

MACKTOWN MONITOR



Fall 2023

Frenchmen's Frolic

Sat. Oct. 21 & Sun. Oct. 22

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

! Free Admission for the Public !

Le Fete Francais is back! This is your year to wander through the pre-1850s era encampment of costumed participants. At the oldest settlement of Winnebago County, old Macktown, you are likely to see pioneers, trappers, traders, voyageurs, and native Americans milling around the grounds, pursuing everyday activities that people in the day would have done during this end of the season gathering: visiting, cooking outdoors, eating in the fresh air, playing games, having long gun black powder shooting matches, throwing hawks (hatchets), preparing animal skins for trading, making twine from dried nettle, sewing, mending, carving. It's a thoroughly enjoyable look back to a time when folks truly lived day to day, thankful for the bounty the earth provided, thankful for health to enjoy the company of others, and thankful for the crisp sunny fall weather.

Spread the word to your family, friends, and neighbors. This is the place to go on a lovely fall weekend to forget yourself in the fun and wonder of past times. *Laissez le bon temps rouler!* Let the good times roll!

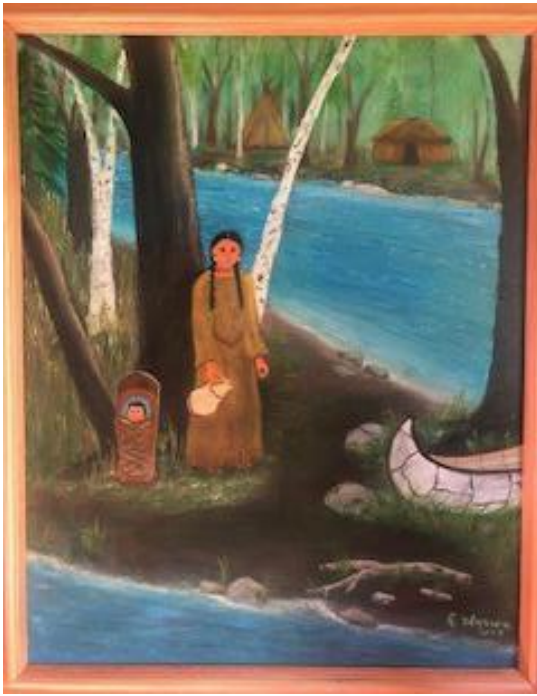
Fall for Some Great Programs!

We have enjoyed incredibly wonderful programs for our Sundays at Macktown. The balance of the year is no exception:

- September 10 Exploring Macktown's Archaeology
- October 8 Old-Fashioned Cider Making
- November 12 Native American / Getting Ready for Winter
- *December 2 (Sat.) Sharing in Rockton's Christmas Walk*
- December 10 Christmas at Macktown

We appreciate all who have participated in the Sunday programs. Your attendance makes the effort to present them worthwhile. While the program schedule for 2024 is tentatively set, we always welcome your ideas for program topics pertaining to the 1835-1850 Macktown timeframe plus prehistoric Macktown archaeology. Call Connie at 815-218-3874 or email rmj5288@gmail.com. The thoughts and input of our visitors as we plan ahead are most valued.





Richard Stasica, 2020

*A local artist's rendition of Hononegah standing
at the confluence of the Rock & Pecatonica rivers.*

Mack and Hononegah: What was the Attraction?

In the vein of a Hallmark Mystery Romance, history has left only a few clues but lots of speculation for us in the 21st Century to know definitively what led to the marriage of Stephen Mack Jr., and Hononegah, a native Winnebago woman. We do know from early historical accounts (though not contemporaneous) that Mack likely met Hononegah when he clerked at the grand Detour trading post, near a Winnebago village in the late 1820s.

Theory #1 – Near fatal attraction. Based on the writings of Edson Irving Carr in 1898, who's memories may be warm (but hazy?), we find our valiant fur trader Mack sick in bed in Grand Detour and not doing well. Injury and illness could be frequent and deadly in the expanding New World of America. Enter the person Hononegah, called in to tend a seriously feverish Mack with her knowledge of healing herbs and youthful tenderness (15 years of age). Touched with gratitude, Mack proposed (31 years of age). Other permutations on the theme of Mack's gratitude extend to bouts of murderous native hostility toward Mack by various tribal factions in which Hononegah, receiving warnings in advance, hides Mack and saves his bacon.

Theory #2 – Few European women existed on the frontier in the 1820s. The natural ambition of adventurous men was to find a mate, a partner and helpmate in the rigors of life. For more than a century, many French trappers and other voyageurs exploring the waters of the East and Northwest Territory selected native women for wives. Perhaps Mack was only following an established pattern when he selected Hononegah.

Theory #3 – Hononegah was, in fact, the perfect helpmate for a husband in the fur trade. In the Encyclopedia of the Great Plains, Andrea E. Radke wrote an article, "Women in the Fur Trade," which analyzes the integral role native women played in the New World's burgeoning fur trade. Indian women were skilled in the trapping of small animals and the preparation of those skins. Naturally, these women had a thorough understanding of native cultures, including their own native tongue, and possibly several others. Native women could lend credibility to fur trading transactions. As stated by Radke, "Native women through their roles as producers, translators, traders, and guides . . . served as a unifying bond between European American men and native tribes." These marriages between white men and native women "encouraged political, social, and economic alliances within the fur trade system." Did Stephen Mack see economic advantage in the eyes of Hononegah?

Theory #4 – the Hallmark theory: Love at first site!

Our modern generations cannot definitively know the reasons for the Mack / Hononegah union in 1829 (re-consecrated in 1840). For neither Mack nor Hononegah (illiterate in written English?) have left us writings that hint to the initial attraction in their marriage. Upon the death of Hononegah at age 33 from a lingering illness, Mack wrote to his sister and expressed gratitude for his deceased mate, extolling her giving, helping, gentle nature which taught him to, "reverence God by doing good to his creatures." Whether the initial matrimonial motive was attraction, gratitude, availability, business expediency, or a combination of these factors, Winnebago County's founding couple and their family of nine children, left a compelling pioneer legacy of significance (and some intrigue) for generations to discover.



Archaeology Dig Scheduled at Macktown

An invitation has been extended to Macktowners to participate in a dig **September 7-13** at a site in Macktown called "Boatstone Grove," north of the Education Center ending at the edge of the quarry. (Boatstone – a dugout shaped stone artifact thought to have been used as an atlatl weight, found at archaic Eastern and Midwestern sites.) Several years ago, a broken boatstone was uncovered just below the surface in this area. Volunteers will dig a series of shovel probes to determine areas of possible greatest artifact concentration, then open a unit or two in these locations for more thorough excavation.

The dig this year will be done completely by adult amateur volunteers, though directed by Dr. Rochelle Lurie. Dr. Lurie, a Macktown Living History board member, has been working the archaeology angle at Macktown for more than 25 years enabling the recovery of both 1800s European, pioneer, and native artifacts, and leading to the discovery of early archaic remnants, some estimated to be 8,000 years old. Assisting Dr. Lurie for this dig is volunteer Peter Czyzewski. Interested persons needing more information may contact him at 815-262-3591 or p_czyzewski@hotmail.com.

THANK YOU to the volunteers from the interpretive community and Macktown Living History volunteers who enabled us to host the Byron Forest Preserve Day camp in June and the North Suburban Library in July. Volunteers also serve during program Sundays at Macktown. Your dedication and talents are the heart and backbone of Macktown Living History.

WANTED:

Macktown Living History is in need of additional pre 1850 furnishings for the Mack house, the Whitman stone building and the Stevens building. Books and maps are among the acquisitions most desired. If you have items you would like to donate, please contact Michael Bost at 815-978-8090.

Welcome to our Newest Members!

Gary & Kathe Meyer	Rockton IL
Amy McFarland & family	South Beloit IL
Sharon Ostermann	Kewaskem WI

Stay in touch with programs and events at www.MacktownLivingHistory.com or check out our page at [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)



Macktown Living History is Growing thanks to Volunteers!

Macktown Living History is in the process of adding new and exciting additions of programming and educational opportunities thanks to our dedicated group of volunteers.

- A Programming Committee has been formed to create new programming for 2024 and beyond. Some of the new offerings will include a lecture series and instructional workshops highlighting historic themes and crafts.
- An Educational Committee was formed to work with local schools, libraries, and summer camps to continue to offer quality historical youth programming.

When offering programs to the public, volunteers are needed to make any event historically accurate, enjoyable and safe. Volunteers range from interpreters, set up helpers, office help, greeters, & many more tasks that help make events possible.

Macktown Living History volunteers of all ages add their talents to Macktown Living History. Volunteers range in age from young children volunteering with their parents to seniors, working in the gardens, in the educational center, at events, and as interpreters. MLH is always looking for new volunteers to become part of our team. We welcome you to join us!

If you are interested in joining the volunteer group at Macktown Living History, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Contact, Pam Stock at pamstock22@gmail.com for more information.

Become, Renew, Engage!

Macktown Living History can be a significant part of your life. Where do your talents lie?

- Become involved in your community
- Expand your historical knowledge
- Help provide educational programs
- Work with historians
- Learn to give tours and talks
- Meet and greet the public at events
- Assist with restorations, renovations, and more!

Fill out the form for yourself or your family or business. Or consider gifting a membership to someone you love.

- | | | |
|--|---------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Settler
<i>(individual)</i> | \$25 | 1 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frontier Family
<i>(2 adults & children)</i> | \$40 | 1 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer Trader
<i>(Business membership)</i> | \$100 | 1 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Guardian
<i>(Lifetime membership)</i> | \$1,000 | Date: _____ |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Phone: _____
(cell) *(landline)*

Additional gift to support programming \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

Make checks payable to Macktown Living History.

Return this form with your payment to:

Macktown Living History

P.O. Box 566

Rockton, IL 61072

Ph. 815-624-4200

*Online membership form and electronic payment available at MacktownLivingHistory.com at SUPPORT.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet & Greet | <input type="checkbox"/> Register Program Visitors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set-Up | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean-up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lead tours | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with Children's Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Visit Macktown Living at 2221 Freeport Rd (Rt. 75) Rockton, IL. Entrance is on the north side of the road. Drive past the golf course to the parking lot & Education Center. Stroll down the hill to view historic buildings.

