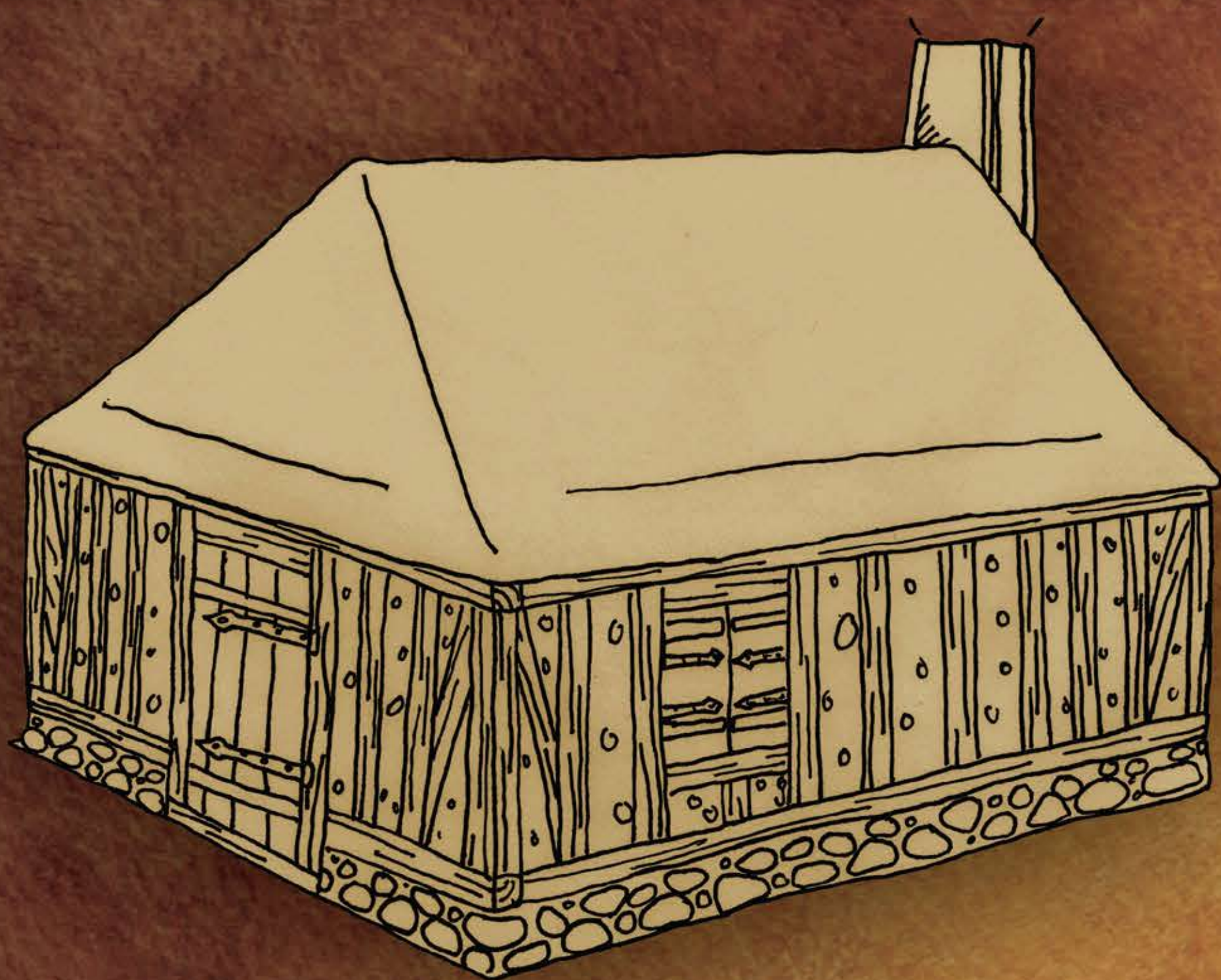


Eighteenth Century Architectural Hardware



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



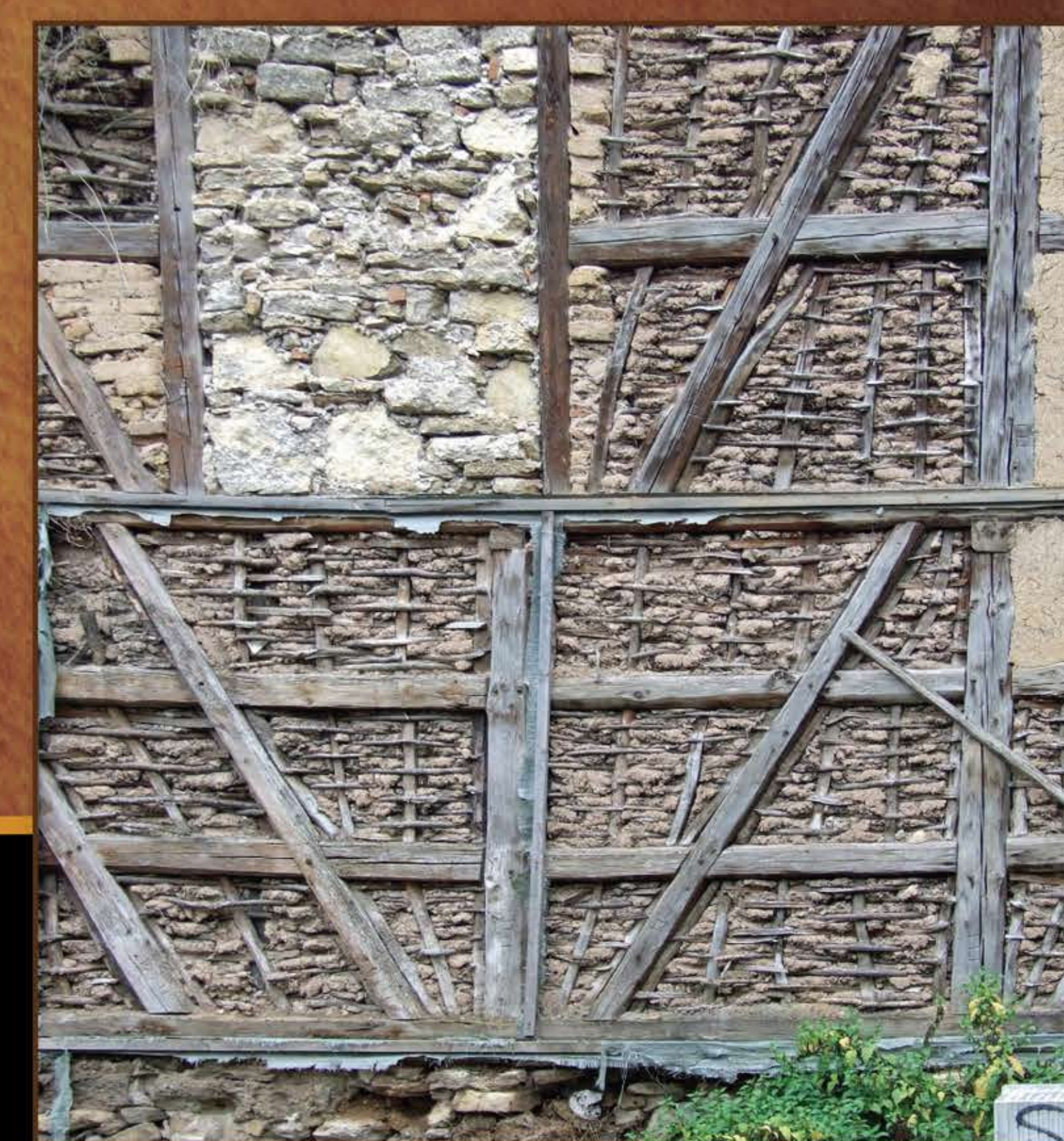
Found at Fort St. Joseph

Houses and other types of buildings leave evidence for archaeologists to discover. This includes stone foundations, wooden posts or post molds, and architectural hardware like the types we have recovered from Fort St. Joseph. Architectural artifacts are portable objects that provide evidence for buildings that no longer exist. What types of artifacts have been uncovered at Fort St. Joseph? Where were they made? How were they used? These are some of the questions that archaeological and historical research can answer.

The French settlers in the region built their homes using familiar techniques. Their houses consisted largely of wooden posts that were stuck in the ground or placed on stone foundations. The spaces between the posts were filled with stone and mortar (*pierrotage*), and a mixture of clay and straw (*bousillage*), to construct the walls. Traces of this mixture have been found at Fort St. Joseph.



Bousillage found at Fort St. Joseph (image on left) was made with clay and straw (image on right) ▲



The mixture of stone and mortar used to fill the spaces in the wooden posts of walls is called pierrotage. ▲

◀ Due to the long journey across turbulent waters, it was practical for glass to be transported in small panes to prevent breakage en route.

Glass found at Fort St. Joseph suggests that some buildings here had glass windows. Archaeologists can distinguish window glass from container glass by its shape. Window glass is flat while container glass is curved. Glass was made in either Britain or France and shipped across the Atlantic, and later by canoe to the fort via a long trade network. On this voyage across turbulent waters, it was practical for glass to be transported in small panes to prevent breakage en route.



▲ Nails made by a blacksmith are four sided and taper toward the tip.

The large numbers of hand-wrought iron nails and other metal hardware recovered from the site indicates the widespread use of metal in architecture at Fort St. Joseph.



FIG A

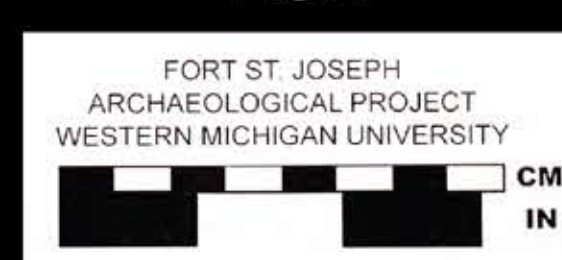
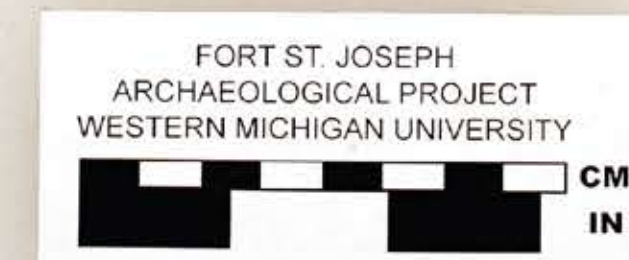


FIG B



▲ Figures A and B: Top and side views of a door hinge recovered at Fort St. Joseph. The fort's resident blacksmith probably made the nails used to fasten the hinge to the door.

Besides nails, door hinges and pintles found on the site once secured doors to frames so they could open and close. Escutcheons were plates used to cover keyholes. Hook and eye latches fastened onto doors or window shutters and latched onto metal rings in the frame kept doors or shutters closed. Finally, door latch catches were fastened to frames so that the latch bar of the door stayed shut.

Architectural hardware found at Fort St. Joseph tells archaeologists how people actually constructed their buildings, what they made locally, and what they imported into New France.