

Preliminary Report on the 2018 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2018 field season was a continuation of the excavations carried out in 2007-2017 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. The main 2018 field season ran from June 4 to August 25, with preliminary work commencing May 25 and wrap-up continuing through August 29. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Alexandra Conell. The crew consisted of Elizabeth Kerton-Schmit, James Dunnigan and John Cardinal. Eight volunteers contributed a total of 366 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. In 1731 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.

Our goal for the season was to continue excavating previously opened areas in hopes of better defining and understanding the features present. We also hoped to complete some of the southern quads.

We opened two new quads this summer (210R40 q1 and 210R50 q1) (see schematic map of excavation below). Both are currently in transition between 1930s rubble and 1781 demolition rubble. The quad between these two (210R40 q2) is now into interior house deposit. Remnants of the concrete piers from the 1960 stocks are still present, cutting into the occupation deposit. A brass ramrod pipe, one of the few gun parts found in this house, was recovered from the 1781 demolition rubble.

The area south southeast of this (220R50 q3&4) is where we discovered a series of trenches and posts late in the 2017 season. By the end of the 2018 season the posts were almost all removed, and the trenches had shrunk onto sterile sand. The features in this area in relation to the fireplace compare well to features near the fireplace in House A/B of this rowhouse. The current interpretation is that they represent joist supports.



The root cellar is located south of this area. Its northwest corner was exposed in 220R50 q1 this season. At this point the northwest and southwest corners of the cellar, the west wall and sections of the north and south walls are all well-defined. Some of the wood plank lining survives. Cellar deposit is present in 220R50 q1&2 and 230R50 q2,3,4. The cellar continued to be the source of many interesting artifacts. Early season finds included a perforated brass thimble containing a section of thread preserved by the copper salts of the thimble, a case knife blade, and a twenty-eight-inch section of

iron barrel band. These are all evidence for trade goods being stored in this area. Other notable trade goods from the cellar this season included an intact trade silver brooch, the third from this house, and an as-yet unidentified, but probably English or Dutch, lead seal.

This house has been rich in ceramics. We did not find any new types this season, but the cellar contained numerous sherds large enough to partially reconstruct the vessels. They included

portions of a plain white tin-glazed earthenware jar, feather-edged creamware plates and a blue and white Chinese export porcelain saucer.

The most unusual artifact of the summer, the handle from a small sword, also testifies to the fashionable lifestyle of the English trader living in this house. While swords continued to be a weapon of choice for dueling for decades after they ceased to have practical military function, by the late eighteenth century they had been relegated to a stylish accessory.

The area immediately west of the cellar has broken onto a ridge of culturally-sterile beach sand. West of that another deep feature seems to be taking shape. The area in question appears in portions of all quads of 220R40, as well as portions of 230R40 q 3&4. These quads are currently at depths of 4.15’ - 4.65’ below datum (levels 28-33). By contrast the root cellar is 5.35’ below datum (level 40). The area is roughly rectangular and appears to be filled with the mixture of artifacts typical of 1781 demolition rubble. The most unusual artifacts to come out of this area were fragments of a bone-handled table knife, a clasp knife blade, and a drawer pull.

The clay feature described in previous years in the northwest part of the excavation (220R30 q2&4, 220R40 q1&3) seems to be shrinking, and breaking onto sand in the west and the new deeper feature in the east. The clay feature was oriented northwest-southeast. The most unusual discoveries in this area were a large concentration of burned corn and a circular concentration of chinking (F.1097).

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

	2104R40 q1 Levels 5 & 6 1930s or Demolition	210R40 q2 Level 12 – Interior features & 1960 Stocks piers	210R50 q1 Level Gamma – 1930s and Demolition	
220R30 q4 Level 29- Sand on west, features to east	220R40 q3 Level 29– Clay feature, deep feature	220R40 q4 Level 28 – Deep feature & sand	220R50 q3 Level 26 – Interior wall features & sand	220R50 q4 Level 26 - Interior wall features & sand
220R30 q2 Level 29 – Clay feature (NE)& sand	220R40 q1 Level 29- Clay feature, deep feature and sand (SW)	220R40 q2 Level 32-Deep interior feature	220R50 q1 Various levels – interior wall & deep features, corner of cellar, sand	220R50 q2 Level 40-Root cellar and sand
230R30 q4 Complete	230R40 q3 East -Level 33 – deep features S- F1045 W- Complete	230R40 q4 NW half Level 33- deep features SE half - complete	230R50 q3 Level 40- Cellar along east edge, remainder complete	230R50 q4 Level 40 –Root cellar
230R30 q2 Complete	230R40 q1 Complete	230R40 q2 Complete	230R50 q1 Complete	230R50 q2 North half - Level 40 – Cellar South half - Complete