

2010 PRELIMINARY REPORT

Preliminary Report on the 2010 Michilimackinac Archaeology
Field Season



The 2010 field season was a continuation of excavations carried out in 2007-2008 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. The main 2010 field season ran from June 7 to August 21, with preliminary work starting June 1 and wrap-up continuing through September 1. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Justin Baetsen. Anna Broge, Sarah Hooker and Andrew Novack were the crew members. Nine volunteers contributed a combined 539.5 hours of screening, excavation and interpretation.

House E is labeled Gonneville on the 1749 Lotbinière map. Research by John Gram indicates this is Charles Henri Desjardins de Rupallay de Gonneville. Born in Canada in 1698, he began trading at Michilimackinac in 1727 and continued to trade there and at other western posts through the 1754 season. During this time he married Marie Charlotte Laplante, making him brother-in-law to René Bourassa, his neighbor in House F to the west. Gonneville still owned House E as late as 1758 when his name is mentioned on the transfer of an adjacent property. House E is listed as an English trader's house on a map drawn by Lieutenant Perkins Magra in 1765.

The main objective of the season was to try to define the south wall trench of the house. This had been observed continuing into the west balk of 230R60 during the excavation of House D. Ten of the eleven quads previously opened were excavated this season: 230R30 q 2&4, 230R40 q 1-4, 230R50 q1-4.

Most, if not all, of the soil removed this season appears to date to the 1781 demolition of the fort. As with other areas in the southeast corner of the fort, the demolition is quite thick here. It appears to cut down to the underlying sterile beach in some areas. At the end of the season 230R30 q4 was almost all sand, and "rotten beach" (undisturbed decaying limestone) and gold sand had taken over the south edge of 230R30 q2 and 230R40 q 1. For some reason the strata at this house seem to slope from west to east, that is, a layer is exposed on the west and then appears deeper (in terms of feet above mean sea level) in the east. Additional large areas of white sand were exposed in 230R040q2 and 230R05 q 1&2 adjacent to possible wall features. These features (F.1042 and F.1043) were found late in the season. F.1043 may be part of the south wall; it is an east-west trench with one post and several vertical stones in 230R40 q2 and 230R50 q1. F.1042 is a north-south trench with five wood posts in 230R50 q1. It is of unknown function at this time. It connects to F.1043 at a right angle running to the south (into the yard) rather than the north (into the house). F.1040, the possible post uncovered last summer, turned out to be a shallow fragment that disappeared this season.

The 1781 demolition layer is typically rich in artifacts, and this season's deposit was no exception. Notable artifacts recovered include a bone gaming die, an intact trade silver circle brooch, a lead seal, a Jesuit ring, a silver and gilt button and a religious medallion with the Virgin Mary and the words "MATER SALVATOR MUNDI" (Mother of the Savior of the World). Conservator Jennifer Lis has already conserved some of these items and revealed more information about them. The bone gaming

die dots were stained with vermilion. The Jesuit ring design was a later secular “XXXX” design, very similar to a ring found in 2008. Other artifacts were unusual for being found in concentrated areas, including a cluster of hawk bells, a cluster of very small (.10” caliber and under) lead shot and a group of barrel bands. Also notable was the continued presence of large numbers of English ceramic sherds including creamware, powdered purple tin-glazed earthenware and some polychrome salt-glazed stoneware, the last extremely rare at Michilimackinac.

Excavation will continue on this house next summer. All interpretations offered here are preliminary, subject to further excavation and analysis.

Lynn L.M. Evans
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