

THE OLD FORT PALISADE

FALL 2022



Greetings from the Board President:

Fall is approaching rapidly! We are experiencing what seems like “reenacting season on steroids!” You can attend at least one event somewhere, if not two or more, every weekend! I urge all of you to travel around the area and visit other events. I’m sure you’ll run into some of our Fort family at many other locations.

Speaking of events, our 2023 calendar is nearly complete (*see page 2*). Watch our Facebook page and website for more information. Reenactor registration forms will be available at our webpage shortly.

“The Commander’s Quarters at the Fort served as the home to the families of Major John Whistler and Major Josiah Vose but is most known today for its atmospheric kitchen.”

Quartermaster’s Corner:
A Look Inside the Walls
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Good news - the Fort hasn’t been hit by a car in over a year! The bad news is that we are looking at some major repairs to our buildings over the next several years. I’m afraid that our constant patching just isn’t adequate. We are applying for grants to help with the expense, but if you have a spare \$100,000, we could sure put it to good use!

Repairs to the Spy Run Bridge are supposed to be done by the end of the year. Let’s hope they are able to complete their project, so traffic can resume to normal, moving past the east side of the Fort.

I’m busy prepping for the fall shows and also harvest. Stop by and say “Hi” if you see me at an event. My advice for attending these autumn events: prepare for every kind of weather and try to arrive early!

Norm Gable, President, Historic Fort Wayne, Inc.

2023 Schedule of Events

Jan. 28-29	Nouvelle Annee 1743
Feb. 18-19	1812 Winter Garrison
Feb. 25-26	Revolutionary War Garrison
Mar. 25-26	Civil War Winter Garrison
May 12	Education Day at the Old Fort
May 13-14	Muster on the St Mary's
June 10-11	Siege of Ft Wayne 1812
July 22-23	Trading Post on the Northwest Frontier
Aug. 26-27	Post Miamies 1755
Sept. 2-3	Napoleonic Days 1804-1814
Sept. 10	Be a Tourist in your Home Town
Oct. 21	Fright Night Lantern Tours

Please check our website for schedule updates.

oldfortwayne.org

Who's Who

Board Members: Norm Gable, President
Bob Jones, Vice President
Tom Grant, Treasurer
Nancy Stansberry, Secretary
Members: Randy Elliott, Josh Grubaugh, Andi Hahn,
Kip Lytle, Sean O'Brien, Gerret Swearingen

Events Planning/School Demos: Bob Jones

Facilities Committee: Sean O'Brien

Maintenance: Randy Elliott

Volunteer Coordinator: Bob Jones

PR/Marketing: Jennifer Balkenbusch

Social Media: Kathleen O'Connell, Willow Ortiz

Send your comments/questions to
info@oldfortwayne.org. Your message will be sent
to the appropriate contact person.

Sign up to receive our quarterly
e-newsletter

THE OLD FORT PALISADE

Send your request to:
publications@oldfortwayne.org

We are looking for articles
for future issues.

If you have a historically pertinent
subject you'd like to write about,
let us know at
publications@oldfortwayne.org

Deadline for submissions to the
Winter Palisade will be
December 1, 2022



Fright Night Lantern Tours

Saturday, October 15th
6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Tour the Old Fort at night! You will be guided by a historic interpreter who will present the Old Fort as it was in the early 1800s. Hear tales of encounters with the ill-fated Lieutenant

Philip Ostrander, the Old Fort's resident ghost. Purchase a sweet treat from the bake sale and enjoy stories by the fire while you wait. Keep an eye out for the Headless Horseman!

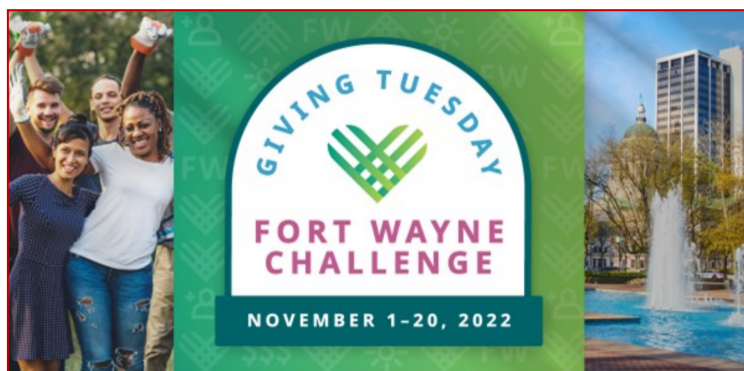
Admission is \$5.00. Ages nine and under are free when accompanied by an adult. Ticket sales begin at 5:30 p.m. and are available on a first come, first served basis. No tickets sold after 9:00 pm. All proceeds benefit the Old Fort.



Help Us Keep the Fort in Fort Wayne

The Old Fort depends on your support to offer reenactments and educational programing.

Thanks to generous donations, we were able have the Fort open throughout the summer with several interns on site to offer demonstrations and tours. With your help, we are keeping the Fort in Fort Wayne! This November, your support of the Old Fort can go even further. During the **#GivingTuesdayFW Challenge**, all donations made to endowment funds held at the Community Foundation, including the Old Fort's Endowment, will be matched by 20%. In addition, the top-fundraising organization in each giving area will receive a surprise unrestricted gift on **#GivingTuesday, November 29**.



To make a donation to the Old Fort's Endowment Fund online, go to <https://cfgfw.org/giving-tuesday/> and click on the "DONATE" Button. On the "Donate to a Fund" page, search for Old Fort/Historic Fort Wayne. Donations eligible for matching can be made from **November 1–20, 2022**. Donations can also be mailed to the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne: 555 E. Wayne Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46802 and designated for the Old Fort.

**Please note that gifts must be received by 11/20/2022 at 11:59 pm to be eligible for matching. If gifts are received the next day, they will not count as part of the #GivingTuesday Fort Wayne Challenge. This means gifts need to be received in the mail before 11/20/2022 and even gifts postmarked before 11/20/2022 but received after 11/20/2022 will not count.*

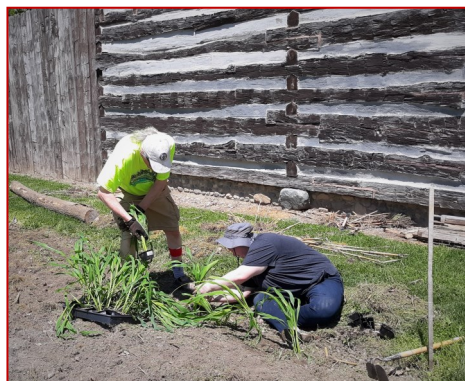
What's Growing in the Garden?

By Willow Ortiz

With the summer season coming to an end and the cold days of fall in our near future, many here in Indiana are preparing for the harvesting of their crops. In the late 18th and early 19th century many of the folks of our area would be doing the same. Farming is a foundational step of a community. We see many local farms out selling their products in farmer's markets, much like the Barr Street Market here in town on Saturdays. Besides the common produce we think of such as corn, potatoes, and beans, the modern farmer's market has an array of mushrooms, berries, and homegrown herbs and spices among the many other things you can find. We as modern people mostly use these items as foods for our households, and for many, that is where most produce goes.



Local news coverage of the Old Fort's garden



Preparing and planting the garden



Early growth

Past generations had a much different view on how to incorporate their harvests into their daily lives. Of course, much of a harvest would be utilized as food, not only for them, but for their livestock and pets as well. Even today, most of the corn we produce here is feed corn for the animals. What was not harvested for food was then repurposed for other things on the farm and in the community. Many of the herbs that we grow on Fort grounds have medicinal properties that, in a time without modern medication, would be a saving grace for the sore throats and upset stomachs of the community. The broom corn that is in the front of our small garden is a very diverse plant, with its strands being used in household items, such as whisks, baskets, and even - surprise, surprise - brooms!

Even without the garden and its harvest, there are other plants that are native to this area that early settlers and the indigenous would use in the same manner. The harvests, which come at different times throughout the year, bring in native flavors such as dandelions (which in my opinion, make an incredible and delicious jelly) as well as the pawpaw, otherwise known as the Indiana banana, which makes amazing desserts and baked goods.

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These few plants, among many of the other edible species that are native to the area, helped supplement the community and their diet in times when non-native crops did not fare well.

With a big push to eat local produce and native species, I cannot wait to see the amazing creations that may come! Farms and organizations across Fort Wayne are starting to grow and harvest many of these plants, and they are becoming much easier to find with a little bit of help. If you're planting your own garden, think about all the amazing options there are that are not only nutritious and delicious, but also native to our land and good for pollinators!



*Broom corn (top) and
Horseradish crops flourishing in
the garden*



Willow Ortiz is a Fort Wayne native who attends Purdue Fort Wayne for a degree in history with focus in medieval and religious studies. She can often be found wandering through the farmer's market and enjoying local restaurants. She reenacts not only 1812 at Historic Fort Wayne, but many different time periods with various groups, both in the United States and internationally. Willow was one of our summer interns at the Old Fort this year, and was responsible for the Fort gardens.

2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

Public hours as listed below. If you're interested in participating as a reenactor or vendor, please contact events@oldfortwayne.org for registration forms, or visit our website.

All events are free admission, unless specifically stated. Donations welcome.

October 22: Fright Night Lantern Tours

Saturday, 6 pm – 10 pm

Tickets Required. See page 3 for details

November 26: Christmas at the Fort

Saturday, 11 am – 5 pm

Welcome the holidays with fun and festivities at the Old Fort!

Always check our website, Facebook, or Fort radio
for event times and schedule updates.

SUMMER AT THE OLD FORT



Three Rivers Festival Parade

Activities on site during Summer weekdays



Colonial America



Napoleonic Days



Post Miami



United Way Day of Caring crew from 1st Source Bank



Be a Tourist In Your Own Hometown



Volunteer Now

Bob Jones

The first time I ever attended at the Old Fort was in 1985, for an event called 'The Rendezvous'. Fast forward to 2006, and I participated as a guest "extra" at an early event of what I call the "Reboot" Historic Fort Wayne, as a group of volunteers came together to keep the Old Fort from being demolished and began offering free programming. It was an odd mixture of historic attire and carrying the coveted musket, but it made an impression and began my journey into living history and volunteer work. I like being involved at the Old Fort because volunteers are contributing to a lasting legacy of preserving the stories behind the history. I enjoy engaging with the public, watching students' eyes light up, and learning from others who love history. Would you like to explore becoming a volunteer, or learn new skills to help you enjoy your time at the Old Fort? Find your niche at the Old Fort and help us with our mission to be an educational center in northeast Indiana by attending the monthly "Volunteer Advance" gatherings.



October Food Ways: "Get your share of the horseradish while it's hot!"

October 8, 2022 10:00 am to 12:00 noon

BYO cheese grater, jelly jar, and lid.

Recipes to take home – English Potted Cheese

A Soldier's Roasted Pumpkin – watch James Townsend's series:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFFxPVfJNXQ>

"We'll Dress the House With Holly Bright and Sprigs of Mistletoe."

November 12, 2022 10:00 an to 12:00 noon

Prepare for Christmas at the Fort.

Bring, pine boughs, juniper, spruce, or holly cuttings.

Gloves, wire cutter, small pliers, twine.

Take-a-Way Skill: A lesson on twining.

All sessions may include first-timer volunteer orientation, FAQ, Q&A, historic clothing questions, and research questions. Thank you for helping us *Keep the Fort in Fort Wayne*.

If you have questions or suggestions, I welcome your comments. Send messages to Bob Jones:

events@oldfortwayne.org

You can also call the Fort Phone: (260) 437-22836

Bob Jones

Board of Directors Vice President,

Event Manager, Volunteer Manager

Volunteer Advance meets the second Saturday of the month from 10:00am to 12:00pm for new volunteer orientation and topical discussions.

Quartermaster's Corner: A Look Inside the Walls

By Cory Balkenbusch

As many of our readers will know, the old blacksmith shop burned down almost a decade ago. With it, valuable tools and even more valuable memories were lost in a plume of smoke. The building was able to be rebuilt due to a generous outpouring of public support. We are fortunate to now have a lovely blacksmith, woodright, and tinsmith shop building, along with additional demonstration areas that allow us to host craftspeople who donate their time and trade during our events for the public.

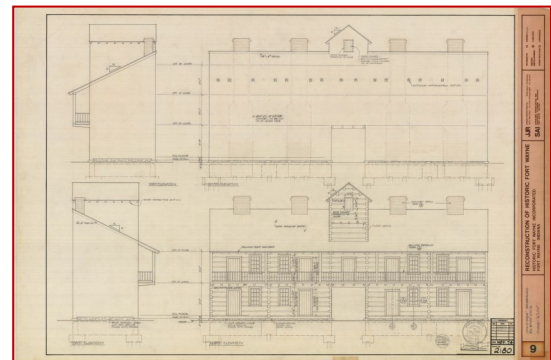
However, the fire also destroyed the site's set of blueprints detailing the 1970s reconstruction of the Fort. Finding another copy seemed hopeless, as neither the contractor nor original lumber supplier had retained the plans. It was not until this May that a retired local architect tipped us off to the possibility of plans being buried in the architectural archives at Ball State. Immense thanks are owed to Cody Sprunger, archivist of [The Andrew Seager Archives of the Built Environment](#), for the time and energy he devoted to restoring and digitizing these files.

Our Fort is a highly accurate replica of the final American fort built to control the confluence of the three rivers. Construction began in 1815 under the command of Brevet Major John Whistler. Whistler was an experienced fort builder, having been present for the construction of both of the preceding American forts in the area as well as assisting with the construction of Fort Dearborn before the war. The final fort was the smallest of the American outposts to be built locally, as the post-war Army had begun shuffling its resources further west. Indiana statehood came in December of 1816, making it clear that the military would not be needed for much longer in the region, yet the Fort would serve nearly three more years. On April 19th, 1819 the final garrison, by then under the command of Major Josiah Vose, marched out for the final time.

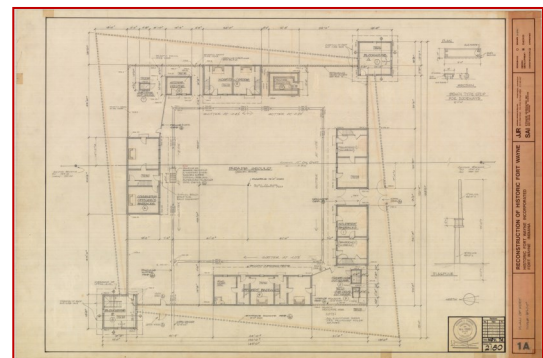
Every aspect of the Fort was constructed with defense using a small number of men in mind. Two rows of palisade, one being five feet and one being over twelve feet tall, prevented unwanted entry except



Board Members review blueprints with retired architect Jim Philips.



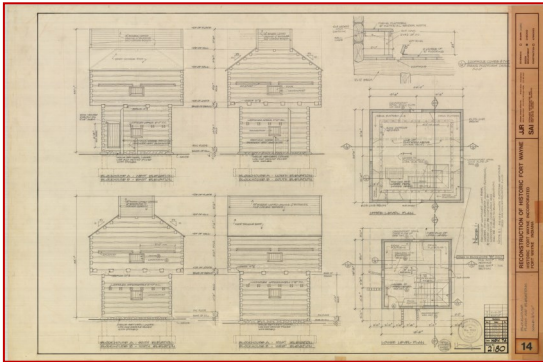
Front view of barracks, showing the musket loopholes in the loft and the angled roof. Note how the loopholes were not able to be evenly spaced due to the wall beams and chimneys.



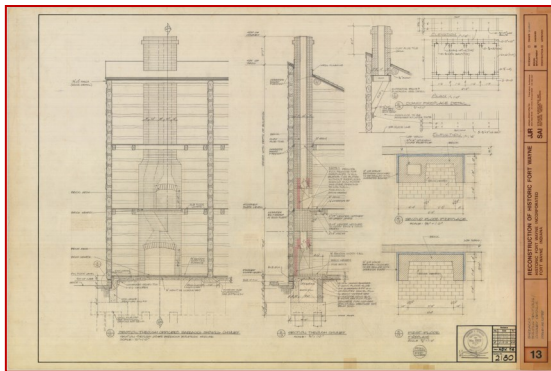
A bird's eye view of the Fort. Of note are the gutters following the footprint of the main buildings, how the buildings form part of the palisade, and the no longer standing powder magazine, outhouses, and outlying palisade.

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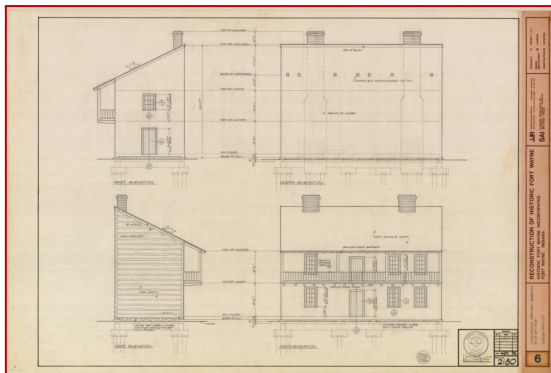
through the heavily fortified double doors of the main gate. (We only have one palisade now, a product of the unfortunate levee placement). A sally port enabled quick access to the river while remaining fairly concealed in the wall to not invite attack. The main buildings themselves serve as part of the wall. This meant less timber, time, and manpower was needed to construct a defensible position than if the buildings and palisade had been separate.



Blockhouses were constructed with a second-floor overhang and four cannon ports per floor. The overhang enabled defenders to fire their weapons straight down, augmenting the normal musket loopholes on both floors.



Chimney design in the Fort's main buildings. Note how each of the main floors have their own firebox and how warm air is meant to circulate as long as possible before leaving the building.



The Commander's Quarters at the Fort. Served as the home to the families of Major John Whistler and Major Josiah Vose but is most known today for its atmospheric kitchen.

Two blockhouses stick out on opposing corners to provide overlapping fields of fire on the exterior walls, without a blockhouse on every corner being necessary. Four cannon ports are built into each floor, with each blockhouse originally housing one six-pounder and two of the 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " howitzers. The stairwell in the North Blockhouse now blocks some of these ports, as access would have originally been limited to a ladder leading to the second floor. The musket loopholes are designed with protection in mind, as they are built high enough that the defenders of the Fort would have been able to step down out of danger to reload before stepping back up to take their shots.

Construction materials were at a premium on the frontier. As was previously mentioned, the living quarters of the Fort helped to form the walls. Brick was also at a premium, yet fireplaces were absolutely essential to keeping the Fort's inhabitants then, and now, with feeling in their toes. Chimneys were designed with fireboxes on both floors with living spaces in each building. The angles involved between the floors help to circulate the heat longer in the building, something I think we can all appreciate to this day.

Our Fort is far more complex than many of us appreciate on a regular basis, and with this complexity comes issues for maintenance efforts at the site. While the flat, slab walls were once needed to prevent attackers from climbing into the parade ground, they face the elements year-round unprotected. The white oak timbers, a strong and reliable wood, are just as resistant to musket fire as they are to weatherproofing. Yet thanks to the discovery of this set of plans and our gracious supporters in the community, the Fort may still very well have a bright future.

All blueprint images courtesy of the Andrew Seager Archives of the Built Environment, Ball State University.

Volunteer Profile: Norm Gable

The Blacksmith's shop is one of the favorite stops on any visit to the Old Fort. But who is the man who is usually working the bellows? Meet Norm!

Norm is an Indiana native. He graduated from Manchester High School, where he was active in sports (football, wrestling and track), as well as the FFA and 4-H. He graduated from Purdue with a BS in Agriculture and started farming with his parents after college. Today he still runs the family farm. He was elected to the Wabash Co. Farm Bureau Co-op board in 1983, which became the North Central Co-op which eventually merged into Ceres Solutions Co-op. They sell agronomy products, feed, and fuel to farmers and others.



When he's not in the fields, Norm has a myriad of interests. Norm and his wife Laura are approaching their 30th anniversary, and have two daughters. He started building Rallye Cars and running the National Pro Rallye series with his college roommate from 1975 through 1980. He also got his pilot's license in 1980 and built an airplane with a couple of friends in 1991. Norm says, "I'm still farming, blacksmithing, reenacting, and thinking about flying again."

Norm began reenacting in 2003, and has been active at the Old Fort for the past 17 years! In 2009 he was asked to serve on the Board of Directors, and has been the Board's president ever since. You can check out his update from the Board on the front cover of this newsletter.

Next time you're at the Old Fort, be sure to stop by the blacksmith's shop. There's a good chance you find Norm there, willing to share some great stories and demonstrate the blacksmith's trade. Bring some good questions. He'll be glad to answer them!

Historic Fort Wayne, Inc.

1201 Spy Run Ave.
Fort Wayne, IN



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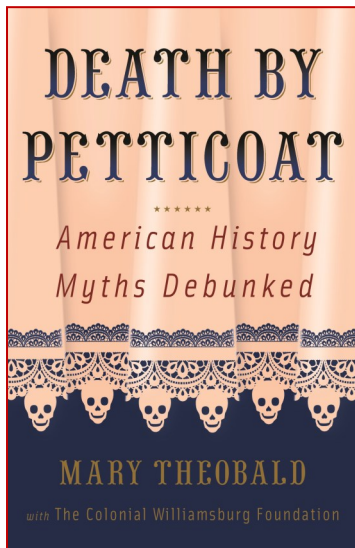
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Kathleen O'Connell
editor

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Book review:

Death by Petticoat: American History Myths Debunked



On July 14th, I had the pleasure of “attending” a video discussion with Mary Miley Theobald, author of *Death by Petticoat: American History Myths Debunked*. The presentation started with an introduction of the author which highlighted her work as a docent and researcher at Colonial Williamsburg (CW) for close to 20 years. She acknowledges that she has actually told visitors a couple of the myths in her book as she grew into her role. Admittedly, I have told some of them myself. The Allen County Public Library has a copy of the book (ISBN # 9781449418533) so I borrowed it. In it, I found 64 common myths told by docents throughout the US. The book is only 131 pages long and the myths take up about a page each. With each myth there is a full page illustration. Needless to say, I finished the book in about an hour (I’m a slow reader and there were interruptions). It’s a fun, quick read, full of great information for reenactors, and more than a few surprises.

The book takes its name from the myth that the second leading cause of death for women in the colonial period was burning to death in the kitchen after their skirts caught fire. Childbirth is usually cited as the primary killer. Both are wrong; diseases like cholera and small pox are number one, with infections as a close number two. To debunk the myths, Theobald not only used extensive research into CW’s wealth of data but also applied simple common sense. It is common knowledge that natural fiber cloth does not spontaneously combust like synthetic fibers; they warm up, then smolder and scorch before lighting. There is some warning before the cloth enflames. Couple that with a society that has been working around open fires all their lives and it is easy to see that a person working in the kitchen would know how to NOT let their clothes catch fire.

Since Theobald worked at CW and currently lives in Virginia, the book’s myths tend to focus on life in the colonial southern east coast. For instance, there is an often told story that slaves were ordered to whistle or sing a song while they were delivering food to the dining room so that everyone would know that their food was not being eaten on the way from the kitchen. Logic tells us that the slaves in the kitchen could have taken the food anytime they wanted. Another myth is that it was unlawful to teach slaves to read and write. Prior to the Nat Turner revolt of 1831, there were at least two schools operating in the Williamsburg area for African American children. CW is currently working to restore one of them to be ready for the public in the summer of 2024.

Two myths that I (or a member of my family) have told concern blue sugar cone paper and apprenticeships. Refined sugar used to be sold as cones wrapped in a blue paper.



Photo from
historymyths.wordpress.com

Continued next page

When my wife was a teen, she volunteered at a 1740's historic site in New Jersey, and remembers learning that the paper was saved to create a blue dye for cloth. Her family had shared that story for years. (These myths stick with us!) When we started volunteering at the Old Fort, she tried to confirm that memory and couldn't find any documentation.

Reading this book, I learned that in the Colonial Era, refined sugar was expensive and the amount of wrappers needed to create the dye would have been cost prohibitive. In other words, if you could afford that much refined sugar, you could afford to have your cloth professionally dyed. However, refined sugar did finally become affordable for the common person around 1830, and then there is some documentation for the paper's use as a dye. It was a lesson in being careful about time periods. What is true in later years is a historical myth in others.

One myth that caught me was regarding apprenticeships. I have been telling tourists for years that apprenticeships lasted seven years. However, no state or colonial law has been found detailing the structure of apprenticeships. In fact, there are newspaper articles asking for the return of runaway apprentices that had been serving for 10 or 12 years. Apprenticeships are business contracts and vary with each Master/Apprentice relationship. In truth, the contract stayed in effect for as long as it was monetarily beneficial to either party. The 'seven year' period is common in Europe, but not here.

The gist of Theobald's book is that docents need to stop telling these falsehoods. It is perfectly acceptable to tell a visitor that you (or I) don't know. After all, we're all still learning! She also provides a web page URL (<https://historymyths.wordpress.com/>) for some of the most frequently repeated myths. The web site also allows a reenactor to ask about the truthfulness of other commonly told stories. Check it out. What myths have you heard or inadvertently shared?

Kip Lytle has a BA in History and volunteers as a woodworker and militia member at the Old Fort. After retiring from the Indiana Air National Guard as a Network Administrator, aka "Computer Geek" he started his own company: Macaddis, Woodwright, where he creates hand made wooden items using period tools and techniques.



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

And check out
Old Fort Radio 1640AM
for historic vignettes,
invitations to events at the Old Fort,
and announcements of coming events.

