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## **Dendroarchaeological Investigation of McGulpin House Indicates Home Was Built in 1790-91**

MACKINAW CITY, MICH. — Mackinac State Historic Parks (MSHP) has often referred to the McGulpin House, located on the corner of Fort and Market Streets but originally located on the east end of town (near present-day Ste. Anne’s Church), as one of the oldest residential structures on Mackinac Island. Now, after a Dendroarchaeological Investigation of the McGulpin House by Zachary Merrill of Great Lakes Dendrochronology, MSHP can say the house was built in 1790-91, on Mackinac Island, making it one of the oldest residential structures on the island.

Merrill collected 38 samples from both the McGulpin House and Officers’ Stone Quarters, located in Fort Mackinac. Most of the timbers from both structures were comprised of pine. Two floating chronologies consisting of pine were created for each structure and joined together. This chronology was dated against five regional anchored chronologies. The regional master chronology resulting from dendroarchaeological work on nearby Beaver Island (Bekker et al.) provided the best match, resulting in definitive proof that the McGulpin House was constructed in 1790-91.

“It is exciting to monitor the process of this scientific research,” said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director. “We are thrilled that the data was available to get a conclusive date on the McGulpin House.”

There had been some anecdotal evidence suggesting that McGulpin House had possibly been constructed in present-day Mackinaw City and moved to Mackinac Island when the British garrison

started to construct Fort Mackinac. This research was carried out to test that theory. However, samples from the south wall of the building indicate that the timbers used included incomplete 1790 rings, suggesting they were cut during the 1790 growing season. Other samples indicate rings dating to 1740, 1764, and 1787-1789. However, with the 1790 rings, the house could not have been constructed earlier than 1790, meaning it was constructed on the island.

Funding for the Dendroarchaeological Investigation came from Mackinac Associates, the friends group to Mackinac State Historic Parks. More information on Mackinac Associates can be found [here](#).

The McGulpin House today is preserved as an architectural artifact, with the interior partially restored to reveal its layers of use. Exhibits, brand new for the 2023 season, tell the story of the house. There is also an interactive audiovisual program on the historic architecture of Mackinac Island. The McGulpin House opens for the 2023 season on June 3, and is included with a Fort Mackinac or Historic Downtown Mackinac ticket.

Pictures available upon request. A downloadable version of this release can be found [here](#).

*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, featuring the Mackinac Island Native American Museum, Benjamin Blacksmith Shop, The Richard & Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, 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](http://www.mackinacparks.com).*

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