

Preliminary Report on the Michilimackinac 2004 Archaeological Field Season

The 2004 excavation was a continuation of work carried out in 1966 and 1998-2003 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, a fur trader, and apparently a seasonal resident of the post. The structure was rebuilt in the 1760s and occupied by British foot soldiers for a time prior to the completion of the Soldier's Barracks. Based on analysis of artifacts recovered through 2001, Todd Reck has suggested that French-Canadian traders resided here in the late British era.

The 2004 field season ran from June 7 to August 22, with wrap-up work continuing through September 9. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Yolanda Rico. Conrad Latuszek, Janie Bloomfield and Jeralyn Gasper were the crew members. We had one crew position open this summer due to a visa delay for a potential crew member. After various problems, it was decided to use the money to keep the crew on in September to work at the Old Mackinac Point Light Station Barn site. Seventeen volunteers provided a combined 448 hours of screening and excavation. Due to the budget crisis we had no full time interpreter this season, instead, each archaeologist devoted one day a week to this task. Our goals for the season were to continue work on the cellar, excavate the hearth and locate the last section of the south wall.

Yolanda Rico worked in all four quads of the root cellar this season (270L30 quads 1 and 2 and 280L30 quads 3 and 4). She exposed more posts, including the eastern corners. It appears that the root cellar



measured six feet by seven feet. Of course we still do not know how deep it is. Many interesting artifacts were recovered from the cellar again this season, including military and civilian buttons, jewelry fragments, part of a thimble, a knife fragment, a utensil handle, lots of sheet metal fragments and several gun parts. A two-eared gun worm was one of the most unusual artifacts found this summer.

Janie Bloomfield completed excavation of 270L20 quad 3, which contained the northeast corner of the house and a small section of the yard. Some of the architectural features in this area suggest that a small porch was present.

Jeralyn Gasper and Lynn Evans excavated the clay pad of the hearth in 270L20 quad 1 and 280L20 quad 3. Unfortunately it was not as substantial as we had hoped it would be. Like other areas along the eastern wall of the house, these quads were damaged by a water line running along their eastern edge. A significant portion of 270L20 quad 1 was disturbed by the early twentieth-century treasure seeker's pit (F.965) identified in previous years. An unexpected number of trade goods were found around and under the clay pad, including part of a hawk bell, a "Jesuit" ring fragment, a glass jewelry set, a buckle and tinkling cones. A trigger and a French military button were found in the same general area.

Conrad Latuszek continued excavating 280L20 quad 1 this summer. The east wall of the house continues to be sporadic here. Parts of this quad are now at the sterile subsoil. A very deep stone feature (F.986) was excavated immediately to the west in 1999.

The southwestern quads (290L40 quad 2 and 290L30 quad 1) were mostly excavated by volunteers this summer. The clay-filled trench for the south wall of the house (F.959) was just beginning to appear at the end of the season.

Cataloging 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
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