

Preliminary Report on the 2023 Michilimackinac Archaeology Field Season

The 2023 field season was a continuation of the excavations carried out in 2007-2022 on House E of the Southeast Rowhouse. The main 2023 field season ran from May 30 to August 19, with preliminary work commencing May 22 and wrap-up continuing through August 24. Dr. Lynn Evans, MSHP Curator of Archaeology, directed the excavation, with the assistance of field supervisor Elizabeth Kerton-Schmit. The crew consisted of Keith Klipfel, Francesca Silverman, Kasey Smith, and Andrew Tallman. Six volunteers contributed a total of 163 hours of interpretation and excavation.

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, and to locate the north wall trench of the house. As with every season, these were partially accomplished.

The southeast cellar yielded a few more interesting artifacts this season. Most notable were

some plain white tin-glazed earthenware sherds, which matched with some similar sherds found late last season to form an ointment pot. This is the second ointment pot we have been able to reconstruct from the southeast cellar. We now appear to be through the layers containing artifacts thrown into the cellar during the demolition of the house. This season we exposed more of the plank walls of the cellar and late in the season we uncovered remnants of the cellar floorboards.

The wall posts of the central cellar were better defined this season as well. Two unusual artifacts were found near the north cellar wall. The first was a six-sided gaming die. This is the second die we have found in this house. This season's die is of higher quality than the previous example, being made of ivory or polished bone and with its pips in the standard pattern of opposing sides adding up to seven. The other unusual find was a marked white clay smoking pipe bowl fragment. White clay pipe fragments are fairly common, but most of the pieces we find are plain. This one was stamped with a "jumping deer" maker's mark. This motif was used by a series of Dutch pipemakers in Gouda from 1660 to at least 1776. It is a good reminder of the worldwide trade networks of which Michilimackinac was a part.

As the season progressed, we were able to identify humic stains from the north wall of the house cutting into the beach sand underlying the fort. The west end of the wall trench was well defined. Unfortunately, we confirmed that the tree stump we have been working around for several seasons is in the center of the east end of the wall trench. The roots do not seem to have grown around artifacts, rather the roots displaced the artifacts in the sandy soil as they grew. The tree post-dates the house; it was planted around 1910, shortly after Michilimackinac became Michigan's second state park. While the location of the fort was never forgotten, its interior layout was.

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

Lynn L.M. Evans
November 2023

Current Status of Excavation

210R30 q4 Level 16- Wall and porch features	210R40 q3 Level 12- 1781 demolition	210R40 q4 Level 12- 1781 demolition	210R50 q3 Level 9- 1781 demolition	210R50 q4 Level 17- Below porch	Excavated with House D Complete
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 17– Interior sub- floor deposit	210R50 q2 Level 17– Interior sub- floor deposit	Excavated with House D Complete
220R30 q4 Level 36- Sand on west, plank walls to east	220R40 q3 Level 36– Chinking feature, French root cellar	220R40 q4 Level 41 – French root cellar & sand	220R50 q3 Complete	220R50 q4 Complete	Excavated with House D Complete
220R30 q2 Level 36 – edge of plank wall (NE) & sand	220R40 q1 Level 42- French root cellar	220R40 q2 Level 41-French root cellar	220R50 q1 Complete	220R50 q2 Complete	220R60 q1 Level 44/45- Cellar
230R30 q4 Complete	230R40 q3 Level 41 – French root cellar	230R40 q4 NW half Level 41- French root cellar SE half - complete	230R50 q3 Complete	230R50 q4 Complete	230R60 q3 Level 44/45- Cellar
230R30 q2	230R40 q1	230R40 q2	230R50 q1	230R50 q2	Excavated with House D

Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete
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