

# NEWS RELEASE

## Colonial Michilimackinac: theme of the 25th annual Kalamazoo Living History Show™ March 18-19, 2000

### Annual event to attract interest from all over the Midwest

More than 8,000 re-enactors, history buffs, collectors and the general public are expected to attend Yankee Doodle Muzzle Loaders' 25th annual **Kalamazoo Living History Show™**, Saturday and Sunday, March 18-19, 2000, at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds, 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan. The nationally recognized, juried show is expected to attract over 270 of the finest craftsman and dealers of pre-1890 living history supplies and related crafts from throughout the Midwest.

The show was created in 1975 to bring history alive and entertain as well as educate the general public to some of the most fascinating times in our history. Each year the focus of the show changes allowing various historical re-enactment groups, organizations and individuals the opportunity to host the show and share their knowledge and enthusiasm of history with all of us.

This year's show will spotlight "**Colonial Michilimackinac: Crossroads of the Fur Trade**." Five long-term Mackinac State Historic Parks' historians will share their expertise about Colonial Michilimackinac with history buffs and re-enactors from across the Midwest. Together, these Mackinac history experts—David Armour, Sally Eustice, Larry Young, Lynn Evans and Phil Porter—have more than 100 years of knowledge, education and on-the-job experience working as professional historians at the museums of Mackinac State Historic Parks (MSHP).

Colonial Michilimackinac is the reconstructed fort and fur-trading village in Mackinaw City built by the French in 1715 and occupied by British soldiers from 1761-1781. MSHP also includes the reconstructed 1790 water-powered sawmill and 625-acre nature park at Historic Mill Creek outside Mackinaw City, and Fort Mackinac, an original fort built by the British in 1780 on Mackinac Island.

Members of the Mackinac State Historic Parks' staff will present the following programs giving us an insight into life at the colonial outpost, Fort Michilimackinac, during the 1700's:

- "**Colonial Michilimackinac: Crossroads of the Fur Trade**" with Dr. David D. Armour (Sat.) - Phil Porter (Sun.)
- "**Life at Colonial Michilimackinac: Through the Eyes of Women**" with Sally Eustice
- "**Firearms at Michilimackinac**" with Larry Young
- "**Archaeology at Michilimackinac**" with Dr. Lynn L. M. Evans
- "**Religion at Michilimackinac**" with Phil Porter (Sat. Only)
- "**Historic Michilimackinac on Tour**" - A Program for School Age Children by the Educational Outreach Staff

#### *About the speakers:*

#### **Dr. David Armour....."Colonial Michilimackinac: Crossroads of the Fur Trade"**

Since 1967, Dr. David Armour has been the Deputy Director of Mackinac State Historic Parks where he has been in a position to witness great change. From the reconstruction of Colonial Michilimackinac to his involvement from day one with the excavation and reconstruction of Historic Mill Creek, Dr. Armour has played an integral administrative role. Prior to his appointment as Deputy Director, Dr. Armour spent the summer of 1965 working with the archaeological crew and the 1966 season with the Colonial Michilimackinac guide staff.

His undergraduate education at Calvin College in Grand Rapids combined with study at the University of London in England, and graduate work at Northwestern University prepared him for the 50 publications he has written or helped produce about Mackinac history.

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**“Crossroads of the Fur Trade”** focuses on the “coming together theme” that describes the Mackinac region. During the fur trade, the site was the gathering place of a wide cross-section of early populations. Native Americans, French and British united in the Straits during the height of the fur trade industry in the eighteenth century. French families and British soldiers occupied the colonial village, while attempting to continue relations with the Native peoples. Dr. Armour will emphasize the mix of culture, religion, military and business drawn to the strategic region.

### **Sally Eustice.....“Life at Colonial Michilimackinac: Through the Eyes of Women”**

Sally Eustice, longtime Colonial Michilimackinac Lead Historic House Interpreter, has educated and amazed guests since 1989 with her craft demonstrations ranging from cooking over an open hearth to dying yarn, sewing and spinning wool. Northern Michigan has always been home to the Cheboygan Native, and during the fall, winter and spring, Sally is an elementary teacher in Wolverine.

Having earned a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics from Western Michigan University in 1974, Sally performed graduate work at Michigan State University, Central Michigan University and Western Michigan University. She created a Colonial Michilimackinac cookbook, *“History from the Hearth,”* that was published by Mackinac State Historic Parks in 1997.

**“Through the Eyes of Women”** revolves around a day-in-the-life scenario of colonial women who lived at Michilimackinac. Two of these women were Marie Archange Barthe, the wife of fur trader John Askin and daughter of a prominent Detroit merchant, and Charlotte Bourassa who was the wife of Charles Langlade, the fur trader who established a winter post at Grand Haven. Dressed in colonial clothing, Sally will explain the endless tasks involved in managing a household in the 1700’s.

### **Larry Young.....“Firearms at Michilimackinac”**

As Mackinac State Historic Parks’ Craftsman for 23 years, Larry Young has constructed everything from mounting displays for museum exhibits to detailed crafts like muskets, pen knives, cooking utensils and furniture. Larry has been a historical re-enactor for more than 40 years. Originally from Portage, Michigan, Larry worked as the gunsmith in the theme town of Jones, Michigan before coming to Mackinac in 1977.

Larry is currently the Vice President of the Greater Mackinac Area Historical Committee and on the board for the annual “Michilimackinac Pageant.” During the last decade, he was also on Greenfield Village’s Muzzle Loading Festival Board.

**“Firearms at Michilimackinac”** focuses on the history of firearms in the Great Lakes region. Larry shares his expertise on a wide range of weapons, from those used by the first explorers in the area to the muskets common at the end of the fur trade era in the 1840’s. He will discuss such firearms as the Northwest trade gun that was sold by the American Fur Company, the French fusil fin-pieces of which turn up regularly in excavations of Colonial Michilimackinac, the English and French trade gun and transitional guns familiar to the 1760’s time period. With guns in tow, he will illustrate the advancements in firearms over the centuries.

### **Dr. Lynn Evans.....“Archaeology at Michilimackinac”**

MSHP’s Curator of Archaeology, Dr. Lynn Evans, has been the official expert on the discovered treasures in the Straits since 1996. Joining the archaeology crew in 1989, she supervised the excavation of two millwright houses at Historic Mill Creek from 1991-94. The current excavation site is the last unit in a seven-unit row house at Colonial Michilimackinac.

After earning a Bachelor of Arts from Beloit College in Wisconsin, Dr. Evans attended the University of Pennsylvania where she earned her Ph.D. in American Civilization-Historical Archaeology. Included in her wake of honors, Dr. Evans has presented eight papers related to Michilimackinac history, and had three works published.

**“Archaeology at Michilimackinac”** centers on discoveries from the excavation of House D of Colonial Michilimackinac’s Southeast Row House. The project concluded in 1997 after nine seasons of excavation and interpretation. Research shows that the house, constructed in the 1730’s, belonged to the Beaulong/Bolon family during the time of French habitation. Some of the most intriguing finds consist of a clay medallion showing Christ and the Virgin Mary, a double fireplace that served House D and E to the west, and several trade goods such as finger rings, a complete crucifix and trade gun parts. Items like military braid, buttons and a King’s arrow stamped on a barrel band indicate British presence during that era.

**Phil Porter.....“Religion at Michilimackinac”**

Beginning as a Fort Mackinac interpretive guide in the early 1970’s, Phil Porter has since achieved his current standing as Chief Curator where he oversees and directs interpretation, archaeology, collections and research at Mackinac State Historic Parks. A graduate of Kenyon College, Ohio, Phil went on to obtain a Master of Arts in History Museum Studies from the State University of New York, Cooperstown.

Phil most recently devoted a great deal of time to MSHP’s newest museum exhibit at Colonial Michilimackinac, *“Redcoats on the Frontier.”* The new interactive interpretive exhibit opened during the 1999 season. Other major projects Phil has contributed to include the Fort Mackinac exhibit, *“Mackinac-An Island Famous in These Regions,”* production of the audio recording, *“Music of Mackinac,”* and a vast selection of interpretive programs and publications.

*“Religion at Michilimackinac”* provides an overview of the character and contribution of the Roman Catholic mission in the Straits region and how it eventually became the parish of Ste. Anne de Michilimackinac in 1743. Through the varying tides of people drawn to the Straits region, from Natives to British soldiers, the Roman Catholic presence remained. Phil will also be presenting the Sunday session of *“Colonial Michilmackinac: Crossroads of the Fur trade”* (see Armour bio for description).

**Dennis Havlena and Jim Evan.....“Historic Mackinac on Tour”: A Program for School Age Children**

Mackinac State Historic Parks’ colorfully costumed interpreters, Dennis Havlena and Jim Evans, will present two *“Historic Mackinac on Tour”* programs at the show each day. These interactive, hands-on, history programs are geared to the later elementary grades. Students will get a chance to peer into Michigan’s past with Mackinac artifacts, dancing, and music. Glowing eyes, open mouths and shouts of “cool,” were recent reactions to these Mackinac programs. Evans, a Mackinaw City native, portrays a British Red-coated soldier and has worked at Colonial Michilimackinac for 25 years. With fiddle in hand, Dennis Havlena, a 15 year Fort Mackinac veteran, comes as a French voyageur.

Over the years, the **Kalamazoo Living History Show™** has grown to be the largest juried event of its kind in the Midwest devoted to pre-1890 original or reproduction living history supplies and related crafts. Of special interest to the whole family, craftspersons dressed in period clothing will be demonstrating various 18th and 19th Century crafts. Turn back the clock and relive America’s days gone by. Visit with people that make history come alive! A show where historical re-enactors in period fashions from Pre-Revolutionary through the Civil War, history buffs and the general public come together for a festive weekend to buy, sell and trade. Anyone attending the show dressed in pre-1890 style clothing will be eligible for a drawing on a 4 point Witney Blanket at the close of the show each day.

The 25th Annual **Kalamazoo Living History Show™** is open to the general public Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is \$5.00. Children 12 years of age and under admitted free when accompanied by a parent. No strollers or cameras allowed.

For more information about Mackinac State Historic Parks’, contact Carolyn Artman, Public Relations Coordinator, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, MI 48909-7528, by telephone (517) 373-4296 or E-Mail: artmanc@state.mi.us

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