

Preliminary Report on the 2019 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2019 field season was a continuation of the excavations carried out in 2007-2018 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. The main 2019 field season ran from June 3 to August 24, with preliminary work commencing May 24 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, Kathlyn Guttman and Caitlin Lobl. Six volunteers contributed a total of 487 hours of field work, 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 main goal for the season was to better define the features in the northwest part of the excavation. We also hoped to find the bottom of the root cellar and other features. These were only partially met. More features were defined, but none were completed.



The northwest area of the excavation became more complicated. The deep feature potentially identified in 2018 has taken on a rectangular shape. It is present in the north half of 230R40 quad 3&4, 220R40 quads 1&2 and the south half of 220R40 quads 3&4 (see schematic below). This area is now all at the top of Level 34, 4.75' below datum. The soil matrix is typical of 1781 demolition rubble, with late-British-era artifacts present. Particularly interesting artifacts from this area include a large fragment of a polychrome tin-glazed earthenware teacup, the base of a dark green British case bottle, fragments of two brass buckles, a two-tined fork, a six-inch case knife blade with a rat-tail shaft, a small iron dart-style projectile point, a wide circular trade silver brooch and a robust structural hinge. The shape and contents of the feature are very typical of a root cellar. A few other houses excavated at Michilimackinac have had two cellars. This trader seems to have been successful enough to have needed extra storage space.

Also in 220R40 quad 3, immediately to the north of this potential cellar, was a concentration of chinking (F.1097) which contained 15.3 kg (33.7 lbs.) of chinking. It extends into the balk to the north.

Also extending into the balk to the north was yet another deep feature. This one is present in 220R30 quads 2&4 and appears to be cut into by the potential second cellar described above. It is defined by two rows of vertical planks (F.1098 & F. 1099) which intersect at a right angle. This area is currently at Level 35, 4.85' below datum. Unlike the other deep areas, this area is sparse in artifacts. The most notable was a cache of burned corn.

The root cellar identified several years ago in the southeast corner of the house continued to yield interesting artifacts. Early in the summer we recovered the final sherd of the feather-edged creamware plate that was mostly excavated in 2018. We also found an additional sherd from a blue and white Chinese export porcelain saucer partially excavated in 2018. An additional sherd from this vessel is visible in the balk. Other notable finds included a trade silver circle brooch, a leg bone and hoof from a pig or sheep, and a brass serpentine sideplate from a British trade gun.

Additional pieces of the wood cellar lining were exposed. The cellar is currently at Level 44, 5.75' below datum.

The area north of the cellar in 220R50 quads 3&4 was excavated almost to sterile beach sand. One post remains (F.1066). A very unusual brass ring with a cameo-style bust bezel was found in this area.

The final areas to be excavated were two quads along the north of the excavation. 210R40 quad 1 is transitioning from 1781 demolition rubble to interior house deposit at Level 10 (2.35' below datum). 210R50 quad 1 is still in 1781 demolition rubble at Level 6 (1.95' below datum). Its stratigraphy seems to have been disturbed by the large tree which grew in its northeast corner and will also impact adjacent quads.

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

	210R40 q1 Level 10 - Demolition and interior house deposit	210R40 q2 Level 12 – Interior features & 1960 Stocks piers	210R50 q1 Level 6 – Demolition	
220R30 q4 Level 35- Sand on west, plank walls to east	220R40 q3 Level 34– Chinking feature, deep feature	220R40 q4 Level 34 – deep feature & sand	220R50 q3 N – complete S- Level 35 - postmold	220R50 q4 N- complete S- Level 35 - interior
220R30 q2 Level 35 – edge of plank wall (NE) & sand	220R40 q1 Level 34- deep feature and sand (SW)	220R40 q2 Level 34-deep interior feature	220R50 q1 N- Level 35 – post S- Level 44 corner of cellar	220R50 q2 N – Level 35 - interior S - Level 44-Root cellar and sand
230R30 q4 Complete	230R40 q3 East -Level 34 – deep feature S- F1045 W- Complete	230R40 q4 NW half Level 34- deep feature SE half - complete	230R50 q3 Level 44- Cellar along east edge, remainder complete	230R50 q4 Level 44 –Root cellar
230R30 q2 Complete	230R40 q1 Complete	230R40 q2 Complete	230R50 q1 Complete	230R50 q2 Complete