

Mackinac State Historic Parks
2015 Annual Report
HISTORIC PROGRESS



Mackinac State Historic Parks

Annual Report 2015

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission was created by the Michigan legislature on May 31, 1895. The commission's purpose was to administer Michigan's first state park; which had previously been Mackinac National Park, the United States' second national park, from 1875 to 1895. The commission's jurisdiction was extended in 1909 to Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City, Michigan's second state park. Over 80 percent of Mackinac Island is now included within the boundaries of Mackinac Island State Park, which also contains Fort Mackinac historic site. Colonial Michilimackinac and Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse are located within Michilimackinac State Park. In 1983 the commission also opened Historic Mill Creek State Park, east of Mackinaw City. The historic sites and parks are together known as Mackinac State Historic Parks. Annual visitation to all these parks and museums is nearly 1,000,000. Mackinac State Historic Parks has been accredited by the American Alliance of Museums since 1972.



**WE PROTECT, PRESERVE AND PRESENT MACKINAC'S
RICH HISTORIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO PROVIDE
OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL
EXPERIENCES FOR THE PUBLIC.**



**CHUCK YOB, CHAIRMAN
HESPERIA**

**RICHARD A. MANOOGIAN, VICE CHAIRMAN
TAYLOR**

**MARY CALLEWAERT, SECRETARY
MACKINAC ISLAND**

**MARCIA BROGAN
BIRMINGHAM**

**WILLIAM DEARY
JACKSON**

**DANIEL LOEPP
BIRMINGHAM**

**WILLIAM K. MARVIN
MACKINAW CITY**

Dear Friends,

What a great year for Mackinac State Historic Parks! We celebrated significant anniversaries, completed major reconstruction and landscaping projects, and installed new exhibitions. We also hosted multiple special events, enjoyed outstanding attendance at our historic sites, and continued to provide in-classroom education programs across the state.

It's not often that a historical agency can celebrate a bicentennial and tri-centennial anniversary in the same year. However, for Mackinac State Historic Parks (MSHP), 2015 was just such a year. In 2015 we marked the bicentennial of the American reoccupation of Fort Mackinac after the War of 1812. To commemorate this important event, we completed construction of the Mackinac Island Peace Garden with its centerpiece sculpture *Be Still*, and reconstructed Fort Holmes 200 years after it was originally built. The tri-centennial anniversary of the construction of Fort Michilimackinac in 1715 was observed with a summer-long series of special weekend events.

Besides these signature projects, our talented staff also completed a wide variety of other museum, preservation, and park enhancement projects. This includes installing new exhibits, resurfacing roads and trails, repairing buildings and facilities, acquiring and preserving historic objects, eliminating invasive species, and publishing new books about Mackinac history.

The appeal of these anniversary celebrations helped draw visitors to our sites in 2015. Overall attendance for all sites was up 8.64% over 2014 and attendance income was up 13.36%. Mackinac State Historic Parks appreciates the cooperative support of the many hotels, ferry boat lines, convention and visitor's bureaus, chambers of commerce, and other businesses that helped promote our historic sites and sell our admission tickets.

As always, we appreciate the great support of the Mackinac Associates board of directors and membership. Their record-breaking donations in 2015 help fund a multitude of important projects that allowed us to successfully fulfill our mission of protecting, preserving and presenting Mackinac's rich historic and natural resources.

On behalf of the entire Mackinac State Historic Parks staff – Thank You!

Phil Porter, Director

Mackinac State Historic Parks

Dear Friends,

Mackinac is a special place and 2015 was a special year. We celebrated two anniversaries, the 200th anniversary of the end of the War of 1812 and the 300th anniversary of the establishment of the fort at Michilimackinac. Another anniversary also occurred, the 120th anniversary of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. The Michigan legislature created the Mackinac Island State Park Commission to act as steward of the park lands and military structures returned to the state following the abandonment of Fort Mackinac. The responsibilities of the commission have expanded to include Michilimackinac State Park and Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park, 148 structures, including the oldest in the state, 70 miles of roads including a state highway, an airport, museums, the governor's summer residence and more. The State of Michigan has more than 200 boards and commissions, but few can have such diverse undertakings.

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission said goodbye to two commissioners, Karen Karam and Frank Kelley; and welcomed two new commissioners Marcie Brogan and Daniel Loepp. I thank Karen and Frank for their thoughtful governance and look forward to working with such talented people as Marcie and Dan. As Chairman of the Mackinac Island Park Commission, along with Commissioners Richard Manoogian, Mary Callewaert, William Deary, and William Marvin, we are proud of the work we accomplished in 2015: the reconstruction of Fort Holmes, the dedication of the Peace Garden, the opening of a major exhibit, resurfacing roadways, improving trails, preserving historic buildings and serving the public at our sites. We owe thanks to many—Mackinac Associates members, donors, and our visitors, but especially to Governor Rick Snyder and the Michigan Legislature that provided funds for much of this work, that were present to help us celebrate and dedicate our projects, and that were and are friends to Mackinac, recognizing that Mackinac is important to all the citizens of Michigan.

Chuck Yob, Chairman

Mackinac Island State Park Commission



Commemorating the Bicentennial of the War of 1812

For the past three years Mackinac State Historic Parks has been commemorating the dramatic events of the War of 1812 at Mackinac. In 2015 we concluded our bicentennial observance with the reconstruction of Fort Holmes and the installation of the Mackinac Island Peace Garden.

Fort Holmes Rises Again



On August 16 a crowd of more than 250 guests gathered on the top of Mackinac Island to witness the dedication and formal opening of Fort Holmes. This successful reconstruction is a result of three years of planning, fund raising, and construction and is a highlight of the commission's commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.

In 2013 the Mackinac Associates board of directors identified the reconstruction of Fort Holmes as a primary fund raising goal for the organization. The concept made perfect sense as the project was part of Mackinac State Historic Parks' strategic plan, but the \$500,000 project was much larger than any other single effort spearheaded by the Associates. However, in less than a year the lofty goal was met through the generosity of Associates members and the commission-led effort to secure support from the Michigan legislature and Governor Snyder.

Thanks to leadership of the commission and the Mackinac Associates Board of Directors, the financial support of our friends and the State of Michigan, and the good work of our crew and contractors, Fort Holmes was completed on time and within budget exactly two hundred years after the original work finished in 1815.

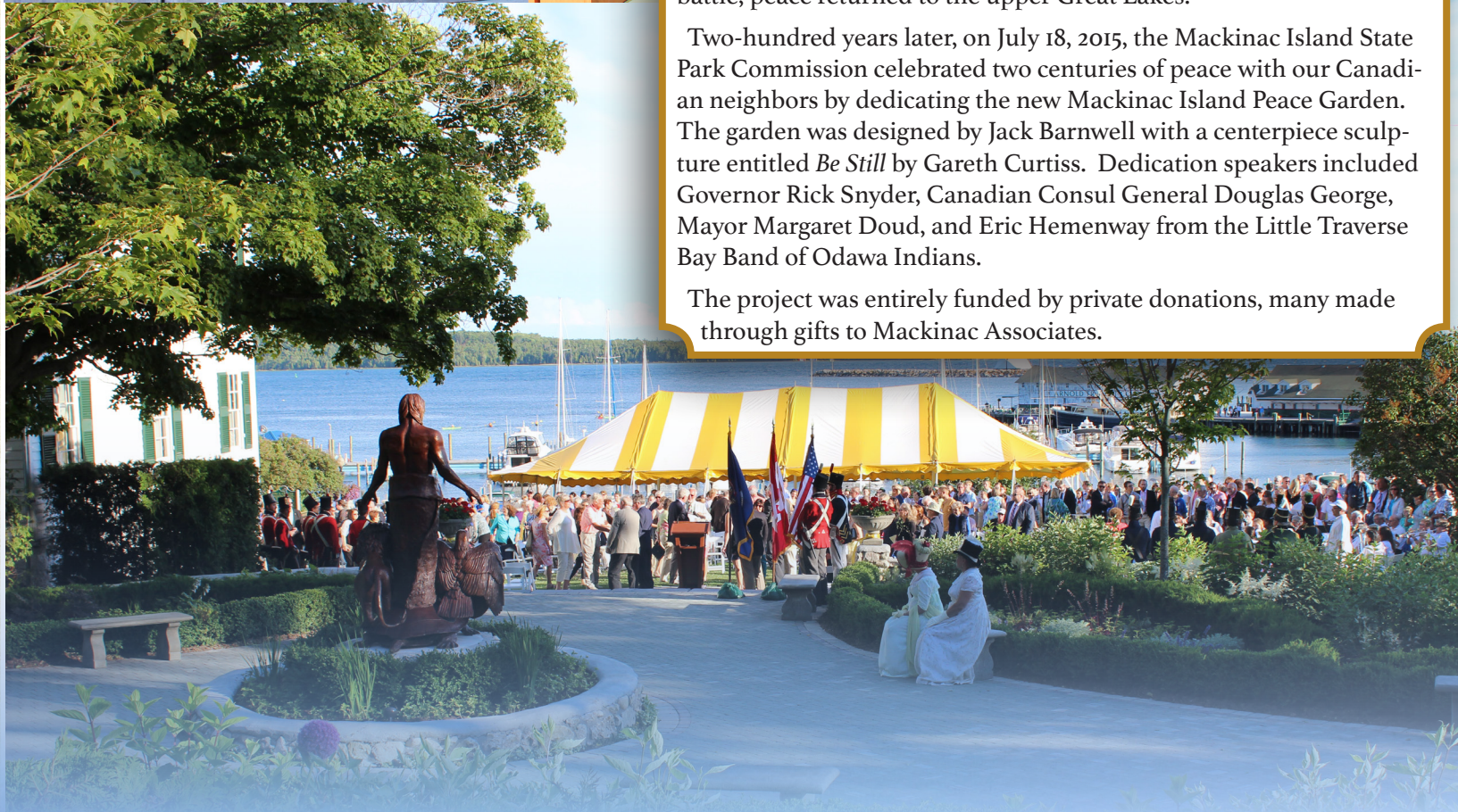


Mackinac Island Peace Garden

On Christmas Eve 1814, United States and British authorities in Ghent, Belgium agreed to terms of peace concluding the War of 1812. The Treaty of Ghent restored the pre-war boundary between Michigan and Canada, thereby returning Mackinac Island and Fort Mackinac, which had been captured at the outbreak of the war, to the United States. On July 18, 1815 United States soldiers peacefully returned to Mackinac Island and, once again, raised the Stars and Stripes above Fort Mackinac. After three years of bloodshed and battle, peace returned to the upper Great Lakes.

Two-hundred years later, on July 18, 2015, the Mackinac Island State Park Commission celebrated two centuries of peace with our Canadian neighbors by dedicating the new Mackinac Island Peace Garden. The garden was designed by Jack Barnwell with a centerpiece sculpture entitled *Be Still* by Gareth Curtiss. Dedication speakers included Governor Rick Snyder, Canadian Consul General Douglas George, Mayor Margaret Doud, and Eric Hemenway from the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians.

The project was entirely funded by private donations, many made through gifts to Mackinac Associates.

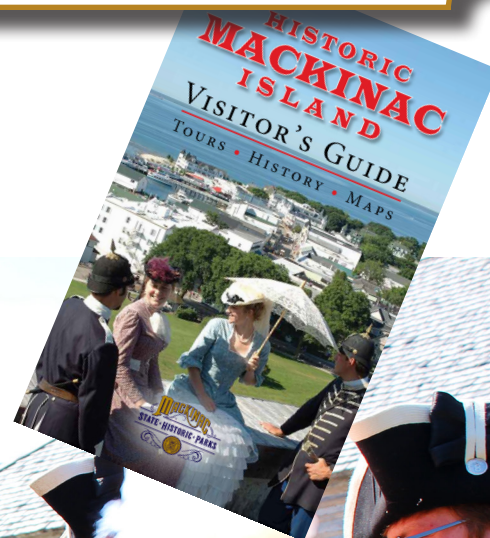
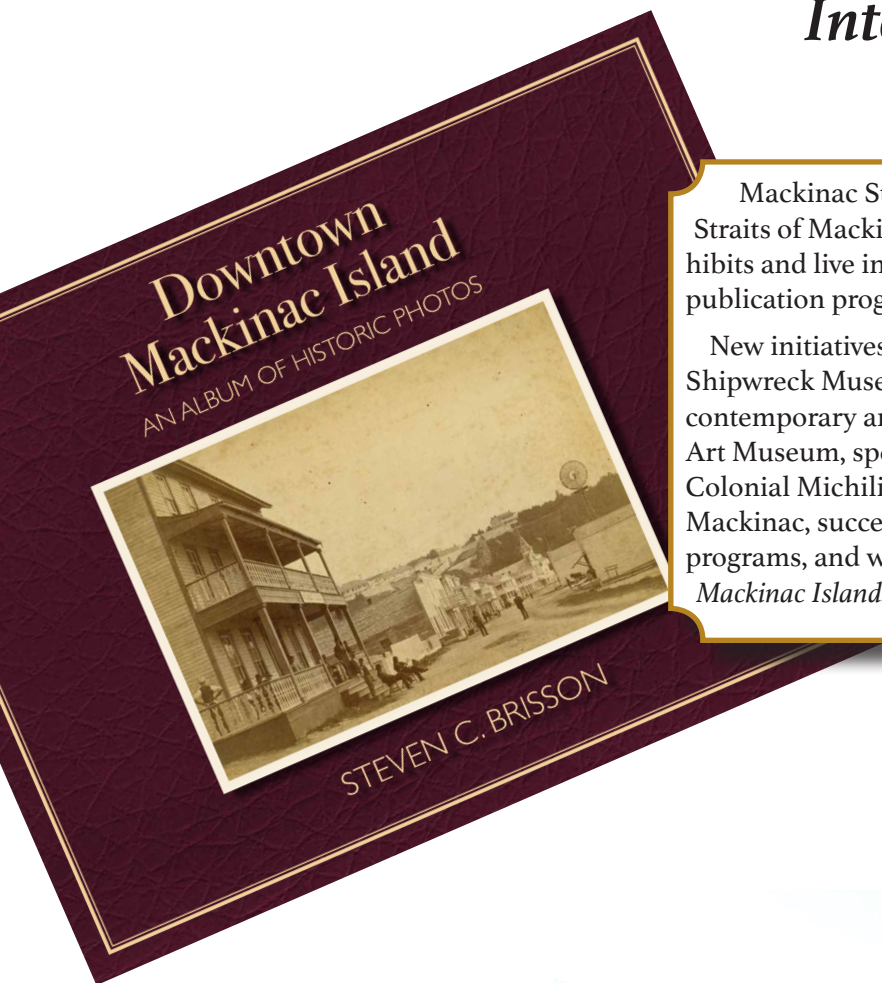


Sharing the Rich History of Mackinac

Interpretation, Education, and Publications

Mackinac State Historic Parks presents the rich history of the Straits of Mackinac through a wide variety of resources including exhibits and live interpretation, education activities, and a comprehensive publication program.

New initiatives for 2015 included completion of the Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Museum at Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, installation of a contemporary art exhibit in The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, special programs commemorating the tri-centennial of Colonial Michilimackinac and the bicentennial of the War of 1812 at Fort Mackinac, successful completion of the 26th year of education outreach programs, and writing and design of our newest photo book, *Downtown Mackinac Island: An Album of Historic Photos*, available for the 2016 season.



Worth the trip especially if you love history
Reviewed September 14, 2015
"I have been coming here since I was a young child and it improves every year. The special events for the 300 year anniversary were wonderful. History is best learned by seeing it and experiencing it in person. I now bring my kids here and it never fails to impress."



Left: Fourth of July is always a popular time at Fort Mackinac, with red, white, and blue banners and bunting and the largest cannon blast of the year. Visitors interact with a number of interpreters, listen to patriotic music, and play games.

Below: To conclude the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812, Mackinac State Historic Parks interpreters were joined by other reenactors and volunteers in addition to members of the Mackinac Island chapter of the American Foreign Legion to recreate the return of Fort Mackinac and Mackinac Island to the United States at the end of the war 200 years ago.

Below: Director Phil Porter with Mackinac Arts Council President Bradley McCallum at the awards ceremony for the "Places of Mackinac" art exhibition at The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum. The Mackinac Arts Council and Mackinac Associates co-sponsor the prize for the annual contest.

Below Right: The new Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Museum was a tremendous hit with visitors to Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. One of the highlights is a 16-foot-long model of the Cedarville.



HISTORIC MILL CREEK DISCOVERY PARK

Hidden Treasure

Reviewed August 14, 2015

"We had a fantastic time here! Zip lined for the first time! The staff was knowledgeable, friendly and entertaining! Beautiful setting! Awesome views from the tower! ...Only wish we would have allowed more time to explore the park! Wonderful experience!"



Treasures from the Sand

Archaeology at Michilimackinac

On August 22 the field archaeology crew completed this summer's excavation at House E, Southeast Rowhouse at Colonial Michilimackinac. This was the 56th consecutive summer of excavations at Michilimackinac, making it one of the longest-running historical archaeology programs in North America. The house on this site was occupied by Charles Henri Desjardins de Rupallay de Gonneville during the middle of the 18th century. Born in Canada in 1698, he began trading at Michilimackinac in 1727 and continued to own the house as late as 1758.

This season yielded a number of interesting artifacts including a very rare, intact Brigittine rosary that captured national attention. Other objects include military buttons, shoe buckles, cufflinks, a barrel band, trade beads, and fish scales.



Rich Historic Resources

Historic collections are the life blood of museums. It is through these objects that we understand, appreciate and communicate the rich history of our sites. At Mackinac State Historic Parks we have a wonderful variety of collections that provide insight to our past. The past year has been an exciting period of growth for the Mackinac State Historic Parks collection. Donations include objects from Mackinac College, an original edition of *Anne* by Constance Fenimore Woolson, and a c. 1900 brochure from Lakeview Hotel. Purchases, made possible by the Martin and Patricia Jahn Fund, include the artillery sword owned by Major Henry Burbeck, the first United State commandant of Fort Mackinac who served at the island post from 1796-1799, a 1947 *This Time for Keeps* movie poster, and c. 1910 hand-tinted William Gardiner photographic prints of Mackinac Island. In 2015 we also completed our multi-year effort to digitize the entire historic MSHP photograph collection.

Right: A recently accessioned image of Captain Leslie Smith, for whom Leslie Avenue is named.

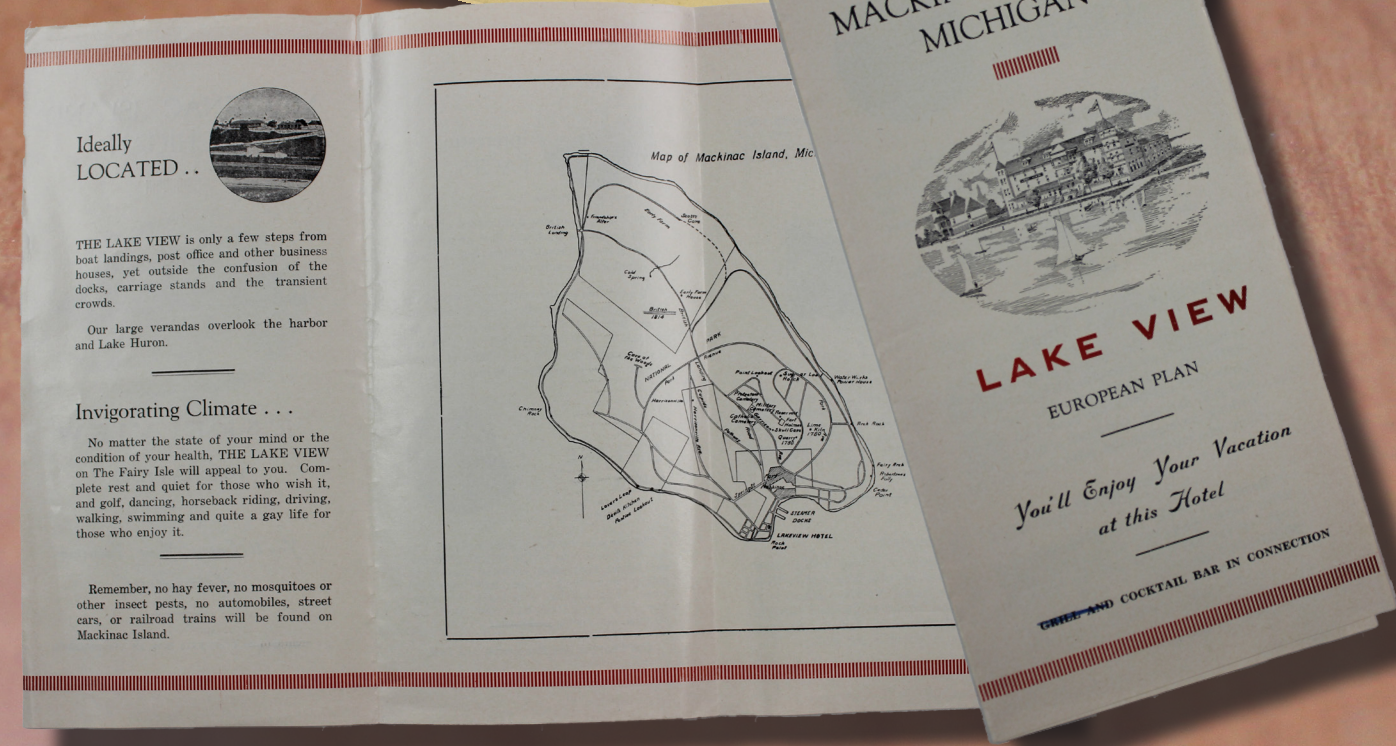
Below: A brochure from Lake View Hotel promoting Mackinac Island, ca. 1940

2015 Collection Donors

Marian Jaeschke
Cheboygan County History Center
Jamie Dickens
Jacqueline Jeffery
Audrey Jaggi
Phil Porter
Tanya Pulte
Frank Pompa
Russell Magnaghi
Carol Vieau
Niagara Historical Society and Museum

Richard Moehl
Alger County Historical Society
Scott Rausch
Charles and Jeri Baron Feltner
Richard and Alice Hill
Keith Widder
Mackinaw Area Historical Society
Margaret (Marshall) Greicar
Debra Orr
Thomas Pfeiffelmann
RDS Rolando

Brian Jaeschke
Barb Wade
Kay Winchell
Cal Pomarius
John Franzen
Doris Marsh
Dan Friedhoff
Carol Van Dyke
Sue McKinnon





Protect and Preserve

Improving our Parks

Nearly one million visitors toured Mackinac State Historic Parks in 2015. The commission continued its uncompromising efforts to care for and improve its park resources for these travelers from around the world. Park enhancement projects for 2015 include repaving roads, resurfacing trails, repairing and painting multiple structures, adding interpretive signs, combating invasive species, and improving the Mackinac Island Airport.



The “Fire Barn” in the Mackinac Island Park Operations Service Yard received repairs and fresh paint.



AmeriCorps volunteers painting the interior of Mission House.



The sheer number of buildings, both historic and non-historic, for which Mackinac State Historic Parks is responsible means there is always work to do. 2015 was the first year we partnered with AmeriCorps, hosting a group of volunteers who performed maintenance services. We also provided additional experiences, tours and lectures for the group.



Curator of Natural History Jeff Dykehouse leads AmeriCorps volunteers on a hike, describing various aspects of the northern Michigan woods.

Banner Year for Visitation

Historic Site Attendance for 2015



9.11% ▲



9.46% ▲



9.19% ▲



3.34% ▲



6.58% ▲



Left: Tom Daldin loads and fires the cannon at Fort Mackinac as part of a live web broadcast of Mackinac Island with Pure Michigan. Thousands of people from around the world watched live, and shared or participated in the program via social media.

Below: The Weather Channel broadcasted live from Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Colonial Michilimackinac and Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park as part of their national morning show.



8.64% ▲



Outstanding Visitor Experiences

Honors and Awards

Mackinac State Historic Parks garnered several awards and commendations in 2015.

- *Family Fun* magazine – Triple Award year for Mackinac Island State Park
 - Top 10 Regional Vacation Destination in the United States
 - Top 10 State Parks in the Country (#1)
 - Top 10 Overall Travel Destinations in the United States
- Congressional Resolution recognizing the 300th anniversary of the establishment of Fort Michilimackinac on the Straits of Mackinac (Presented by the staff of Representative Dan Benishek May 30, 2015)
- Special Tribute to the Mackinac Island State Park Commission for the Fort Mackinac Bicentennial Celebration of the War of 1812 by Governor Rick Snyder (Presented at Peace Garden dedication, July 18, 2015)
- Legislative Special Tribute to the Mackinac State Historic Parks for the restoration of Fort Holmes by Senator Wayne Schmidt and Representative Lee Chatfield (Presented at the Dedication of Fort Holmes, August 16, 2015)

FamilyFun

Mackinac Island State Park was Voted

**#1 State Park
in the Country**

by readers of Family Fun magazine



Six of Mackinac State Historic Parks' sites were awarded the TripAdvisor **Certificate of Excellence** in 2015.

Governor Rick Snyder congratulates Director Porter on the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.





In 2015 volunteers donated 39,341 hours of service to Mackinac State Historic Parks. Volunteers supported a wide variety of activities including historical archaeology, collections management, interpretation, park maintenance, and visitor services. As usual, the largest number of volunteer hours was recorded by the more than 800 boy and girls scouts who participated in the Mackinac Island Scout Service Program.



The Mackinac Island Scout Barracks has served as the temporary home to scouts since its construction in 1934. Regular updates are made to the building, including new fire escape stairs this year.



Lots of Interesting Information

Reviewed July 29, 2015
“Definitely the place to go for a history lesson of the island. They had lots of beautiful photos and information displayed. Downstairs there’s a place for kids to go to create something for themselves. We especially enjoyed looking at the old maps from the 1700s. It’s incredible how close they are and it’s interesting to see what the different cities and areas were called back then.”

There's Nothing Like Good Friends!



Mackinac Associates members had great opportunity in 2015 to see the results of their contributions when three Mackinac Associates funded projects opened to the public. Members contributed over \$252,000 to reconstruct Fort Holmes, prompting the State

of Michigan to match that amount. In addition Associates provided more than \$150,000 in support of the creation of the Mackinac Island Peace Garden and over \$30,000 toward the Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Museum.

Members enjoyed several events in record numbers. The 27th annual G. Mennen Williams Celebration at Anne Cottage and the Annual Meeting in conjunction with the dedication of Fort Holmes were the highest attended ever for each of these events. In addition large numbers attended the 300th anniversary of Michilimackinac event, the Contemporary Art Contest Award Reception, and the Peace Garden dedication.

Mackinac Associates was just a concept suggested by a handful of individuals 35 years ago. We've come a long way, adding new friends along the way and keeping those who were there in the beginning. Our outstanding Board of Trustees created the organization's second long-range plan in 2015. This plan allows Mackinac Associates to provide better service to our members and greater support for Mackinac State Historic Parks programs.



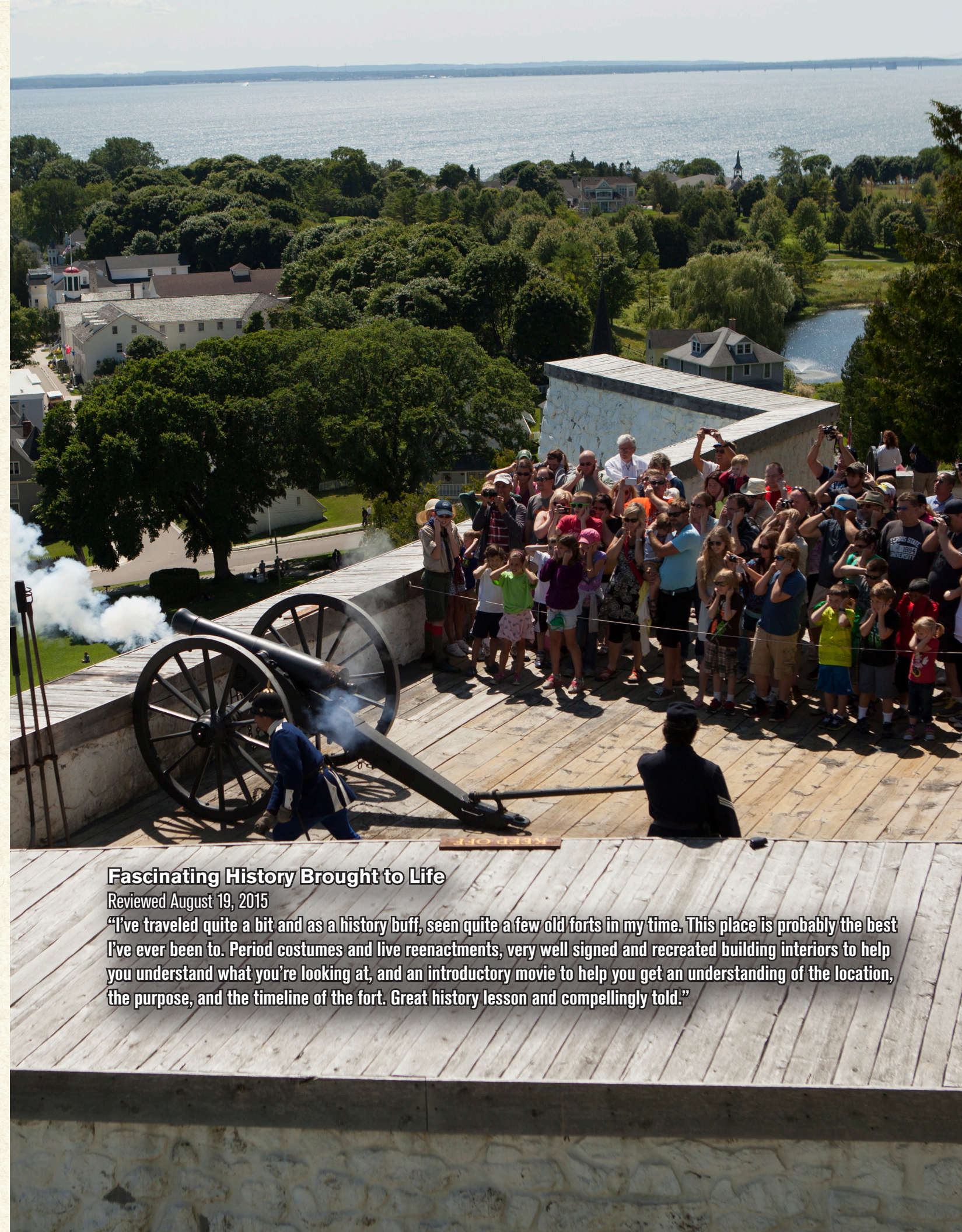
Memberships 23% ▲

Revenue 15.6% ▲

Board of Trustees

Mark Mercer, *President*
Peter Pellerito, *Vice President*
Ann Parrish, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Jack Barnwell
Mary Jane Barnwell
Jerome Burns

Kelly Cooper
Tom Lockwood
Wesley Maurer
Harriet McGraw
Todd Petersen



Fascinating History Brought to Life

Reviewed August 19, 2015

"I've traveled quite a bit and as a history buff, seen quite a few old forts in my time. This place is probably the best I've ever been to. Period costumes and live reenactments, very well signed and recreated building interiors to help you understand what you're looking at, and an introductory movie to help you get an understanding of the location, the purpose, and the timeline of the fort. Great history lesson and compellingly told."