplate					French	French	French	French	French									
02-1-202.07f	Cock					British	British	British	British										
02-1-203.08	Lock plate					French	French	French	French										
04-1-074.18	Sideplate					French	French	French	French	French									
08-2-63.11	Escutcheon						French	French	French										
15-2-015	Sideplate							French	French	French	French								
10-2-148.01	Lock plate								French	French	French	French							
10-2-109.01	Cock									French	French	French							
98-3-0.31	Cock																		
02-1-115.09m	Cock																		
02-1-203.05	Cock																		
10-2-113.01	Cock																		
13-2-123.01	Cock																		
98-3-0.38	Sideplate										French	French	French	French					
98-3-0.35b	Butt plate													British	British	British	British		
98-3-0.42	Butt plate													French	French	French	French		
06-2-93w.22	Finial													French	French	French	French		
08-2-45w.15	Finial													French	French	French	French		
04-1-54.18	Sideplate														French	French	French		
98-3-178.15	Trigger guard															French	French		
04-1-115.01	Butt plate																British	British	British

KEY French British unknown country of origin

50). The date of the coin is consistent with the age of the flintlock components from the cache (first half of the eighteenth century) and coincides with the period Deshêtres worked at the fort. The gun parts found within are representative of civilian, trade, and military flintlocks, suggesting that Deshêtres fixed all manner of guns.

Musket balls, lead shot, and gunflints are also found in site excavations (figure 51). These artifacts do not pertain exclusively to the soldiers who were stationed at the fort; they would have been used by soldiers and civilians alike. Civilians hunted large game with musket balls, whereas the French and British military used them in warfare. Lead shot is common at the fort

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and would have been effective for hunting smaller game.

Military uniforms were fitted with distinctive buttons that often indicate different regiments and countries of origin, whereas others are generic in style. Two buttons with cast designs represent the King's 8th and the 60th Regiment of Foot (figure 52). Several dome-shaped brass buttons with flanged edges from the collection are indicative of the French *Troupes de la Marine* and pre-date 1760 (figure 53).

More information will be revealed about the military presence at Fort St. Joseph as archaeological excavations continue. Comparisons with contemporaneous sites like Fort Michilimackinac and unearthing additional archaeological clues can provide a better understanding of where the soldiers lived and performed their daily activities, the clothing they wore, their diet, and how they spent their leisure time. Artifacts, structures, and food remains provide tangible evidence of military life that complement official documents about Fort St. Joseph.

Skilled Craftsmen

A blacksmith/gunsmith and a master carpenter are among the skilled craftsmen documented at Fort St. Joseph (table 7, page 42). They were contracted laborers who learned their trade through an apprenticeship. For instance, in 1747, gunsmith Joseph Maurice Chevalier worked alongside his experienced uncle Antoine Deshêtres at Fort St. Joseph when Joseph was 19 years old, probably learning the trade and refining his skills. Often, apprentices would work under multiple craftsmen to diversify their abilities.

Blacksmiths/Gunsmiths

Blacksmiths were employed in large urban centers and at many of the forts and settlements throughout New France (figure 54). They typically produced domestic goods like axes, nails, and hinges, whereas gunsmiths focused on gun repair. At smaller settlements like Fort St. Joseph, these roles were performed by a single individual, perhaps with a helper. Smiths at Fort St. Joseph produced and repaired objects used for cooking,

Figure 51 · Honey-colored gunflint recovered during excavation at Fort St. Joseph.



Figure 52 · A button (*inset*) recovered in the vicinity of Fort St. Joseph resembles the buttons on the coat sleeve of this living history reenactor representing the King's 8th Regiment.

Figure 53 · This button was worn by a member of the French *Troupes de la Marine* at Fort St. Joseph.





Figure 54 · Fort St. Joseph blacksmiths performed a variety of tasks for post residents and local Native Americans.

gardening, cutting wood, hunting, fishing, trapping, and constructing buildings.

The remoteness of Fort St. Joseph may have also required its blacksmith to adapt to meet the varied needs of its inhabitants (figure 55). Objects listed in historical documents and found in the archaeological record indicate that the resident blacksmith also made repairs for the military and Native peoples to ensure their guns were in working order. Native American groups often requested that the French or English provide them with access to a blacksmith or gunsmith, suggesting the value they placed on the smith's work. Historical documents reveal the names of several blacksmiths employed at the fort, including Antoine Deshêtres (1731–1751); Deshêtres's partner, Michel Baillargeon *dit* Durivage (1739–?); Deshêtres's nephew, Joseph Maurice Chevalier (1747); and Michel Girardin (1755–1760). Prior to Deshêtres, Julien Perrière, a member of the Sieur Étienne de Villedonné garrison (1722–172?), is briefly reported to have served as a blacksmith at the fort, but more documentation is needed to confirm his role.



Figure 55 · This object was found in the vicinity of the fort and donated to the Niles History Center. While translating historic documents, Dr. Joseph L. Peyser identified it as the tomahawk-dagger mentioned in two payment vouchers.

BLACKSMITHING SPACES

Blacksmithing typically required spaces for work, domestic activities, and storage of raw materials and products. Work areas—containing a forge, anvil base, and possibly a workbench—have been identified in archaeological contexts elsewhere and typically include a large heat source and a concentration of artifacts related to blacksmithing activities (figure 56). A forge required a brick or stone chimney with a platform about waist high where the blacksmith could easily access the heat source and forge iron. A packed earthen floor, rather than wood, would be typical to prevent fires.

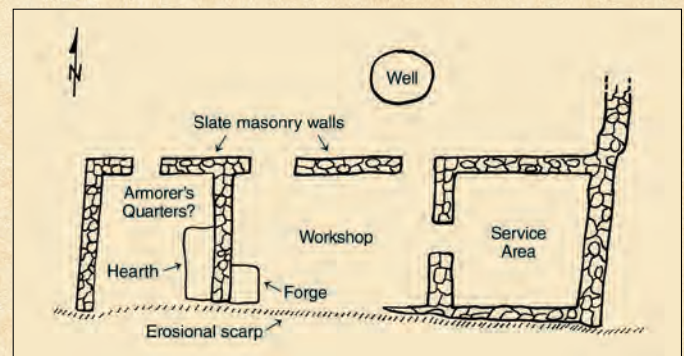


Figure 56 · The original three-room plan of Structure 2, used by the blacksmith at Fort Pentagoet (ca. 1635–1670) in Maine, suggests the types of blacksmithing spaces that may have existed at Fort St. Joseph.

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· Table 7 ·
Select Payment Vouchers Made to the Skilled Craftsmen at Fort St. Joseph

Voucher Date	Skilled Craftsmen	Clients	Tasks Performed
August 7, 1739	Antoine Deshêtres (blacksmith, gunsmith) Michel Baillargeon <i>dit</i> Durivage (gunsmith)	Frenchmen and Native Americans serving in the Chickasaw War	Inspected a musket; made a gun cock, a mainspring, a sight bead and holder, a tomahawk-dagger, three screws, two sears, two tomahawks, and two side plate screws; repaired a kettle cover, a lock plate, a tomahawk, a tumbler, and three pikes; rebrazed a pistol; and tempered a steel.
May 15, 1746	Antoine Deshêtres	Fort residents, signed by Jean-Baptiste Céloron, Sieur de Blainville	Brazed and joined gun parts; made and/or repaired 25 gun cocks, and 30 steels; and sharpened 34 axes. Served as interpreter in absence of Jean Baptiste Dubois.
April 22, 1747	Antoine Deshêtres	Native Americans, signed by Claude Marin, Sieur de la Perrière	Made and/or repaired a small bell, a kettle bottom and flanges, two hinges, axes and pickaxes, darts, musket parts, metal projectile points, saddle parts, and tomahawks (including a tomahawk-dagger for Haoussa's son-in-law).
August 19, 1747	Joseph Maurice Chevalier (gunsmith)	Frenchmen, approved by Villeray, Commandant of Fort Nipigon	Repaired weapons.
September 25, 1747	Antoine Deshêtres	Louis-Césaire Dagneau Douville de Quindre	Made and/or repaired a musket joint, a spear, a steel, a trigger guard, two tomahawks, several curved knives, and screws.
December 16, 1747	Antoine Deshêtres	Native Americans, by order of Ensign Claude Marin, Sieur de la Perrière	Brazed seams; made or repaired a foresight, a joint, a shortened steel, a steel spring, a tumbler, gun cocks, mainsprings and small springs, musket breeches, ramrod holders, screws, sears, steels and weighted steels, and top jaws; sawed off a musket; tightened two axes; and tempered a musket stock, two steels, and sight beads; and room and board for two men for five days.

Voucher Date	Skilled Craftsmen	Clients	Tasks Performed
December 29, 1747	Antoine Deshêtres	Native Americans, certified by François-Marie Picoté, Sieur de Belestre	Constructed a coffin for Pinchicaché's son and a hut for Pinchicaché (twenty pieces of squared timber, twenty pegs, two doors and fasteners) and repaired gun parts.
May 23, 1749	Antoine Deshêtres	Native Americans and fort residents, signed by François-Marie Picoté, Sieur de Belestre	Made and/or repaired gun parts.
May 13, 1750	Antoine Deshêtres		Assembled muskets; made and/or repaired gun cocks and screws, mainsprings, pickaxes, scrapers, steels, and tomahawks; and repaired kettles. Made a jail of square-cut stone, 10.6 feet long by 8.5 feet wide, and provided the necessary ironwork.
June 10, 1751	Antoine Deshêtres		Made and/or repaired gun parts.

Domestic areas used by blacksmiths would have served as their dwelling and a place to interact with customers. A fireplace would be located within to provide heat, because the forge was located in a separate room. Domestic spaces would contain household and personal artifacts and appear similar to other dwellings. Blacksmiths used storage areas for raw iron, spare parts, finished goods, and metal objects that were cached and in need of repair.

At Fort St. Joseph, the presence of flintlock hardware and iron caches (Feature 4 and Feature 19) are indicative of gunsmithing and metalworking at the site. These two features are located near (Feature 4) and within (Feature 19) the proposed Structures 3 and 4 (figure 57). The gun cache was found about 23 feet (7 m) northeast of the fireplace in Structure 3, while the iron cache was unearthed just 16 feet (5 m) south of a concentration of

burned stones (Feature 20) in Structure 4. Feature 20 does not resemble the other four fireplaces found at Fort St. Joseph, as it is much larger and does not have

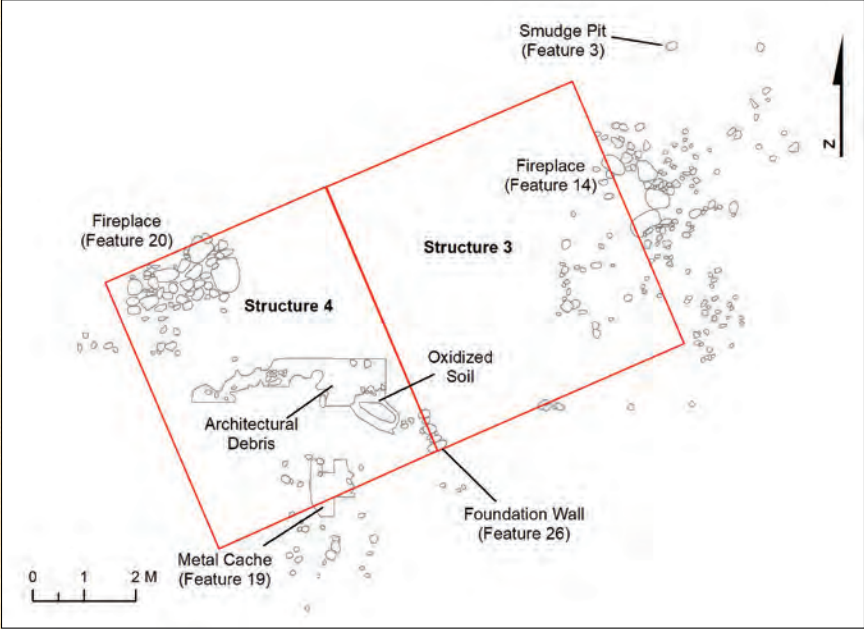


Figure 57 · This is the proposed outline for Structures 3 and 4, which has been interpreted as the home and work space of a blacksmith at Fort St. Joseph.

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PEOPLE IN FOCUS

Antoine Deshêtres

Antoine Deshêtres (also known as Dehaître, Dehestre, and de Hestre) was a blacksmith, master gunsmith, and interpreter for the King of France and lived at Fort St. Joseph from at least 1731 to 1751. He is thought to have been born between 1700 and 1706 and likely lived in New England before his arrival at Fort St. Joseph. He died in the Detroit area between February 1764 and May 1765. Deshêtres married Marie Charlotte Chevalier, daughter of merchants Jean Baptiste Chevalier and Marie Françoise Alavoine, in Ste. Anne's Church at Fort Michilimackinac on October 30, 1729.

Payment vouchers and baptismal records provide much of what we know about Deshêtres's life. From 1739 to 1741, Deshêtres was at Fort de Chartres to support the Chickasaw campaign, and Michel Baillargeon *dit* Durivage, his partner, was the resident smith at Fort St. Joseph. Vouchers from Fort St. Joseph indicate that there was considerable demand for their skills and products.

Deshêtres and Durivage were involved in repairing guns, hardware, and tools for both the French and their Native American allies. Payment invoices and vouchers detail these repairs, and archaeological excavations have produced physical evidence of their activities. In addition to a large cache of gun parts, another nearby metal cache (Feature 19 on figure 57) was found, containing two ax heads, lead sprue, an iron chisel, a gun cock, a brass butt plate, a lead whizzer, a gun lock, iron screws, hand-wrought nails, nail fragments, lead shot, and unidentifiable iron and copper alloy fragments. The proximity of these two features to Structures 3 and 4 suggests that these buildings may have been Deshêtres's conjoined living quarters and workshop.

Further evidence of metalworking at the site is provided by documents indicating that the Crown paid Deshêtres to provide the necessary ironwork and a lock for a cut stone jail, eight by ten feet, in 1750. While material evidence of this structure at the site is needed to determine if it was ever completed, the voucher suggests the types of tasks Deshêtres performed.

Deshêtres was more than a blacksmith, gunsmith, and interpreter at Fort St. Joseph. In the 1740s and early 1750s, he, among other *habitants* at the post, sold pigs, cows, and oxen to the fort's commander. He is also recorded as the craftsman who built a coffin for the son of the local headman, Pinchicaché, and a French-styled house for the grief-stricken father.

These documents provide support that blacksmiths took part in a variety of occupational tasks and provided for the material needs of the community.



Archaeology field school students, carefully excavating the contents of Feature 19, expose an iron axe.

a clear opening for the hearth, suggesting that it may have been part of a forge. While it is not certain, these features suggest that the associated structures may have been used by the fort's blacksmith; however, more excavation is needed for a better understanding of this area, its related material culture, and the activities it represents.

Carpenters and Buildings at Fort St. Joseph

Architecture consists of building design, style, and construction techniques that distinguish cultures in time and space. In New France, carpenters often used standard architectural methods established in the Old World.

While not much is known about the carpenters who worked at Fort St. Joseph, records reveal the name of one master carpenter, Louis Métivier. In June 1741, an employment contract states that Louis was hired by Claude Marin, Sieur de la Perrière to come to the post. Then in 1745, Louis and his wife, Marie Madeleine Fafar, served as godparents for a Miami couple who were baptized and married on June 5. Unfortunately, further details about the lives of Louis and Marie Madeleine and his work at the post remain unknown.

When skilled craftsmen were absent, helpers and unskilled laborers were capable of erecting structures in vernacular or expedient forms. French colonial building styles derive from the half-timbered houses of north-west France that date back to medieval times. Archaeological studies, historical documents, and standing structures indicate that these buildings were constructed using one of four methods: (1) *poteaux en terre* (posts in the ground), (2) *poteaux sur sole* (posts on a sill), (3) *pièce-sur-pièce* (squared timbers), and (4) stone masonry (figure 58; see also *Sheltering New France*).

Structures often left archaeological signatures in the form of fireplaces, postholes, and foundation walls. This evidence, combined with the location and contents of the buildings, suggests that the buildings identified at Fort St. Joseph were among the homes that sheltered fur traders deported by the British in 1780 (table 2, page 8). Some exhibit a combination of the *poteaux en terre* and *poteaux sur sole* construction techniques.

Builders employed both locally available and imported materials to construct houses at Fort St. Joseph, using traditional techniques. The archaeological record contains architectural elements made of wood, stone, clay, glass, and iron. Wood for posts, beams, and

floorboards; stone for fireplaces and foundations; and clay to fill the spaces between upright posts were available in the vicinity of the fort. Glass window panes were transported from Europe through the extensive trade network developed by the French (figure 59). Iron hardware like nails, pintles, locks, keys, and hinges were also imported or produced by one of the fort's blacksmiths (figure 60).

Archaeology can supplement the few documentary sources to reconstruct the appearance and function of structures at the site and the occupations of the people who lived within them. It is likely that heretofore undetected buildings lie beneath the early twentieth-century landfill that covers the southern part of the site. Recent

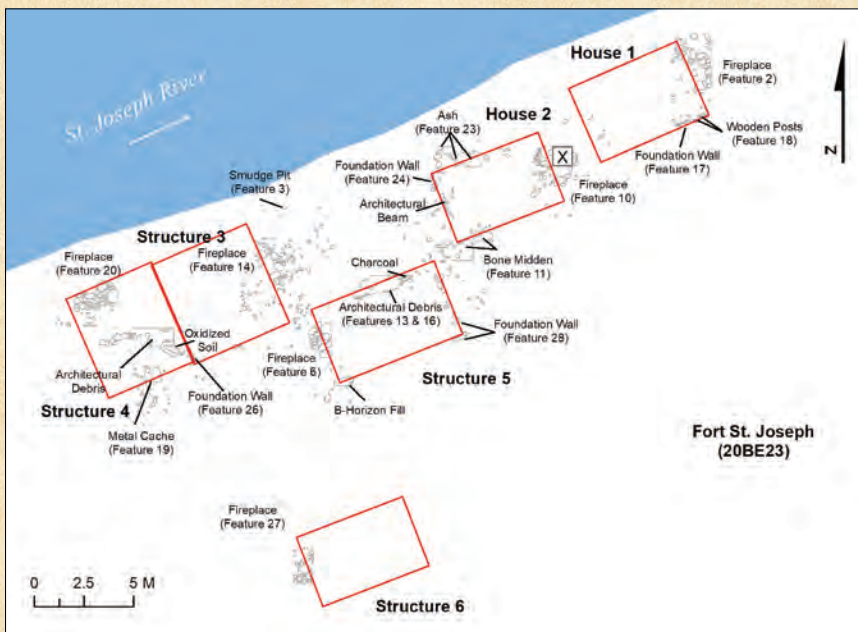


Figure 58 · Structures identified at Fort St. Joseph through archaeological excavations.

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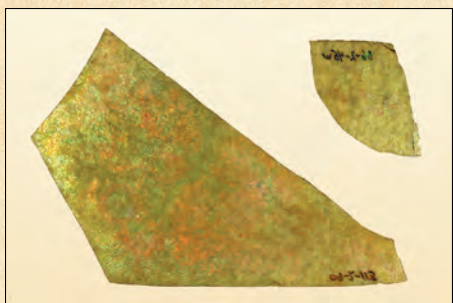


Figure 59 · Window glass was imported from Europe to Fort St. Joseph in small panes.

excavations into the landfill exposed intact deposits of eighteenth-century materials, including possible foundation stones, indicating that much more of the fort remains to be revealed.

Voyageurs and Fur Traders

Beginning in the sixteenth century, the French encountered many different Native peoples and a landscape rich in fur-bearing animals. Beaver and other animal furs were obtained in trade from Native American producers in a multifaceted, global network that had a formative influence on the history and cultures of peoples throughout North America. What became known as the fur trade had significant economic, political, social, and cultural implications for both Europeans and Native Americans. The exchange of furs for manufactured goods created close bonds and reinforced social alliances.

The French went to great lengths to underwrite the fur trade and maintain their relationships with indigenous allies, leading to the establishment of a network of trading posts, forts, and missions in the North American interior. Throughout New France, licenses (known as *congés*) and permissions were issued to regulate travel into the interior of the colony in order to barter European wares for Native-procured pelts. Controlling the number of traders not only helped prevent smuggling to avoid taxes, but also ensured that only trustworthy people were sent west. The latter was important in maintaining good relations with Native

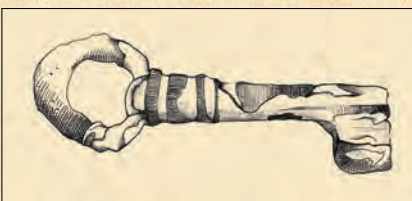


Figure 60 · Keys were used by fort residents to secure their belongings.

American partners. Some of the most economically productive posts in the western Great Lakes region included Fort Michilimackinac, Fort Pontchartrain (Detroit), and Fort St. Joseph. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, hundreds of thousands of furs were shipped to France, including bear, beaver, deer, wapiti, lynx, muskrat, otter, and raccoon (figure 61).

Beaver was the predominant animal trapped, and its fur was traded to make fashionable felt hats in eighteenth-century Europe. Imported goods such as muskets, iron tools, glass beads, and cloth were shipped from Europe to the cities of Quebec and Montreal. Many of these goods were destined for Native American consumers.

Goods and furs were carried in birchbark canoes into and out of the western Great Lakes region by *voyageurs*, a job title literally meaning “traveler” in French (figure 62). *Voyageurs* were not trappers; rather, they were hired by licensed traders, merchants, and military officers to transport goods. Terms of employment (that is, wages, length of service, items they could bring for personal use) were specified in contracts signed by notaries, usually in Montreal where merchants were based and *voyageurs* originated. Key restrictions were in the



Figure 61 · Furs of various animals were in demand at Fort St. Joseph.

amount of brandy that could be carried in the canoe (limitations discouraged selling it to Native Americans) and whether the *voyageur* would be allowed to undertake trade on their own account. Many contracts even listed a *voyageur's* placement in the canoe; wages were tied to those positions.

Voyageurs and Traders at Fort St. Joseph

Among its various functions, Fort St. Joseph was probably best known as a commercial center that produced a significant volume of furs for export. In the early eighteenth century, typically three or four canoes, carrying three men each, were officially licensed annually to carry on trade at Fort St. Joseph. However, by 1740, the number of crewmen had risen to six to eight men per canoe. It was also not unusual for unlicensed traders, *coureurs de bois*, to travel into the interior. Their exact number, as might be surmised, is unknown. Some may have made their homes at the fort year-round after having come to the area, or they may have simply traveled back and forth from Fort St. Joseph to the Montreal area from which many originated.

While not much is known about the *voyageurs* and traders themselves, historical documents provide some of the names of people who were granted permission to transport items to and trade at the post. For instance, we know that the fort's first commandant, Augustin Legardeur, Sieur de Courtemanche, entered a contract with *voyageurs* Joseph Moreau (September 1693) and Robert Réaume (along with Sieur Vincennes, June 1695) to transport goods to New France. The *voyageurs* Léger Bougery (September 1694), Jean-Baptiste Boudron *dit* Champagne (September 1694), Charles Cusson (September 1694), Louis Hust (May 1695), Joseph Pillet (May 1695), and Jean Séguin (June 1695) were contracted by Courtemanche's successor, Jean-Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, to trade for furs.

Sieur Étienne de Villedonné followed a similar practice during his command and entered into a partnership with traders Paul and Louis Desjardins de Rupalley



Figure 62 · Fur traders and *voyageurs* transported goods in birchbark canoes.

(1722–1725). Louis Rupalley remained in Montreal, while Paul and their brother Henri-Charles accompanied Villedonné to Fort St. Joseph as soldiers for his garrison. When Louis died in 1723, his mother, Anne Lemire, acted for the partnership in hiring *voyageurs* until Henri-Charles assumed that role. Villedonné's successor, Nicholas-Antoine Coulon, Sieur de Villiers, joined Antoine Ménard (1725–1727), Jean-Baptiste Fauché (1726–1727), and Marin Hurtebise (1728–1729) during his command. This practice continued throughout the French period at the fort, even after more rigid trade restrictions occurred in New France from 1752 to 1755. In 1757, Commandant Jean Leverrier, Chevalier of St. Louis traded at the fort with his partners Pierre Leduc *dit* Souigny (1749–1760; he and his wife, Marie La Feuillade, lived at the post with at least one child) and Louis Hurtebise (1757–1760; a relative of Marin Hurtebise).

Baptismal records reveal the spouses of some *voyageurs* and traders and the baptisms of their offspring. Albert Beaune and his wife, Marianne Ferron *dite* Sancerre, baptized two children between 1720 and 1722. Pierre Pepin-Laforce and his wife, Michèle Leber, baptized a child in 1721. Augustin Larchevêque (also referred to as Larche) and his *métis* wife, Marie Madeleine Réaume (daughter of interpreter, *voyageur*, and trader Jean Baptiste Réaume and Simphorose OuauouagoKoué,

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tribal membership unknown), were residents at the fort beginning around 1731 and had six children. After Augustin Larchevêque died, Marie Madeleine remained at the post and married Louis Thérèse Chevalier in 1751, baptizing a son, Louis, that same year. The family remained at Fort St. Joseph until their forced removal by the British in 1780.

Claude Marin, Sieur de la Perrière and his wife, Marie Madeleine Coulon de Villiers (widow of François Lefebvre Duplessy Fabert, the younger; daughter of Nicolas-Antoine Coulon, Sieur de Villiers and Angélique Jarret de Verchères), lived at the post from 1741 to 1748. Her established connection to the post may have assisted her husband in his trade. His good standing may have also influenced the decision to place him briefly in command of the post during the second half of 1747. Claude Marin's trade partner, Louis Césaire Dagneau, Sieur de Quindre, and his wife, Marie Anne Françoise Picoté de Belestre (sister of François-Marie Picoté, Sieur de Belestre), lived at the fort and had four children between 1741 and 1747.

Jacques Dumay (or Demers or Dumais; a former soldier) and his wife, Marie Magdalene Chevalier (sister of Louis Thérèse Chevalier), resided at the fort and baptized five children between 1751 and 1758. Louis Thérèse and Marie Magdalene Chevalier's brother, Louis Paschal Chevalier, and his wife, Marie Madeleine Larchevêque (daughter of Marie Madeleine Réaume and Augustin Larchevêque), lived with their children at Fort St. Joseph from 1758 until his death in the 1770s. Louis Paschal died sometime between the birth of his last child in 1773 and the new marriage of his widow to François Marcotte in August 1778. Marie Madeleine Larchevêque's sisters, Marie Catherine and Angélique, also resided at Fort St. Joseph with their husbands. Marie Catherine married Jean Baptiste Jutras (son of Jean Baptiste Jutras and Marie Josèphe Godefroy dite Linctot) at Michilimackinac in July 1748. The couple lived at Fort St. Joseph with at least one child from around 1751 to 1761. Angélique was married to Charles Lhuillier dit Chevalier (son of Charles Michel Lhuillier dit Chevalier and Marie Marguerite Renée Kay), living at Fort St. Joseph with three children from at least 1754 to 1773. The marriages highlighted here demonstrate the importance of familial connections in New France.

French men who traveled into the interior also recognized the value of kinship ties and married Native American women who were often members of nations with whom they traded or wanted to build a trading relationship. For instance, *voyageur* Jean-Baptiste Baron lived at the fort between at least 1727 and 1734. He was married to Marie Catherine Ouékioukoué (formally Sagatchioua), an Illinois woman, and they had at least three children together. Jean Roc Morin married Therese, a Potawatomi woman, on March 22, 1773, during the British period of the fort. The details and frequency of this practice at Fort St. Joseph are poorly documented, and Native American women adopted Christian names at the time of their baptism and marriage, thereby obscuring their indigenous ancestry.

Cross-cultural intermarriage was likely more common among *voyageurs* who wintered with Native Americans. Its roots, moreover, lie in the seventeenth century, when it became clear that establishing kinship ties with indigenous groups helped create good trade relations between French men and Native American women and bound them together both economically and socially. Marriage into a clan would pave the way for traders, because much of indigenous socioeconomic activity was conditioned by kinship and reciprocal obligations. Native American women connected to French men received better access to imported goods and had higher status within their communities.

Evidence of Trade and Other Commercial Activities at Fort St. Joseph

Archaeological excavations have uncovered a wealth of information on the goods that arrived with *voyageurs* at Fort St. Joseph, although it is not always easy to distinguish between those destined for trade and those used by the fort's residents. For instance, iron knives were popular trade goods that no French adult could do without. By examining multiple lines of evidence, such as historical documents (for example, trade lists) and archaeological contexts from Fort St. Joseph and contemporaneous sites, we can gain a better understanding of who used various goods (figure 63).

Cloth, clothing, and sewing supplies were among the most common trade goods in the western Great Lakes



Figure 63 · These items are among the trade goods brought to Fort St. Joseph.

region and the St. Joseph River valley, in both value and volume. Cloth was imported from Europe, because its production was severely limited in the colonies. Various fabrics were obtained, such as woolens, linens, cottons, and silks. Bolts of cloth shipped from France were marked with lead seals—inspection markers that designated the contents, origins, and destinations of taxed cloth. Lead seals were also important for Montreal merchants, because they denoted the manufacturer and quality of the goods. Once the seals arrived at the fort, they might be discarded or melted to form musket balls and lead shot or molded into objects such as whizzers—flattened, perforated lead disks attached to a string that served as a form of amusement. Although cloth is rarely preserved in the archaeological record, the recovery of lead seals from Fort St. Joseph provides clues to the types of cloth that were shipped to the fort in the eighteenth century.

Trade inventories document many ready-made imported items, like shirts, hooded coats, stockings, and neckerchiefs, with fewer breeches, waistcoats, caps, and jackets. Both men's and women's clothing are represented. The lists also include thread, ribbon, tape, lace, buttons, needles, straight pins, thimbles, and scissors. The presence of these latter objects in the archaeological record suggests that the occupants of Fort St. Joseph not only were able to repair clothing items, but could fashion certain clothing articles to their own specifications (figure 64).



Figure 64 · Baling needles and thimbles found at Fort St. Joseph.



Figure 65 · Knee and shoe buckles of various sizes and designs have been recovered in excavations across the site of Fort St. Joseph.

Objects of dress and personal adornment can reveal the identities of those living at Fort St. Joseph, because the residents were making choices about how they wanted to express themselves, just as we do today. The selections that they made in regard to buckles, buttons, cufflinks, earrings, finger rings, and nose bobs can be attributed to class, gender, and ethnicity. For instance, buckles, buttons, and cufflinks found at the site are material expressions of class. Depending on their intended function and the personal tastes of the residents who wore them, buckles would vary in size and decoration. Fur traders and other fort occupants used copper alloy, iron, and pewter buckles for shoes, to secure stockings to knee-length pants, fasten belts, and attach breeches and garters (figure 65). Shoe buckles are thought to be associated with wealthier residents at the fort, since hard-soled shoes were a luxury item in New France. In addition, the economic status of men and women at Fort St. Joseph can be suggested by the ornateness of a buckle. Those with rounded and curved edges and glass insets, as opposed to plain, square ones, were markers of elite status.

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ARTIFACTS IN FOCUS

Lead Seals

Small lead seals marked European merchandise, especially textiles, with information about the origins, producers, and distributors of goods in

the fur trade. Those recovered from Fort St. Joseph indicate that most of the cloth came from France, with lesser amounts from England. Many seals are fragmentary, but a few are complete enough to allow us to identify the types of cloth they once marked. For instance, the seal below bears the coat of arms of Seigneuresse Marie Sophie Honorate Colbert and her husband, Charles-François II of Montmorency-Luxembourg, dating between 1724 and 1747. The seal provides evidence of cloth coming from Darnétal near Rouen in northwest France, where Normandy blankets and popular woolen broadcloths in French and Dutch styles were produced. Another belonged to the firm of Lescure and Olier, international merchants, who produced scarlet cloth for New France between 1727 and 1751. By identifying the cloth from the markings on the lead seals, archaeologists can gain insights into the types of fabrics that fort residents and Native peoples obtained and their global connections to the Atlantic world.



Map of cloth production and distribution centers in France and England.

Lead seals recovered from Fort St. Joseph provide valuable insights into the types of cloth that were imported.



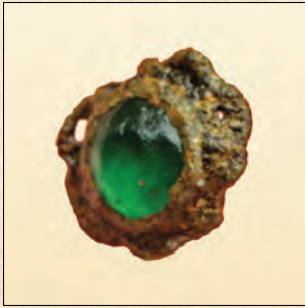


Figure 66 · Sleeve button featuring a green glass inset.

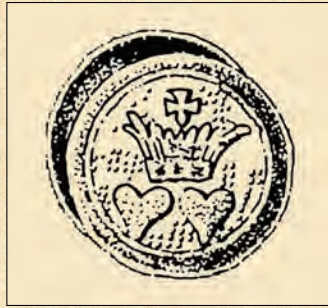


Figure 67 · Small finds such as this pair of cufflinks can provide clues about social identity to archaeologists.



Figure 68 · Iconographic plaque rings and glass inset rings recovered from the fort.

Sleeve buttons (also known as cufflinks) can provide material evidence of social identity. Similar to buckles, these clothing items varied in decoration from plain, flat buttons to those with paste glass insets and embossed designs (figure 66). They are generally good markers of gender, since they were worn almost exclusively by men at the fort. Men of higher status, such as merchants, had access to more costly European goods and probably owned and wore the more ornate examples found at Fort St. Joseph.

Beyond expressions of wealth, buttons could also convey personal and religious meanings. For example, one pair of sleeve buttons from the fort features double hearts beneath a crown and a cross (figure 67). This pattern likely symbolizes the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary and perhaps the connection between Catholicism and the authority of the French monarchy. They may also have had a secular meaning (a family crest?), since they appear in a medium that is not usually considered to be an object of religious devotion, such as a cross or medallion.

Personal adornments such as earrings, finger rings, and nose bobs found at the site are also material expressions of class, gender, and ethnicity and were worn by fur traders as well as Native peoples. Finger rings present at the fort and across New France include iconographic plaque rings, glass inset rings, and band rings that can inform on their owners and use (figure 68). For example, plaque rings were mass-produced trade items that featured various designs and symbols, some of which were religious. These rings were worn by both Native Americans and the French. Glass inset rings



Figure 69 · Two independent fragments of the popular ball and cone dangler.

were more ornate than plaque rings, suggesting that they may have been associated with people of higher status. Many exhibit small band size, indicating they were likely worn by women, whereas men probably wore the larger band sizes of the plain, unadorned rings (also referred to as wedding rings).

Often cast in silver or silver alloy, earrings and nose bobs are frequently recovered at French sites with a large Native American presence. These adornment items were worn by Native Americans and the French; the latter most likely adopted the practice from Native American groups who traditionally wore danglers and other objects through pierced ears and noses. As silver ornaments became increasingly common in the fur trade, a popular design arose, featuring a ball and cone dangler on a copper wire (figure 69). The desire to look fashionable may have played a role in the residents' choice to adopt this jewelry item.

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

Sacred and Profane Practices: Tobacco and Smoking

Native Americans domesticated tobacco and used it in spiritual and ceremonial contexts long before Europeans acquired it in the late fifteenth century. Tobacco was smoked as a means of ritual communication, to establish alliances, and as an offering on solemn occasions. It was generally restricted to segments of the population, such as male religious practitioners.

Stone smoking pipes carved in various forms could be engraved with meaningful symbols, decorated with feathers, and attached to embellished hollow reeds and wooden stems. On occasion, pipe bowls and keels were made of select soft, red siltstone known as catlinite found in Minnesota that was believed to be sacred among many Native American tribes. Catlinite pipes and raw material in various stages of production found at Fort St. Joseph testify to the wide distribution and importance of this raw material in the region.

The French were often introduced to tobacco when they encountered Native American groups. They came to understand its religious and political role, and tobacco became a significant component of the fur trade. Trade tobacco was imported from the West Indies and generally had a lower nicotine content than the variety grown by Natives in the Eastern Woodlands. Both tobacco varieties and the pipes they were smoked in were not always used interchangeably. Europeans began producing their own white clay forms in England, Holland, and France, carefully modeled after Native American clay elbow pipes. These imported specimens were cheaply made by the thousands and appear in practically all North American archaeological sites from the sixteenth through the early twentieth century, testifying to the popularity of smoking. The French and other Europeans, however, transformed tobacco consumption to secular use divorced from the sacred meanings that Native Americans ascribed to it. The ready availability of clay pipes, ample supplies of tobacco, and nicotine's addictive properties ensured its widespread and enduring, albeit secular, European use (figure 70).

Historic documents reveal that *voyageurs* would also use smoking tobacco to measure time and distance. Travel from one location to another in New France

Figure 70 · At Fort St. Joseph, hundreds of broken, imported white clay bowl and stem fragments have been recovered, some of which have been refitted.



by canoe was calibrated by the number of pipes that would be smoked along the way. This supports the notion that smoking for *voyageurs* was a part of their daily routine and not a religious practice. The presence of both stone and clay tobacco pipes at Fort St. Joseph suggests that both sacred and secular smoking was practiced there.

Fort St. Joseph Families

The women and children of Fort St. Joseph are underrepresented in the documents. Their low visibility stems from the facts that they were not in positions of power, they operated in mostly private realms within the household, and many were illiterate. Some of the women and children who are discussed in the documents were often related to an influential male family member. For example, Commandant Courtemanche's mother is referenced as Marguerite Nicolet, daughter of Jean Nicolet, the first Frenchman to paddle into Lake Superior in 1634. This is likely to help identify and establish family ties; however, this mention says little about the woman who raised the first commandant of Fort St. Joseph. Women and children who played active roles in the fur trade are also mentioned in historic documents, though few personal details about them are provided. Nevertheless, the general contours of their lives can be inferred from the limited records at our disposal, archaeological remains, and information about the activities of their ancestors and cousins in Quebec, Montreal, and France.

Women at Fort St. Joseph

At Fort St. Joseph and throughout New France, women often acquired an importance that they generally lacked in the old country. This was partly because a widow

had the right to inherit property from her husband. French America observed the “Custom of Paris”—a community property law. Upon the death of a spouse, the household’s assets were inventoried and added up. A widowed woman was entitled to her bed, clothing, and other personal effects, as well as her dower (*douaire*), consisting of one half of the community property and the right to use the community property during her lifetime. A unique part of the Custom of Paris was a *préciput*: a right of either surviving spouse to a specific amount of money or possessions at the death of the other spouse, before any division of the estate. Often, this sum was one-half of the *douaire*. This also went to a widow before expenses and debts were paid. The other half would be shared equally among both the male and female children. In other words, a widow usually stood to gain more than her children, thereby making her a desirable marriage partner. During her marriage, however, she fell under her husband’s jurisdiction, since legally he was the head of the household, with wide-ranging authority over his wife and other members of his household.

Despite their unequal status, women of all classes in New France participated in business activities. All married women and those over the age of twenty-five were granted power of attorney and could conduct business with their husband’s permission in his absence. At Fort St. Joseph, women would have supported and helped their husbands in their business ventures.

Women also regularly provided food and merchandise to support soldiers and other occupants of Fort St. Joseph. For example, Commandant Blainville signed a bill of sale for “one fat pig, a heifer, an ox, 4 pairs of snowshoes, a bark canoe, and another fat pig” provided by the Widow Larche in 1746. (Widow Larche was most likely Marie Madeline Réaume, as her husband’s last name, Larchevêque, was often shortened and recorded as Larche.) That same year, and again in 1747, Blainville signed two vouchers to repay Marie Madeleine Coulon de Villiers, wife of Claude Marin, Sieur de la Perrière, for eleven ells (a unit of measurement, usually of cloth, of about 45 inches) of red ribbon and two pigs. Records such as these demonstrate women’s active participation in the colonial economy (figure 71).



Figure 71 · Women at Fort St. Joseph performed various roles, such as maintaining their households, supporting their spouses and families, and assisting in business ventures when needed.

Along with the wives and widows of *voyageurs* and fur traders, the wives of military commanders and soldiers, blacksmiths, and interpreters also resided at Fort St. Joseph. In 1722, Sieur Étienne de Villedonné brought his wife, Françoise Roussel, and their eight-year-old son, Pierre-Étienne, to Fort St. Joseph; their daughter was born after their arrival and baptized on May 2, 1723. The Fort St. Joseph baptismal records indicate that the soldiers Claude Collet and Gabriel Bolon lived with their wives, Marguerite Faucher and Susanne Ménard, respectively. Antoine Deshêtres’s wife, Marie Charlotte Chevalier, resided with him at the post, where six of their children were baptized between 1731 and 1743. Marie-Charlotte Robert Jeanne, wife of the interpreter François Ménard (brother of Susanne Ménard), also lived at Fort St. Joseph and had three children between 1738 and 1742. Charlotte Marie Hypolite Favre, wife of the blacksmith Michel Girardin, had four children at the post between 1755 and 1760. The roles that these

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

women played outside of being mothers and dutiful wives can be partially ascertained from archaeological remains.

MATERIAL EVIDENCE OF WOMEN AT FORT ST. JOSEPH

Women at the post were able to express their preferences, economic means, and identity through their clothing choices. Women of New France were known to dress extravagantly. Located some distance from the homeland, they challenged traditional mores regarding appropriate clothing styles, fabrics, and designs. Women were said to be smart, spirited, and well dressed, willing to don revealing attire. Some attended mass wearing elaborate coiffures and low-cut gowns. They also enjoyed displaying their embroidered shoes and stockings by wearing skirts that reached only to midleg. Documentary sources and other contemporaneous sites in New France provide information about the styles that may have been worn by the women of Fort St. Joseph (figure 72).

Outfits would have started with a simple chemise or shift, usually made of linen, as an undergarment and a nightgown. Over it, women wore at least two petticoats

tied around the waist. Pockets were also tied about the waist rather than sewn into women's clothing, usually under the top petticoat which had slits to allow access.

Whalebone stays, like a corset, were the foundation for the gown or jacket and allowed for an erect posture, providing a rounded, fashionable shape. Women used garment hooks, hasps, straight pins, and cording (or linen) tape to fasten stays as well as jackets, bodices, and gowns. Pins and lacing allowed flexibility. Hooks were used on some garments, but were less common. The presence of hooks and straight pins in the archaeological record provides tangible evidence for the women of the post. A jacket or gown went over the stays, and a *fichu* (neckerchief) was worn around the shoulders and tucked into the front of the gown. While at home in a state of *deshabille* (less formal dress), a woman might wear a quilted vest or jumps rather than the stays. A *coiffe*, or cap, always covered a woman's hair unless it was elaborately styled.

In the eighteenth century, women would have been responsible for making and repairing clothing needed by her family. Children grew quickly, and women were often pregnant. Having a maternity wardrobe is a modern concept. There were pregnancy stays that laced

on the sides, giving room for an expanding belly, but few examples of maternity wear exist. One notable exception is a clever quilted jacket, vest, and petticoat in the Colonial Williamsburg collection that could be worn both before and during pregnancy. Sewing supplies used by women residing at Fort St. Joseph to make, alter, fasten, and repair clothing appear in trade lists, and some have been recovered archaeologically (figure 73). Straight pins were common, whereas few needles have been found. This is likely due to preservation—whereas pins were made of copper alloy, iron needles were likely to rust away.



Figure 72 · Women carefully selected clothing and adornment items, such as glass beads to express their social and personal identity.



Figure 73 · Women used awls, straight pins, and scissors to make, alter, and repair clothing.

Most fort women had only a few gowns, which could be slightly altered. A woman's wardrobe varied with her overall prosperity. A common soldier's wife would not be able to afford as many articles of clothing as an officer's or trader's wife. But women on the frontier cared just as much about fashion as those in Quebec and Montreal. They ordered silk gowns and the latest styles. Marriage inventories and probate records often list great quantities of clothing for some well-to-do women.

Adornment was a way for women, among other fort residents, to decorate their clothing and bodies. Items of adornment convey meanings about the personal style of women and, therefore, are quite

ARTIFACTS IN FOCUS

Glass Beads

Glass beads are ubiquitous at many fur trade sites, owing to their widespread popularity for adornment among both the French and Native Americans in North America. Thousands of glass beads in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors have been recovered from Fort St. Joseph.

French merchants, traders, and women acquired glass beads, which were cheaply mass-produced in Europe beginning in the fourteenth century. Most notable were the beads made by Italian artisans who helped develop the two main production methods: wound and drawn. Used by French and Native American inhabitants alike, glass beads were predominantly decorative items attached to clothing, bags, moccasins, and other objects. Native Americans ascribed different meanings to various bead colors. White, blue, and black were particularly common. Beads were strung as jewelry and embroidered onto garments to create floral and geometric patterns.

Both Native American and French-Canadian women produced beaded objects for personal and family use. Indigenous beading practices likely spread to fort inhabitants, though the French also had their own beading traditions for adorning secular and religious garments such as chasubles. While it is hard to discern what specific objects



A variety of glass bead sizes, shapes, and colors have been recovered from Fort St. Joseph.

were embroidered by the women at Fort St. Joseph, the high volume of seed beads recovered across the site provides evidence for their extensive use. A concentration of beads recovered from an area in front of the fireplace in Structure 2 is evidence of embroidering activities in that location.

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informative to archaeologists. Women used clothing, piercings, and makeup to express (and hide) their age, ethnicity, and social status. They also chose to adorn themselves with articles that represented the ways they wanted to be viewed publicly. For instance, women would use brass and pewter brooches as hair fasteners and ornaments to achieve various hairstyles. Similarly, beads could be embroidered on all manner of garments to express notions of group and individual identity (figure 74).

On Sundays and special occasions, women might display additional personal and/or valuable possessions, such as glass inset finger rings. The small size of these rings suggests that they were primarily worn by women and perhaps children at the fort. Women may have selected from available designs and glass inset colors and received rings as gifts, just as women select and acquire jewelry today (figure 75).

Children of the Post

Little is known about the lives of children residing at Fort St. Joseph (figure 76). The names of some children are recorded in the fort's baptismal record. Seven French children were baptized between 1720 and 1723, shortly after the fort was reoccupied. Twenty-seven French children were baptized between 1725 and 1745, and thirty-one between 1752 and 1761. A number of Native American children also appear in the register. Unfortunately, these documents do not include the children born prior to their parents' arrival at the post unless they played a role in a business transaction or baptism of another child. Few children born in France made the long voyage to New France in the eighteenth century.

Many unions between French, French-Canadians, and Native Americans led to the birth of children in New France, some of whom were baptized and documented. The offspring of mixed marriages created a



Figure 74 · Pewter and silver brooches were pinned on garments and worn as decorative hair pieces; beads were often embroidered onto clothing, bags, and moccasins to achieve a fashionable look.



Figure 75 · Green and blue glass inset finger ring recovered from the fort.

Figure 76 · The children of living history reenactors dress in eighteenth-century attire at the archaeology open house to provide a sense of how the children of the post appeared and the activities they performed.





Figure 77 · Children of the fort most likely took part in various daily tasks to aid their parents as they became socialized to become productive members of the community.

class of descendants known in French as *métis*. This term carries no racial prejudice and simply means a person of mixed ancestry, having French-Canadian (often the father) and Native American (typically the mother) parentage.

Many French *voyageurs* married Native American women belonging to nations with whom they traded or wanted to establish exchange relations. Creating kinship ties through marriage and children helped bind the traders and Native Americans together both politically

and socially. *Métis* children shared ties to both cultures, and some grew up to be diplomats who could operate in both Native American and French worlds.

Little is known about the daily activities of children living at the fort. Their parents likely socialized them into prescribed gender roles by teaching them to hunt and gather, perform household chores, serve as apprentices, and play with other children living at the post in age-appropriate games and activities (figure 77). Artifacts associated with recreation, such

ARTIFACTS IN FOCUS

Whizzers

Recreational items such as whizzers provide material evidence of children at Fort St. Joseph. While they were not exclusively used by children, whizzers were toys that would have entertained their owners for hours on the frontier. Made from wood, metal scrap, and most frequently lead, whizzers were perforated disks that would have been spun around on a string. As a child twisted and pulled the ends of the string, a fun, buzzing sound was made. Whizzers are still offered in gift shops at historic sites throughout the area that was once New France.



This whizzer found at Fort St. Joseph would have provided hours of entertainment for children and adults alike.

European Inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph

as whizzers and the cup from a cup-and-pin game, provide material evidence for the presence of children at Fort St. Joseph, as well as information on the ways in which they entertained themselves.

Foodways at Fort St. Joseph

Settlers came to New France with their own cuisine, but they often had to modify it in response to available resources. Domesticated plants like wheat, barley, and oats could not be immediately established in some areas of the colony, and it took several decades before *habitants* in the Illinois Country began producing a surplus. Interaction with Native peoples from nearby villages influenced settlers' diets. Europeans acquired and adopted North American foods such as corn, squash, and maple syrup from indigenous allies who engaged in harvesting and small-scale farming.

It is likely that the inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph had gardens near their homes and just outside the palisade, perhaps similar to those found at Fort Michilimackinac (figure 78). Father Pierre de Charlevoix described cleared fields surrounding the fort, while other observers only noted Native American farming practices. Clearing land and planting crops required iron axes

and hoes, examples of which have been found archaeologically (figure 79). Maize and other plant remains like grape seeds and peach pits have also been recovered at Fort St. Joseph. The former may have been grown by the Native Americans and traded to the French.

Animal protein was important to the people of the post, as indicated by abundant quantities of whole and fragmentary animal bones and teeth found as refuse at Fort St. Joseph. The study of these materials is providing insights into the patterns of animal use among the people who resided and worked at the post during the eighteenth century (figure 80). Thus far, more than 50,000 animal remains have been recovered and examined from the excavations.

Whereas historical documents from Fort St. Joseph seldom provide details on precisely what fur-bearing animals were processed, a couple of accounts specifically mention raccoon, bear, otters, wildcat, lynx, deer, elk, and stags. Beaver is not included among these mammals, which is surprising considering how important beaver pelts were for the greater North American fur trade economy. Although bones and teeth of beavers are found during excavations, the large rodent remains are less numerous than those from raccoons; this may

reflect intense exploitation during the initial years of French occupation that impacted local beaver populations, and beaver was subsequently processed elsewhere.



Figure 78 · French row houses at Fort Michilimackinac featured private gardens for each family.



Figure 79 · Iron hoe blades recovered at the fort suggest that residents were tilling the land.



Figure 80 · Excavators have carefully recovered thousands of animal remains, including this deer mandible.



Figure 81 · Antler tines were made into tools and recreational items.

The skeletal remains of white-tailed deer are much more common, accounting for approximately seventy-five percent of all identified specimens. Great quantities of venison were obviously consumed by the French *habitants* and their Native American neighbors. In addition to meat, deer provided hides that were processed locally for global markets. It is suspected that deer hides from the fort were transported to tanneries at Detroit, where non-indigenous-made moccasins were popular footwear among the French and other Euro-Americans. Antlers and select deer bones were also made into various kinds of hide-processing tools (for example, fleshers, beamers, and awls) and recreational items (such as dice and cup-and-pin gaming pieces) by residents, just as Native Americans had done for thousands of years (figure 81).

Other wild animals also provided skins and meat at Fort St. Joseph. Black bears were frequently hunted, as suggested by the widespread occurrence of their skeletal remains (nearly 200 specimens), which are mostly foot bones and fragments of ribs (figure 82).



Figure 82 · In 2019, archaeology summer campers discovered a bear bone in their excavation unit.

French historical accounts for this time period in the Midwest and lower Mississippi valley indicate that bears were highly esteemed for their skins and meat (especially hams and bacon, which were dried, smoked, and salted). Perhaps of even greater value was oil rendered from bear fat and used by the French for cooking in lieu of butter and olive oil. Large quantities of bear oil were shipped from the Illinois Country to the French settlements in New Orleans and Mobile. More than two dozen bones of wapiti reveal that they were also hunted opportunistically.

The remains of smaller mammals include eastern cottontail rabbits, squirrels, muskrat, marten, long-tailed weasel, striped skunk, and bobcat. Canid bones include gray wolf, dog and/or coyote, and grey fox. An unexpected finding was more than 80 bones and teeth from porcupine, a large rodent that no longer inhabits southwest Michigan. Albeit not a fur bearer, local Native Americans ate porcupine meat and used their quills to decorate clothing and containers. Interestingly, although river otters were mentioned as one of the fur trade species available at Fort St. Joseph,

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no bones or teeth of this mustelid species have been encountered among the archaeological animal remains.

The French imported domesticated animals to North America, including cows, pigs, horses, and chickens. Lamothe Cadillac hired the “Lescuyer” brothers, Paul and Jean (Lécuyer), along with Jacques Mainville (also spelled Miville), to transport three horses and ten cattle from the St. Lawrence River valley to Detroit, Michigan in 1706. Milking cows appeared at Fort St. Joseph by the 1730s, when Antoine Deshêtres sold cows and pigs to the commandant. In 1762, the English surveyor Thomas Hutchins noted the presence of cows and horses. Archaeological evidence of all three have been recovered at the fort, but the skeletal remains of these animals are rare. The presence of horse remains suggests that overland travel occurred along with river transportation by canoe, and the St. Joseph (later the Sauk) Trail was an important route connecting the lower St. Joseph River valley to Detroit.

Historical accounts report that bison were hunted near the portage between the St. Joseph and Kankakee Rivers near South Bend, Indiana. Whereas bison may have been hunted by residents of Fort St. Joseph and their meat consumed at the post, bones from the large wild bovid were probably not transported any great distance. This may explain why the only trace of bison at the fort site is a lower leg bone fragment.

Identified birds from terrestrial habitats consist of a hawk, barred owl, domestic chicken, ruffed grouse, crow, grackle, and several small and medium-sized songbirds. Most abundant among all birds, however, are remains of wild turkey. Bones from passenger pigeons have also been identified, which is intriguing since the last records for the species nesting in southwest Michigan (South Haven) were in 1872, and the last sightings in the state were in the late 1890s. Although ducks and geese are most numerous, aquatic birds also include trumpeter swan, pied-billed grebe, and sandhill crane. Turtle bones have also been found, with painted turtles being most numerous among the several species that have been identified.

Although several large metal fishhooks have been recovered, perhaps most surprising is the paucity of fish bones (figure 83). Identified species include suckers



Figure 83 · Iron fishhooks and lead sinkers provide evidence that residents of the site were fishing in the St. Joseph River.

(buffalo and redhorse), along with single finds of gar, bowfin, northern pike, bullhead, walleye or sauger, and largemouth or smallmouth bass. Most plentiful, however, are the bones of lake sturgeon, which account for seventy-six percent of all identified fish bones. Since Native Americans relied on various fish species as an important part of their diet, the rarity of fish remains is perplexing. Furthermore, fish would have been particularly desirable among French Catholics during Lent, on Fridays, and on numerous religious feast days when Catholics were required to abstain from eating meat.

Even though French colonists relied on local wild food resources, they maintained some of their Old World culinary practices. During the eighteenth century, cooking was done directly over a fire and/or using coals to heat cast-iron pots, both outside in a bake oven made of clay, brick, or stone, and inside household fireplaces. The French introduced iron and other metal tools (for example, flintlock muskets, knives, harpoons, fishhooks) to hunt and prepare animals for food and for trade. “One-pot” meals such as stews and soups, made in copper, brass, and iron kettles over a fire or on a hearth inside their homes, were common cooking methods in both Native American and French cuisine. Of course, Native Americans had made and used earthenware vessels for cooking for hundreds of years. Metal and wooden ladles were used for stirring and serving these foods.

At Fort St. Joseph, food and drink required a range of different containers. Hundreds of ceramic fragments, or sherds, from plates, platters, cups, and bowls made in France, England, and other production centers have been found throughout the site.

Ceramics originating in France include two varieties of a tin-glazed earthenware known as faience. Faience *blanche*, a refined variety, was generally used for tableware, whereas the coarse faience *brun*, with a lead-glazed exterior, was used for food preparation and storage. Creamware and Staffordshire slipware are refined earthenware types found marking the British period at the fort. Staffordshire slipware was produced in England from 1670 to 1795, while creamware was first manufactured in 1762 and remained popular into the 1820s (figures 84 and 85).

Chinese porcelains were an expensive commodity during the eighteenth century, owing to their high transportation costs. Unlike utilitarian redwares, tin-glazed earthenwares, and salt-glazed stonewares, porcelain was used only by those who could afford it. Both the French and the British used these various types of ceramics, making it difficult to determine their owners and the precise date of their use at the site. The low frequency of porcelain at the fort is attributable to the peripheral location of the site in New France and the few residents who could afford to acquire goods from such distant markets.



Figure 84 · Refined, tin-glazed earthenwares like these faience sherds were popular imports from France during the eighteenth century.



Figure 85 · Unglazed redware ceramic vessel recovered from Fort St. Joseph.

Crafting Culture and Repurposing Goods

Fort residents crafted goods to pass the time and provide themselves with articles for barter and domestic use. This might involve carving bone, antler, and wood into knife handles, bowls, cups, plates, and platters (figure 86). Women embroidered clothing and decorated other items such as moccasins with glass beads and metal brooches. Tinkling cones were produced opportunistically from copper alloy kettle scraps. Basket making, weaving, and other fabric crafts such as sewing also occupied members of the household. Given the apparent absence of sheep at Fort St. Joseph, it is unlikely that any spinning of wool was done at the fort. This stands in contrast to Fort Michilimackinac and other French settlements in the Illinois Country where sheep were raised for their wool. All of these productive economic activities also served a social function, with juniors learning from elders and children learning from parents. The skill levels and talents of those residing at Fort St. Joseph most likely varied, suggesting that inhabitants worked collectively as they shared their knowledge.

Fort St. Joseph's occupants also depended on their ingenuity to mend broken tools and replace others. Archaeology demonstrates that they were using rivets and patches to repair copper kettles. Fort residents and Native Americans modified scraps from worn-out kettles into decorative tinkling cones, which they fastened to their clothing, bags, and moccasins. They repurposed thimbles in much the same way, perforating the top to facilitate attachment to mimic tinkling cones (figure 87). Items in high demand and in need of continuous replacement—such as musket balls and lead shot—were also produced on site by pouring molten lead into a mold (figure 88). A limited supply of metals and cloth and uncertain supply chains made recycling an essential practice.



Figure 87 · A perforated thimble from Fort St. Joseph was intentionally modified to serve as a tinkling cone, similar to those used on the nineteenth-century First Nations garment in the Royal Ontario Museum depicted below.

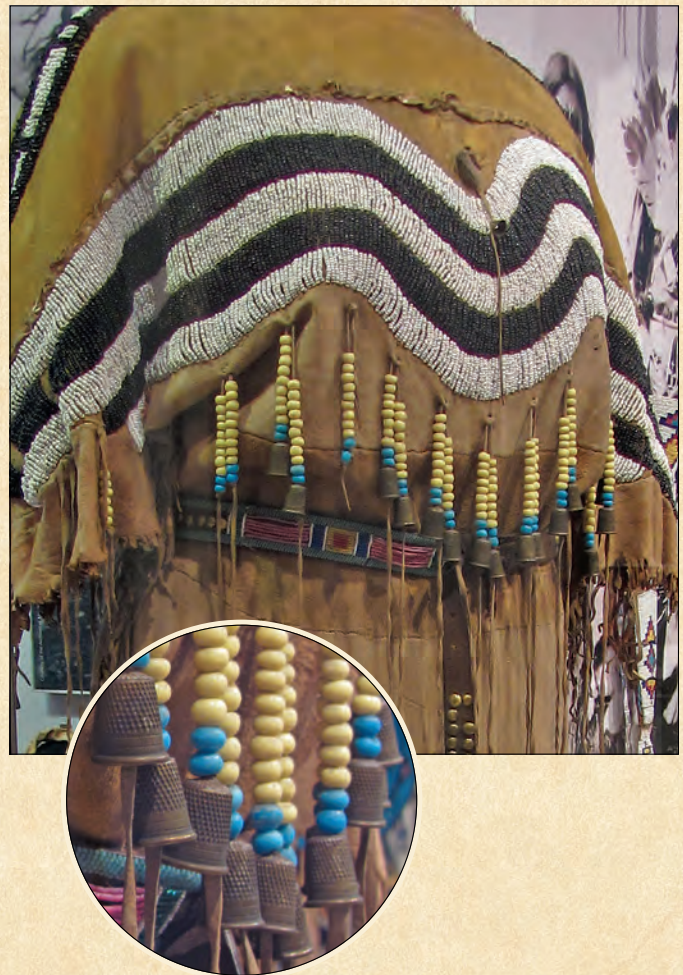


Figure 86 · Pieces of bone were modified and carved to make handles for tools and utensils.



Figure 88 · Lead sprue provides evidence that residents were locally producing lead shot and musket balls.

Fun and Games

French colonists were not completely consumed by the onerous labor of living on the frontier. The settlers enjoyed games, dancing, and music played on mouth harps. Small bone discs were used by the French and Native Americans as gaming pieces in their amusements and various games of chance, sometimes accompanied by gambling and drinking. Excavations have recovered two gaming pieces remarkably similar to those used by Potawatomi women into the 1960s. Both are smooth on one side and decorated on the other—one with incised lines filled with red pigment (vermillion?) and the other with a series of radiating lines and several black dots resembling a die or domino (figure 89). Two cup-and-pin gaming pieces made from the phalanx (toe bone) of a deer have also been recovered from the site.

Mouth harps—small musical instruments—were common during the fort’s occupation, and several have been recovered archaeologically (figure 89). The instruments were placed against one’s teeth and played by strumming the thin reed or tongue that runs down the middle of the harp. Made from iron or brass, these fun little instruments provided entertainment for all.

Recreation for children had to be easy and inexpensive on the frontier. In imitation of girls, dolls were made from corncobs and shriveled apples. The hoop-and-stick was a popular game that allowed children to race each other. The hoops might come from old barrels or wagon wheels. It is unknown if there were any wagons at Fort

St. Joseph, but some children may have brought this game with them when they moved to the fort. Children also played the game of *quoits*, in which a stake called a “hob” is placed in the middle of a circle of children who take turns trying to toss a rope or metal ring around it. Other games include kite flying, marbles, and walking on stilts.

Adult amusements at Fort St. Joseph included card playing, drinking brandy and wine, smoking tobacco, and the aforementioned games of chance that lent themselves to gambling. Fragments of wine bottles and glass containers have been recovered at the site and likely held alcohol as well as other liquids (figure 90). Alcohol consumption was controversial and was often discouraged by French officials, Jesuit priests, and indigenous leaders. For many residents and fur trade participants, it was a part of everyday life that helped ease the boredom that marked fur trade society. Alcohol use is often overestimated, but had a profound impact on sociability and French–Native American interactions on the frontier of New France.



Figure 89 · Mouth harps and gaming pieces recovered from the fort tell us about the fun pastimes of residents.

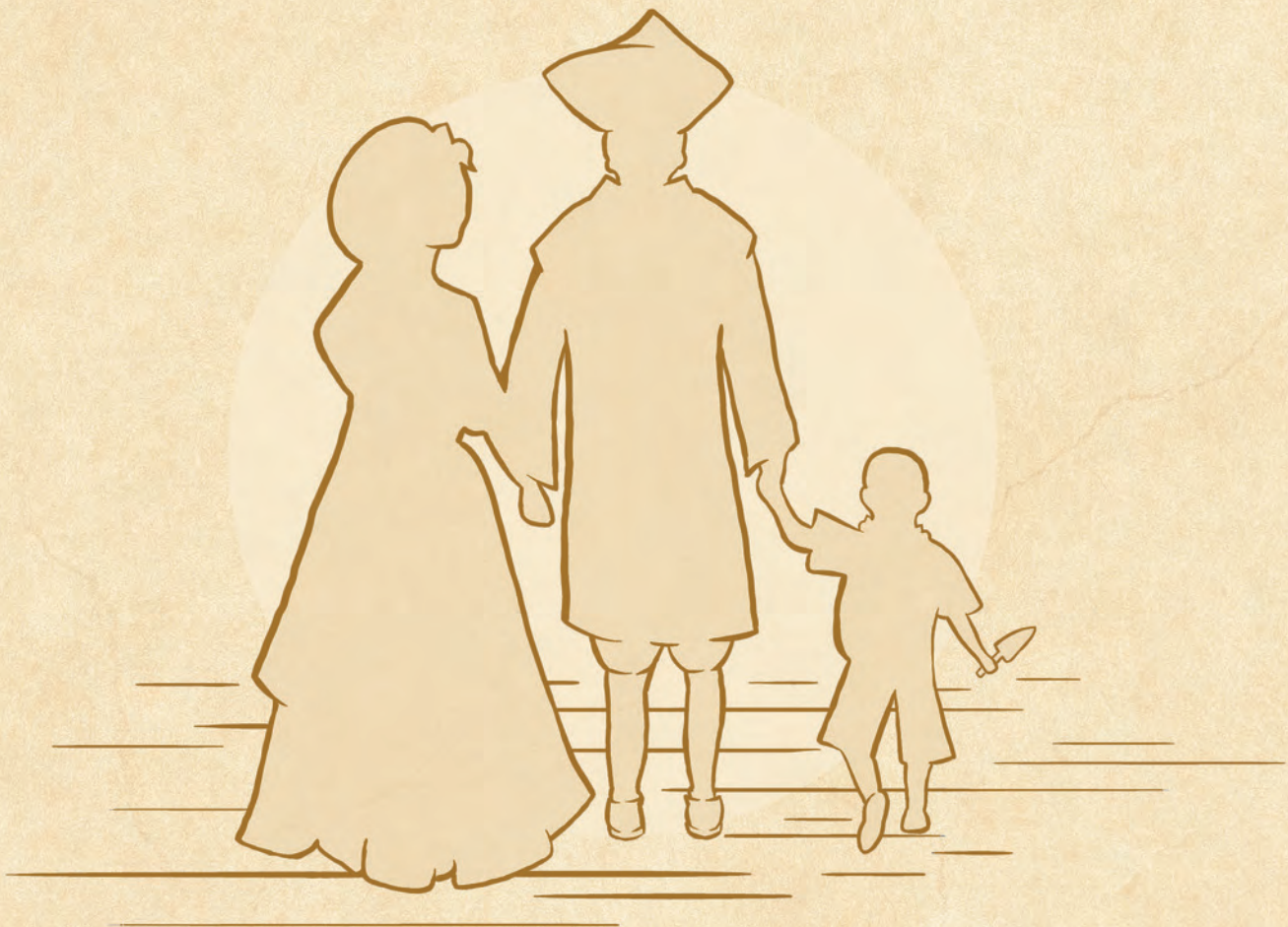


Figure 90 · Fragments of blue-green and olive-green bottles found at Fort St. Joseph, similar to these vessels from Fort Michilimackinac, likely contained wine, brandy, and other beverages.

Remembering the People of the Post

Historical documents and archaeological remains indicate that Fort St. Joseph was occupied by groups of people who had different aspirations and social identities, even as they interacted and shared a way of life. Cooperation was essential for the people of the post; they relied on and complemented each other's talents as they maintained some degree of autonomy in the struggle to carve out an existence on the frontier of New France. Native peoples often welcomed the newcomers and sought to fit them into their culture and worldview. Native Americans extended food, technology, local knowledge, and kinship ties to the French, as they attempted to integrate them into their daily lives, albeit on their own terms. The French, in turn, offered imported goods, religion, and what they considered the civilized life, which the Native Americans selectively incorporated into their traditional cultures, often preferring to retain their core values that prescribed what it meant to be indigenous.

All segments of the population—Native American and French, men and women, soldier and priest—mobilized material objects to express, transform, and negotiate their social identities in the turbulent eighteenth century. The results of their actions and interactions can be deciphered from the detritus of everyday life that we encounter at Fort St. Joseph, from the rusty nails, ash deposits, and wooden posts, to the beads, buttons, ceramics, lead shot, and religious paraphernalia buried in the floodplain sediments. Each object in its archaeological context can reveal a small part of the story of this place and illuminate the people who built, occupied, and abandoned it, if we are willing to listen and see beyond our biases. By unearthing these remains and interpreting their meanings, we can remember the people of the post and learn how our lives are both different from and similar to those who went before us.



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ERIKA K. HARTLEY, M.A.



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N I L E S H I S T O R Y C E N T E R

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Glossary

30-dernier coin (double sol) A coin minted in France in the early eighteenth century for use in its overseas colonies.

A pound of buckshot cost about 15 *sols* in the eighteenth century, suggesting the approximate value of a *sol*.

60th Regiment of Foot Also known as the Royal American Regiment of Foot, this British infantry regiment began in 1755–56 as four battalions to meet the needs of forest warfare in North America at the onset of the Seven Years' War.

archaeological record The combined detritus of humanity from time immemorial deposited on the earth and beyond, from the earliest stone tools in East Africa to objects in contemporary landfills and space junk.

arpent A French unit of land areal measurement equivalent to just under an acre.

artifact An object made or modified by humans, such as pottery, a flintlock musket, a nail, or a bone awl.

catlinite A distinctive red siltstone derived from a quarry in southwest Minnesota. Named for nineteenth-century artist George Catlin, catlinite was ground to produce beads, ornaments, and often smoking pipes that Native Americans held in high regard.

coiffe A cap worn by women in New France to cover their hair.

community service learning A type of pedagogy in which students benefit from community assets, provide a community with service, and reflect on their engagement. At Fort St. Joseph, students learn from the museum collections and human resources in Niles and assist the community in recovering and interpreting the history of the fort.

congé A license granted by the French Crown for legal trade with Native Americans.

coureur de bois Literally “runner of the woods”; one of the scores of illegal traders who exchanged goods with Native Americans in the fur trade era without having a *congé*.

Custom of Paris (Coutume de Paris) A compilation and systematization of customary law in Paris and environs that applied to French overseas colonies, including articles concerning family and inheritance, property, and debt recovery.

deshabille A state of partial dress.

douaire On the death of a male, his surviving spouse was entitled to one-half of their shared property and the right to use that property during her lifetime.

ensign A commissioned officer of the lowest rank.

faience A type of earthenware made in France and found archaeologically at Fort St. Joseph and throughout New France. Tin-glazed, refined varieties of earthenware were used for serving food, whereas lead-glazed, coarse varieties were used in food preparation and storage.

fichu A neckerchief worn by a woman around her shoulders and tucked into the front of her gown.

fusil de chasse A flintlock hunting gun. In New France, the term often referred to a particular hunting gun model popular among Native American allies, French-Canadian militiamen, and hunters.

fusil de traite A trade gun. These were traded and given as presents for the purpose of arming Native American allies.

habitant A French civilian occupant of Fort St. Joseph.

hematite and vermillion Natural pigments that were ground and mixed with a stabilizing agent like animal fat to produce a paint that could be applied to the body and other decorative surfaces.

King's 8th Regiment Also known as the King's 8th Regiment of Foot, this infantry regiment of the British army was formed in 1685 to serve overseas, including at Fort St. Joseph.

métis Offspring of racially mixed marriages, usually involving French men and Native American women.

palisade A structure, typically comprised of upright wooden posts, often constructed around settlements inhabited by Native Americans and European colonists for defense or symbolic purposes. The French are reported to have constructed a palisade at Fort St. Joseph.

permission A license granted by the French Crown to officers for the transport of goods by canoe to provide for the needs of officers and missionaries and for trade with Native Americans.

pièce-sur-pièce An architectural construction method involving the use of horizontal wooden logs attached at the corners to secure the walls of a building in place.

Pontiac's Rebellion Conflict fought from 1763 to 1765 between the British and a confederation of Native Americans led by the Odawa chief Pontiac. When the French ceded their North American land holdings to the English after the Seven Years' War, Native Americans attacked a number of French settlements in the western Great Lakes region, including Fort St. Joseph, in an effort to oust the British and reinstate their French allies, with whom they had close personal and political relations.

poteaux en terre Literally “posts in the ground”; this method of architectural construction involved the placement of vertical wooden posts directly in the ground. The spaces between the posts were often filled with a mixture of clay and straw (*bousillage*).

poteaux sur sole Literally “posts on a sill”; this method of architectural construction involved the placement of vertical wooden posts on a horizontal wooden sill often supported by a stone foundation. The spaces between the posts were often filled with a mixture of clay and straw (*bousillage*).

Glossary

powder magazine A building for storing ammunition, arms, gunpowder, and other potentially explosive materials associated with warfare.

préciput The right of a surviving spouse to a specific amount of money or possessions on the death of the other spouse, before any division of the estate, according to the Custom of Paris.

Seven Years' War Global conflict between the British and French to determine political and economic control over much of eastern North America. The defeated French had to cede most of their land holdings to the British by 1763, the official end of the war.

shovel test pit A small excavation by hand, approximately 40 × 40 cm, dug to sterile soil by archaeologists to locate artifacts and other evidence of past human activity.

Troupes de la Marine The principal military force of France attached to the French Royal Navy and bound to serve on land and sea.

voyageur Literally “traveler”; this man transported furs and finished goods by canoe between Montreal and French outposts like Fort St. Joseph. He was legally engaged in the fur trade.

wampum Beads made from mollusk and whelk shells found along the Atlantic seaboard that were traded as far west as Fort St. Joseph in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

wapiti A large North American deer (*Cervus canadensis*), more commonly known as elk.

Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project Booklet Series

Michael S. Nassaney, Editor

The booklets in this series examine topics related to the archaeology and history of Fort St. Joseph, an eighteenth-century mission, garrison, and trading post complex in Niles, Michigan. The site has been the focus of systematic investigation and public interpretation by Western Michigan University archaeologists in partnership with the City of Niles since 1998. Each booklet is intended to be an authoritative treatment of an important topic related to the fur trade and colonial life in New France for a general audience.

Women of New France Edited by Stacey Moore and Michael S. Nassaney (2011)

The Fur Trade By Rachel B. Juen and Michael S. Nassaney (2012)

Sheltering New France By Erika K. Loveland and Michael S. Nassaney (2017)

People of the Post By Erika K. Hartley and Michael S. Nassaney, with contributions by José António Brandão, William M. Cremin, Loraine DiCerbo, Terrance J. Martin, and Robert C. Myers (2022)



Timeline of Public Outreach Activities

- 1997 ▶ Hal Springer, president of Support the Fort, Inc., contacted Michael Nassaney to solicit his interest in finding Fort St. Joseph, using documents provided by Dr. Joseph L. Peyser.
- 1998 ▶ Nassaney led a team of Western Michigan University (WMU) archaeologists and volunteers in a search for the fort. They identified eighteenth-century French and English artifacts in the floodplain near the St. Joseph River.
▶ Local community members initiated a long tradition of providing meals for the archaeologists.
- 1999 ▶ *An Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey to Locate the Remains of Fort St. Joseph (20BE23) in Niles, Michigan* (Nassaney, Michael S., ed., Archaeological Report No. 22, Department of Anthropology, WMU) was published on the team's survey findings.
- 2000 ▶ Project members began visiting grade school classrooms to discuss archaeology and Fort St. Joseph.
- 2001 ▶ The 26th WMU archaeological field school conducted further testing on the terrace above the floodplain and held its first archaeology open house in Niles, attracting 300 visitors.
- 2002 ▶ The 27th WMU archaeological field school was held at the Fort St. Joseph site. During this course, the site was dewatered, a geophysical survey was conducted, and the identified anomalies were tested, determining that the site contained undisturbed archaeological deposits.
▶ The first archaeology summer camp was held, teaching students about the fort's history and archaeology (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFSPMLdgSPM>).
▶ The first of five videos was produced on the archaeological work at Fort St. Joseph (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4iQCSpPg6U&t=25>).
- 2003 ▶ The Project was granted the first Governor's Award for Historic Preservation.
- 2006 ▶ The 31st WMU archaeological field school established residence in Niles during the field season.
- 2007 ▶ The Project received an Outstanding Educational Program award from the Historical Society of Michigan.
▶ The Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee was established by the Niles City Council.
- 2008 ▶ The City of Niles and WMU entered into a ten-year memorandum of agreement.
▶ Students and faculty attended the annual conference of the French Colonial Historical Society in Quebec and participated in a symposium summarizing the results of ten years of research. Support for travel to the meeting and to various French colonial sites and archaeological collections was made possible by a grant from the Joseph L. Peyser Endowment for the Study of New France, administered through the WMU History department.
- 2009 ▶ The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project website was launched (<https://wmich.edu/fortstjoseph>).
▶ The Project began its Summer Archaeology Lecture series.
- 2010 ▶ Media Day was scheduled in advance of the Archaeology Open House to increase publicity and heighten interest in the program.
▶ The Project received a grant of \$8,100 from the Michigan Humanities Council to support the Open House.
- 2011 ▶ The Project was the winner of the prestigious Archaeological Institute of America's first Education Outreach contest.
▶ The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project booklet series was inaugurated.
▶ The Project was awarded a grant of \$9,605 from Digital Antiquity to upload, store, and make accessible digital documents associated with Fort St. Joseph.
- 2013 ▶ The Project received a second Education award from the Historical Society of Michigan.
▶ The Project blog was launched (<http://fortstjosepharchaeology.blogspot.com/>).
- 2014 ▶ The Project hosted the 10th annual Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference in Niles.
▶ The Project established a social media presence via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/fsjarchaeology>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/fsjarchaeology/>).
- 2015 ▶ Michael Nassaney published *The Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade*.
- 2016 ▶ Sue Reichert developed an archaeology curriculum for fifth-grade students.
- 2017 ▶ WMU and the City of Niles extended their memorandum of agreement through 2022.
- 2019 ▶ Michael Nassaney published the edited volume *Fort St. Joseph Revealed: The Historical Archaeology of a Fur Trading Post*.
▶ Investigations conducted beneath a landfill to establish the southern extent of the site identified undisturbed archaeological deposits.
- 2020 ▶ The Fort St. Joseph Curatorial Fellowship was established with the assistance of a generous donor.
- 2021 ▶ WMU and the City of Niles extended their memorandum of agreement through 2027.
▶ A paperback edition of *Fort St. Joseph Revealed: The Historical Archaeology of a Fur Trading Post* was released.

