

Preliminary Report on Michilimackinac 2000 Archaeological Field Season

The 2000 field season excavation was a continuation of work carried out in 1998-99 on the easternmost unit of the south-southwest rowhouse within the palisade wall. The field season ran from June 5 to September 22. Dr. Lynn L.M. Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Todd Reck. Conrad Latuszek, Erin Meekhof, Elizabeth Sauer, and Carl "Traie" Shelhart were the crew members. Sixteen volunteers provided a combined 713 hours of screening, excavation and interpretation. Brian Kenady provided regular public interpretation.

Our goals for the summer were to complete those quads begun in previous years and to continue moving west through the interior of the house. These goals were partially met. The discovery of a root cellar, potentially six feet deep, precluded the completion of several quads. A map is attached to better illustrate the current state of the site.

The discovery of the root cellar was the highlight of the season. It was defined, by soil differences and post remnants, in 270L30 quad 2 and 280L30 quads 3 and 4. In these quads it was excavated to a depth of 3.30' below datum. It continues into 270L30 quad 1, which was begun this season and is still in higher modern disturbance levels. These disturbances relate to the pothunter pit identified in 270L30 quad 2 in 1998-99. The root cellar contained numerous trade and personal artifacts. Among the most notable were a hawkbell, cufflink parts, buckles and a rosary. The rosary appears to be a nearly complete six-decade rosary, missing only four beads and a crucifix. An intriguing artifact found in the cellar late in the season is a brass disk that may be a coin. No markings are visible, but once the conservation lab is operational again cleaning may reveal details.

The north wall is adjacent to the root cellar in 270L30 quads 2 and 4. The posts were removed this summer, but some underlying matrices remain. Removal of the south wall was completed in 270L30 quad 2, finishing that quad. The east wall is beginning to be defined in 290L20 quad 3. This quad was begun in 1999 and only excavated for a brief time this season. None of the walls excavated this summer had a significant artifact content.

Work in the interior of the house went very well. Two quads, 280L30 quad 1 and 290L30 quad 3, were completely excavated this season. The quads along the west edge of the excavation area contain some interior deposit and some 1966 backfill. One of these (280L40 quad 4) was completed this summer and another (280L40 quad 2) was begun. Grid strings from the 1966 excavation were found at the bottom of the former. The interior deposits were not as rich as the root cellar, but did contain some interesting artifacts. Most notable is a sling swivel barrel band from an early French Marine musket, interesting because it is the first known part from this type of gun to be found at Michilimackinac.

Cataloging and analysis of the season's finds are underway. All interpretations offered here are preliminary, subject to further analysis and excavation. Excavations at this structure are scheduled to continue two to three more seasons.

Lynn L.M. Evans
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