

## Preliminary Report on Michilimackinac 1999 Archaeological Field Season

This season's excavations were a continuation of work begun last summer on the easternmost unit of the south-southwest row house within the palisade wall. The field season ran from June 9 to September 24. Dr. Lynn L.M. Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Todd Reck. Sarah Jordan, Terri Bedore, Conrad Latuszek, and Erin Meekhof were the crew members. Frank Stahl volunteered on the crew throughout the field season (302 volunteer hours). Ten other volunteers provided a combined 423 hours of screening, interpretation and excavation. Sarah McLennan provided regular public interpretation.

The major goals for the season were to complete the quads begun last summer and to better define the interface with the 1966 excavation. These goals were partially met. The 1966 interface was better defined, but deep features precluded the completion of several quads. A map is attached to better illustrate the current state of the site.

An additional quad to the west (280L40 q4) was opened this summer, to look for the 1966 backfill. Although none of the hoped for plastic lining was found, a clear soil and artifactual divide was found. This divide, about two feet east of the west edge, has been consistent from levels three to nine. A modern post hole (F982), filled with apton stone, is present in the southeast corner of this quad.

Along the north edge of the excavation, the north wall of the house (F981, F984) was very apparent this year, with several post remnants exposed in late summer. This wall runs along the line between quads 2 and 4 of 270L30, with more to the north than south. North of the wall, the excavation is down to sterile beach. South of the excavation, occupation deposit is still present at a depth of 2.70' below datum. This deposit covers the rest of 270L30 q4 and extends along the northernmost foot of 280L30 q4 and the northeast corner of 280L30 q3.

The remainder of 280L30 quads 3 and 4 and all except the extreme southeast corner of 280L30 q2 were excavated to a rock and sand layer known as F960. This feature was first exposed in 1998. It is quite distinct from the adjoining dark brown sandy loam matrices. It appears as high as 1.22' below datum along the south edge of 280L30 q4. Because it was so high and distinct it was assumed to be cultural and treated as a feature. Over a foot was excavated in some areas, with only a few artifacts being recovered, mostly around the edges. At that point, and with its extent becoming apparent, it was reinterpreted as beach and excavation was halted.

Towards the end of the summer 290L30 q4 was excavated down to what was believed to be sterile rock and sand beach. This butted up to and appeared the same as F960 in 280L30 q2. At that point a small pocket of deposit remained in the southeast corner of 280L30 q2. It was excavated to a depth of 2.99' below datum, where it broke onto large, flat-lying rocks (F986). These rocks continued under the F960/beach. A two-foot by four-foot area of F960 was then removed in 280L30 q2 exposing more large flat rocks. These continue into quads to the east and south. At this point it is not clear whether these rocks are a very early feature, possibly a hearth, deliberately covered by sand and rock fill or a geologic feature. The answer to this will require further excavation once adjoining squares are excavated down to the sand/rock level. Excavation before then would result in undercutting known occupation deposit due to the instability of the sand and rock level once cut into.

The occupation deposit in 290L30 q4 was unremarkable except for a sliver of the south wall trench of the house (F964, F969) along the south edge of the quad. This feature continued in the quad to the south (F959, F968, F976 in 290L30 q2). The remainder of that quad is now down to beach. A charred wood feature (F971) on the surface of the beach level in 290L30 q2 turned out to be natural, possibly the result of a lightning strike.

From there the south wall extended into the quad to the east (290L20 q1) where it formed the southeast corner of the house. Careful excavation revealed that the trench for the east wall (F963) was dug before the trench for the south wall. Another feature (F972) in this quad is associated with the south wall, but the determination of whether it is an earlier wall or a leach area from the British wall awaits artifact analysis.

this winter. The house wall portion of F963 was much deeper than the garden fence portion. Presumably these wall features continue into 290L20 q3, a quad opened this summer, but only excavated into the 1781 demolition layer at this time.



We continued to have difficulty with modern disturbances this year. Most notable was the continuation of the large pothunter pit (F965) in 270L30 q2. It yielded more tin can and Listerine bottle fragments, as well as an intact Listerine bottle, dating from 1900-1920. Close examination of the east profile wall showed the pit's extent into 280L30 q4, explaining some of the modern artifacts encountered there in 1998. Two more postmolds (F956, F974), probably from park activities, were excavated in 270L30 q4.

As was the case last year, the artifacts recovered were typical of Michilimackinac. Floral and faunal remains, nails, seed beads, and lead shot were the most common artifacts found. Notable artifacts included a knife blade, buttons, MicMac pipe fragments, a small intact brass Jew's harp, and an unused wrist escutcheon from a c.1740 French *fusil fin*.

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

Lynn L.M. Evans  
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