

Preliminary Report on the 2013 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2013 field season was a continuation of the excavations carried out in 2007-2012 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. The main 2013 field season ran from June 3 to August 17, with preliminary work starting May 28 and wrap-up continuing through August 22. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Alexandra Conell. Andrew Novack, Elizabeth Kerton and Hilary Wolkan were the crew members. Eighteen volunteers contributed a total of 830.5 hours of excavation, interpretation and lab work.



House E is labeled Gonnevile on the 1749 Lotbinière map. Research by John Gram indicates this is Charles Henri Desjardins de Rupallay de Gonnevile. 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. Gonnevile 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 finish the eastern section of the south yard (230R40 q2&4, 230R50), and to better understand the clay feature in the northwest section of the open area (220R30 q2). These were only partially met. All but one previously open quad was further excavated this summer and one new quad was opened (220R30 q4).

The central area of the south yard (230R40 q 2&4, 230R50 q1&3) is nearly completely excavated to sterile beach sand. There are still remnant pockets of the south wall (F1043 & F1047), which may be post molds for anchor posts for the wall or door posts. There are still remnant pockets of F1051, a yard pit, in 230R40 q2. F1051 is still present in 230R40 q1 to the west. F1042, the mystery north-south running wall, defines the edge of the completed yard. The yard to the east of F1042 (230R50 q2) is nearly complete, including possible remnants of F884, a puddling pit partially excavated during the House D project.

There is still some cultural deposit (occupation and/or demolition) in the interior of the house in 230R40 q3&4. In 230R50 q4, the interior deposit is narrowing into a root cellar-shaped area. This area yielded several barrel band fragments, a possible gate hinge fragment and other large metal artifacts. The area lines up with an area identified as a possible root cellar during the House D project.

Only one level was removed from the sandy squares on the west end of the main trench. The south wall (F1045) is now fairly well defined in this area. It appears that the edge of the House E/F wall may be appearing in the profile of 230R30 q 2&4.

In order to further investigate the clay matrix discovered last year in 220R30 q2, the quad to the east (220R40 q1) was excavated to the level of the clay. Only a small edge of the clay was present, so the quad to the north of the clay (220R30 q4) was opened. At the end of the season the thick modern layers (House D backfill, 1933 reconstruction) had been removed. 220R30 q2, where the clay matrix is located, was the only open quad not further excavated this season.

Rubble from the 1781 demolition of the fort was removed from, and continues in, the three quads opened during the 2012 season (220R40 q2, 220R50 q1&2). As is usually the case, many of the most interesting artifacts came from the 1781 demolition layer. This year they included a brass hollow point key, a brass shoe buckle, an iron sock garter buckle, and a heart-shaped Jesuit ring. We continued to find the fishhooks and blue necklace beads particularly noted in earlier seasons in this house again this season.

Two interesting artifacts came from the south wall trench, a St. Ignatius religious medal and an iron shoe buckle. Another notable finding was that in some of the deepest levels, seeds, especially burned corn kernels, outnumbered faunal remains.

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

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December 2013