

Preliminary Report on the 2021 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2021 field season was a continuation of the excavations carried out in 2007-2020 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. Although covid continued to be a concern, a full twelve-week field season was carried out. Safety protocols were modified as the season progressed and covid ebbed and returned with the delta variant. The main 2021 field season ran from June 1 to August 21, with preliminary work commencing May 24 and wrap-up continuing through August 26. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Dr. Alexandra Conell. The crew consisted of Elizabeth Kerton-Schmit, Marissa Miller and Emily Shirilla. Six volunteers contributed a total of 343.5 hours of interpretation, excavation and assistance with packing and unpacking the site.

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.

The archaeological goals for the season were to complete the southeast cellar, to further define the central cellar, to better understand the deep features in the northwest area of the excavation, and to find more of the French north house wall trench. As with every season, these were partially accomplished.

The bottom of the southeast cellar was reached at a maximum depth of 6.85' below datum. All of the exposed structural features and deposit associated with this cellar have been removed. There is deposit, and presumably the east wall posts, extending into the east profile. The eastern edge of the cellar was exposed, but not excavated during the House D excavation.

Excavation of the central cellar continued. Twelve wall posts are now exposed. One of the most interesting artifacts of the summer was found along the north wall of the cellar, an intact clasp knife, perhaps lost during construction.

Only a little work was done on the deep features in the northwest part of the excavation. The posts continue, as does the concentration of chinking. Sand is now visible at the bottom of the north profile, so work in this area has been paused again so as to not undermine the squares to the north.

Work continued on the squares to the north of the deep features as well. British house interior deposit continues in 210R30 q2 and French house interior deposit continues in 210R40 q1. (See Current Status of Excavation map at end of report.) At the eastern end of this row, 210R50 q2 is now in 1781 demolition rubble.

Two new quads, 210R40 q3&4, were opened in what is expected to be the final tier of squares on the north side of the excavation. They are currently in the 1782 demolition rubble. Two concrete piers from the c.1960 stocks are present in quad 4. The demolition level in this quad contained the most intriguing artifact of the season, a round, clear glass intaglio with Masonic

symbols. The intaglio could be the set from a ring or a sleeve button. A square and compass surrounding the letter "G" are easy to see. The surrounding symbols are not as clear, but appear to include a trowel.

While the lodge at Mackinac (St. John's #15) was not established until 1784 on Mackinac Island, many of the soldiers and traders at Michilimackinac were members of lodges in Detroit or further east. Known Masons at Michilimackinac include: Major Robert Rogers, Lt. John Christie, Captain John Vattas, Lt. Robert Brooks, Lt. George Clowes, Surgeon's Mate David Mitchell, Felix Graham, Benjamin Lyon, Forrest Oakes, David Rankin, and Ezekiel Solomon.

This list is a starting point for possible owners of the intaglio. It could be a clue to the "British trader" who owned the house or could have been lost by a guest of his. It is particularly interesting to note that three other residents of the southeast rowhouse were Masons, Lt. Clowes (House A/B), Ezekiel Solomon (House C), and David Mitchell (House D).

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

The 2021 field season was sponsored by the Mackinac Associates, and all of the archaeology staff thank them for their support.

Lynn L.M. Evans
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Current Status of Excavation

	210R40 q3 Level 8- 1781 demolition	210R40 q4 Level 8- 1781 demolition		
210R30 q2 Level 17 – British house interior	210R40 q1 Level 19 - French interior house deposit	210R40 q2 Level 19 – French wall and interior house deposit	210R50 q1 Level 10– Interior house deposit	210R50 q2 Level 7 – 1781 demolition
220R30 q4 Level 36- Sand on west, plank walls to east	220R40 q3 Level 36– Chinking feature, French root cellar	220R40 q4 Level 37 – French root cellar & sand	220R50 q3 Complete	220R50 q4 Complete
220R30 q2 Level 36 – edge of plank wall (NE) & sand	220R40 q1 Level 38- French root cellar	220R40 q2 Level 37-French root cellar	220R50 q1 W- Level 37-edge of French root cellar Rest - complete	220R50 q2 Complete except east profile
230R30 q4 Complete	230R40 q3 Level 38 –French root cellar	230R40 q4 NW half Level 37- French root cellar SE half - complete	230R50 q3 Complete	230R50 q4 Complete except east profile
230R30 q2 Complete	230R40 q1 Complete	230R40 q2 Complete	230R50 q1 Complete	230R50 q2 Complete