

## Preliminary Report on the 2012 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2012 field season was a continuation of the excavations carried out in 2007-2011 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. The main 2012 field season ran from June 4 to August 18, with preliminary work starting May 29 and wrap-up continuing through August 23. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Justin Baetsen. Andrew Novack, Alexandra Conell and Elizabeth Kerton were the crew members. Sixteen volunteers contributed a total of 697 hours of excavation, interpretation and lab work.

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 objectives for the season were to better define and understand previously exposed features and to expand the area of excavation to the north. All previously open quads were further excavated this summer and three new quads (220R40 q2 and 220R50 q 1&2) were opened.

Only one level (15) was excavated in the western quads (230R30 q2&4 and 230R40 q1&3). The light gold sand noted in previous years continued to dominate this area. Artifacts continued to be sparse, consisting of food remains and chinking. The dark char area that has been present in 230R30 q4 for several levels seems to be resolving into a postmold. Possible remains of the French wall, brown sand with rocks, are present more or less along the 225 (south) line. This is further north than where sections of the possible British wall are present in these quads.

In 220R30 q2 the gold sand is present in the southwest half of the quad but ends abruptly at an interface with a clay matrix. The clay matrix appears to extend to the north and east. The next quad to the east (220R40 q1) was intensively excavated (levels 7-13) to try to determine what the clay area is. The levels removed represent 1781 demolition material and British occupation deposit. At the end of the season this square was still higher than the adjacent clay matrices.

Three levels (15-17) were removed in the southeastern area (230R40 q2&4, 230R50) where wall features were previously identified. Feature 1043, tentatively identified as the trench for the British south wall,



extended west, with a possible doorway gap being identified. Feature 1042, the mystery north south running wall, was further defined as it cut into increasingly sandy yard deposits. An intact French folding knife recovered from this feature was one of the most notable artifacts of the season. An area of primary refuse deposit, a concentration of fish scales, was located in the yard area of 230R50 q2.

North of this area, three quads (220R40 q2, 220R50 q1&2) well within the house were opened. Levels 1 through 7 were removed in this area. The modern layer was quite thick, consisting of sod, backfill from House D and a buried, pre-1989 sod. This area was used for water-screening during the

excavation of House D (1989-1997). When the House D backdirt was removed some was left some to ensure that no undisturbed deposit was removed at that time. By the end of this season all twentieth-century deposit was removed from these quads and the 1781 demolition matrix was visible in all of them. The 1781 demolition level was artifact-rich as expected. The most unusual artifacts recovered were an

intact shoe buckle and a trade ring, in which vermilion had been used to fill in gaps where glass or paste sets had fallen out.

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

Lynn L.M. Evans  
November 2012