

## Crew digs up historic items

Archaeology team surveys Kate Mullany National Historic Site

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TROY -- Clam shells, a handful of marbles and a large outhouse mark the crowded quarters that once was the house owned by labor leader Kate Mullany in the 19th century.

These finds at the Kate Mullany National Historic Site, along with other artifacts such as an intact medicine bottle, tantalized the archaeologists from Hartgen Archaeological Associates Inc. of Albany, who spent the week of July 2 surveying the Mullany property at 350 Eighth St.

"It was a very busy house," said Abigail McGuirk, a project director at the site.

The six apartments in the three-story building housed 40 to 50 people. Out back survives a 10-by-8-foot privy area that would have been six-to-eight feet deep when it served as the outhouse for the residents.

"It was very crowded with people," McGuirk said of the residence. "They didn't have much privacy. You had to share a lot."

McGuirk, fellow archaeologists Steve Riester, Garrett Boyd and Tom Macomber worked with project director Tracy Miller through the week in the Mullany house backyard. They hunted for features that might be disturbed in preparing the backyard as part of the historic site's eventual opening to the public.

"It will allow us to proceed with the 19th-century landscaping of the backyard," said Paul Cole, executive director of the American Labor Studies Center, which operates the historic site.

The ALSC funded the \$13,249 archaeological reconnaissance study. It follows up a study conducted in September 2006 by the National Park Service that recommended the additional review. The latest study was to discover what archaeological resources might be present in the backyard.

Mullany was a young Irish immigrant who founded and led the Troy Collar Laundry Union, the first all-women's union in the country. Her home was designated a National Historic Site in 2004.

Miller explained that the archaeologists looked for any historical or archaeological items. The crew discovered a brick sidewalk in the backyard that previously was not known.

The outhouse site intrigued the archaeologists. It came from a time when the city of Troy required privies to be lined with stones or bricks.

"I was really excited by that find. I would love to be able to excavate. You can tell a lot of really great stories about the people who lived there based on what they threw away," Miller said.

The artifacts recovered during the weeklong dig will eventually be displayed at the Mullany house.

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