

PRELIMINARY REPORT 2001 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SEASON

The 2001 excavation was a continuation of work carried out in 1966 and 1998-2000 on the easternmost unit of the south-southwest rowhouse within the palisade wall. The field season ran from June 4 to September 2, with occasional work continuing through October 2. Dr. Lynn L.M. Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Todd Reck. Conrad Latuszek, Erin Meekhof Sturgill, Elizabeth Sauer and Erika Schmied were the crew members. Fourteen volunteers provided a combined 536 hours of screening, excavation and public interpretation. Anne Nagrant provided regular public interpretation. Our goals for the summer were to further define the root cellar, north and east house walls and west edge (1966 interface) of the excavation. Although only one quad was excavated to sterile beach, these features were better defined.



The interface between the 1966 backfill and our current excavation of house deposits is now well established. Elizabeth Sauer (270L40 q2) and the volunteers (290L40 q4) opened two new quads in this line. Conrad Latuszek completed another quad begun last summer in this line (280L40 q2) and then picked up the work begun by the volunteers. The upper levels of 270L40 q2 were badly disturbed, connecting to disturbances noted last summer in 270L30 q1 to the east.

Todd Reck worked in 270L30 q1 this season. Once he got below the modern disturbed area, he was able to begin to define the northwest corner of the root cellar. More work remains to excavate this quad to the level of the remainder of the cellar and still more to find the bottom of the cellar. This new area of cellar continued to yield buckle, button, cufflink and other jewelry fragments.

Erin Meekhof Sturgill opened 270L30 q3 in an effort to further define the north wall of the house. By the end of the summer the trench and some post remnants (F981) were visible. There was some disturbance in the upper levels of this quad, apparently related to the other disturbances in the northwest corner of the house. The season's most intriguing artifact came from this quad, a rock engraved with parallel lines and "dal8." Because of the way the rock is broken it appears that "dal8" is part of a larger word. The numeral "8" was used by the French in Canada as a letter, approximately equivalent to "oui." The archaeology staff had great fun speculating to whom or what this might refer. Our favorite answer so far is Pental8an (Pentalouan, and various other spellings), an Ottawa leader in the Michilimackinac region in the 1740s (Peysner 1996:286), however there is no definitive link. Even more unfortunate is that the rock came from the 1781 demolition level, a mixed colonial context. A similar piece of rock with engraved lines, but no letters, came from Level 12 of the same quad.

The final area to be excavated this season was the southeast corner of the house. Lynn Evans completed removing the south wall trench (F959) in 290L20 q3 and defined the east wall trench (F994) along the entire east edge of the quad. Pure sand pockets eroding out of the east profile are probably related to the water and electric lines noticed in the east profile of the quad to the south (290L20 q1) as it erodes.

Erika Schmied opened the quad to the north (280L20 q1) in search of the east wall trench and possibly the hearth. Neither are apparent yet, but excavation will continue here next summer.

Much remains to be done in this house over the next two seasons. The interior of the house is nearly complete, but the southwest, northwest (probably disturbed) and northeast corners remain, as well as the root cellar. Root cellars in other structures have been around six feet in depth and the wall trenches so far are in the three-foot range. Cataloging and analysis of this season's finds will take place this winter. All interpretations offered here are preliminary, subject to further excavation and analysis.

Lynn L.M. Evans
December 2001

Reference Cited

Peyser, Joseph L.

1996 Jacques Legardeur De Saint-Pierre: Officer, Gentleman, Entrepreneur. MSHP/Michigan State University Press, Mackinac Island/East Lansing.