

M E D A L L I O N U P D A T E

At long last, STF presents the reproduction of the circa 1730's Jesuit medallion that was unearthed during the 2004 Western Michigan University field school held at the site of Fort St. Joseph. The medallion was located in association with Feature 6, a stone hearth that was probably part of a building, at the southern portion of the dig site.



Obverse Silver

This medallion is significant in many ways. It is intact, meaning that the loop is still attached and it is not broken anywhere.

This medallion is only one of two known to have been found in North America. A medal very similar in design but with slightly different inscriptions and dating to the first half of the 18th century has been recovered from the Palais de l'Intendant in Quebec City (Moussette 1994: 65, 2001).

The stone hearth (Feature 6), comprised of a series of large, close-spaced, level stones, resembles a similar feature identified in Southeast Row House C at Fort Michilimackinac (Halchin 1985) The hearth was nearly fully exposed in a trench (1 x 4 m). Few artifacts were recovered from this feature, indicating that it may have been purposefully kept clean. Also collected in Feature 6 were artifacts which include glass beads, fragments of window and container glass, hand wrought nails, lead shot, a brass mouth harp, and the cast brass religious medallion with depictions of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary and Latin inscriptions. On the medal obverse is a depiction of Christ and a Latin inscription, "CLARIOR

SOLE MISERE," roughly translated as "You, who are brighter than the sun, have mercy." On the reverse is a depiction of Mary and a Latin inscription, "MATER SAL VATORIS," which translated as "Mother of the Savior." (Nassaney et al 2007)

This medallion gives the anthropologist and the collector an insight into the religious and cultural life of the inhabitants of New France. The medallion was used as part of a rosary in most cases. The Jesuits converted many of the Native Americans in the area and they had a very large influence in the whole Great Lakes region.

The success of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project is due to the collaborative efforts of Western Michigan University, the City of Niles, the Fort St. Joseph Museum, and Support the Fort, Inc. The Department of Anthropology and the College of Arts and Sciences of Western Michigan University also supported the 2002 and 2004 WMU archaeological field schools.



These replicas are cast in brass, as the original, and silver for those who wish. **Reverse Brass** to purchase a replica in silver. Thanks go to Ace Castings of S. Burlington, Vermont for the casting of our medallions and their assistance in this endeavor. Without the partnership with the City of Niles, Mayor Mike McCauslin, City Manager Terry Eull, Fort St. Joseph Museum Director Carol Bainbridge, Dr. Michael Nassaney, Western Michigan University, Dr. William Cremins, Western Michigan University, Dr. Jose Brandao, Western Michigan University, the late Dr. Joseph Peyser, Professor Emeritus of French,

IUSB Support the Fort, Inc. would not have been able to offer this beautiful reproduction of the medallion.

Parts of this article are graciously reprinted with permission from the Anthropology Department, expressly, Dr. Michael S. Nassaney, Dr. Jose Antonio Brandao, Dr. William M. Cremins and Brock A. Giordano et al, *Archaeological Evidence of Economic Activities at an Eighteenth-Century Frontier Outpost in the Western Great Lakes*. 2007 41(4):3-19.

Moussette, Marcel 1994 Le Site du Palais de L'Intendant à Québec. Septentrion, Sillery, Québec.

2001 Les Médailles Religieuses, Une Forme de L'Imagerie



Feature 6 at the site of the Fort St. Joseph archaeological study conducted by Western Michigan University, July 2004.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Michael S. Nassaney and the FSJ Archaeological Project.

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