

## Preliminary Report on the 2006 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2006 excavation was a continuation of work carried out in 1966 and 1998-2005 on the easternmost unit of the South Southwest Rowhouse within the palisade wall. The original structure was built during the 1730s. The 1749 Lotbinière map indicates that a Des Riviere owned the house. This is probably Jean Noel Desrivieres, who held trade licenses for Michilimackinac from 1747 through 1750. The structure was rebuilt in the 1760s and occupied by British foot soldiers for a time prior to completion of the soldiers' barracks. Based on the analysis of artifacts recovered through 2001, Todd Reck has suggested that French-Canadian traders resided here in the late British era.



The main 2006 field season ran from June 5 to August 20, with preliminary excavation starting June 1 and wrap-up work continuing through August 24. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Amy Roache. Conrad Latuszek, Justin Baetsen and Tiffany Adams were the crew members. Eight volunteers provided a combined 391 hours of screening, excavation and lab work. We had no full time interpreter this season, instead, each archaeologist devoted one day a week solely to public interpretation. Our goal for the

season was to complete as much of the remaining deep features as possible. These features included the cellar (270L30 quads 1 and 2; 280L30 quad 3 and 4), the area below the hearth (270L20 quad 1 and 280L20 quad 3), a post of unknown function (F.1021; 280L20 quad 3) and part of the south wall (F.959) and doorway (F.1023) (290L30 quad 1; 290L40 quad 2).

The most interesting discovery of the summer is that the cellar extends further east than originally believed. Justin Baetsen and Conrad Latuszek excavated the area under the hearth. They began the season by removing a large horizontal timber (F.1019, F.1018) from this area. Underneath this they encountered some charred horizontal wood (F.1025, F.1026, F.1029), a large white rock, and then some uncharred wood (F.1028) and a vertical post (F.1024) which lines up with the root cellar wall posts (F.1009). The charred wood is currently being interpreted as related to the demolition of the hearth, mantel and/or chimney. The large white rock could be chimney fall. Similarly sized rocks have been recovered from the cellar fill last year and this year.

In addition to all of the structural evidence of the root cellar, this area also yielded many interesting artifacts, similar in nature to those found in the adjacent cellar fill. These artifacts include a lead seal, plain brass finger ring, iron awl, brass button, oval strike-a-light, part of a beaver skull and large iron fragments. This deposit continues down and will be further excavated next year.

Amy Roache and Tiffany Adams completed excavating the previously defined area of the cellar. At the end of the 2005 season the western edge of the cellar was beginning to look like beach sand. This sand spread across the cellar from west to east this season, transitioning into sterile rocky sand. Although nothing like the riches of the 2005 season, several interesting artifacts were recovered from the cellar fill this season before it bottomed out. These artifacts include bone awls, a thimble, tinkling cones, buttons, engraved Mic Mac pipe fragments, a knife blade fragment and a hawk bell. Only a few fragments of the wood floor of the cellar survived (F.1027). At the end of the season MSHP Conservator William Fritz

guided us in packing in this portion of the root cellar for preservation as a possible exhibit when the South Southwest Rowhouse is reconstructed.

Conrad Latuszek and Amy Roache excavated a post (F.1021) of unknown function located southeast of the cellar. It could be related to the hearth, the east wall of the house and/or the possible post molds at the bottom of 280L20 q1. Although the post and surrounding matrix were completely removed this season, no diagnostic artifacts were noted. The post was flat on the bottom.

The final area to be excavated was the westernmost two quads of the south wall. These were primarily excavated by Lynn Evans and volunteers. 290L30 q1 was excavated down to sterile beach sand. Although no wood posts remained, some deep post molds were evident at the bottom of the feature. These may have been particularly deep because they were adjacent to the south door, located in 290L40 q2. The doorway is defined by the absence of distinct trench edges and the presence of lots of small char flakes, possibly from discarding hearth-cleanings out the door. No unusual artifacts were recovered from this area. Further excavation will take place in this area next summer.

Processing of this season's finds is currently under way. All interpretations offered here are preliminary, subject to further excavation and analysis

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September 2006