

Historic Preservation in Michigan



Early 1960s



2013

2016 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation

Mackinac Island State Park Commission

Ongoing Archaeological Investigation of Fort Michilimackinac

Scientific archaeological excavations at Fort Michilimackinac began in 1959 and continue to this day. The investigation is believed to be the longest ongoing archaeological project of its kind in the country. Research conducted there has broadened our knowledge of French and British efforts to establish a foothold in the western Great Lakes region during the 18th century, and has made the site one of the premier historical archaeology projects in the country.

The Michilimackinac archaeology program has provided field experience and training for scores of young archaeologists, and has served as the basis for publications on topics ranging from the way the fort changed in size and shape over its lifespan to the contrasts in diet between French and British occupants.

Results of the archaeological investigations have played an important role in bringing the fort back to life. To date, the reconstruction of 15 structures plus the palisade wall creates a physical setting that helps visitors step back into the 18th century. Fort Michilimackinac's success in capturing the past is borne out by the fact that it is a National Historic Landmark and one of Michigan's top tourist destinations.

