

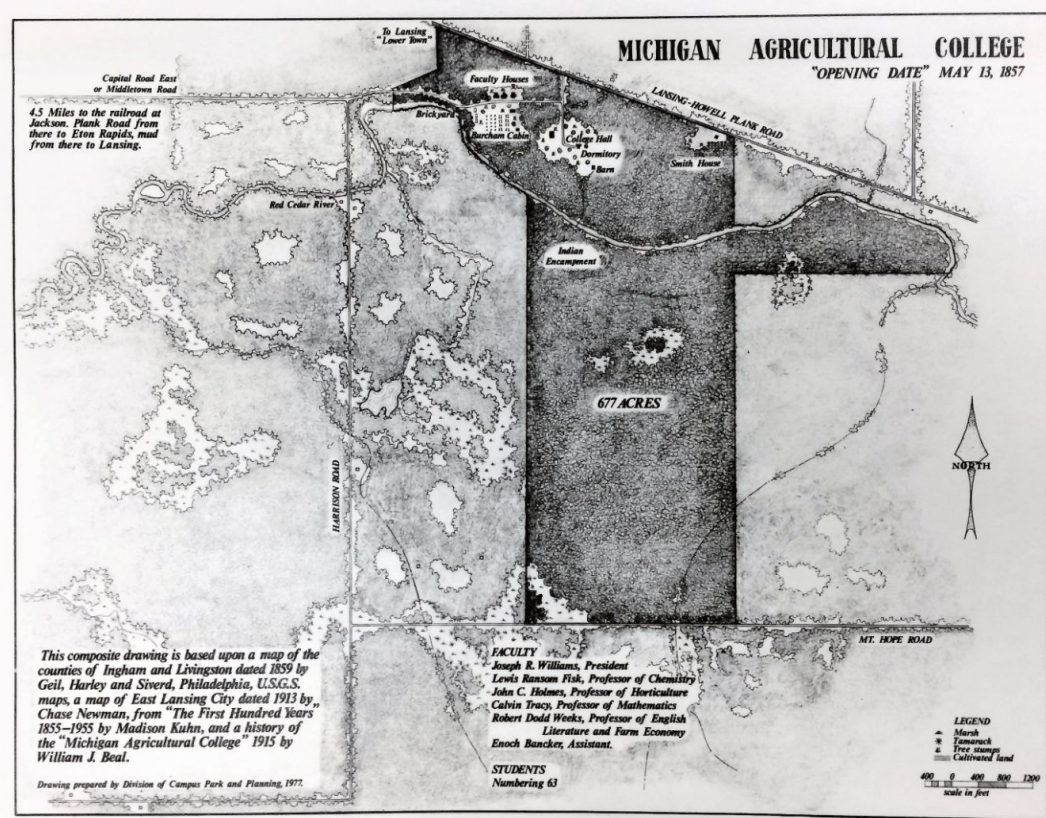
A Corner of MSU through the Ages:

The Archaeology of the Toolan Family Homestead

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This poster presents research conducted by the Campus Archaeology Program (CAP) on Michigan State University's campus at the corner of Shaw Lane and Hagadorn Road, the location of the historic Toolan family homestead. Initial archaeological field investigations were conducted during the 2018 field season, followed by an archaeological field school in 2019. The four boxes below discuss findings from archival research and archaeological excavations of the site. Through this research, we have endeavoured to contextualize the archaeological remains using historical documents. The timeline along the bottom of the poster provides an overview of MSU's history.

1860s-1870s Settling Down



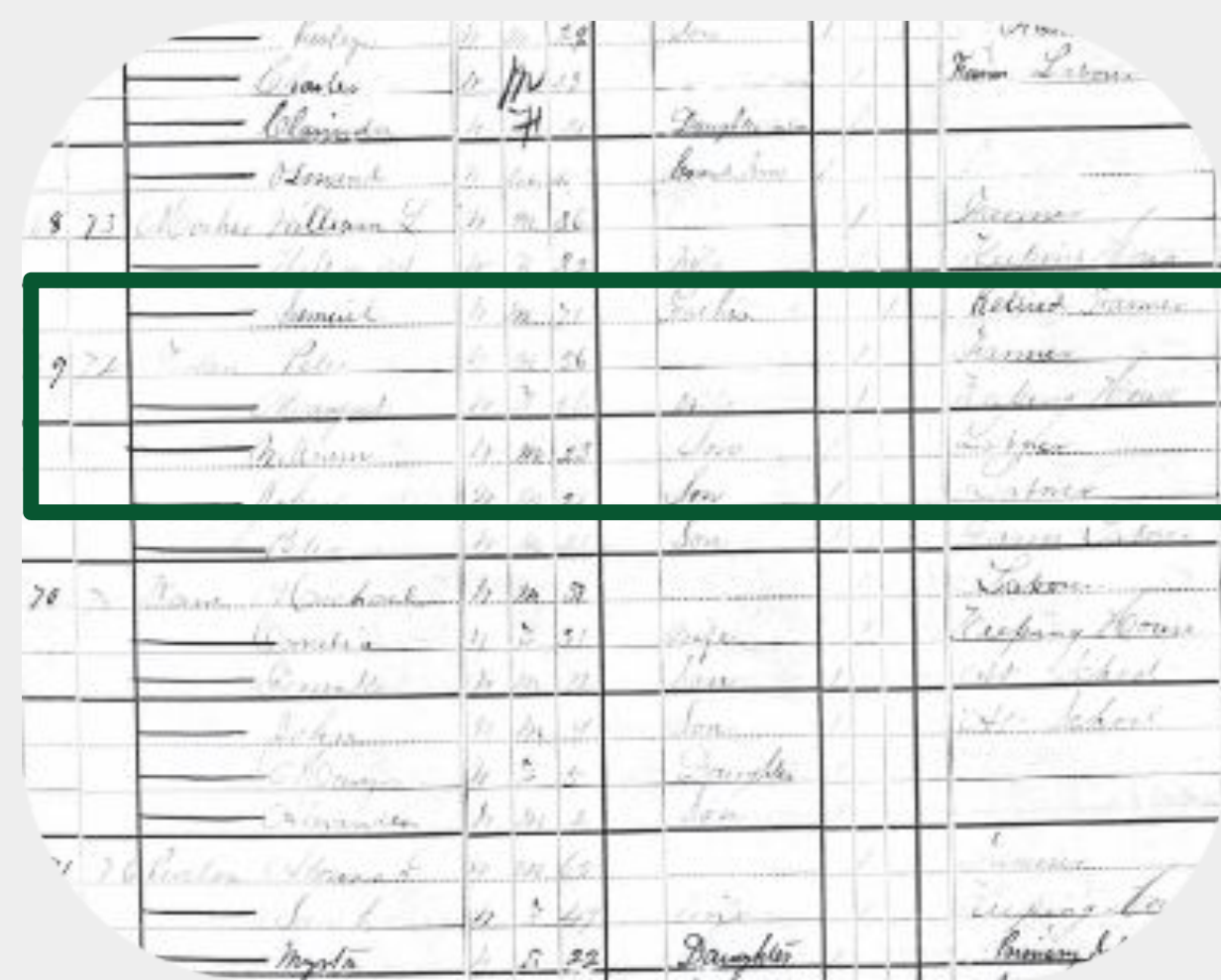
Map from 1857 showing what the MSU campus looked like the day it opened. The future location of the Toolan homestead is currently uninhabited (Launter, 1978). Used with permission of MSU Archives and Historical Collections.



- The Toolan family owned land between Hagadorn Road and what is today Bogue Street since 1861. The family farmed the land.
- Before arriving in East Lansing, Peter Toolan Sr. and Margaret Toolan lived in Ireland. They came to Michigan via Canada.

Artifact:
A lapel pin from *The Home Insurance Company*, founded in 1853 (The Home Insurance Company, n.d.). Image courtesy of CAP.

1870s-1900s Family Life



Census records from 1880 show the whole Toolan family living on the farm (*Inhabitants of Meridian Township, 1880*). Image courtesy of ancestry.com.



- In 1880 Peter Sr., Margaret, William, John, and Peter Toolan Jr. are living on and farming the land.

Artifact:
Mineral Water/Soda bottle with applied finish dating from 1875-1920 found in excavation unit during the 2019 field school (*Bottle Finishes & Closures*, 2019). Image courtesy of CAP.

1900s-1930s Moving Forward

A page from the 1920 U.S. Census for Meridian Township, Michigan. The Toolan family is listed as residing on a farm. The record shows Peter Toolan Jr. as the head of the household, with Mary Rodgers as the only other family member.

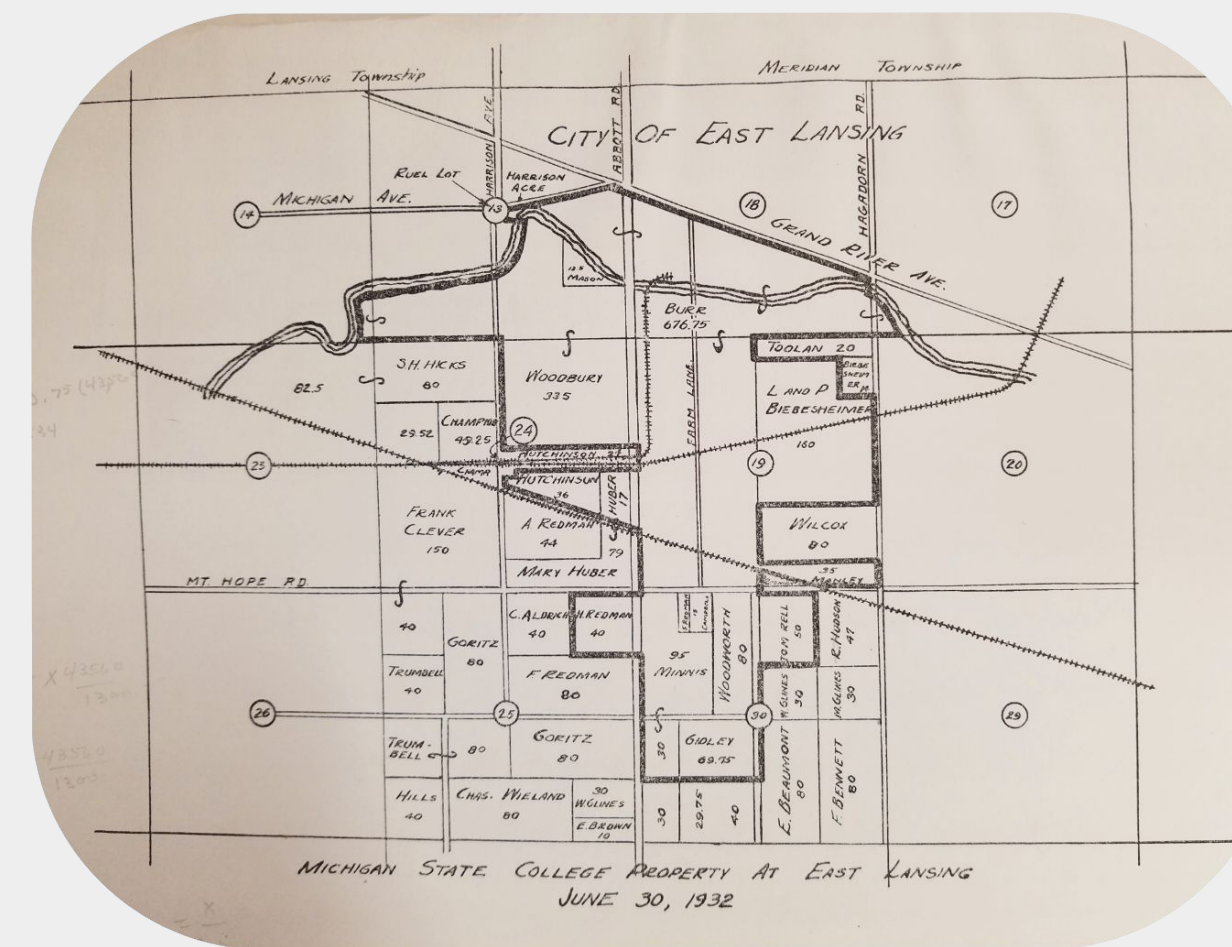
Census records from 1920 show that only Peter Toolan Jr. and Mary Rodgers are living on the farm (U.S. Census Bureau, 1920). Image courtesy of ancestry.com.



- Peter Toolan Jr. and his sister Mary Rodgers are the only two people living on the land.

Artifact:
'Phillips Milk of Magnesia' glass bottle found in excavation unit during the 2019 field school, 1906-ca. 1915 (Lockhart, Shriever, & Serr, 2014). Image courtesy of CAP.

1930s-1940s Tennant Occupation



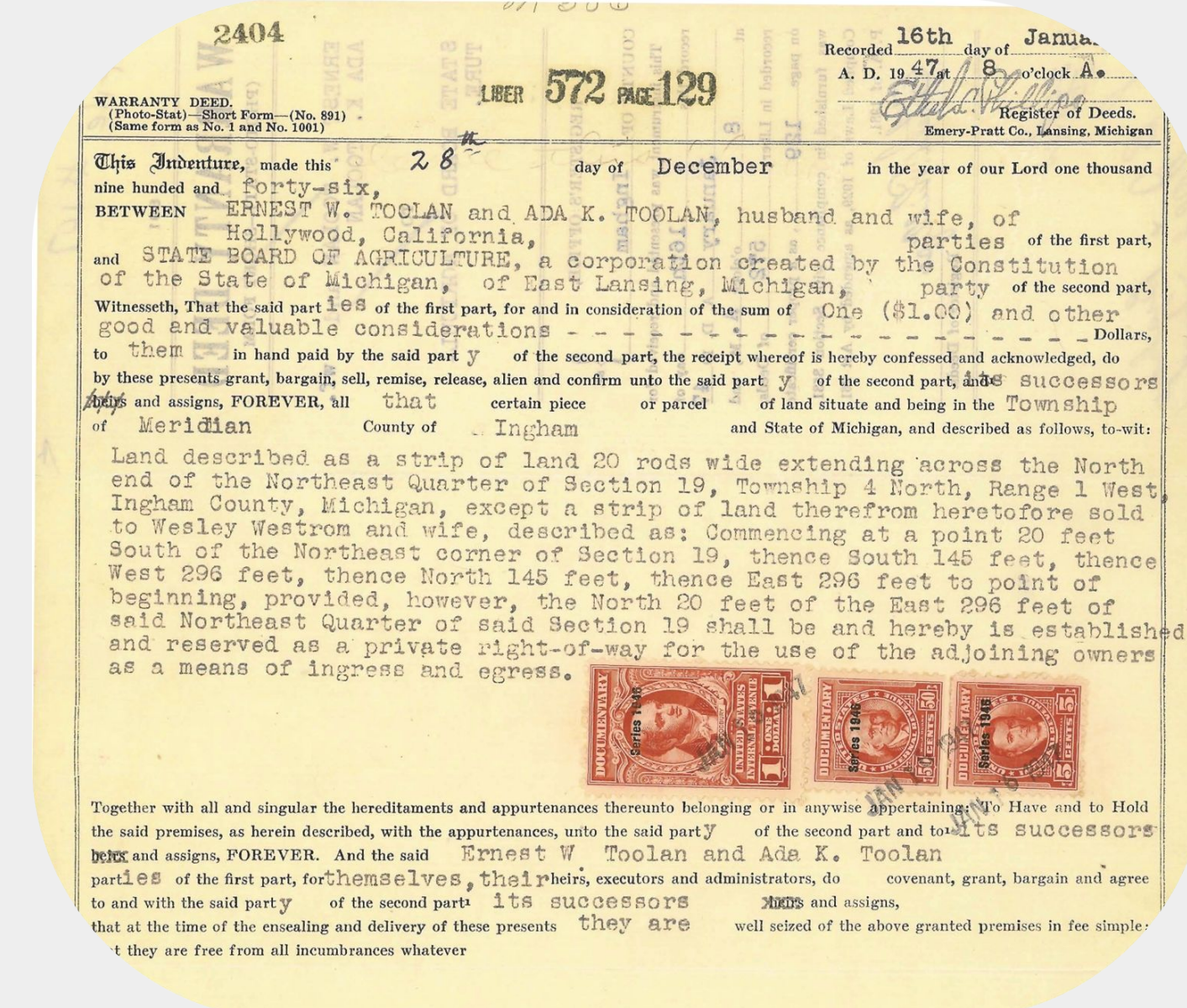
Plat map from 1932 showing the dimensions of the Toolan property (Balbach, 1934). Image courtesy of MSU Libraries.



- In 1940 the Toolan family rents the land out to the Bush and Westrom families who live on and farm the land.

Artifact:
Fragment of the MSU's logo dating from 1925-1955 (MSU Archives) found in excavation unit during the 2019 field school (Most likely not associated with the Toolans). Image courtesy of CAP.

1940s-2019 Becoming MSU



Deed signing over the land from the Toolan family to the State Board of Agriculture, photo courtesy of MSU Land Management Office.



Bird's-eye view of the 2019 field school excavation of the site, showing excavation units. Image courtesy of the MSU Campus Archaeology Program.



- 1946 - the Toolan family sells their land to MSU.
- The above aerial image shows the Toolan homestead with Hagadorn Road located to the right, taken on October 12, 1956 (MSU Infrastructure Planning and Facilities).
- The site is now directly adjacent to modern day Holmes Hall and the Sanford Woodlot, by the intersection of Shaw and Hagadorn.



Artifact:
A 1937 Mercury Dime and a shard of green petalware from a dish made by the Mt. Clemont Pottery Company that were found in association with each other (Trietsch, n.d.). Photo courtesy of CAP.

Conclusion:

Understanding MSU's past is important to experiencing its present. Next time you are traveling south on Hagadorn and make the right turn onto Shaw you can reflect on the Toolan family living in that spot 150 years earlier. Hopefully learning about the site through its different stages of development will have facilitated a greater connection to a space on campus.

Acknowledgements:

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MSU
Timeline

- The Beginnings**
 - Michigan State legislature passes a bill establishing the State Agricultural College (MAC).
 - Saint's Rest (the first dormitory), and College Hall (first academic building) were constructed

1855

1870

The Foundations

- Morrill Act was passed in 1862 which eventually lead to the MAC becoming a Land Grant institution and began receiving funding through the Morrill Land Grant

1900

- Expansion**
 - Women, students of color, students from rural and middle class backgrounds enrollment increased
 - College expanded across Red Cedar River and south of the river was dedicated to new athletic facilities

1925

Legacy

- In 1925 MAC became the Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science (MSC)
- June 15th, 1953- MSU purchases land from John Westrom and Chester Westrom

1955

Present day

- School changes name to Michigan State University
- 1965 Construction of Holmes Hall