Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project
Annual Report, 2013-2014

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December 19, 2014

2013 Field School Logo
Courtesy of John W. Cardinal and Katelyn Hillmeyer. (Just a random picture I chose. Please feel free to either choose or suggest something better. John, this is fine. Provide a caption and credit.)
Introduction

Over the past year 15 months, the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project (hereafter the "Project") maintained its high standards in research, teaching, and public outreach in the study of the fur trade and colonialism in southwest Michigan under the auspices of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee. Although field work was temporarily suspended last summer to provide time for publication and assess our progress to date, Western Michigan University (WMU) students and faculty, along with interested stakeholders and community volunteers, continued to collaborate in the dissemination of information to an expanding audience. The culmination of our planning activities was the 10th annual Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference (MHAC10) held at the Niles District Library, September 26-27, 2014. Other highlights include:

- MHAC10 provided essential feedback from the community concerning the future of the Project.
- Artifacts from the 2013 field season were inventoried and entered into the database prior to curation at Fort St. Joseph Museum.
- Our highly successful blog was regularly updated, offering current information to scores of followers (http://fortstjosepharchaeology.blogspot.com/).
- Artifacts and information from Fort St. Joseph were displayed in Lansing at the 2013 and 2014 annual Michigan Archaeology Day, visited by over 500 attendees.
- Plans for a new interpretive center to store and exhibit artifacts and disseminate information about Fort St. Joseph are underway in Niles.
- The Project continues to develop opportunities to inform the public, including a Facebook page (Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project) and a Twitter account (@fsjarchaeology).
- The Project, along with Support the Fort, Inc. participated in the annual Kalamazoo Living History Show, March 15-16, 2014.

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

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

Project Activities and Personnel
Considerable effort was expended by the Advisory Committee to host the 10th annual Midwest Historical Archaeological Conference (MHAC), which took place September 26 and 27, 2014, at the Niles District Library. Michael Nassaney initiated the conference in 2005 at Western Michigan University and it since been held annually throughout the region. The conference provided an opportunity for archaeologists, historians, heritage planners, economic developers, museums specialists, and other stakeholders to discuss effective strategies in order to manage the archaeological resources associated with Fort St. Joseph, our 18th-century French trading post that has been under investigation since 1998.

By all accounts, the conference was a huge success. Over 80 historic preservation and heritage tourism specialists, along with local supporters, were in attendance over the two-day conference. The first day began with a welcome from Niles City Administrator Ric Huff, followed by presentations about the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project from project participants José António Brandão, Terry Martin, Bob Myers, Juan Ganum, and Michael Nassaney. About 60 people then toured the fort site where Nassaney gave a brief overview of its discovery and investigations over the past 16 years. The conference participants then broke into smaller groups to visit the Fort St. Joseph Museum and the proposed interpretive center to be housed in the old post office on Main Street. Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee members Dorilee Schieble, Larry Sehy, Dave Bainbridge, and Carol Bainbridge greeted visitors and discussed their vision for the building.

After lunch, we rolled up our sleeves and engaged in the real work of discussing the drivers and barriers in order to creating sustainable facilities, programs, and partnerships and to bring the story of Fort St. Joseph to a larger audience. The discussion was ably facilitated by John Beck from Michigan State University and included a good mix of local stakeholders, students, and preservation professionals from academic, governmental, and private sectors. Ideas regarding goals and measures of success were also discussed and recorded in small and large groups. A consensus emerged that the program had a good track record and was well positioned to build on past accomplishments to make Niles and Fort St. Joseph a heritage tourism destination. Students in Nassaney’s Historical Archaeology (ANTH 3030) class, including the Fort St. Joseph Museum interns Aaron Howard and John Cardinal, collected the information from the conference to prepare a comprehensive report containing recommendations for a 5-year plan in support of archaeology and heritage tourism at Fort St. Joseph. The report will be made available to the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee and posted online for broad dissemination upon completion.

Friday was capped off by a wonderful reception provided by our partners, Kreis, Enderle, Hudgins & Borsos, P.C. The keynote presentation was kindly delivered by Lynn Evans (Director of Archaeology at Mackinac State Historic Parks) who stepped in for Uzi Baram whose flight was canceled due to a fire in an aircraft control tower that halted air traffic throughout the region.

More discussion, presentations, and posters filled the Library on Saturday as many of the attendees returned and new faces appeared. A number of invited papers focused on the theme of managing archaeological heritage in the 21st century, while other contributed papers provided updates on various projects throughout the Midwest and beyond. Dean Anderson (State Archaeologist of Michigan) moderated audience questions and comments, which provided ample
opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas and perspectives. Our generous sponsors—the City of Niles; Kreis, Enderle, Hudgins & Borsos, P.C.; Western Michigan University; and the Joseph L. Peyser Endowment for the Study of New France—provided funding for the conference. Numerous volunteers contributed their time and energy to ensure a smooth flow and pleasant venue conducive to planning the future of the past at Fort St. Joseph. Various community partners, students, and professional colleagues helped to make MHAC10 a memorable experience for all who attended.

Public Outreach and Education

The Project has continued to engage the public with education and outreach opportunities. Our membership program has reached 100 Fort Followers who receive special benefits including access to publications and regular updates on Project activities and events. Public outreach has always been an important aspect of the Project and continues to be. Presentations were made at a number of different venues including the 9th annual MHAC held at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana (October 2013); Michigan Archaeology Days in Lansing (October 2013 and 2014); The annual conference of the Center for French Colonial Studies at the Texas State Museum, Austin (November 2013); the annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Quebec city, Canada (January 2014); and Kalamazoo’s Living History Show (March 2014). For further information on Project outcomes, see Appendix B.

Laboratory Analysis and Collections Management

Over the past year Fort St. Joseph researchers stayed busy with analysis, organizing collections, attending conferences, as well as other public outreach opportunities. A complete list of Project outcomes can be found in Appendix B. A number of students learned how to clean, sort, and label artifacts from the 2013 field season and enter data into Past Perfect in the Archaeology Laboratory at Western Michigan University. Previously inventoried materials were transported to Niles where several independent study students integrated them into the collection at the Fort St. Joseph Museum.

Alex Brand, the 2013-2014 Fort St. Joseph Museum intern, measured the bore sizes of the entire collection of clay pipe stems recovered from Fort St. Joseph. Pipe bores are made using metal wire and as the years passed, thinner wire was gradually used, producing smaller bores. By determining hole diameter, we can thus establish the median date of occupation for the archaeological site. The study indicated a date of approximately 1765, somewhat later than anticipated. This may suggest that more clay pipes were used and deposited near the end of the occupation.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

The Project has gained local, regional, national, and international attention as a model for community service learning in archaeology and a collaborative partnership since it was initiated. Yet a project such as this has to evolve with changing circumstances in order to maintain its
large and enduring presence. The large artifact collection recovered thus far is in need of proper
curation facilities. Further analysis of the materials and dissemination of the results is also a
priority.

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee has begun to address these issues
by proposing a new interpretive center. The City of Niles has agreed to make the old post office
available for artifact storage, lab space, and exhibits to display artifacts and interpret the history
of the site. Plans have already been proposed as to what would make the building suitable for the
curation and preservation of the artifacts. This is only a proposal, and donations are greatly
appreciated, for the success of this endeavor relies on the Advisory Committee’s ability to raise
the needed funds within a set timeframe which is quickly closing.

Although the Project has led to the recovery of over 200,000 objects, further excavation
is proposed to gain a better understanding of the site architecture to assist in creating a virtual or
physical reconstruction of some components of the fort to aid in interpretation. Archaeological
goals should emanate from the strategic plan that is authorized by the Advisory Committee.
Excavations are planned for the summer of 2015, and applications for the upcoming field school
are now available online at wmi.edu/fortstjoseph/field-school/. Applications for the Fort St.
Joseph Summer Camp Program will also be available online March 1 at nileshistorycenter.org.
The Advisory Committee has selected architecture as a theme for the 2015 field season and
research is currently being conducted on the types of architectural forms that were used
in the 18th century at Fort St. Joseph and within the vicinity.

APPENDIX A

Project Sponsors and Supporters, 2013-2014

Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Advisory Committee

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

Cash Donations

Lifetime Members (10,000+)

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

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

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

**Explorer ($250-499)**

Dr. Sharon Lee Carlson & Mr. Thomas Dietz  
Ms. Mary Ellen Drolet  
Kiwanis Club of Niles

**Voyageur ($100-249)**

Alliance Française de Kalamazoo  
Dr. & Mrs. John Carter  
Mary Ann Chellman  
Mr. James T. Clark  
Ms. Lisa Donaghe  
David Ikerd  
Mrs. Nancy Johnson  
Denton Keith Kime  
Dr. & Mrs. Terry Martin  
Michael & Lucy McCauslin  
Herb and Donna Ochenryder  
Father David Otto  
Susan Reichert  
Lawrence Sehy  
Marybeth Janei Smith  
Society of Colonial Wars State of Michigan  
Fred and Diane Williams
Friend ($1-$99)

Robert Ailes & Laura Van Valk-Ailes
Christine Ballard
Dean Barnum
Lesley Bookout
Karen Brininstool
Erin and Greg Claussen
Barbara Cornette & Stan Smeed
Robert and Stella Cottini
Neil Coulston
Denis Fortin
Mrs. Barbara J. Groner
Russell Holm
Partick Hudson and Gina Frasson-Hudson
Charles Louis Hurtubise, Jr.
Rachel Kaufman
James and Karen Newman
Mr. John Pugh
Mr. Ted Ream
Barbara Sherbino
Roni Sionakides
John Spnner
Douglas Stickney
James Teall
Mrs. Judy Truesdell
Theresa & Theodore Turnquist
Brian & Constance VandePolder
Alison Vollrath
Dale Wiars

Volunteers and Gifts (we need a list of the volunteers for 2014; most of these folks worked that the 2013 open house, no?)

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

APPENDIX B
Project Outcomes: 2013-14

September 2013
*Dr. Michael Nassaney presented at the 139th annual conference of the Historical Society of Michigan, Kalamazoo.
*Dr. Michael Nassaney was invited to lecture at the Parchment Library, in Parchment, MI.

October 2013
*Students from the Project participated in Michigan Archaeology Day in Lansing, Michigan.
*Dr. Michael Nassaney presented at the annual Michigan Museums Association Conference in Bay City, Michigan.
*Members of the Project attended the 9th annual meeting of the Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference held at Ball State University in Munsee, IN.
*Dr. Michael Nassaney delivered an invited lecture to the Clements Library at the University of Michigan.

November 2013

*Kelly Berliner and Dr. Michael Nassaney presented a paper entitled “A Two-Way Street: Ten Years of Learning at Fort St. Joseph” at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago.

*Dr. Michael Nassaney presented a paper at the annual conference of the Center for French Colonial Studies at the Texas State History Museum in Austin, TX.

*Sklar Bauer prepared a summary of the field season for the Society for Historical Archaeology Newsletter.


**December 2013**

*Lab students completed sorting soil samples, and continued to inventory and record the artifacts collected during the 2013 field season.

*The 2013 annual report was completed and distributed.

**January 2014**

*Members of the Project travelled to Quebec City, Canada to attend the 47th annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, sponsored by the Society for Historical Archaeology.

*Project alumni, Andrew Beaupré, organized a session highlighting the forts and families of New France.

*The Project was awarded two first-place and two second-place awards in the SHA’s annual photo competition.

*The Project was particularly proud of placing first in the new diversity category.

**February 2014**


**March 2014**

*Members of the Project joined Support the Fort, Inc. in attending Kalamazoo’s Living History Show.

*Dr. Michael Nassaney presented an invited lecture to the Chicago Archaeological Society in Evanston, IL.

**April 2014**

*Alex Brand discussed work in the lab and recent research outcomes to Project supporters in Niles, MI.

**September 2014**
The Joseph L. Peyser Endowment for the Study of New France awarded $2,500 for the 10th annual Midest Historical Archaeology Conference.
The City of Niles donated $2,500 for the 10th annual Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference.
Members of the Project attended the 10th annual meeting of the Midwest Historical Archaeology Conference held at the Niles District Library in Niles, Michigan.

December 2014
The launch of the Project’s new Twitter account: @fsarchaeology.
An exhibit showcasing the Project was on display in the Bernhard Center on Western Michigan University’s Campus.
A draft of a five-year strategic plan for the Project was completed by members of Dr. Michael Nassaney’s class on historical archaeology at Western Michigan University.