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200 Years: The Beaumont and St. Martin Story

MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. — 2022 marks an important anniversary on Mackinac Island: 200 years since the accident that led to Dr. William Beaumont’s famous experiments.

It was in June 1822 that a young man named Alexis St. Martin was shot. Dr. Beaumont, the post surgeon at Fort Mackinac, saved his life. This terrible accident set Beaumont and St. Martin on a course of experimentation and discovery that remains crucial to medical science today. At the cost of St. Martin’s permanent injury, Beaumont unlocked the secrets of human digestion. To commemorate this anniversary, the Dr. Beaumont Museum inside the American Fur Co. Store has been completely remodeled and will open for the 2022 season on June 4 at 10:00 a.m.

“We are excited to update this exhibit as part of our bicentennial celebration of this important event in medical history,” said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director.

The exhibit stands in almost exactly the spot where St. Martin was accidentally shot. It will detail Beaumont’s experiments and the scientific process, as well as the complicated relationship between Beaumont and St. Martin.

“This exhibit allows us to share the story of Dr. Beaumont and Alexis St. Martin in an exciting new way, with an expanded focus on the experiments and scientific discoveries that started on Mackinac Island,” said Craig Wilson, Mackinac State Historic Parks’ Chief Curator.

While the period setting of the American Fur Co. Retail Store will stay largely the same, the gallery space in the next room includes a number of new exhibit elements: original surgical implements

similar to those employed by Dr. Beaumont; an interactive element illuminating the unexpected “tools of the trade” Beaumont relied upon to perform his experiments; and a vintage diorama depicting Beaumont and St. Martin in the Stone Quarters at Fort Mackinac, which featured prominently in earlier exhibits.

Visitor’s will also see a new logo for the American Fur Co. Store & Dr. Beaumont Museum, and large banners hanging outside the door commemorate the anniversary.

The new exhibit at the American Fur Co. Store & Dr. Beaumont Museum was made possible, in part, through the generosity of Mackinac Associates and its members.

The American Fur Co. Store & Dr. Beaumont Museum will be open daily 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. starting June 4 through August 20. A downloadable version of this release can be found [here](#). Additional pictures available upon request.

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan’s Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, The Richard & Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Benjamin Blacksmith Shop, the American Fur Co. Store & Dr. Beaumont Museum, McGulpin House, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks’ rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or on the web at www.mackinacparks.com.

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