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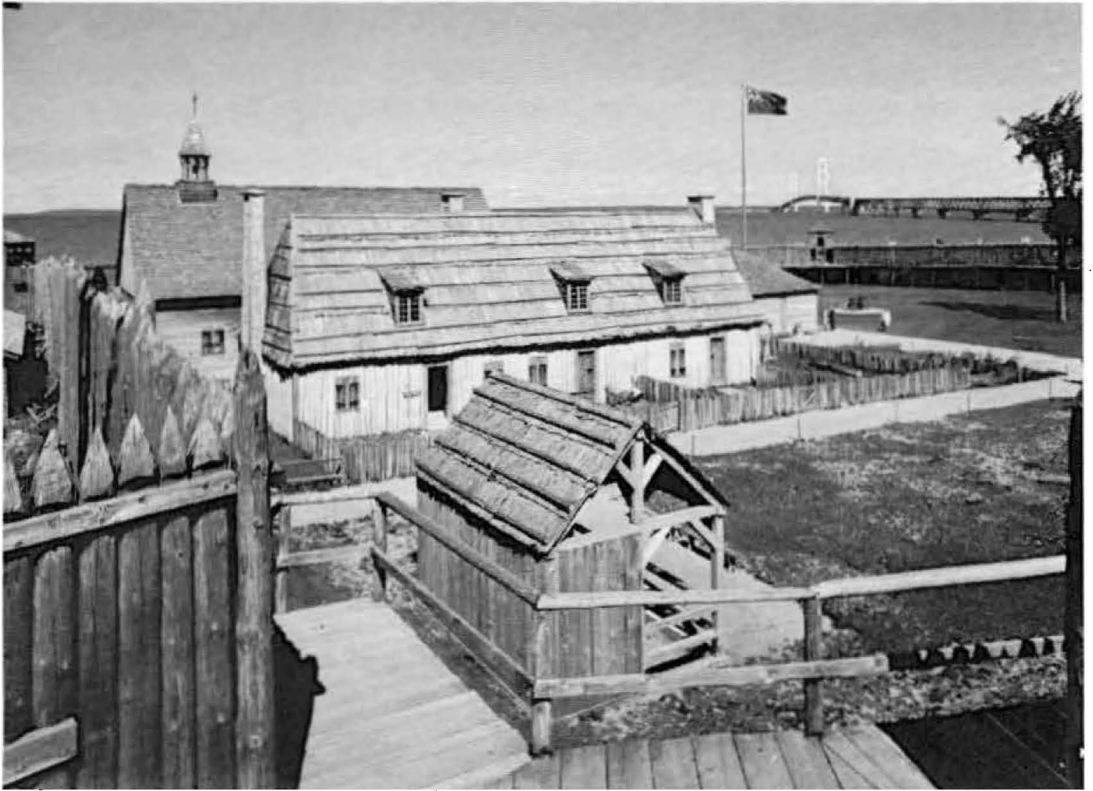


Fig. 13— Reconstructed buildings at Fort Michilimackinac based on archaeological evidence provide a tangible example of the value of archaeology to the touring public, the local community, and the state. —*Mackinac Island State Park Commission photo.*

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PUBLIC

Out of the Ivory Tower and Into the Streets

by

David A. Armour

Many of us who are professionals in the field of archaeology look around and are appalled by the rapid destruction of significant archaeological sites. We wring our hands, seek diminishing funds to carry on our own valuable work, and pontificate comfortably from our ivory tower. Often removed from the real decision-making processes in our community or state, we watch destruction's onrush but play no role in impeding or re-directing its energies.

The time is past when we can conduct our archaeological excavations in a sociological vacuum. If we want to save and salvage our archaeological heritage, we must assume a new role. We must become politicians, diplomats, and promoters in order to infiltrate and influence the power structure of our society. Only by working creatively with the public can we save the archaeological resources we hold so precious.

In order to get our message across to the public, we must involve ourselves closely with people we have often ignored or even considered a nuisance. Also, we must be willing to bend some of the ideals we hold dear in order to achieve victories on the items of greatest importance. Thus let us examine the relationship of the professional archaeologist to three groups of people: the amateur archaeologists, local and state officials, and the general public.

The Amateur Archaeologists

It is no great task to convince the amateur archaeologists of the value of archaeology. However, we often castigate them as "pot hunters." Admittedly, some fit this description. Yet in the face of the rapid destruction of sites we must seek allies and not remain narrowly parochial. Properly directed, the amateurs can make major contributions. Their very number and enthusiasm are their greatest strengths. These assets are particularly useful in conducting site surveys. If a professional heads the survey, keeps the records, and provides proper instruction, the amateur's sharp eyes can ferret out far more elusive sites than the few professionals would ever find.

Also, the amateur can be a potentially valuable asset on professionally-conducted excavations. In the United States, professional archaeologists have tended to utilize student or paid crews and ignore the amateurs. However, this has resulted in costly excavations, and there are precious few dollars available for archaeology. The amateurs are eager to excavate, and in some countries they make

up the major work force. England has a long tradition of utilizing this form of labor. For example, the 1971 *Advance Issue of Calendar of Excavations* of the Council for British Archaeology, 8 Saint Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1, Great Britain, lists twenty-nine excavations where amateurs are welcome. Many Americans annually pay their own way to England to participate in a scientifically-conducted excavation because no similar opportunities are available in this country. At Fort Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City, Michigan, where the Mackinac Island State Park Commission has conducted an archaeological program since 1959 in conjunction with Michigan State University, we are having an amateur contingent for the first time this year.

An area of growing amateur activity which few professionals have faced is the burst of underwater "archaeology" since the advent of the scuba gear. Thousands of underwater prospectors have invested hundreds of dollars each in sophisticated equipment to explore the treasures of the waters deep. Annually they bring tons of historic artifacts to the surface with little or no professional direction or oversight. Indeed, since most professionals have enough to keep them busy on land they ignore the underwater problem.

Only a few states have moved to assert direction or control. New York took a step in the right direction by publishing *Diving Into History: A Manual of Underwater Archaeology for Divers in New York State* (Albany, 1969). Also Florida, Texas, and South Carolina have legislation regulating removal of historic artifacts from State waters. Michigan is in the throes of assuming control under existing legislation, and has a law before the Legislature to strengthen its position. However, in each of the states the large question is who is going to do the work and pay the bills.

Of even more pressing concern is the growth of the "treasure hunter." Armed with his trusty metal detector and spurred on by dreams of buried treasure, he scavenges the countryside. This is a large and growing group. The Treasure Hunting Association, based in Oscoda, Michigan, claims 20,000 members. Only this year there appeared the *Treasure Hunter's Yearbook, 1970-71*, authored by A. T. Evans and published by Eureka Press, Box 1215, Odessa, Texas. Coupled with the metal detector crowd is the hoard of bottle collectors who work busily in historic dumps like an army of moles.

If the states' archaeological resources are to be protected from this onslaught, some regulatory legislation and enforcement is necessary. Only twenty states currently have any form of "Antiquity" law, though a few additional states are contemplating legislation. To block them, however, the Pioneer Historical Preservation Society (616 Arkansas, South Houston, Texas 77587) was formed in 1970 "for the purpose of combating the problem of ever-increasing legislation against treasure-hunting activities."



Fig. 14— Aerial view of the reconstructed Fort Michilimackinac. Approximately half of the fort has been excavated, and several structures have been found outside the fort walls. —*Mackinac Island State Park Commission photo.*

Fig. 15— Archaeology in progress at Fort Michilimackinac, Michigan. Archaeology not only provides the basis for authentic reconstruction, but is one of the major attractions for visitors to the site. —*Michigan Tourist Council photo.*



The Archaeologists and Government

If we wish to preserve our archaeological heritage, we must go where the power is and work actively with the Federal and State Government. We must convince those in power that archaeological resources are "natural resources," and as part of our environment should be protected as are other non-renewable resources. Only twenty states now even agree with this principle, and in those with antiquity legislation the question of enforcement is another matter. Very little state money is now directed to archaeological matters.

One laudable effort to convince decision-makers of the value of archaeology is the excellent booklet *Stewards of the Past* available from The Arkansas Archaeological Society, University of Arkansas Museum, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

It is time for the professional archaeologists in each state to become more deeply involved in state government. One possibility is to work to have someone in state government play a coordinating role. Only twenty states currently have a state archaeologist. However, even where a state has a state archaeologist it is imperative that he consider his role broadly.

Archaeologists must get to know the planners and decision-makers in the State Highway Department, the Natural Resources Department, and the state and local planning departments. Only by having adequate advance warning of where new construction is going to wipe out archaeological sites can the archaeologist marshal his forces to divert the project or conduct a salvage excavation. In Michigan, there has recently been established a state inter-agency Historic Preservation Task Force, which is helping to bring about this type of cooperative effort.

Ironically, some of the greatest stumbling blocks in attempts to influence state government come from ivory tower professionals, both historians and archaeologists. The problem is that when ideals are translated into the world of practicality, some of the ideals have to be compromised for the larger good. Sometimes professionals refuse to compromise, and nothing gets done. For example, Michigan is blessed with hundreds of miles of new expressway. During their construction, Federal dollars were available for salvage archaeology. However, due to squabbles between the professionals about how the program should be conducted, no program was set up, and no salvage archaeology was done. Only now does it appear that this salvage program may finally be organized.

If we are going to be involved in state government, it is important that we get to know the people who make the important decisions. We must also be willing to assist and offer our services. We must spend our time, and often a great deal of it, in meetings, conferences, consultation, etc. Finally, we must be prepared to compromise on details when necessary.

One of the major ways to convince state officials of the value of archaeology is to show them the economic and social benefit of archaeology. Dollars talk, and

if archaeology can mean dollars to the state, state officials will listen. At present, the most commonly recognized value of scientific archaeology is as a tourist attraction. Rand McNally has recently published a book entitled *America's Ancient Treasures: Guide to Archaeological Sites and Museums*, by Franklin Folsom, which is designed to acquaint the touring public of the location of visitable archaeological sites and museums. The fact that a major publishing firm should publish such a guide indicates the broad public interest in viewing archaeological projects. Furthermore, the Tourism Division of the State of Illinois has spent an estimated \$100,000 to publish in several issues of *Life* and *National Geographic* full-page, four-color advertisements featuring a visitable archaeological site at Dixon Mounds, Illinois.

At Fort Michilimackinac, a quarter-million people annually visit the partially reconstructed fort and watch an archaeological excavation in progress. The program, which has been conducted each summer since 1959, has provided the data for the reconstruction and interpretations of the palisades and eleven buildings in the 18th century fort. The touring public is fascinated by the archaeological exhibits, and is particularly impressed by the opportunity to observe an ongoing archaeological excavation. Moreover, the tourists are willing to pay an admission fee of \$1.25 per adult to visit the reconstructed fort. These fees enable the Mackinac Island State Park Commission to pay all the operating expenses of the Fort, and also retire the revenue bonds which have financed the reconstruction of the buildings.

The general public apparently has a great latent interest in archaeology, and under proper direction may make their interests known to the politicians. However, it is up to the professionals to educate the general public to the value of archaeological resources and the necessity of their utilization by competent researchers.

The Archaeologists and the Public

One of the methods of reaching the public is through the published word. Unfortunately, scholarly publications such as *Historical Archaeology* and *Northeast Historical Archaeology* have a very small circulation and thus little direct public impact. Newspapers reach a much greater audience, and can be exploited if used for dramatic effect. It has always made me feel a bit strange to see our local paper carrying items on archaeological work in the Mediterranean or Near East, and very little on Michigan. Apparently the classical archaeologists are simply more public relations conscious than North American archaeologists.

National Geographic, which has one of the largest circulations of any magazine in our country, has done a great deal to create the existing popular interest in archaeology. Yet this magazine is interested in classical archaeology, and only rarely carries stories on North American archaeological matters. Nevertheless, the

public must be reached, and archaeologists must use the media people read. Thus, Nelson A. Reed's article in the March, 1971 issue of *Argosy* entitled "A Lost Indian Empire Found: Six Minutes from St. Louis," while exploiting the dramatic elements of the "Sacrificial Pit of the Virgins," has made the public aware of the rich resources of Cahokia Mounds in Illinois.

Another imaginative method of reaching the public is through television and movies. One of the most creative efforts was the HUD-financed National Education television and movie version of the Weeksville Project in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of New York City, in which a group of black children, under expert direction, explored the archaeological history of their immediate neighborhood. Another effort in the same direction is Colonial Williamsburg's new film "Doorway to the Past" which explores the role of archaeology in the 18th century reconstruction.

An even more direct method of telling the story of archaeology to the public is to let them watch archaeological excavations in progress. Sites such as Fort Michilimackinac that are open to public view and which are interpreted for public benefit can educate the public and also provide a valuable tourist attraction. However, the archaeologist must be willing to tolerate observers and tourists who often ask the most elementary questions, and occasionally get in the way. Yet if we expect the taxpayer and general public to finance continued and more elaborate archaeological projects, we must be willing to let them feel they are getting their money's worth. Many other sites could be opened to public view with a minimum of effort.

If archaeology is an enterprise conducted in an obscure corner for the pleasure and benefit of only a few highly interested individuals, only limited public support will be forthcoming. However, if archaeologists can present archaeology as a program of great public interest and concern, then perhaps the public and their political leaders will give archaeology the funds which are so necessary to rescue the sites before they are destroyed by the onrush of progress.