

Preliminary Report on the 1996 Michilimackinac Archaeological Field Season

This was the eighth summer of excavation on House D of the Southeast Row House. The original house was built during the 1730s and occupied during the 1730s and 1740s by the Beaulong/Bolon family. It was rebuilt by the British in the 1760s and used to house British foot soldiers. During the 1770s it was occupied by officers, as a living and/or work space.

This summer's excavation was under the direction of Dr. Lynn Morand, Curator of Archaeology for the Mackinac State Historic Parks. Renee Lutes-Kurtzweil was the field supervisor. Crew members were Jenna Hamlin, Lynda Kennard, Keri Kutt and John Thompson. Public interpretation was provided by Diane Fish. Frank Stahl was a regular volunteer throughout the summer. Additional volunteers provided more than five hundred hours of service interpreting, screening and excavating. The field season ran from June 3 through October 3, with daily operation from June 11 through September 6. This was the first year for daily operation, which presented supervisory challenges, but was well received by the public.

As this was the second-to-last scheduled summer of excavation on the house, our strategy was to begin removing architectural, and other, features from the house itself. The yard will be left until last because, if necessary, it can be preserved while the house is reconstructed. Beginning at the eastern wall of the house, we now have excavated twenty-three of forty-one open five-foot square quadrants down to sterile sand.



The primary features excavated this summer were the north and south walls of the house. Like the other row houses at Michilimackinac, this house was built in the French provincial *poteaux-en-terre* (post-in-ground) style. This was done by digging a trench and placing vertical posts side-by-side within it. The gaps between the posts were filled with clay-based chinking. Many post remnants were encountered while excavating the British wall trench (F.574). In the southeast corner some building hardware, probably from the demolition of the first house, also was found in the trench.

One of the most notable finds of the summer was the discovery of deep circular pits (F.910, F.911, F.913, and within F.574 and F.841), each containing a post remnant above a large rock base, within the British wall trench. These pits were spaced at five foot intervals along the southern wall (a total of five), and are tentatively identified as rafter support posts. Two were identified along the north wall, with more of the wall remaining to be excavated.

Much of the French house was obliterated by the construction of the British structure, but portions of its wall trenches were recovered as well. The northern French wall trench (F.837/847) was found approximately one foot south of the British wall trench, indicating that the French house was a foot narrower than the British. The southern walls of both structures appear to have been in the same general location. A few traces of the French wall (F.908, F.914) were found under the British.

The wall trenches for the southern ell, tentatively identified as a pantry, were partially excavated. Removal of the east wall (F.858) showed that there was no break between the main house wall trench and the ell wall trench. Therefore, the ell was built as an integral part of the building and not as a later addition. A small section of the French ell wall (F.912) was excavated directly under the British ell, but separated from it by a layer of sand.

In the north a possible early British structure (F.904) was found. It was under British street deposit and above French porch deposit. The feature consisted of two trenches, the first perpendicular to the house wall and the second attached to the first at a right angle. This feature may be evidence for a sheltered entrance, small porch or additional room. The French porch previously revealed along the north edge of this and the adjacent houses to the east was excavated further this summer (F.816, F.835, F.836, F.905, F.906).

Within the house several features associated with the fireplace were excavated. One was a postmold from a support post (F.915). A second post (F.896) recovered may date to the French era. Two very small refuse pits (F.845, F.855) from cleaning the southern hearth were removed. The final two features were parts of the fireplace that had eroded out of position. One was a few rocks from the south arm of the hearth (F.916) and the other was a small section of the clay hearth floor (F.895).

Three postmolds (F.898, F.900, F.907) dating to 1960s park activities were encountered in the northern part of the site, cutting into the British street and French porch deposits. Disturbances related to the punishment device display have been excavated in past years in this area.

These results are preliminary, and subject to change following artifact analysis. The 1998 field season will be the final at House D. Upon completion of analysis and synthesis, the results for the entire project will be published in the *Archaeological Completion Report Series*.

Lynn L. Morand
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