

Preliminary Report on the 2014 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2014 field season was a continuation of the excavations carried out in 2007-2013 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. The main 2014 field season ran from June 2 to August 16, with preliminary work commencing May 27 and wrap-up continuing through August 21. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Alexandra Conell. The crew consisted of Andrew Novack, Elizabeth Kerton and James Dunnigan. Twelve volunteers contributed a total of 565 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 main objective for this season was to complete excavation of the southern tier of quads to sterile soil, removing the wall and yard features. Although significant progress was made, these quads are yet completely excavated. Volunteers, assisted by staff, continued excavation of previously opened house interior quads in the north part of the excavation, and opened one new quad, 220R50 q4.

Most of the south yard occupation deposit is now gone, although there is a small amount remaining in 230R30 q2 and 230R40 q1. Parts of two pits remain. F.1051, a probable refuse pit, is still present in 230R40 q1. It was removed from 230R40 q2 and the pit was backfilled. Matrix 26N in the southeast corner of 230R50 q2 is probably associated with F.884, a series of pits partially excavated along the west edge of the House D project.

Matrix 26L, in the north of 230R50 q2, the soils present in 230R50 q4, and the strip of deposit (28A and 28B) present along the east edge of 230R50 q3, are still hypothesized to be a root cellar. Over the course of the season several large artifacts, including bricks and a barrel band were recovered from this area, and another barrel band is still partially exposed in-situ here. A hinge and a large animal jaw bone came from the south wall trench (F.1043) immediately adjacent to this.

The British south wall trench is still present in 230R50 q2, but was removed in 230R50 q1. Other features associated with this wall that were removed this season include F.1047 (230R40 q2, 230R50 q 1&3), F.1050 (230R50 q 1&3) and F. 1057 (230R50 q 3&4).

One of the questions raised by previous seasons of excavation was the function of F.1042. This feature was a trench running north-south, with as many as eight posts, extending from the south edge of 230R50 q1 into 230R50 q3. The south portion was well defined by clay, while the north portion was less distinct, blending into the south wall features. Upon excavation, only two of the posts, the second and third from the south, had any substantial wood remaining. These two appeared to be leaning toward the house, possibly indicating a function as support posts. A large flat stone was exposed when the posts were removed.

At the west end of the excavation, F.1045, present in 230R30 q2&4 and 230R40 1&3, is the last remnant of the French south wall trench. The west profile of the excavation appears to cut along the edge of the wall trench for the House E/House F party wall. A char pit (F.1046), present in 230R30 q4, appears to be associated with the initial clearing of the house site.

Occupation deposit from the interior of the house is still present in 230R40 q3&4 and the extreme northwest corner of 230R40 q2. 230R40 q3 was one of the richest quads in artifacts this season. Some of the more unusual artifacts from this quad included a buckle fragment, a fork, and a brass jaw harp so small it could only have been used by a child.

Only two quads were excavated in the next five foot strip to the north this season. Demolition rubble from 1781 was removed from 220R40 q2 and 220R50 q2. The only notable artifacts were an unusually large amount of chinking from the latter.

Demolition rubble was also excavated in the northwesternmost quad currently open, 220R30 q4. As has been the case previously, the demolition layer contained interesting artifacts, including part of a “Jesuit” ring, part of a Micmac pipe and a clear glass set from a cufflink with an intaglio bust engraved on it.



The final quad excavated this summer was 220R50 q4, which was opened in mid-July. The modern sod and House D backdirt were removed, exposing large roots from the stump just to the north. This quad should be near the top of the 1781 demolition level at this point.

Along with the artifacts already mentioned, this season saw the continuation of a wide variety of ceramic types being recovered. The most unusual were one sherd each of polychrome creamware and polychrome salt-glazed stoneware. Also notable was the large quantity of burned corn kernels associated with the wall features at the east end of the south trench.

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

Lynn L.M. Evans
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Current Status of Quads

220R30 q4 Level 10- Demolition	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	220R50 q4 Level 7- Demolition
220R30 q2 Not excavated in 2014 Level 16 – clay features	2220R40 q1 Not excavated in 2014 Level 17-interior house deposit	220R40 q2 Level 13- Demolition	220R40 q4 Not excavated in 2014 Level 13- Demolition	220R50 q2 Level 13- Demolition
230R30 q4 Level 20 –mostly sand F.1045 & F.1046	230R40 q3 Level 21 –sand on west, interior house deposit on east F.1045	230R40 q4 Level 29- interior house deposit	230R50 q3 Level 28 along east edge, remainder sand	230R50 q4 Level 26 – hypothesized root cellar
230R30 q2 Level 20 – yard deposit, sand F.1045	230R40 q1 Level 21, yard deposit, sand F.1045, F. 1051	230R40 q2 Sand except Level 29 interior house deposit in extreme northwest	230R50 q1 Complete	230R50 q2 Level 26-cellar, pit (F.884), F.1043