

## Students Save for Decade, Make Donation to Mackinac Associates

One million of something. That's what Tom Byrum wanted his students to see. Well, that and the Straits of Mackinac.

For two-and-a-half decades, Tom Byrum has planned and chaperoned

elementary school trips to the Straits of Mackinac and to Mackinac State Historic Parks' sites, twenty-three of those as a teacher.

And 10 years ago, the idea for a very special project took hold. "I wanted my students to see how

big of a number a million is, even of something small," Byrum said. A decade ago he began encouraging his students to bring in pop can tabs in exchange for participation bonus points. While some more entrepreneurial students saw an opportunity to bring in thousands, it was still a long time before the one million goal was met.

Gallon size bags held 4,500 individual tabs and were stored under tables in Byrum's classrooms, first at Delton-Kellogg Elementary outside of Battle Creek, and then at Hopkins Elementary south of Grand Rapids. And as the classroom filled, other spots around the school became the temporary home for the more than 200 bags.

But more than just an opportunity for bonus points and bragging rights, the pop can tabs have some value as aluminum scrap. Once the goal was met, and the 616 pounds of tabs were delivered to the scrap yard, Byrum received a check for \$308.

That \$308 was then donated to Mackinac Associates, specifically to the education scholarship fund. That same fund helped Byrum bring an estimated 7,000 students and counting to the area.

"Having been a teacher for so many years, I still get invited to a lot of graduation parties," Byrum said. "And every single one of those students has pictures from their trip to Mackinac pinned up on their board. It always makes me happy to see how special their trip was for them.

"We couldn't have kept coming up if we didn't have the help from Mackinac Associates. We just wanted to give back."

A donation 10 years in the making, helping to continue inspiring a lifelong love of Mackinac.



## Michilimackinac Wraps Up Tricentennial Summer of Special Programs

More than a dozen weekends of special interpretive programming comprised the celebration of Fort Michilimackinac's 300th birthday this summer. There aren't many things in Michigan that can boast hitting the three-century mark.

"Because Michilimackinac's history is so rich and diverse, we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the people and events that helped shape the stories we know today," said Craig Wilson, museum historian and site supervisor for Colonial Michilimackinac.

"It was definitely fun for the staff to try new things we don't normally do, change up some of the tours and programs. We had great responses to the varying demonstrations," he said.

Weekends ranged in subject matter from gardening and

cooking, the Catholic church Ste. Anne de Michilimackinac, archaeology programs, to the Native American impact, French Voyageurs, Soldiers for the King, and more.

Though the special programming for the weekends has concluded, Fort Michilimackinac is still honoring its tricentennial with a special scavenger hunt available to guests, signature apparel, and a "Michilimackinac: 300 Years" tour, along with its regular, in-depth and hands-on demonstrations of various components of life at the fort.

"I can't think of a better way to honor all 300 years of Michilimackinac's history than to include our visitors, immerse them in that history, as we have every day this summer," said Wilson.



# Peace Garden Dedicated, Bicentennial Commemoration Closes

For the past three years, Mackinac State Historic Parks has commemorated the bicentennial of the War of 1812 in a variety of ways.

Special interpretive programs, tours, and battle reenactments culminated in three major events to close the bicentennial this summer. July 18 featured a reenactment of

the return of Fort Mackinac to the United States by the British, 200 years to the hour of when it happened in 1815. The program included a narrated history of the event where a number of soldiers yelled “huzzah!” as the British colors descended the Fort Mackinac flag pole and the Stars and Stripes flew over

Mackinac once more.

The addition of the Mackinac Island Peace Garden to Marquette Park symbolizes the 200 years of peace between the United States and Canada along the longest undefended border in the world. A custom piece of sculpture entitled “Be Still” stands at the center of the garden.

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder and Consul General Douglas George of Canada were among the honored guests for the ribbon cutting and dedication.

Finally, the completed reconstruction of Fort Holmes, a British fort built during the War of 1812 and spending the last 200 years in varying stages of construction and disrepair now once again sits more than 300 feet above the Great Lakes and the town below.

And now, the small island that was the site of the first land skirmish of the war, a surprise attack that put Mackinac Island under British control with a single shot 203 years ago, is once again, and forevermore, at peace.



Left: Mackinac Island State Park Commission Chairman Chuck Yob, Consul General of Canada Douglas George, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, Repatriation Specialist for the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians Eric Hemenway, and Mayor of Mackinac Island Margaret Doud cut the ribbon dedicating the Mackinac Island Peace Garden. Right: Interpreters dressed as American and British soldiers watch as the British flag is lowered and the American flag raised over Fort Mackinac, as it was on that day 200 years prior.

# 250-Year-Old Rosary Highlight of Summer, Decades

Unseen, untouched, undiscovered for more than two centuries, the archaeological excavation site at Colonial Michilimackinac has not been short on treasures this summer.

Since 1959, a little bit more of the historic fort in Mackinaw City has been uncovered as archaeologists scrape away the soil a fraction of an inch at a time.

Items as small as decorative beads and fish scales, bits of wood or lead shot are not uncommon finds and the careful, trained eyes of the archaeology crew can spot these without delay and add them to the more than 1 million other artifacts currently in the collection. Though Michilimackinac is the site of the longest ongoing archaeological excavation in North America, it isn't without its surprises.

Every little piece of history found at the site tells us a bit more about the fort and its people. A high concentration of fish scales or animal bones can indicate the diet of the person living there, the remnants of the foundation and materials can tell us the architectural style of the building, and religious or military artifacts combined with records of tenants within the building can help narrow down the potential one-time owner of the item.

Though many of the artifacts have enriched our understanding of the fort and its people, few of the artifacts uncovered at the fort can compare to the

delicate ivory and brass rosary pulled from the earth this June.

“It’s an exciting find for a number of reasons,” said Phil Porter, director for Mackinac State Historic Parks. “It’s fully intact without any breaks in the chain and may only be missing one or two beads.”

But its not the beads that are missing, rather the beads that are present that tell us even more about the artifact. A typical Dominican rosary has five sets of 10 beads, but this rosary seems to have an additional set of nine beads, meaning it is likely a Brigantine rosary.

“A rosary is a very personal item,” said Dr. Lynn Evans, curator of archaeology for Mackinac State Historic Parks. “I can only imagine the stories this artifact might tell.”

What started as a small clump of dark and dirty beads was painstakingly and slowly excavated by James Dunnigan, a graduate student at Western Michigan University and second year member of the archaeology crew at Colonial Michilimackinac.

Because Fort Michilimackinac was initially founded by the French, it had a Catholic community from the very beginning. Even after the fort came in to British control, the French residents were allowed to keep their religion, and attend Ste. Anne de Michilimackinac located within the fort walls, and as such religious

artifacts such as medallions and even pieces of rosaries are often found at the site.

With the excitement that followed the rosary’s discovery, not just for the members of the archaeology crew and staff, but visitors to the site, a concerted effort was made to get the artifact prepped and on display as quickly as possible.

“After all of the media exposure and with the number of people coming to the site and asking to see it, we knew we couldn’t keep it in a box in storage,” said Porter.

Exhibit Designer Keeney Swearer developed a display mount

and the rosary was on display by the end of July.

The display is temporary at this point. The rosary still needs to be properly conserved and cleaned and a more permanent location for its display will be determined at a later date.

Additionally, research into the meaning of the additional beads and what it could potentially tell us about the former owner of this artifact will continue as well.

“In some ways, there are two discoveries here. One is the finding of the artifact, the other is its yet to be determined story,” said Porter.



Left: James Dunnigan stands next to the screen he uses to find small artifacts at the Colonial Michilimackinac dig site. Right: The newly discovered rosary on display in the “Treasures from the Sand” exhibit at Colonial Michilimackinac.



## 2015 – Three Centuries of Mackinac History

It's not often that a historical agency can commemorate three significant historical events that represent a centennial, bicentennial and tricentennial anniversary in the same year. However, for Mackinac State Historic Parks, 2015 is just such a year.

Let's begin with 300 years of history. In the summer of 1715 French soldiers constructed Fort Michilimackinac, a fortified fur trade and military village at the northern tip of Michigan's lower peninsula. For 65 years this community, under French and later British control, served as the primary fur trade center of the upper Great Lakes. In 1780-81 the fort and village buildings were moved to nearby Mackinac Island and the site of Michilimackinac was soon buried in sand and lost for generations. In 1959 the Mackinac Island State Park Commission began the archaeological excavation and

reconstruction of the site. Today, approximately 60 percent of the site has been reconstructed and more than 7.8 million visitors have toured the site since it opened in 1960. Special programs, tours and events took place throughout the summer to commemorate this important tricentennial event.

British troops retained control of Fort Mackinac until 1796 when American soldiers peacefully occupied the island as a result of Jay's Treaty. Sixteen years later, at the outbreak of the War of 1812, British soldiers attacked and captured the fort. They retained control of the fort during the war, successfully repelling an American attack on August 4, 1814. A few months later, on Christmas Eve, 1814, U.S. and British negotiators signed the Treaty of Ghent ending the War. American soldiers brought United States control back to the upper Great Lakes

when they reoccupied the fort on July 18, 1815. Two hundred years later, on July 18, 2015 the Mackinac State Historic Parks commemorated the bicentennial anniversary of this event with special programs in Fort Mackinac and by dedicating a garden in Marquette Park which will celebrate 300 years of peace with our Canadian neighbors.

In 1915 the Mackinac Island State Park established a museum to interpret Mackinac Island's "historic growth and development" in Fort Mackinac's Officers' Stone Quarters, Michigan's oldest public building. Museum rooms were set up for the "reception and preservation of such relics and souvenirs appertaining to and forming part of the history of Mackinac." Objects included items from the Michigan State Museum donated by the Michigan Historical Commission and a collection of "relics and curios"

donated by Edwin O. Wood, trustee of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. This summer we celebrated the centennial anniversary of this first Mackinac Island State Park Commission museum.



Phil Porter  
Director

## Fort Holmes Dedication Brings Hundreds to Top of Mackinac Island for First Look Inside New Historic Reconstruction

High atop Mackinac Island, there once stood a fort. Not the white stone walls of Fort Mackinac so recognizable from the ferry, but a different, smaller fort. Today, there is a fort there once more, and this too can be seen from the boat!

In 2013, the seed of an idea was planted to reconstruct Fort Holmes. Though not a small task, it was met with incredible optimism and a fundraising campaign quickly began.

The half-a-million dollar project was paid for with \$250,000 in private donations which helped motivate the Michigan State Legislature to appropriate the other \$250,000 through the capital outlay endowment to make Fort Holmes a reality.

However, this is not the first construction. From its first iteration as Fort George when constructed by the British in 1813, to what you

see today, this is the fourth time a fort has been placed at the island's highest point.

Tall observation towers were erected on the site until the turn of the century to provide access to great panoramic views of the Straits of Mackinac as the tourism industry thrived on Mackinac Island.

After 1817, portions of Fort Holmes are said to have been used to construct small buildings in the soldiers garden, what is today called Marquette Park.

In 1907 or 1908, the old barn that likely once served as the top of the Fort Holmes blockhouse was returned to the original location from Marquette Park, at the suggestion of Dr. John R. Bailey where it remained until 1933 when a mysterious fire set the blockhouse ablaze.

It was the Federal Works Progress

Administration that, in the 1935 approved a request to reconstruct the fort.

By the 1960s, the fort had once again fallen into disrepair and despite some maintenance, it was decided the unsafe portions of the fort be dismantled. For decades it stood as it had looked in the 19th century—a ruin.

Today, the accurately reconstructed Fort Holmes stands once more. The plans were based off the 1817 United States Army drawings of the original fort and helped architect Rick Neuman with the design.

Like a set of Lincoln Logs, the entire fort was pre-fabricated near Harbor Springs, Mich., then dismantled, and shipped to the island in the spring where Darrow Brothers had begun the groundwork at the site and Ground Level Masonry was ready to start placing the first timbers.

Visitors to the top of the island were greeted with clear views of the progress of the reconstruction and a crew that happily took the time to answer questions.

More than 150 people gathered on Sunday, August 16 for the dedication of the fort, including State Representative Lee Chatfield, State Senator Wayne Schmidt, President of Mackinac Associates Dr. Mark Mercer and Chairman of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission Chuck Yob.

The interior of the fort is dominated by a large, two-story block house surround by green grass. Inside the blockhouse, six exhibit panels detail the history of the site.

The fort will remain open to the public free-of-charge throughout the summer, once again offering more than just the chance to enjoy a scenic vista from 325 feet above the Great Lakes.



Left: Visitors explore the interior of the Fort Holmes reconstruction at the dedication ceremony. Top: Mackinac Island State Park Commission Chairman Chuck Yob, State Representative Lee Chatfield, State Senator Wayne Schmidt, and Mackinac Associates President Dr. Mark Mercer cut the ribbon dedicating Fort Holmes while Director Phil Porter and Deputy Director Steve Brisson look on.

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[mackinacassociates.com](http://mackinacassociates.com)



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## Mackinac Associates' Annual Meeting Re-elects Board, Honors Dombroski



Left: Chairman of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission Chuck Yob stands with President of Mackinac Associates Dr. Mark Mercer, Fund Development and Grants Coordinator Diane Dombroski and Director for Mackinac State Historic Parks Phil Porter at the recent annual meeting of Mackinac Associates. Mackinac Associates and Dombroski were both recognized for their outstanding contributions to the organizations. Right: Mackinac Associates Board of Trustees (L-R) Jeb Burns, Pete Pellerito, Mark Mercer, Todd Petersen, Kelly Cooper, Mary Jane Barnwell, Ann Parrish, Harriet McGraw, Wes Maurer at the 2015 annual meeting, which included the dedication of Fort Holmes.



## Photo Album: Fort Holmes Observation Tower, ca. 1905

This recently acquired photo of the observation tower at Fort Holmes has been added to the collection. It was the last of several towers dating from the 1850s to 1908 and rose about 70 feet above the ground.

The depression in the foreground is the location where the blockhouse once stood and the supporting legs are on the berm just to the right of where the entrance gate was located. While we have seen a number of images of this structure from this time, this is the first of this version.

Enjoy an evening of folk tales and family-friendly fun at

## FORT FRIGHT

Colonial Michilimackinac  
Mackinaw City

Friday, October 9  
6:30 - 9:30pm

Saturday, October 10  
6:30 - 9:30pm

Adult - \$7

Youth (5-12) - \$4

Free for children 4 and under

Free for Mackinac Associates  
at the Heritage Level and Above

