

2023 Quebec Field Diary: Archaeology of a Basque Whaling Station in St. Paul River, Quebec's Lower North Shore

William W. Fitzhugh, Smithsonian Institution



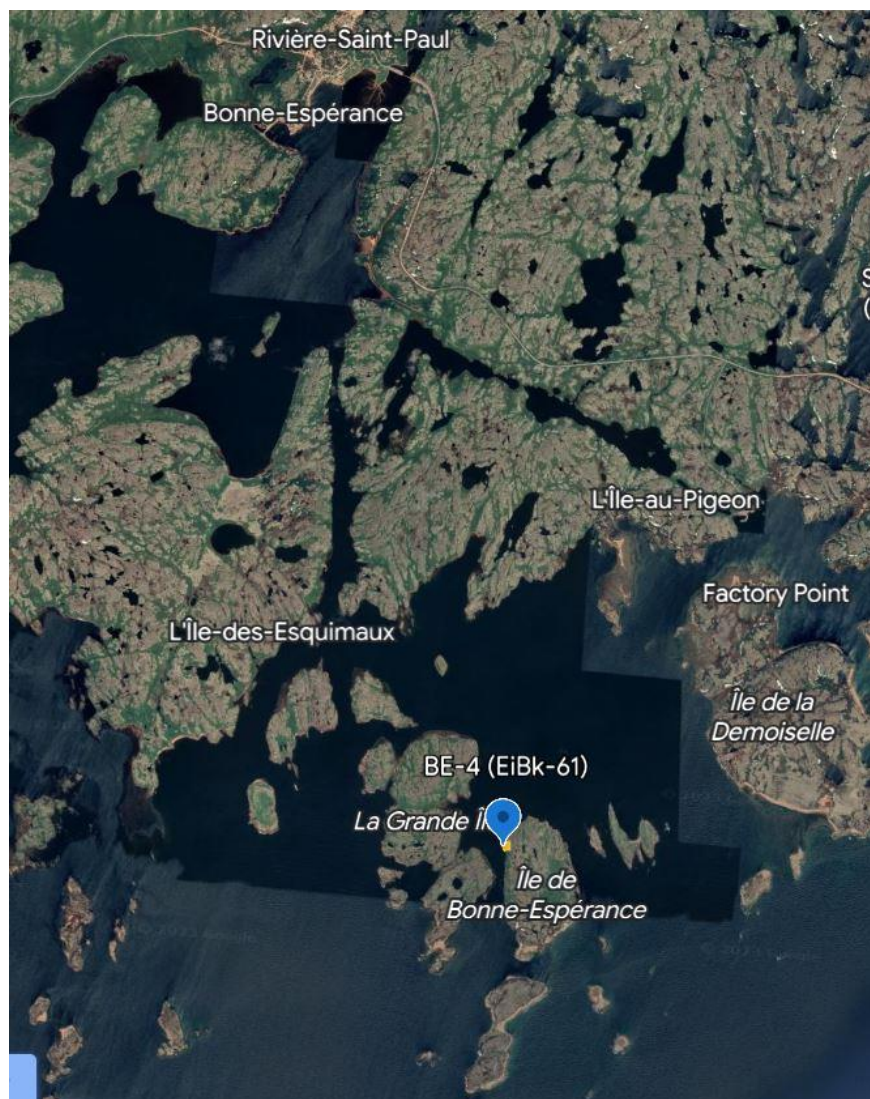
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Google Earth map of Bonne Espérance Municipality, Quebec Lower North Shore, and BE-4 site.

This report is in two parts: Part I, field diary by William Fitzhugh, and Part II, summary of archaeological results by William Fitzhugh and Francisco Rivera-Amaro.

PART I: Field Diary (William Fitzhugh)

12 July (Wednesday) Fairlee to Sussex New Brunswick

I finished preparations for what may be my last field project during several days in Fairlee in early July. This year most of the land use (MERN) and archaeology (MCC) permit tasks were accomplished before arriving in the field (an unusual feat!), and the only complications were at the Smithsonian end where Nancy Shorey had to struggle with intern appointment for Alyssa Miulli (Notre Dame) and volunteer appointments for Kody Shugars and Sofia Vakhunitsky (both University of Colorado). The SI systems for these appointments has been in transition (more like turmoil!) ever since the covid epidemic ended and people returned to work—or didn't. The SI lost many of its support staff to resignation or retirement during the epidemic, and new procedures were instituted by the administration that have not been fully implemented.

This year's project is straight-forward: excavation of the Bonne Esperance-4 (EiBk-61) whaling station, which we tested last year. Just as we began the trip I had word from Caroline Solazzo in our Museum Conservation Institute that the baleen samples I provided from the 2022 dig at this site are bowhead, and one sample may be right whale. The latter would be a surprise if confirmed. We will be teaming up with Brad Loewen and his students from University of Montreal. The core goal is to document a small Basque whaling station, determine the activities represented, date the site (late 16th century?), and search for Inuit or Innu involvement. The latter is suggested by the presence of Basque roof tiles and iron nails found in the Grand Isle Inuit site we excavated several years ago. We plan to do the project in the last week of July and first two weeks of August.

I drove to Fairlee, VT, in early July and met my summer students in Hanover, N.H., on Friday 7 July. On Saturday we worked at the 19th century Cross Mountain North site near my VT home, mapping Structure 4 ('the barn'), setting up a few squares and registering about fifty metal detector hits fairly evenly distributed throughout the structure. One of the first finds came from the north side of an old rotted white pine stump at the northwest corner of the foundation: an inch-thick iron shaft with a round flange at one end and a cap at the other. The flange disc was about 20 cm in diameter and had three bolt holes with three slightly larger holes perhaps for pins. Wound around the shaft was a wire spring. Checking on-line suggested this may be the drive shaft for a circular sawmill blade. The find was basically on the top of the ground, so it might not date the original use of the structure. While clearing the leaves we also found a one-quart rusted 'lard pail' and a small soda can with an early style flip-tab and a faintly-visible 'Cola-Cola' name. Rain that produced a major flooding event in up-state New York and southwest Vermont kept us from the site until Tuesday morning when we finished three one-meter units in the northeast corner of the interior, and in these units we recovered small fragments of an annular ware bowl or cup, window glass, and a square cut nail. A '25 cent' detector hit in the north wall turned out to be a small pocket-knife.

We left Fairlee about 9am Wednesday morning and had a sunny drive across northern New Hampshire and Maine. At Mexico, near Rumford, we stopped at our usual ice cream shop, whose proprietor spoke about the down-turn in the Androscoggin River paper mill business. Then on to Calais/St. Stephen where we had the quickest interview at the Canada border I've experienced, and from there proceeded to the Fairway Inn in Sussex, N.B. for dinner and the night.



A sawblade driveshaft found at the Fairlee Cross Mountain North site ‘training’ dig; and the 2023 crew departing for Newfoundland and Quebec: WF, Sofia Vakhunitsky, Alyssa Miulli, and Kody Shugars.

13 July (Thursday) Sussex N.B. to North Sydney, N.S.

We were rolling by 8am. The coffee shop in Sackville N.B. was closed, so after a drive around Mount Allison University we went on, crossed Canso Strait, and reached Louisbourg about 3pm. I had contacted Eddie Kennedy, Parks Canada’s public director, earlier and discovered that Xabi Otero was there with two Basque students doing tourist presentations. I had met Xabi, a Basque ‘chocolateer’, and two students here last year, and so this news was unexpected and most welcome. Our visit, in pouring rain, began with a field site visit with archaeologists from the University of New Brunswick led by Amy Scott and Mallory Moran (Parks Canada) followed by a tour of the Louisbourg archaeology research facility, which contains the amazing collections from archaeological work going back to the 1950s.



A visit to the Louisbourg Fortress: SI team (left) with Eddie Kennedy, Amy Scott, Mallory Moran, Xabi Otero, and Basque students Maddi Belza Beristain and Elaia Inchauspe Larre. Right: Mallory displaying a shoe, one of thousands of finds in the fortress conservation and storage center.

The eastern shore of the fortress region had been battered by Hurricane Fiona in 2022, and an extension of the rock revetment had been installed to stem further erosion. More generally, however, we were struck by the incredible damage done by the storm to the forests of black spruce which were ripped up and blown flat for miles along the coast. Our meeting with Xabi included the two Basque students, Maddi Belza Beristain from Etearri, Navane, and Elaia Inchauspe Larre from Baione, Lapurdi. The students were busy for the evening, but we had a nice dinner with Xabi at a local restaurant and leaned about his plans for finishing his work at Jauzarrea Basque cultural organization. After a pit-stop in Sydney to buy a sim-card for Kody's phone, we lined up for the ferry at North Sydney, were aboard by 9 and underway at 11:15. All the way across the 7-hour passage to Port-aux-Basques we felt the slap of storm waves on the ferry's starboard bow and the accompanying shudder that ran through the entire ferry, *Blue Puttees*, named for the blue wool calf leggings worn by Newfoundland regiments in WWI.

14 July (Friday) North Sydney to Lushes Bight

The storm continued until we were on the highway north of Port-aux-Basques, where we passed through a sunny stretch before diving into the storm again east of Corner Brook. At Springdale I exchanged American for Canadian funds and dropped in at Leonard Harvey's accounting office, finding him out but aware of the problems Nancy Shorey has had getting Perry's contract through the SI financial maze. We had an hour to spare before the 3:30 ferry to Long Island, so we made a quick pilgrimage to the Triton boatyard to see how our old expedition vessel, *Pitsiulak*, is doing in retirement. Lonesome she looked, tucked way back into the far corner of the yard along with a couple of yachts and other odd-ball vessels. Physically she looked fine and well-kept, but the knowledge she is not likely to touch the water again cast a pall over our visit. I did not have the heart to climb aboard but will do that before heading home in August to collect gear onboard. On the Long Island ferry I found Dennis and Jim Wise in the pilothouse, Dennis at the helm, and had a nice chat, mostly centered around Jill Colbourne's death at age 34 a month ago, from cancer that crept up on her and gave her little more than a week to live following diagnosis. We found Perry and Louis at home and discovered we had unwittingly arrived the day before Long Island 'Come Home Day'—which is why so many vehicles were on the ferry. A surprise at the ferry was the sight of a huge iceberg, aground at the west end of the channel, the remnant of an unusually heavy sea ice appearance along the northeast Newfoundland coast this spring. With the ice came a huge influx of harp seals—both baby white-coats and adults. Old timers say they have never seen such a large number of harps and young. Their appearance is interpreted partly as a result of the failure of a sea ice platform to form in the Gulf, causing the seals to shift their birthing area to the icy Atlantic coast. Without sea ice to support the new-born white-coats until they can swim, many died in the both areas.



Dennis Colbourne skippering the Long Island ferry; right: a large berg in the Long Island channel cracked and gave us a scare when we came too close.

15 July (Saturday) Lushes Bight

A very busy day started with a visit to the big iceberg in the Long Island Channel. While we were a bit too close, it sounded a loud rifle-shot crack, and when I tried to speed us away the outboard died, leaving us vulnerable to a surge wave. We were unable to start and paddled with oars, but the heavy boat hardly moved. After what seemed like an eternity, Perry got the engine going and we escaped. Luck was with us because the berg stayed intact. Back in the harbor, we pulled the boat on the trailer and loaded it up with the zodiac and other bulky gear like digging stuff, gas cans, floater jackets, and a tent. It was ‘Long Island Day’ and crowds of relatives and friends were returning, requiring constant ferry crossings. We lunched at the festive gathering at the old school, now converted to a community center, trying out the mooseburgers and watching people try to dunk a kid in a tub of water by throwing a ball through a tiny target hole. Kody won a water bottle at the silent auction, and Sofia a sweatshirt. Fireworks started at dusk across the harbor and lasted nearly half an hour, costing about \$200 per episode, so with 15-20 sets the cost was a couple thousand, all financed by donations. We watched from the road, swatting mosquitoes. The annual dance party followed with a DJ spinning discs and large numbers of dancers paying \$5 a head and showing plenty of enthusiasm. Kay and Louise shared a table with Sofia, Alyssa, and me (Kody opted for sleep). I discovered dance antics put a strain on my metal hip, but at least I did not collapse. We left at midnight, but heard that the music continued until 2:30, when the hard core shifted to Beaver Pond where, by some reports “there were naked people in the water.”

16 July (Sunday) Lushes Bight

Nothing stirred in our lodgings at Jim and Trudi Rice’s shed attic until I climbed out about 8:30, catching Jim in the kitchen making coffee. His son’s crew from Labrador City staying in their camper next to the shed soon popped up in the form of two talkative young boys and a grandmother who had never been to Lushes Bight before. I had a chat with Jim until our team appeared and then headed to Perry’s, finding he had already loaded the rest of our gear into the truck. Not a whole lot needed to happen today—Sunday—except show up for Perry’s fish and brewis lunch and his seal flipper stew at dinnertime. We hiked up the Beothuk Trail to the observation platform at the top of China Head, where you get a spectacular 360-degree view. On the way down we found three young beavers in the pond below the gazebo, near a bog full of pitcher plants, and then visited the heritage center for a soda and tour. There is a small collection of Beothuk corner-notched arrowpoints in one of the display cases. A brief visit to Beaver Pond for a swim, a load of laundry, and discussion with Jim about fishermen politics rounded out the day and brought us to Perry’s seal-flipper stew, which was enjoyed by all: the darkest, richest, meat in the world according to Perry. I spent the evening playing with Jane’s kids, Cassie (already a smartie with a sense of self and capable of doing entomology searches on the web) and her little sister, Camy, who obstinately refused to let me push her in the swing, but loves to sneak up and scare me in Perry’s workshop.



Sofia, Alyssa, and Kody at the Beothuk Trail observation post above North China Head.

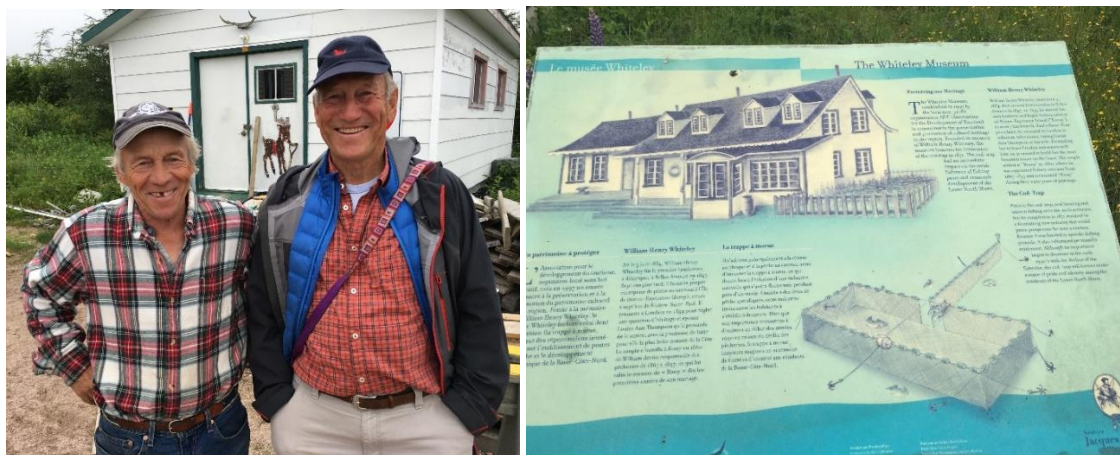
17 July (Monday) Lushes Bight to Middle Bay

We left Perry's on the 8am ferry, gassed at Deer Lake, arrived in St. Barbe in time for a late lunch before the 3:30 ferry, and reached at the teachers' residence in Middle Bay about 6pm. The trip was completely uneventful and without traffic. I don't know where people are, but they were not on the road today. One of the surprises was the new breakwater around the east and southeast side of the Blanc Sablon boat harbor, next to the ferry landing. This construction of massive boulders was not present last year; the new groin makes an important but dangerous boat harbor into a fine facility, but only for a small number of boats. It was pouring on the Labrador shore, and we were met at the Middle Bay teacher's residence by Garland Nadeau and Ross Thomas. The house is a duplex for two families, and we will occupy only the northern half. Last year's place in St. Paul River has been taken by the crew demolishing the Esquimaux Island dock, a project now in its second year. The residence was empty except for a small table, three beds, two mattresses, a few table chairs; one of the two bathrooms is not working, and there are no kitchen stuff except a things supplied by Eileen Schofield. Eileen and Garland will help round up some of the missing equipment and furniture, but it seems our stay here will be a Spartan enterprise for our frequently dirty, hungry diggers. Adding to the nuisance, my cell phone is not working, so Perry got me to the internet and SI email via his phone hotspot.

18 July (Tuesday) Middle Bay/St. Paul River

A foggy organization day started with oatmeal prepared in a frying pan and eaten in mugs , and a lot of make-do in our quarters. Usually, we do not work here until August to avoid the July fog which results from the warm southwest wind over the winter-chilled Gulf water. By August the Gulf is warm enough that fog is not so likely. We began the day launching the speedboat at the fish plant and then meeting Garland and Eileen at the Whiteley Museum. He has found us a house in St. Paul River, right on the water and fully furnished. Ross and Brenda Thomas are leaving their summer home for their winter place in Sherbrooke and are willing to have us take over their place. We can move in on Friday and will leave the Middle Bay residence to the Quebec students.

We returned to the fish plant to move the speedboat to St. Paul River, leaving in a thick fog as a training operation for Sofia, using Perry's GPS navigation app on her iphone. Garland was skeptical about the technology, always using plain sight, but he changed his tune when he saw how easy it was following the track on the iphone screen and was amazed when the landmarks appeared visually where they belonged. It took only thirty minutes to reach SPR. We lunched at the museum and then drove to Blanc Sablon, stopping to make a short detour to see the Inuit houses at the Hart Chalet. The access road is worse than ever, but we managed it without busting the car or meeting another vehicle. Florence Hart has had some work done on the cottage—new windows and perhaps more. The three Inuit winter houses were just as we left them. It's always impressive to see how large and rectangular they are. The blackflies were ferocious and gave our team their first experience with these little monsters. As a result, we invested in several new bug nets and shirts at the Black Sablon hardware store. Groceries, gas, and beer completed our business in Black Sablon. We returned to Middle Bay, stopping to place a 'welcome home' gift of cherries at Florence's house. She was due in today from Ottawa but could not land because of fog. While I was cutting grid stakes at Garland's I met his elder brother, Phillip Nadeau, who has a house next to Garland's which he uses in the summer. Phillip was one of Rev. Bob Bryan's young 'finds' when Bob was running the Quebec-Labrador Foundation on the LNS and helped find Phillip a place at Choate Academy in New England. He finished his education in the U.S. and had a career working for the Iron Ore of Canada. I returned from Garland's to find the tiny kitchen full of cooks preparing a codfish and mashed potatoes. Tomorrow—weather permitting—we lay out the grid at our Basque whaling station.



Garland and Philip Nadeau at Garland's workshop; the Whiteley home on Bonne Esperance Island and the cod-trap that Whiteley invented, on a sign outside the Museum.

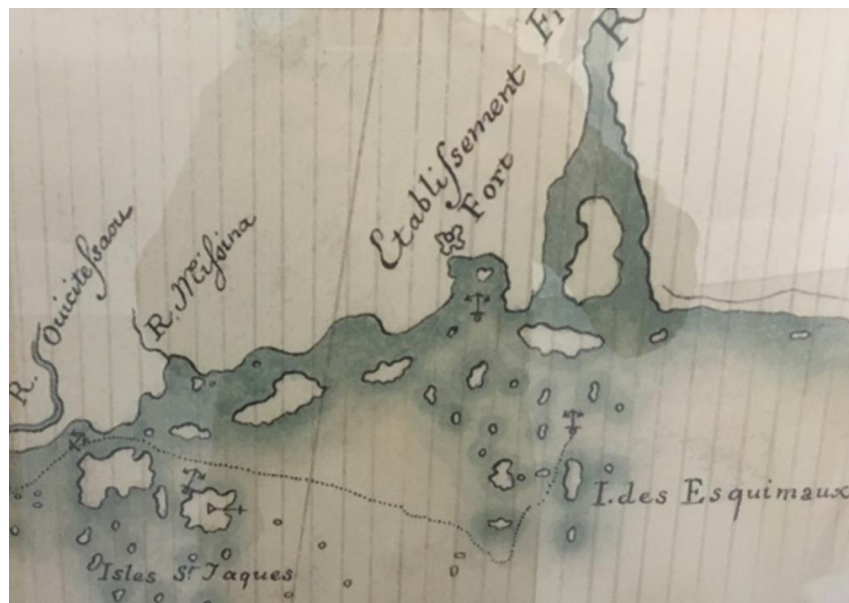
19 July (Wednesday) Middle Bay/SPR

I had a miserable evening last night with my phone mess. I went online to Verizon to see if they could find out why I'm not getting messages, calls, or able to make calls, ever since leaving the U.S. When Lynne and I checked our accounts at their store in Hanover, we were told my phone was 'all set' for use in Canada or Mexico, but they must have messed something up. And when I thought I was chatting with Verizon and was asked to provide my credit card info, I assumed this was ok, and did it—then immediately reconsidered and called Lynne to alert her, finding she had just received an alert from Verizon about a charge of \$55 'for repairs'. When I said it was not me, Verizon closed the card. Someone scammed me, and we now have to wait a week for a new account and cards. I must have clicked on a Verizon look-alike. At least we got on top of this immediately and blocked other charges. I am still at a loss on how to get the phone working.

To add to the dreary communications scene, today was as foggy as yesterday. But with Perry's navigation app on his phone, we got to the site easily. We set up Jill's tent on the only relative level area, at the north end of the site. Not sure how this 10x12 ft tent will do in a breeze, but with guy-lines and weighed down with gear inside, perhaps it will sit tight. We extended the 2022 grid into a 26x4 m rectangle covering most of the main site except for what may lie beneath the tent or up on the hillside.



Laying out the grid at Bonne Esperance-4, view to the N; North end of the site showing boulder pile, baleen pit (Zone 2), and Zone 3, the domestic-work area.



Early French map of the St. Paul River-Old Fort region showing I. des Esquimaux mapped in the Grand Isle-Bonne Espérance location.

20 July (Thursday) Middle Bay/ SPR

A second foggy day. We decided to drive to Red Bay and show the students what Basques in Canada were about. It was slow going on the highway, most of which is in pretty good shape, with few potholes, but the road had many camper vans and large trucks with heavy loads, making for slow hauls up the steep hills. We arrived at Red Bay about 11:00 and toured the museum. I enjoyed seeing many ‘old friends’ (artifacts) and had a chance to discuss them with the kids. The tour on Saddle Island was led by Karen Pye, the daughter of our old friend from Goose Bay days, Rev. Frank Pye. Frank died, but his wife is alive. Karen gave an excellent tour. Unfortunately, I did not know her name at the time and did not have a chance to discuss Lynne’s and my friendship with her parents. Last year’s island guide, Ryan, was tending the museum, and we had a nice chat. Director Phil Bridle, who I know from other visits, was off on errands. Our boat driver, Bob Stone, remembered us from last year. The highlight of the tour was the huge renovation of the boardwalk. About a third of the one-hour circuit has been completed, and already has consumed a huge volume of timber. Karen mentioned that the wreck of the *Bernier*—the iron hulk off the east shore of Saddle Island inspired Robert Grenier to wonder if Basque vessels may have been lost nearby, driven in from a similar storm. The original clue however may have been Selma Barkham’s archival discovery of the wreck of the *San Juan* described in the Basque records. We had our usual lunch in the Whaler Café where I had a discussion with a proprietor/waitress who, after my suggestion last year, had one of the sales shop women who had been on the Memorial University dig in the 70s identify many of the people in a crew photo that accompanies the reconstruction of the Basque tryworks in the center of the dining area. My earlier identification of Robert Grenier in the photo last year was wrong. The picture only shows the MUN land dig team. On the way home we stopped for hardware and visited Florence Hart’s house, finding daughter Karen’s family had arrived, but Florence was still in transit.



Basque trywork reconstruction at the Parks Canada Red Bay Museum; trywork implements; and Karen Pye leading the Saddle Island walking tour.

21 July (Friday) Middle Bay/SPR

We finally had a full day at the site even though fog stayed with us most of the time, but it was patchy and thin and burned off in the afternoon. We began at the south end of the site, working on the stone wall, from the creek bed to 14 South. The wall found last year extends to 18S and consists of roughly rectangular rocks set in a sandy-clay matrix with occasional pieces of rooftile mixed in. Total height of the wall is 40-50 cm. But what was its purpose? More about that below. Sofia has become our regular speedboat driver. She has had lots of boating experience sailing with her father off the New England coast and is familiar with navigation and boat handling. She learned our outboard quickly and the mooring off-haul procedures, simplifying my life considerably. The same is true with the entire group's culinary skills. They dive in and do what needs to be done quickly and without reservation. Alyssa has had archaeological experience in a Southwest field school, so she quickly cottoned to our dig requirements and was the first to finish her unit today. Kody is an excellent, careful excavator, and Sofia and Alyssa have become the project's mapping team.



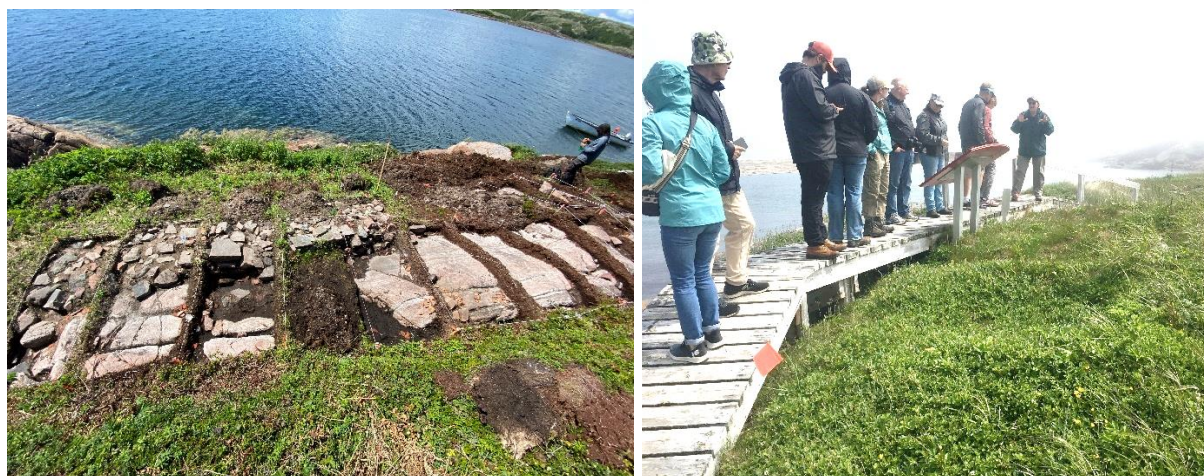
Kody and Alyssa working on the foundation units at the southern end of BE-4. View SW. (photo: Sofia Vakhunitsky); Units 15-18 South with the stone foundation at 2 West, view W.

Garland stopped by today in his skiff with his friend Ross Thomas and Ross' grandson and daughter. The son climbed the hill like a billy-goat ("look at me!", he chimed from the grassy ledges above us), while his sister stuck by the dig, a bit less adventurous. After a bit, they departed for the outer coast to catch a mackerel. I suspect we will see some of Garland's mackerel in a day or two.

22 July (Saturday) Middle Bay/SPR

Fair weather most of the day until 2:30 when a storm came in from the southwest and we quit the site, returning to the residence. The team finished their wall units. Alyssa and Sofia mapped the new units and took elevation measurements of the ground surface and major rocks. Kody found an encrusted spike in 18S, and I found a small nail fragment east of the wall in 14S. These are the first artifacts of the season, which does not say much for productivity of the wall area. If this was covered by a shed like those at other Basque sites, there should have been more large spikes, unless they were scavenged by Inuit. In the non-wall parts of the units the deposits have the same features as the 15S one I excavated last year—10-15 cm of peat, then a cultural layer beginning with a few tiles, and then a basal cultural layer with many tiles bedded in compacted soil with lots of charcoal, tan clayey soil, and, in wet areas, small amounts of baleen. Last year we found the very bottom of the cultural layer was wet and contained preserved wood, baleen, and a fragment of a skin garment. This year I did not excavate the west half of 14S OW to bedrock, but rather quit when I reached the basal level with its concentrated tile and charcoal. The east part of 14S was excavated to bedrock, and the bottom had tiles, baleen, and lots of charcoal. It seems that the Basques used fire to clear the site of vegetation, then laid down broken tiles. The wall was laid on bedrock and its rocks were often bedded in a tan clayey-sandy soil.

We are still at a loss to explain how the blubber rendering took place. Why the wall? Why no boiling tub depressions? Their absence is odd given the fired remains deposited west of the wall, as though cooking detritus was being dumped there from rendering fires above. None of the wall rocks, or those found east of the wall, were oil-encrusted. Alyssa suggested that, given the prevalence of baleen, that perhaps this was a baleen-processing site, not a one for rendering. Why then the midden of cooking fire remains?



The wall foundation units at the south end of BE-4, view west (photo: K. Shugars); Pot depressions at Saddle Island.

We arrived back at the residence just as Perry returned from watching loons feeding in Middle Bay near the Basque site Françoise Niellon dug years ago. Her finds are on display in the Middle Bay Museum and its restaurant, both of which have been moved to a town building near our residence. For dinner, the crew

got into a major cooking spree built around the small bunch of black berries we picked at the site during lunch. The kitchen came alive with their activities and the music that accompanies just above everything they do. Alyssa was the master of the cake which she managed without normal ingredients, producing something very close to a pound cake with blackberry syrup glaze. Caking transitioned into a hamburger dinner with many trimmings. Their evening was spent, as usual, at card games, with music of course.

After weeks of delays, miscommunication, and messed-up instructions, Nancy finally succeeded in getting Perry's SI contract funds wired to Leonard Harvey in Springdale, and the funds were received at Harvey's accounting firm. The delays resulted from new procedures, new personnel in cash management, poor staff training, and a fair does of incompetence. I will say, however, that all displayed good will in trying to solve the problems, and Nancy did wonders in urging the transfer forward. But after all, how difficult should it be to transfer funds to a company in Canada? I remain mystified.



Kody with his Sofia-knitted cap; team dinner with Alyssa's blackberry cake dessert.

23 July (Sunday) Middle Bay/SPR

Our drive from Middle Bay to SPR—now that the fog has gone—displays the majesty of the Quebec Lower North Shore geography. The road runs across the highlands since the coast is too steep and embayed to support a coast road. Instead, you cruise the uplands and get great views of the rolling hills, innumerable ponds, and vast marshes, the home of the berry delight—the bakeapple. This year this beloved berry's appearance is in question, as many of the plants have no berries or only tiny wizened ones. Some of the plants still have their flower petals. Besides reveries about berries, gazing across the hills, I wonder what this country would be like had caribou survived the arrival of Europeans and their guns. The landscape seems like it should be teeming with this animal, and I wonder why it is not when northern Newfoundland has managed to sustain its northern herd. The highway skirts in and out of the postglacial marine limit, and one can find the sea-scoured outcrops as well as the erratic-festooned outcrops that the post-glacial sea never reached. The best view of this type of landscape is south of Red Bay, where erratics of huge size are densely concentrated.

Perry and I met Garland at Ross and Brenda Thomas' house to scope out the living arrangements. The house could use some carpentry on its collapsing porch, but the main house is in fine shape and full of antiques and stuff accumulated by the family over the years. Among the special items are an old foot pedal organ and an ancient radio console that used to be at the Greenley Island lighthouse where Ross's father was keeper for years. Some of these items could be candidates for donation to the Whiteley

Museum if it's space could be expanded. Besides the kitchen and pantry, there is a dining room, living room, bath, utility room, and four bedrooms upstairs, plus a large basement. The washer and drier don't work, so we'll cart our laundry to the Middle Bay residence. We moved in after dinner—a fine Colbourne Sunday chicken stew—and cleaning up the Middle Bay house so it is ready for the U. Montreal students and Francisco, all to arrive tomorrow if weather permits. We left lots of food and necessities in the pantry for them because much of that stuff is already on hand at the Thomas house.

Before dinner the students returned from a walk on the Middle Bay beach and said they had visited the museum. “What museum?” I wondered since the Middle Bay Museum I knew looked permanently closed. Turns out the whole museum and café has moved to a small building just below our residence. When I went to explore, I found the entire contents of the old museum up in the new building. It looks great and is in perfect order, with all the illustrations, artifacts etc. in their proper places. “We moved it ourselves, just the two of us,” the proprietor said, “using the old shipping cases.” “What about needing permission from the object lenders?” I asked. Silence. Local initiative. The move was needed because the old (relatively new) building had a rotting foundation.



Martin Lowe's vision of the Middle Bay Basque site excavated by Françoise Niellon. (Middle Bay Museum painting)

While I was there, an elderly couple was eating lunch, and I decided to intrude and say hello. Both were old friends who grew up in St. Paul: Phyllis Springle and Walter Brake. Phyllis grew up near Rodickton, south of L'Anse aux Meadows and Walter on the south Nfld coast and had worked in Makkovik, Labrador. They were finishing up a St. Paul River visit. I secretly paid for the lunch, and when I was nearly out the door, they asked for their bill and discovered “Dr. William Fitzhugh already paid it.” The least I could do in the spirit of Rev. Bob Bryan, the flying Anglican priest revered on the coast for his ministry and founding the Quebec-Labrador Foundation and shepherding so many people to careers and

outside education, Like Phillip Nadeau. Bryan's autobiography was on the bookshelf at the Whiteley Museum, and I borrowed it as I had known Reverend Bob during our work around Harrington Harbor, but never read his book. The Thomas house has lots of interesting old books.

While working on my notes I heard the students reading from a collection of old Newfoundland ghost stories. I am discovering many things about Bob Bryan's early life as a Choate school student, then Yale and its Yale Divinity School, and how he got interested in the North during a canoe trip in Quebec, his early fascination with planes, and meeting the leader of the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church in Quebec City and getting appointed to minister to the people of the Gulf North Shore. His family had been wealthy as a result of the grandfather's wheat and cereal supply business, but lost everything but their land and home in the depression. While in divinity school his 'Bert and I' records brought Bryan enough money to buy his first plane.



Rev. Robert Bryan's autobiography; SI-UM teams embark from St. Paul River on our first excursion to the Bonne Espérance site.

24 July (Monday) St. Paul River

It was very calm this morning, and we reached the site after a 25-minute ride. Fog hung off the outer islands all morning but began moving in around 1pm. We decided to leave in order to have time for shopping before a dinner in Blanc Sablon and meeting the Quebec students at 7pm. Kody finished clearing the eastern 75 cm of 14S/2W that had the western side of the wall and found that side of the wall was not as carefully-made as the east side. Deposits west of the wall here were like those I found in 15S/0W and consisted of burned and blubber-stained rock and file, and charcoal, looking like trywork fire debris. He then began 13S/0W. Alyssa finished her 12S/0W 1x2, finding the cultural layer hugging bedrock throughout the unit. Sofia's 11S/0W and had ledge throughout her 1x2, but in the thin 5 cm thick

culture layer on top of bedrock, were tiles, clayey soil, a piece of European flint (fire-starter probably), a small, polished stone that probably was a fire-kit hammerstone, and three nails—one of which is a large log spike. Once again, we see evidence of preparing the site by burning off the vegetation and depositing cultural materials directly on bare rock. My contribution to the day's work was a 1x1 m unit above the ledge east of the wall at 16S/4E. This unit is in a small ravine running down from higher on the hill. A test pit yesterday showed tile and baleen about 15 cm below the surface. I cleared the entire unit today and found it paved with a layer of tiles and had a 60cm long baleen strip running down the center of the gully. No charcoal or artifacts were present. Possibly this feature was paved to serve as a channel to deliver water to a cistern that may exist at the bottom of this channel. However, there is a more productive water source in the larger rainwater channel at the southern end of the stone wall. Rain yesterday made 16S/4E fill with water seeping through the soil.



The southern Zone 1 excavation completed, revealing the stone wall/bedrock foundation. Boulder pile and baleen pit to right. View NW. Right: Lunch break overlooking the northern Zone 3 area. View N.

We returned to town about 1:30 when fog began rolling in, because we needed to drive to Blanc Sablon to meet the Quebec team arriving on the 19:10 Air Laison flight. Francisco Amaro, Marie Trottier, Clarence Laliberté, and Thomas Lelièvre were all to be on the same flight. Chances for their arrive did not look promising, for the fog grew worse as we approached the airport. We stopped for a hello to Florence, who had arrived a couple days ago by the coastal boat from St. Augustine. She looked great and was pleased to be back home, along with Karen, her daughter, Karen's husband, and their poodle. It did not take long for the subject of bakeapples and flies to emerge. After her place we visited the hardware store across the Blanc Sablon River, where we found two of the world's worst trenching shovels and some clip-boards for the Montreal diggers. Dinner was at The Club restaurant near the hospital. We heard from the team that they were stuck in St. Augustine because of fog in Blanc Sablon, but to our eyes the fog was lifting, so we returned home. An hour later Garland showed up with news that they had landed and picked up their rental car and were headed to the teacher's residence in Middle Bay. Garland met them and introduced the house. I spent the rest of the evening reading Bob Bryan's flying exploits and life in Harrington Harbor.

25 July (Tuesday) St. Paul River

A thick fog lay on the land when I got up at 6:30, but by 7 it was gone, and a beautiful clear day followed. Perry and I set out for Middle Bay to greet our new University of Montreal arrivals. After saying hi, both groups assembled at the Whitely Museum for an organizational meeting with Eileen and Garland. Then we set out for the site and found the speedboat and engine carried us along at about 9 knots. That was a relief, as I worried, we would be overloaded and too slow. While the SI team got started on new 1x2 m

units (5,6,7S/0W), I introduced the UM team to the site, our excavation and recording system, and laid out 1x2 m units north on the 2W line where I had noticed a ridge under the turf. As soon as they started to clear the turf, a large 20x4 cm (ship?) oak plank appeared, not the stone wall I expected. As they continued, no tiles appeared at the plank level, so perhaps this is a post-Basque addition. However, 5-10 cm or so deeper, tiles began to appear and the usual Basque cultural layer emerged. The first artifacts to come from this area were a piece of a whetstone and a small nail. An unusual find was a quartz piece with the shape of a British gunflint, perhaps a bit of emergency production for a flintlock gun? After spending the entire day removing thick layers of peat and humus, they are just reaching what I hope will be a more interesting part of the site (domestic? shops?) than the industrial oven complex to the south. The problem, however, is the flooded nature of the spongy peat which makes excavation a difficult and messy business.

Meanwhile at the south end of the site, the SI team has worked north to the boulder pile and discovered empty spaces between the rocks, as I had noted last year. So, this was a pile of stones that had been assembled as dry rocks before a cultural layer was deposited on it. In this thin layer were found a flint fire-starter, an iron spike, charcoal, baleen, and a 10 cm long sheet of lead. Still no sign of potholes or ovens. Water—too much of it—is turning out to be a big issue, unlike last summer. All the low areas are saturated and flooded with water draining from the hillslope above. This may also have been a problem for whomever put the plank through the swale on the 2W line.

We lunched on the flat rock above the site, gazing out over the islands. No salmon finning or seals or porpoises showed, and the water was barely ruffled by the light and fluky breeze. We returned to the village for a group dinner prepared by Perry: fried mackerel, cod, rice, and salad. The two teams had fun sitting around the table swapping school stories and tales of past activities and crazy stunts. All the Quebec students are quite easy with English, and all have had some diving experience which they hoped to use this summer until we had to cancel it for lack of advance planning and permits.



The combined teams' first dinner: l-r, Perry, Kody, Sofia, Alyssa, Francisco, Thomas, Marie, and Clarence. Right: Montreal students begin work on Zone 3 peat pits. View N.

27 July (Wednesday) St. Paul River

This was a second day of 'full force' excavation, and it began with a thunderstorm that was over by the time the Montreal team arrived at 9. Alyssa and Francisco remained behind for an online meeting with the MRC to discuss program requests from the Whiteley Museum. Supposedly our request for funds was

under consideration, but I doubt will be funded. Garland brought Alyssa and Francisco out to the site around 10:30 full of praise for Alyssa's plans to help with media programming. Fog never cleared, but the sun tried to burn through a couple times.

The Montreal pits were full of water when we arrived and had to be bailed out. Excavation turned the peaty deposits to mud. Despite difficult conditions, Clarence and Thomas succeeded in finding several pieces of thin ceramic, likely stoneware, one with a bit of greenish glaze, all probably from the same pot. Marie had a large mat of baleen in her unit, and Francisco found a large flint chunk. Rooftiles began to appear about 15-20 cm from the surface and continued for another 10-15 cm in a cultural layer that was also full of peat. We will look for internal stratigraphy when the walls dry out. Alyssa and Sofia finished their 9S and 10S 1x2 m units and began mapping those that had been finished. We set out a level line at the 0 cm datum level and ran it south along the east side of the stone wall, so they could prepare a west view of the wall profile, showing its construction. Meanwhile I continued excavating 6S/0W west of the ledge outcrop. This unit has a thick upper peat layer and was streaming water. As with all other units south of the datum, the culture layer was lying on bedrock and contained badly decomposed tile, lots of charcoal chunks, a few pieces of baleen, and a large, thin flat piece of wood that may be a decomposed plank or barrel stave. The southeast part of the cultural level was extremely hard and indurated from fire.

Kody finished work on the north side of the rockpile, finding lots of blubber cinder, cinder coating on rocks, and tile fragments. The base of the unit was a jumble of rocks, some of which had fallen from the north side of the rockpile, which had been built as a layered wall. This and the cinder-stained rocks suggested this pile was the location of a tryworks with a structure I had not seen before—one without 'pot-holes'—that may have had a boiling pot perched on a rockpile stabilized by props, with heat supplied by a ring of fire around its sides. This would explain the profuse amount of cinder and cinder-stained rocks around the rockpile and the air spaces between the platform rocks resulting from piling rocks without filling in the cracks between them. This technique might have been a precursor to the 'pot-hole' style of tryworks seen at Red Bay and most other Basque stations and might explain the presence of so much discarded baleen. All this speculation makes it important to find materials other than radiocarbon to establish the site's occupation date.



Marie's West Trench 3N 3W showing cultural layer between peat deposits, view W; and north side of the boulder pile 7-8S 0W units with fallen wall rocks and baleen dump in 7S, view SE (photo: K. Shugars)

We arrived back home to a Colbourne chicken stew and baked pan bread whose consumption got held up by a general discussion with the Montreal students about our finds and hypotheses. Clarence in particular

had lots of questions about Inuit and Basque relations and economy as she has been charged by Brad Loewen to undertake an MA thesis on our findings over the past twenty years. The group left about 6:30 to shop for dinner and return to Middle Bay, where they seem to be comfortable. Today Perry and Garland delivered a couch for their empty living room.

27 July (Thursday) St. Paul River

Thunderstorms predicted for the afternoon. We got off the dock at 8am and found our pits flooded with groundwater. Alyssa and Sofia finished drawing the west-viewed profile of the wall from 19 south to 11 South and began working on the units on the west side of the stone pile, 8S/2W and 9S/2W. Last year I began excavating 8S/2W but did only the upper 10 cm, and excavated 7S/3W at the northwest edge of the stone pile. This time we will excavate the entire pile. Kody finished digging 8S/0W, finding many large rocks at the bottom of the stone pile wall looking like they were dumped there or fell off the pile or came from the pile's north wall, because they all were jumbled up and some have baleen and tiles beneath the rocks. I finished 7S/0W without finding much of interest. The cultural layer was beneath 15-20 cm of peat and had the same characteristics as other south end deposit: a few small strips of baleen, scattered broken tiles, charcoal lumps, and a couple of pieces of wood—one a thin plank-like piece about 25 cm long without obvious working. A patch of soil in the southeast part of the unit next to the ledge outcrop consisted of hard-packed cultural deposit, possibly having been burned after being soaked in oil. No artifacts were found other than tiles.



The north wall of the boulder pile viewed to SW, with burned deposits and baleen at its base; Right: lumps of blubber cinder found in this pit and in the stone pile.

The Montreal team made good progress on their West Trench units. Marie completed the southern half of 5N 0W and found 10-15 cm of sterile peat resting on sand; Francisco photographed the scattered rocks in the northern half of her unit, and she will excavate below them tomorrow. Clarence finished—and found a long piece of wood at the bottom of the cultural layer and will remove it tomorrow. Thomas made progress on 1N 2W and found more pieces of the thick ceramic found previously. At the north end of the large plank, Francisco made progress in his muddy unit 0N 2W which had two vertical ridges of granite running SW/NE with a peat-filled gap between them.

During lunch break, Sofia and Alyssa decided to walk over the hill and visit the Whiteley house at the north end of the island, despite our warning that it was farther than they thought. When we returned to the dig, Thomas alerted us to an approaching t-storm, and we decided we needed to return to the village. Fortunately, our wanderers appeared back at the site in time for us all to leave together. The storm struck

just as we reached town, and one of the bolts knocked out the town's electricity for 12 hours. Garland was just stepping out of his work-shed and the bolt knocked him flat on the ground. "I thought it hit me and I was a goner," he said. Later we found the electric pole it struck split in two.

Garland stopped by in the afternoon to tell me that the MRC (the mayors of the Lower North Shore) declined our request for a grant. He was furious at the picky points made by the council, like "where were the artifacts going?" "Why are we not hiring local people and using rented boats from townsfolk?" "Why are we employing a Newfoundlander (Perry)?" They completely miss the point about the need for research and new information that can interest tourists. Many of these same issues emerged in our permit discussions with the town in Iqaluit (Baffin Island) years ago. Garland offered to help find a few thousand dollars to help us with our gas and food.

While we were talking about this, Medric Thomas appeared in the doorway carrying a rock that looked like the joint of a large animal, wondering what it might be. It was fun seeing him again and hearing more about his dad, Lennie, who found the Inuit skull, snow-knife, harpoon tip, and a few other things in one of the stone pits on Kettle Head (Grand Isle). The snow-knife was resting on a flat rock above the skull (and presumably the rest of the skeleton, not recovered). Medric was with his dad when they found the burial and tools. Whoever buried the person did so with some respect for Inuit burials and afterlife, so I imagine this was the Inuit man's family, not a European. Medric had a picture of a stemmed arrow point that his sister had found eroding from the bank near the Grand Isle Inuit summer camp we excavated. It was not made of Ramah chert and probably dates to the same period as the Ramah chert layer beneath the Grand Isle-2 Inuit summer house which we radiocarbon-dated to 1240 +/- 30 BP (Beta - 481305).



View of 7-8S 0W collapsed rocks on the north side of the boulder pile (left), with 2022 baleen pit back-filled at upper right; right: northeast corner of the boulder pile, view S, and 5S 0E with fired earth, rocks, and tile, view E. (photos: K. Shugars)



St. Paul River harbor front looking SW from the Ross and Brenda Thomas home.

28 July (Thursday) St. Paul River

This was the first fine day for weather, with a light breeze from the northwest, shifting to southwest in the afternoon. We reached the site about 8:30 in nearly flat calm conditions, and found our pits again filled with water. Alyssa and Francisco had a meeting with Donna online at the museum, planning some media work; Garland brought them out to the site at 11am. Alyssa excavated the 1x2 m unit at the southwest edge of the pile, finding mostly bare granite and hardly any cultural deposit, only small pockets of charcoal. Sofia finished the excavation that I started in 2022 on top of the pile, finding the usual blubber cinders, fire-cracked rock, and tile fragments. No artifacts. Alyssa and Sofia then finished mapping the stone pile, spending quite a bit of time on the Northeast unit that Sofia and Kody excavated, to show the accumulation of jumbled large rocks north of the laid-up wall. Kody re-excavated my 2022 1x1 m at the northwest corner of the mound, and I excavated the remaining unit along the mound's north side. This unit has a deposit of mixed tiles, charcoal stains, and tan clayey soil that extends 30 cm deep in its northeast corner. This type of deposit seems to extend beneath the fallen rock jumble. Here and in Kody's unit to the east. We now have a total picture of the stone pile and its surroundings. While we were cleaning this feature up, Francisco flew a drone flight and gave a bit of training on it to Alyssa. From our lunch rock we saw *Bella*, the Lower North Shore ferry, traveling west toward Blanc Sablon. In the afternoon we had a visit from a family that has a cabin on one of the islands west of "Bony". One of the women is a teacher in the local school and was familiar with our work.



West Trench showing the oak plank found beneath the turf 10-15 cm above the Basque layer. Right: detail of the south end of the plank with two round nails.

Meanwhile the Quebec team wrestled with the muddy pits north of the datum. Few new finds appeared, and Marie's unit remained a lake as she was not able to join us due to an upset stomach. Clarence found a barrel stave and a second smaller piece, probably also a stave, at the bottom of the cultural layer, and we lifted out the 4-meter plank and found two iron nails in one end. There are also two depressions about one cm wide cut across the plank. The surfaces of the plank on both sides were eroded, but seem to have been sawn, not adzed. Apparently, someone brought this large plank ashore and placed it in the wet, level part of the site long enough ago to have it grown over by 5-10 cm of turf and reach a fairly advanced stage of rotting. Perhaps it is related to the cod-fishing industry of the late 19th early 20th century when Bonny Harbor was filled with schooner fishing vessels. The advantage of this otherwise poor geography for living or working was the deep-water approach and ease of loading and unloading materials, for instance, in this case perhaps salt for preserving fish. No other post-Basque artifacts were found on the site.

29 July (Saturday) St. Paul River

Stormy all day, low clouds and lots of rain—just what we don't need. Our pits will be brimming over. I had a restless night wondering if I had left my fieldnote binder unprotected outside vulnerable to rain, until Kody told me he stashed the binder in the dry dig box. The Montreal gang dropped by at 8am thinking we would be digging because I did not send them a cancellation message soon enough. Instead, they went off to Red Bay, and to buy rubber boots. They've been using ours until now, and tomorrow we are all going to be in swampy units. The girls stayed home and made focaccia bread—one of Alyssa's Italian specialties. Perry and I drove to L'Anse-au-Clair and found some large mesh hardware cloth for screening the culture layer, and we were on our way to L'Anse-au-Loup to find a Tellus store that might

give me a chip to make my iphone work, until halfway there we realized it was Saturday and the store would be closed. The local Tellus shop burned down at the other end of the Blanc Sablon food store last week. Instead, we had lunch at the Northern Light Inn and returned to a spaghetti dinner, focaccia bread, and a peach-flavored wine ‘experience’—the best our local grocery store could manage for wine. I spent an hour in Garland’s shop fitting the wire screen to the box I made the other day. By sunset it was calm and clear. Dark at 8pm now, as the summer days shorten. The screen turned out to be useless for the peaty soil.

30 July (Sunday) St. Paul River

Cool and overcast with a light NE wind, turning to misty rain in late afternoon. We reached the site at 8:45 and had a full day, interrupted only by lunch hour and a brief visit from Eileen and Piercy returning to town from their cabin outside Chaloop Chanel, the old name for our waterway, a carry-over from its original Basque history. Kody and I finished work on the boulder pile units, and I started to map the lower level rocks in 9S/0W. I removed the rocks that had tumbled in at odd angles and sizes, except for a very large one I could not move. Charcoal, tiles fragments, cinder, baleen, and burnt rock continued down beneath the ‘jumble rocks’, and the NW corner had a rough pavement of slabs, but this was still not the bottom of the fired debris. I elected not to go deeper and remove more rocks. This area north of the boulder pile was filled with fired materials. Kody suggested maybe this is where the trytops were located rather than on top of the boulder pile. This seems like the answer to our riddle and may explain why there is so much hard-packed ash, baleen, cinder, and burned rock. Some of the large rocks in Kody’s unit 9N/0W might have been used to perch a pot on. Last year’s baleen pit is the next unit to the south.

Francisco began a unit at the south end of the West Trench and soon recovered a ceramic sherd like those in Thomas’ unit. Thomas, Clarence, Kody, Alyssa, and Sofia took charge of 1x2 m units in East Trench between 4 and 8N/2E. These are very wet units, and soon after removing the upper peat Sofia (8N/2E) and Alyssa (7N/2E) began finding preserved wood, tile frags, and stitched leather fragments. Two leather pieces with stitching holes came from Sofia’s unit, and Alyssa’s produced a large amount of wood—much of this has been sawn or has axe cut marks. One of Alyssa’s pieces is a rod tapered to a point (perhaps a peg); another might be part of a box; and another is a split section of a tree trunk that has been cut into a wedge-like shape. These units turned into veritable ‘mud pits’ when the turf was removed, making it impossible to excavate in any controlled manner. I expect Thomas, Kody, and Clarence will experience similar conditions when they reach the cultural layer in their units.



Lunch break—not a biblical plaque; right: heel portion of a leather shoe or boot with stitching holes. (photo: Sofia Vakhunitsky)

During lunch from the high rock, I noticed the boat engines were hung up on a shore rock due to the falling tide. Thomas, Francisco, and I managed to free it, but when it began to rain and we piled into the boat to return home, the engine would not start, and we had to motor home pushed by the small 15HP Perry had mounted for a back-up. It started right up and moved us along at a decent clip. When we reported the incident to Perry, he asked if we had failed to put the transmission in neutral before turning the key. I should have remembered because this was the same problem we had in the iceberg incident in Long Island Tickle. I immediately went to the dock and put the gear in neutral and it started right up.

31 July (Monday) St. Paul River

This was the best weather day so far. Bright and sunny all day. Eggs and bacon á la Kody and then a much faster run to the site than the trip in with the 15HP engine last evening—especially because half of the crew got a ride out with Piercy who was on his second run this morning pulling up his lobster traps. A dozen of his lobsters found a place at our table that evening, and the whole house was filled with lobster steam when we entered. Clarence was having her first taste of lobster, because she has been allergic to shellfish and seafood since a child. A taste was all she could manage, but she did not get sick. Kody had a different problem: his parents are from the Midwest and aren't keen on seafood, even though they have had a house in Hawaii for several years. Kody has no trouble eating lobster!



Perry's display of Piercy's lobsters. Marie scores a "1" in a puzzle that captivated all hands.

At the site, work progressed on all four dig areas. I finished cleaning up the north side of the stone pile, mapped the lowest level rocks, and excavated the large mass of baleen in 7S/0W. One area of the baleen cache was layered like deck of cards—I can't imagine why. I then began a 1x1m west of Sarai's bedrock slope unit of 2022. Francisco finished 0S/2W (1x2m unit) and found more of the broken ceramic vessel found in the units to the north. Alyssa and Sofia finished their 'mud-hole' units in the East Trench that turned out to be dark, cavernous pits glistening with water seeping through the peat. Sofia recovered a second piece of leather with stitching holes that looks like the heel section of the shoe she recovered yesterday. The large amount of wood recovered suggests this area might have been for a carpenter or cooper shop. We bagged and saved the worked pieces but did not try to plot their individual locations or depths. All came from the cultural level, which had few tiles and no other artifacts. Clarence and Thomas worked on their southern units in the east trench without notable finds. Late in the day Marie, Sofia, and Alyssa began new units at the north end of the north trench. We are now nearly at a stage where the best option for finds is beneath our shelter tent—but where can we move the tent too?



Baleen mass and (right) stacked 'baleen deck' in 7N 0W.

Midway through the afternoon Garland came by offering to take two people mackerel fishing. Thomas and Clarence went out and caught a few and returned for Garland's lesson in fileting, Thomas and Marie gave it a try but had trouble keeping the knife close to the backbone. We've had a mink running around the shore north of the site. Yesterday, Piercy spotted it and tossed it a piece of meat. We threw the mackerel carcass on the beach, and the mink had no trouble finding it and dragging it off to its den and little ones. We're going to up the ante and see if we can coax it closer, then teach it to use a trowel. A beautiful, flat calm ride back to the village and the waiting lobster feast.

1 August (Tuesday) St. Paul River

Today was a weather day due to a strong southeast wind from a storm running up the eastern gulf, bringing showers until evening. This is the worst wind for the St. Paul River area because the outer bay is not sheltered by islands from that direction. However, Bony Harbor is safe from all directions except east, and there is not much fetch from Stick Point in that direction. The students were eager to sleep in, but eventually arose and prepared a pancake breakfast. The SI team made a run to the Middle Bay residence to use their laundry machines as ours does not work, and then the students used my car to buy Raman noodles in Blanc Sablon—our general store in St. P. seems not to have the right kind for their taste. I stayed on with the UMontreal students and got into a discussion with Clarence about the Inuit sites on the LNS, whose faunal collections will be used for her MA thesis. Only four produced bone collections: Hare Harbor (Petit Mecatina), Jacques Cartier Bay, Belles Amours, and Hart Chalet. She was interested in visiting these sites, so Marie, Clarence, Francisco, and I drove to Belles Amours and walked over to the 2-house Inuit site on a small, low peninsula on the western shore of Belles Amour Peninsula. The tide was very low, and the flats were filled with clam holes and mussel shells. The sites were just as we left them in 2018, when we made a contour map with the assistance of Igor Chechushkov. Part of our datum triangle was still in place. The southern house is large and has a secondary room on its east side. Both have long entrance tunnels and no obvious external kitchen alcoves, which probably means they date to

the late 16th or early 17th century. Perhaps Clarence can convince Brad to undertake an excavation at one of these houses next season. Both should have excellent bone deposits.



Belles Amour Inuit House 1 and House 2 (right) seen to the north and the west in 2018 photos.

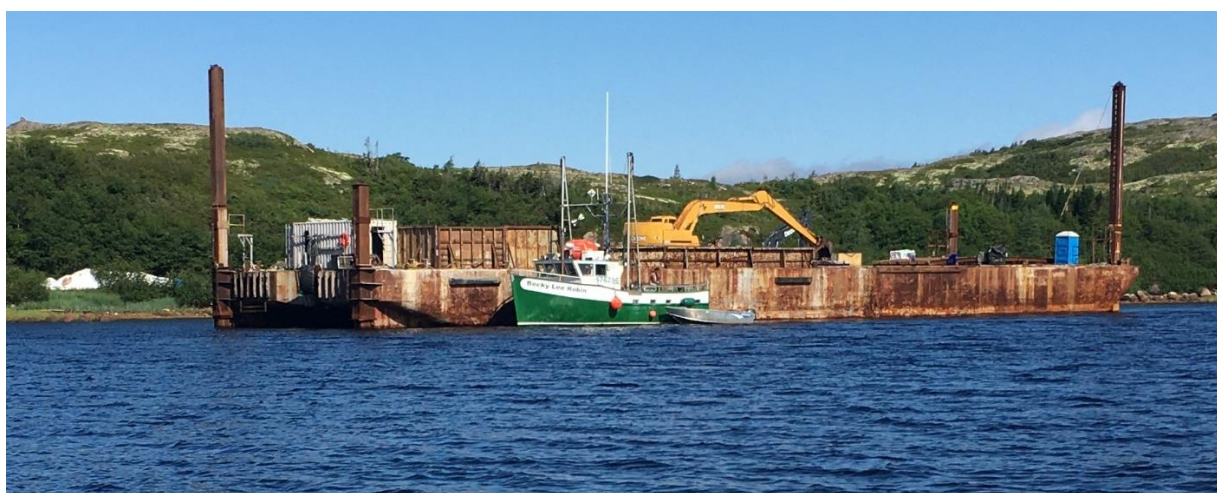
We returned to Middle Bay, where the UM folks wanted to use the museum's internet. I got dropped off in SPR and made a dinner of moose meat, potatoes, and carrots. Perry has decided to make a run back to Lushes Bight tomorrow to settle some family business attending daughter Jill's death, and say goodbye to Tracey, who is soon to return to New Brunswick where her son is to graduate next June. Then they plan to move to the Springdale area where they will be closer to the rest of the Colbournes.

2 August (Wednesday) St. Paul River

The weather cleared overnight, and the wind shifted into the southwest, burning a light fog off by 7am. We got to the site about 8:30 and could only put in a few hours before a large thunderstorm loomed up in the west and the wind gusted to 20-25 knots. The few hours of archaeology produced, in the West Trench, a large iron spike in Marie's unit (5N/2W), and in Sofia's (7N/2W) a piece of thick leather with a curved cut showed up, preserved like fresh from the cow, as well as pieces of ceramic. Work in the East Trench turned up more baleen and wood timbers that may have been part of structure, as well as lots of baleen. Francisco was just getting into his unit north of the baleen pit, and my square west of Sarai's bedrock slope (1S/2W) showed a charcoal-rich layer with tiles and baleen, and several flakes of flint. I saved a charcoal sample for c14 dating.

About noon the threat of the on-coming t-storm forced our hasty retreat—more due to the rising SW wind than the storm itself, which was shown by the weather app to be passing us to the west. Sofia did a great job driving through the cross-wind and the following sea. The Esquimaux Island channel can be like a river rapids, especially with a strong ebb tide bucking the wind waves, and in SP Bay the following seas had us slewing all around, racing down the front side and churning up the backside of the waves, whitecaps all around. Garland had shown up earlier in the day for a look-see at the site and then went off scouting bakeapples. On his way in, he triumphally flashed a full pot of berries as he roared past. He offered to come back out and pick up a couple of people to lighten our load, but we left earlier than planned. When he went back out to help and did not find us at the site, got concerned and ran back in along our route looking for orange coats and life-preservers in the water or onshore. He's our godfather now that Perry is not marking our progress with binoculars from our dining room window.

For the past few days Perry has been getting concerned about a small wood skiff that the Thomases had on their lawn just up from the beach when we arrived. A couple days later it had moved and was upside-down in an overgrown grass patch next to the store shed. This morning a pile of garden debris on the lawn had disappeared, and the boat was right-side up in a different place. Perry suspected something strange afoot. Garland put the phenomenon to rest saying a friend was buying the boat and cleaned up the yard. Perry also noticed the arrival of a barge that anchors itself on four stilts at each corner parked at the old Esquimaux Island steamer dock that the government is tearing down and hauling away. In 2018/19 we used to tie *Pitsiulak* up there overnight, and we noticed lobster pots around its perimeter. The authorities were catching lobsters to see if they were contaminated with creosote or diesel fuel. Apparently, the lobsters were ok, but the dock was condemned anyway, and for the past two years workers have been dismantling it and barging its construction materials and contaminated soil off to dump it somewhere else. I had talks with Perry, Garland, and Eileen about the waste of taxpayers' money, costing millions to move one perhaps noxious bunch of material from one place to another.



Loading the barge with debris from the ship dock demolition project at Esquimaux Island.

At 5pm we convened at the Whiteley Museum for a pizza and seal meat dinner of sorts to watch a local coaster film production about hunting harp seals and producing oil in a tryworks. The film needs more work but does a nice job introducing an oil production activity that has not been practiced here for several generations. The process is similar to Basque whale oil production. Three grades of oil are made: the best and clearest is from pressing the boiled blubber; next is the amber oil; and the lowest grade is brownish resulting from meat and tissue adhering to the blubber. The work is done at shore ledges where seals can be landed easily, and blubber can be diced on a wood platform with a chute delivering the fat to the rendering pot. Perhaps something like this architecture was being used at our Basque site.



Alyssa records Garland dressing harp seal meat; marmite rim sherds with strap handles.

3 August (Thursday) St. Paul River

This was a second nice day that ended in thunderstorms that caused an early retreat from the site at 3:30, then the breeze died down and it was a fine evening. We've lost quite a bit of time to weather in the past week, so tomorrow we will leave at 7 am instead of 8. Perry did not return last evening so he must have found a place on the ferry to St. Barbe.

The big news at the site was ceramics. Both Francisco and Sofia in 4S3W and 7N2W came up with buff-colored marmite sherds, similar to those we found in other squares, but in this case, both had rim fragments, and Francisco's had rim fragments that could be assembled, including a strap handle. This is the classic Basque cooking pot and is a very welcome addition to our sparse findings so far. It was a bit odd to find a marmite pot next to the baleen pit, in what we have thought of as an industrial area. Several timbers also showed up in the East Trench squares that may be the remains of building structures, although none are fitted, jointed, or have nails or holes. Kody spent an hour surveying the site with my metal detector and planted flags where he got hits—about 25-30 all told, mostly in areas we have not excavated, but also a few in areas we have. In the end we never had time to follow up on these signals, most of which would have been nails.



Water saturated wood and timbers in 5N 2E (left) and 6N2E (right), in the culture layer but not showing architectural modification. Views to east.

As the excavation moved north toward our tent site, finds began to increase. We pitched it here because it was the only relatively level ground on the site, and apparently the Basques had found this place useful for their domestic activities for the same reason. To clear the area for digging, we moved the tent uphill to a small area next to a ledge. Then, around 3pm, Thomas sounded the weather alarm when a thunderhead was headed our way, so we packed up and drove home. Phillip Neadeau and a couple of his grandkids passed us in the Esquimaux Island channel, which was not scary and full of haystacks like yesterday. Garland told us last evening that people were impressed with Sofia, a woman, driving our speedboat. There are only a few female boat drivers in town, and some refuse to boat through the narrows because of its strong ebb tide surge. SPR is still a traditionally gendered place, although that is changing, and we are pleased to help that along.

4 August (Friday) St. Paul River

I asked the gang to assemble at 7am instead of 8 to give us more time on-site now that we are in the last week of the digging. Everyone showed up on time and we were at the site by 7:40 making for a long day and an early lunch. Garland came by with a cooler and six large codfish and demonstrated how ‘the coasters’ filet a cod, including the head parts, cheeks and tongues. It looks like a great season for cod on the LNS. We came in early to see Garland’s mackerel smoker in action at 5:30 and had a tour of his overstuffed freezer—full of every kind of local game you could imagine—hare, moose, seal, salmon, salt cod, bakeapples, redberries—a natural history museum on ice. He has already loaded up our frig with a large bowl of cod and given us instructions on how to fry it. The redberries have to be cooked after “smashing” them and boiling for a few minutes before adding sugar. Phillip’s wife Brenda, originally from Burlington VT, showed up across the smoke-filled shed and had a few things to say about cold-water swimming, which she has done lots of. This topic arose because Marie made a 10-minute lunchtime dip swimming between the two Basque sites, BE-3 and 4, with Thomas and I providing safety backup in the speedboat. She found a piece of tile off the BE-3 site and a glazed ceramic sherd a hundred meters to the north.



Garland demonstrates filleting a codfish; right: Ramah chert turns up in Francisco’s unit, apparently scavenged from a Native site by Basques and used for fire-making along with their European flint.

Archaeological progress occurred at both ends of the site. Francisco finished his 1x2 m unit at 6S/2W and began another at 5S/2W, finding a nail and a strap handle for a marmite pot, and I opened a 1x1 unit at 2S/3W where three nails and a cluster of flint chips appeared. Marie opened a 1x2 unit at the north end of

the West Trench. Thomas toiled in a mud-filled 1x2 unit (2N/2E) and found three logs that may have been part of a structure. Clarence, Kody, Sofia, and Alyssa opened units under our former tent site in the East Trench and immediately began turning up marmite fragments, a couple pieces of grey stoneware, and shards of a glass vessel with a rolled rim. These finds suggest this area had been used for domestic activity.

Tonight, in Vermont, begins the Fitzhugh family celebration in honor of my brother Josh's 75th birthday. I've been hearing lots about the preparations—a party tent erected at Portia's and John's Connecticut River bank dock in Orford, NH (across the river from my place in Fairlee, VT), plans for canoeing, kayaking, and other fun—all engineered by sister Portia, with lots of help from her son Hugh, Lynne, and our son Josh, who piloted his small plane up from DC. Meanwhile, here on the Lower North Shore, we are having a big fish fry at our borrowed St. Paul River house.

5 August (Saturday) St. Paul River

A second calm day, bright and sunny. We got lots done this morning. Francisco finished his 5S/2W 1x2m unit and found nails and a twisted knot of baleen. Lots of ceramic finds came from the northern units in the East Trench—mostly poorly fired marmite cooking vessel fragments with some strange vessel shapes, and a few pieces of stoneware. These units may be the site of a cooking operation. The ceramics are poorly fired and highly fragmented. One of the larger pieces in Clarence's unit had a decorative frieze on the outside characteristic of Basque cooking pots. Kody found a small thin piece of silver that has tiny notches and a groove at the top, suggesting it was used as a pendant. One face has a line running down the center with a barb at the top end, making the mark look like a harpoon--possibly a whaler's talisman? In the West Trench Marie found a rim fragment of a thin cast iron cooking pot—the second we've seen from this site. Garland stopped by to see how things were going and hauled me off to check a couple possible site areas across the channel, but we found nothing. His grandmother used to live at BE-2 on the grassy point between the Whiteley factory and our Basque sites when the Whiteley fishing operation was going on. I dug a small test pit there some years ago and found Basque and later European ceramics.



A decorative motif on the body of a marmite cooking pot; and a 2 cm long grooved silver(?) pendant with a possible harpoon motif on one side. (photos: WF and Kody Shugars)

In the afternoon, a small home-built skiff pulled up, and Camille ('Cam') Thomas stepped out saying he had a picture he wanted me to see. He was in a small boat his father built when Cam was a kid, using nothing except an axe, a plane, and nails. What he wanted to show me was a picture of a huge obsidian biface with a thick concave base and two broad notches on each side. I had seen this amazing piece several years ago when it was briefly displayed in the Whiteley Museum, but the family was concerned about its security and took it home for safe-keeping. Cam said the artifact is now in Calgary being studied by one of the local archaeologists there. Cam dug it up in the family garden, about a foot down. He did not notice any other artifacts with it but did not dig around much. This has always seemed like an unbelievable find to come from St. Paul River—the size, the material, and without evidence of a burial or other feature. I never had a chance to study it carefully 'in the flesh' while it was in the museum, but it did not strike me as being recently made, and there was wear on its edges. I will try and track down the folks who are studying it. Perhaps a small dig could be arranged next summer when Cam is back in St. Paul River.



An obsidian biface found some years ago by Cam Thomas in St. Paul River, in the family vegetable garden.

We have been besieged by local benefactors—especially Garland, Eileen and Piercy, and Brenda Nadeau—delivering fresh fish to our site or doorstep. Last night it was two large codfish Garland cleaned as a demonstration for Alyssa to film, and gave to us, and then a bunch of his smoked mackerel. His sister-in-law Brenda donated a potato-cod-and cheese casserole, and this evening Garland dropped off a bunch of frozen halibut and scallops. Our freezer is full, and we can hardly keep up with the deluge of food. This in contrast to the lack of hospitality by the town and municipality, which today informed us that the MRC regional funding group would not provide support to the project. In response, the Whiteley Museum offered \$5K, and we have Brad Loewen's support from University of Montreal to help cover our costs and field support for his students. The Bonne Esperance municipality School Board has also supported us by providing lodging at the Middle Bay teacher residence, and Garland arranged our stay at Ross and Brenda Thomas's home!



Brenda and Ross Thomas' vintage home full of antiques became our 'nest' for staging work.

Living in the Thomas residence has been like returning to the Fitzhugh summer house on Stage Harbor in Chatham, Massachusetts. The house is filled with two or three generations of 'St. Paulers', including the grandfather who was lighthouse keeper on Greenlee Island, and his old radio set console, microphone, and a communication switch apparatus is part of the dining room furniture. Brenda has been organist for the church and an old foot-pedal organ stands in the other corner of the dining room with old bibles and hymnals. There is lots of period piece china and glassware like we had in Chatham, and old pictures and paintings on the walls. Everything we need for the kitchens is stuffed in drawers, and instead of a broom and dustpan there is only a floor mop. Despite all the memorabilia, the house is very well-appointed with modern kitchen and bathroom facilities, and lots of hot water. The only thing missing is the washer and dryer which are under repair. I felt particularly familiar with this house and was taken aback when Perry declared he expected the place to be gone in five years now that the Thomases are spending more time away in the south. It's not difficult to see the creeping outcome, beginning with the front porch, which has rotted and is falling down. Ross's small skiff has been sold, and the store-shed by the water needs work. All this is a normal situation with the change of generations. We are lucky to be a part of this old house's history.

6 August (Sunday) St. Paul River

We planned to work today following a leisurely Sunday morning, but when the Quebec team arrived at 10am the southeast wind was too strong for crossing Stick Point Bay. Yesterday I brought all the BE-4 collections ashore, so we set about washing, drying, and packing them for further processing when we get to Perry's. Marie, Kody, and Sofia went through the collections from their recent West Trench units that were full of ceramics and found many pieces that fit, and they identified two separate broken marmite pots and two sherds of salt-glaze stoneware representing a third vessel, so we have at least three pots, of two types. We still have to process Kody's ceramic-rich unit 10N 2E which should have parts of the same pots in Sophia's unit.

Here are notes Marie prepared after looking over the ceramic from Sofia's unit 11N 2E.

"Five different ceramic vessels were identified, and three of the five are represented by only one sherd. One of the latter has a yellow/beige salt glaze, dark grey paste, fine inclusions, and is a body sherd of stoneware. A second has a bluish, grey slip, light brown paste, fine white-color inclusions, is a bottom-piece of stoneware. The third has beige paste with a slightly lighter slip and green glaze and is part of a spout (2 pieces). The two remaining pots are represented by a large number of fragments.



Marmite vessels reassembled from fragments.

Pot #1 has a beige paste with no slip or glaze. It has a smooth surface and has no temper that can be seen by the naked eye, although there are some inclusions that are as large as 0.5 mm. The curvature of the body sherds indicates this is a large vessel of 30-40 cm diameter. Thirteen bottom pieces are present. There are no rim pieces and one shoulder sherd. One unusual piece that could not be identified looks like a body piece with some additional clay stuck to it, and a part that was cut. Perhaps it is a wide broken handle or a folded rim.

Pot #2 has a burned appearance and lots of visible temper that looks like coarse sand. The vessel surface is less smoothed than Pot #1. There is a trace of yellow-green glaze that only shows as a drip decoration. The burn marks are of two types. The first appears to be cooking residue that shows accumulation. The second type is the general blackened appearance from both everyday use and from being dropped into a fire. The paste in unburned pieces is brown color. Present is one complete strap handle in eight fragments—two pieces with part of the neck, five rim pieces, and 25 pieces with traces of the glaze present.”



Preserved organics: folded leather, birchbark roll, and barrel stave and head parts.

After cleaning the collections and lunch we drove to Old Fort, hoping to find Dwight Bilodeau. Three long-liners were tied up at the dock. Dwight was not at home, but we met his brother who told us he was

out at his island cottage—the one we visited with Erik Phaneuf and UM divers who checked out the 20th century wreck in the lagoon next to his cabin. We were hoping to see his store shed and the archaeological and historical collections he has been gathering since a young kid, sometimes working with Garland digging Basque and prehistoric sites. “Dwight knows everything there is to know about here,” his brother says, “even when a mosquito farts.”

The country between St. Paul River and Old Fort is the most dramatic I have seen on the Lower North Shore. The road twists and turns, dives, and climbs and presents surprising views. Perhaps it’s partly because it’s new to me compared to the road to the east. We drove to where the gravel road leading west toward Natashquan starts at the top of the hill north of town. Once before I was in Old Fort and checked this high beach pass here for Maritime Archaic signs but found none. Lots of archaeological material has been found in this town on terraces where people were building their houses. Dwight’s house is a light blue one just down from the hilltop, His front yard is decorated with antiques including a fully dressed small Christmas tree. A large building is connected to the rear of his house--perhaps a museum for his finds?



Marie finds a lump of 400-year old clay still malleable in 9N 2W and crafts it into a miniature marmite.

I made a fish chowder for the combined gang. We now have only two digging days left before the Montreal team leaves for a two-day visit to L’Anse aux Meadows. With several units still to be excavated, it is looking like the SI team will be doing the site back-filling by ourselves. Perry arrived as expected at 7pm after a six-hour drive to St. Barbe, an hour on the ferry, and another hour to St. Paul. He got a lot of his business settled regarding daughter Jill’s death and saw Tracey and her family off to New Brunswick.

7 August (Monday) St. Paul River

The clear, warm August weather continued today as we worked at the north end of the site. Francisco and I finished 3S/3W and 4S/4W without making exciting finds, although I recovered a couple pieces of tan glazed stoneware and Francisco found a nice bottom section of a marmite pot. We found a few nails too. The western part of my 3S/3W unit had 5 cm of hard-packed cultural deposit with lots of charcoal, a few tiles, baleen, broken and burned rock, and seemed like a midden accumulating directly on the granite bedrock, as usual. There was lots of activity at the north end of the site as the units approached the landing area where we bring our boat ashore. One unusual feature is the presence of small round cobbles packed in the lowest part of the deposit where one walks from the water into the rest of the site. The cobbles may have been placed to help drain the rainwater channeled between the bedrock ridges—a sort of drain-pipe effect. These cobbles are in the culture layer and, unfortunately for us, do not function as a

drain now, but the spaces between them would have drained during the Basque occupation. Quite a bit of pottery appeared in these units, most from whole or partial pots dumped or smashed in place. One unusual find was a conical cup of lead about 2 cm in diameter, with a hollow center and a hole through from the outside into the bottom of the cup. For a few days this piece stood out as a real mystery piece—until we showed it to Melvin Colbourne who said, “it looks just like a pipe bowl!” And so it certainly is! Clarence has some aligned remnants of rotten wood that may be part of flooring. We shall see about that tomorrow, our last day with University of Montreal help. Also, today we began back-filling the south end of the site, finding it difficult to re-excavate waterlogged back-dirt laced with roots.



Basques placed cobbles for drainage at the northern end of the site, where many finds were made;

Center: Lead pipe bowl with stem hole and a clay pipe found underwater in 2019. Right: flint nodule.

8 August (Tuesday) St. Paul River

Another very fine day, this time with a light southerly breeze. It's the last day working with the UMontreal team. The ride to the site was 'flat-ass' calm. Like yesterday, most of the finishing work was at the north end where Basques must have been accessing the site from the same landing place we use, and where most of the non-trywork activity was taking place. These units are producing tiny fragments of faience, some marmite fragments, lead mini-balls, and in Clarence's unit a pavement of burned sticks. This is next to the area Kody identified as a fireplace. Francisco in 3S/4W found a section of another thick (ship's) plank like the one in the center of the site, also just below the turf and probably a late 19th/20th century addition to the site. Other than that, only a bottom fragment of a marmite and a couple nails. I set up a level line through the center of the site along the 2W line and began drawing a profile of the east wall, and this was later continued by Marie and Sofia to about 7 North. The rest will be drawn when the northern units are excavated. I excavated beneath the long ship plank in the West Trench, but the only find was a roll of birch bark, probably used for fire-starting.



Burned flooring of sticks and hearth area in 13N 0-2E where large amounts of ceramics were found. Middle and Right: Mackerel catch south of Bonne Espérance Island, and a near-complete roof tile (photos: Alyssa Miulli)

Garland loaned us his fishing rod, and we set out at lunch to try for mackerel between two small islands south of the Whiteley place. On her first cast, Sofia landed a large fish, and many more came aboard after that. When Garland heard the news, he motored out to the site and gave a mackerel filleting demonstration and then agreed to get them into his smoker so the Montreal team can take them on their trip to Newfoundland.

9 August (Wednesday) St. Paul River / St. Lunaire, Newfoundland

At breakfast I mentioned to Perry that the southeast storm approaching might call for a road trip rather than digging, and he suggested we go to Newfoundland and visit the L'Anse aux Meadows site now, like the others, instead of next week. All agreed, so we let Garland know and went standby on the mid-day ferry, arriving in St. Barbe at 2:30. A 90-minute drive got us to Griguet / St. Lunaire, just south of LAM. We stopped at the camper park run by Grace, Boyce Roberts' sister, and found Boyce was in St. Johns, heading home tomorrow. He had no rooms for us at his 'Roberts Rooms' B&B, but we were lucky to find a cottage with two bedrooms at the Pond Cottages south of Griguet. The place is owned by Skipper Hot's Bar, where in former years we spent Friday nights getting 'screched in' while waiting for weather to clear for our boat passage to Labrador or the Quebec LNS. We had dinner at the Northern Delight restaurant where we found Boyce's daughter Jamie and her son dressed as part of a mummer's parade for the dinner guests, with appropriate antics and music by the former principal of the local high school. No moose sightings so far. While driving north on Rte. 430 ("The Viking Highway") we visited the small electrical facility where the DC current from the Muskrat Falls dam on the Churchill River west of Goose Bay, Labrador, emerges from its tunneled transit beneath the Strait of Belle Isle between Forteau and Green Island. The station itself looks pretty innocuous, surrounded by a not very formidable chain-link fence, and inside, some small metal stands with cooling vanes, and other gear. Considering that this cable is supplying power to most of Newfoundland and the Maritimes to the south, it's not very imposing. No guards, or obvious cameras, etc.

10 August (Thursday) Griquet

We woke to a pretty rummy day, although rain did not begin until afternoon. After a breakfast we drove to L'Anse aux Meadows and discovered the road under construction using the gravel from the quarry near our rented cottage. Perry dropped us off at the Norse site and we hiked in from the bus pick-up near the longhouse. A group was on the boardwalk touring the site, and who should be its guide but Jamie, all fitted out with her Parks Canada uniform and a lapel mic and speaker, so her voice was clearly audible despite the breeze. She soon spotted us tagging along and gave a wave, then, while discussing the smithy,

mentioned a certain ‘gentleman’ had joined the group who was familiar with the site. Her discussion was the best of the many tours I have been listened to—partly because the information was more detailed and up-to-date—but also because she drew the audience into the discussion with jokes and observations that people could relate to. She has a quick wit and a style of delivery much like her father’s. When I met Boyce later, I told him he must join one of her tours to fully appreciate her skill. We did not spend much time at the longhouse, but I found many of the Norse re-enactors were new, except the blacksmith, Mark, and the senior female weaver, Bonnie. Tour-guides Paul and Fred, who had been fixtures as site guides and interpreters for years, had moved on to other Parks Canada sites in Newfoundland. Matthias, the public engagement leader for LAM, had also moved on. These departures paved the way for Jamie’s advancement, and she has already surpassed their interesting deliveries.



Jamie Roberts giving a tour of the L’Anse aux Meadows site to a bus tour group; Fitzhugh and Parks interpreter and blacksmith Mark (“Ragnar”) discussing staff changes. (photos: K. Shugars)

I bought some books to give to our crew, including copies of Gina’s Noordhof’s children’s books for the UMontreal students, for their young relatives. We had a brief visit to Norstead, the Viking tourist center at L’Anse aux Meadows, so I could show our group the full-size ship replica, *Snorri*, built in Maine by Hodding Carter, shipped to Nuuk, Greenland, and sailed to LAM in 1998, where it was used to host tourists in Noddy Bay before being parked permanently in one of the Norstead buildings. Norstead is still proving a viable tourist attraction but struggles to compete with the Parks world heritage site.



Viking ship replica Snorri in a display shed at Norstead—an idea for Pitsiulak? (photo: K Shugars)

We had lunch at Gina and Adrian Noordhof's Norseman Restaurant, which served as a birthday event for Alyssa, and discovered our Montreal team at the next table. Their visit to LAM and St. Anthony, where they climbed Antenna Hill at Lighthouse Point, was over, and they were heading back to catch the afternoon ferry to Blanc Sablon. Marie and Thomas were to fly to Montreal in the morning. Gina was not there because she had taken her youngest son to St. John's for treatment for a covid-like illness. The food and staff were superb as usual, and the price was a whopping \$330—and it was just lunch. Since we still had a couple hours of light we drove to St. Anthony and toured the Grenfell Museum, which gave the students an introduction to Grenfell and his work among the Labrador and Lower North Shore people. The Grenfell house Museum is nicely appointed with Grenfell materials returned from friends, relatives, diplomats, even King George V.

On the way back we stopped at the Dark Tickle shop/emporium and discovered they are still carrying my *Viking* catalog, *Maine to Greenland*, and Will Richard's *From Sea to Glacier* book about Ummannaq. Steve Knutsen and his wife were there as well as his son Kier, who is now owner of the shop. Dark Tickle materials (crafts, weaving, books) are being marketed in many places in Newfoundland. I spoke with Kier about carrying more of our northern books. I also discovered Kier has purchased the 65' steel-hulled *Attempt II* and has plans for using it for tourism and science on the Labrador. Perry knew the boat from its several years presence at the Triton Marine Center. When we learned it was berthed nearby in Dark Tickle, we found it and had a peek. A nice boat indeed, and perhaps one Perry and I might see more of in the future.

Dinner was at Northern Delight again, this time without musical entertainment. After cleaning some lint out of my iPhone charging port, I gave it one more chance to charge and—lo and behold!—in the morning it was at 100%. I hope it keeps charging for the rest of the project and trip home.



Jamie, Boyce, Perry, Kody, Sofia, and Alyssa at Boyce's sister's mobile park office near L'Anse aux Meadows; Mummer's antics at Northern Delight Restaurant, with Jamie (photo: K. Shugars)

11 August (Saturday) Griquet to St. Paul

Rain continued most of the night and today until we reached St. Barbe. We cleared out of our South Pond cabin and found Boyce at his sister Grace's office having his usual breakfast coffee. He looked great and was full of the old spark despite his long drive yesterday from St. John's—rain all the way. We chatted for an hour and got lots of news while Alyssa, Sofia, and Kody got a good picture of a Boyce's character and wit. We were joined briefly by Jamie, on a break from her Parks Canada job. All lamented the passage of time, people, and old boats (*Snorri*, *Pitsiulak*) – such is life! On the road again, we found the

weather improving and by noon reached the Labrador Marine ticket office where we got a No. 5 standby ticket. We found a lunch place 15 kms north, in Anchor Point, and then returned to St. Barbe for the ferry line-up. In between, we stopped at Pigeon Point where I met Frank Beaudoin, an elderly gentleman whose wife is in the St. Anthony hospital's Alzheimer ward. I wanted to see if he knew something about the large stone mound we found last year on the point a short distance from his house. He had no knowledge of it and had not even noticed its existence but said he would ask around and see what he could learn. I'll check with him again on our way home. Our low number got us on *KAYAQ W* without trouble and besides a bit of fair weather rolling, reached Blanc Sablon, got groceries, and dropped in to say 'hi' to Florence Hart.

12 August (Saturday) St. Paul River

This was a Newfoundland trip 'recovery' day, and the weather out of the northeast cooperated completely, not becoming 'civil' until evening. I spent most the morning catching up my diary, and in the afternoon developing a catalog for our artifacts and samples. Perry went off bakeapple picking and filled a small pot. His plan to buy a small homemade tow cart that he saw being sold roadside in Blanc Sablon fell through when the cart disappeared overnight. While the students were doing laundry at the Middle Bay, Garland came by, and we chatted about the report I will prepare on our summer's work and the Whiteley Museum's plans. They had very good visitation in June and July, probably due to the advertising from Latitude 52 project that is drawing tourists here this summer, mostly from Canada. I suggested they try and build a Basque whaling station reconstruction on our site and put plaques on the Grand Isle Inuit sites. Film-maker Louise Abbott is due in St. Paul the day after we leave to finish her heritage film project. Alyssa has her video in rough-cut stage and will have something for us to see by the end of the week. Perry made a codfish casserole for dinner. I now have shifted my Port-aux-Basques departure ferry to 23 August at midnight, giving me a long day of driving to Vt. We will take the ferry to NL this Thursday and drive straight to Perry's—if both vehicles score standby status.

13 August (Sunday) St. Paul River

The weather cleared and the morning brought a light northwest breeze perfect for Kody to try his hand as boat driver. Alyssa took the return shift, and both did a fine job. Clarence had her last day at the site and will shift to Florence Hart's place tomorrow night. Francisco has one more day at the site before leaving with Clarence on Tuesday. She and Kody spent most of the day finishing their two 1x1m units at the far north end of the site. Her unit produced a French gunflint (a first for the site; then Kody found a second) and a couple thin, metal hook-like pieces. They are very thin and fragile, perhaps part of a jewelry or necklace piece. Kody found a puddle of lead sprue and a tiny metal (copper?) piece looking like a tack. There was very little action on the water all day except for a sea-doo that roared out to the Whiteley factory, turned, and headed back into town. No one seems to be picking bakeapples on the islands this year.

Our time was spent backfilling, and we completed everything except for a couple of the big piles on the hillslope above East Trench, which will be tomorrow's task. The work was made more difficult than usual because we only have one working trenching shovel—the trusty old GI one Ben or Will left with us. Regular shovels don't cut it with the piles of wet peat mixed with roots. I found it difficult to keep up a steady pace excavating stubborn, tramped on peat-dirt, mostly with my hands, and lugging buckets to the pits, but the work was enlivened by the stream of music from Sofia's hand-size 'boom box'. Perry picked a bucket of bakeapples, visited Florence, and returned in time to prepare a moose-meat stew with dumplings, which was much appreciated by the weary crew and our two remaining Canadians.



Barrel staves and tops, and baleen samples prepared for shipment to Quebec.

A few days ago, Brad Loewen send me a long report in old French from 1579 that is kind of a gazetteer for Basque navigators, providing placenames and sailing directions for places of interest in Newfoundland and Grand Bay, including the Quebec North Shore. Details are provided for St. Paul River, then called Sacho Bodege, which describes how to safely enter the main channel, threading many shoals to reach its several safe harbors, the main one being Bony Harbor between Grand and Bonne Espérance Islands. “Sailors beware!” notes author Martin de Hoyarsabal, in *Les voyages aventureux du capitaine Martin de Hoyarsabal, habitant de Cubiburu, contenant les reigles et enseignemens nécessaires à la bonne et seure navigation*, 1579. People here largely agree that Sacho Bodege identifies the St. Paul River region.

We are still lacking solid evidence for dating our site. One certain indicator is the absence of clay pipes— we have only just the lead pipe bowl described above, which may be a clay pipe prototype. Perhaps the 1 cm diameter lead bullets (arquebus lead bullets 1540s?) can provide a clue, with the small indentations in their sides. We have found these bullets in Inuit sites on the LNS.

14 August (Monday) St. Paul River

This was our final day at the Bonne Esperance-4 Basque site. Rain was predicted by noon but never materialized, even later in the day. Francisco joined us for the final back-filling work, which was concentrated at the north end of the site where the water-logged ‘mud pits’ in our East Trench had produced up to 50-60 cm of peat due to the constant flow of water down the hill. The benefit of all this moisture was fair preservation of wood remains. This is where we found most of the barrel staves and some logs, all in the cultural level, which tended to be 10-20cm thick. There is no evidence from the site that trees ever grew here before or after the Basque occupation, so all wood (except for the oak ship’s plank from the late 18th or early 19th century) were brought in from the inner bays or were from Europe. All of the barrel parts (staves of various sizes and top parts) were distinctive in that as they dried out their surface flaked up—this may be a feature of European linden, which was the barrel wood of choice. The team did a great job moving the huge piles behind the East Trench into the 60-80 cm deep pits, some of which had filled with ground water since they were excavated. Most of these pits had 20-30cm of sterile humified peat between the cultural layer and granite bedrock. The sterile peat below the culture layer in the West Trench was thinner and varied between 10-20 cm. This area of the site seems not to have been burned to bedrock when the site was created, unlike the southern half where the tryworks were located and where the bottom of the cultural layer rested on bedrock mixed with charcoal from vegetation clearance. The southern part of the site also tended to be less prone to ground water seepage and flooding.



BE-4 with soil, peat, and rocks replaced and grid and lines left standing. (photo: K Shugars)



'Bony' Harbor on the final day. (photo: Sofia Vakhunitsky)

We finished back-filling about 11:30 and packed everything into the boat, pulled the mooring anchor, and Sofia ran us across Stick Point Bay to the fish plant. Perry arrived moments later from berry-picking nearby and we hauled the boat full of gear out and parked it at our house. Perry left for Middle Bay to pick up Clarence, introduce here to Florence in Brador, and drop her off at the Blanc Sablon River Trail for a day's hike. Perry would stay the rest of the day with Florence and will drop Clarence at the airport in the morning, where she will join Francisco for their flights west. I spent the afternoon cleaning up the digging gear with Kody and continued working on the field catalog. I reimbursed Francisco \$750

Canadian for the Quebec group's food bills (minus beer and wine). Garland managed to rope Francisco into a berry-picking venture, if only for a couple hours. Louise Abbott is to arrive the day we leave and stay at the Middle Bay residence and will produce her final video contribution on St. Paul history and heritage. I am hoping Brad Loewen will take over my role by organizing new field studies for the next several years so that the students we have introduced will undertake projects advancing knowledge and community heritage on this part of the Lower North Shore. My reports on SI research will make a solid foundation for future work.



SI team (WF, Francisco Rivera, Alyssa Miulli, Sofia Vakhunitsky) leaving the site. (photo: K. Shugars)



Florence Hart showing Clarence Clifford Hart's Maritime Archaic collections from the cache he found while excavating the basement of their home in Brador.

15 August (Tuesday) St. Paul River

Clean-up day with the collections, and the girls slept in. I finished up a rough collection catalog and believe I have got the units and their collections sorted out. Some units in the East Trench and the south wall area had no artifacts. Correlating finds on the artifact lists with the maps is sometimes difficult because the site clipboards for the South Wall, Boulder Pile, West Trench, and East Trench were being swapped around and maintained by different people. The other issue is that the find logs were being recorded sequentially for each of the three areas, not individually unit by unit, so you have to hunt on the log sheets for the object numbers on the unit maps, and those artifact sheets do not have unit numbers.

Finally, not all objects were recorded individually because there were too many ceramic finds in concentrated areas, so these were either mapped as ‘clusters’, and some were not mapped at all during the busy last couple of days. Some of the clusters come from adjacent areas in adjoining units. Kody was a big help in identifying fitting pieces within some of the high-density ceramic units, but we did not have the time or layout space to do fitting work across units. These cursory fitting efforts show that we have a variety of vessel types besides the classic globular marmite cooking pot. Some of the vessels have spouts, others have sharp shoulders, and there are at least 2-3 stoneware types based on sherd color, thickness, and paste, and at least one faience vessel.



Kody, Alyssa, and Marie cleaning collections in the Thomas’ kitchen. (photo: Sofia Vakhunitsky)

Perry did some bakeapple picking and I cleaned up the boat gear and packed the speedboat for the trip to Long Island. Garland took us to visit Harvey Springle, a local artist and wood-carver who makes carvings for local museums and souvenir shops. His basement shop and home are full of face masks, puffins, duck decoys, model ships, and other objects. In his yard he has a huge metal cauldron, probably used for barking net twine, and a large iron cannon he salvaged from the Whiteley premises on Bonne Espérance Island “to keep it from being stolen”. It’s pretty badly corroded and would be better preserved in the museum than in his backyard.



Harry Springle, St. Paul River artist and history buff, gave us a tour of his house, carvings, and collection, including a cannon rescued from the Whiteley property on Bonne Espérance. (photos: K. Shugars)

A series of three articles is being published in the *Washington Post* these days exposing the terrible legacy of Ales Hrdlicka and his ghoulish and often sneaky endeavors to build skeletal and brain collections at the Smithsonian in the 1920s-30s. No amount of apologies by SI officials can have much effect given the atrocities exposed and reactions of descendants who never knew their ancestors remains were being so mistreated by Hrdlicka and his associates. Unfortunately, the press stories are one-sided, and little attempt was made by the *Post* to present the scientific issues that were being explored, and that fact that the background of the times of extreme racial prejudice makes the stories all the more powerful and difficult to address except with apologies for the sins of our predecessors.

16 August (Wednesday) St. Paul River

Our last day in St. Paul was a glorious sunny day with puffy clouds and a light breeze. I went to the museum to catch some email and instead got caught by Garland, soon joined by Eileen, who wanted to thank us for our research project. The Whiteley Museum plans to develop a display based on our Inuit and Basque finds. I will have a report on this summer's work for them soon. I urged them to engage Brad Loewen and Francisco to develop a multi-year project to continue Gateways research and provide opportunities for students to engage with research and community work. I hope to collaborate in some way beyond preparing reports on our LNS surveys, the intensive work on Basque and Inuit occupations at Mecatina (Hare Harbor), the Inuit sites at Hart Chalet, Belles Amour, Little Canso Island, Grand Isle in SPR, and the Basque whaling station. There is more than enough information to interest tourists when presented with all the other stories about fishing, sealing, hunting, contacts with Innu and Inuit, and others. Everyone here seems to recognize that the past sustaining economies of trapping, fishing, and hunting are not going to sustain people in the future, and that it is tourism and related activities that need to be developed. Reinforcing this view was the visit of two elderly brothers from Massachusetts—both having grown up on a family farm near Quabbin Reservoir, only a stone's throw from the home of Tony and Dorothy Morse—who showed up at the museum this morning. Garland heard they were Americans and asked me to speak with them. A long chat merged into a bowl of the museum's chowder, and we learned one of the gentlemen ran the family's dairy farm while the other went into the local logging business. Last year they traveled to Alaska to visit a son and this summer did the Labrador highway loop from Quebec to Goose Bay and here, driving to the end of the 138 highway in Old Fort. Many others will follow, especially if the coast highway gets between built between Old Fort and Natashquan.

We cleaned up Brenda and Ross Thomas' house and said our goodbyes to Garland and Eileen. Perry returned with another pail of bakeapples, got his gear, hooked up the boat trailer, and went off to spend another evening with Florence Hart, partly to be closer to the ferry terminal where we hope to snag standby access for the morning crossing. Our Quabbin travelers hope for a morning crossing as well. I phoned Brenda Thomas to thank her for letting us stay in her house—she was out but I left a message. As a final goodbye event, the kids appeared downstairs in their bathing suits and jumped off the dock. The verdict? "Not that cold." The worst part was having to climb down into the water on the ladder instead of a quick dive immersion.



Kody, Alyssa, and Sofia finish off the season with a (quick!) dip at the St. Paul River town dock.

17 August (Thursday) St. Paul River to Deer Lake

Up at 4:30 to get in the standby line for the 9:30 (Nfld time) ferry to St. Barbe. It's a beautiful calm morning, and the drive to Blanc Sablon could be my final farewell to this great land—the granite hills rolling away in every direction except south. Perry, with the boat trailer in tow, was one ahead of us in the standby line when we arrived at the dock, and as we were in positions #7 and #8, we have a fair chance of getting aboard. For the next 90 minutes while we waited for the clerks to arrive, we swatted blackflies and chatted with a fellow from Montreal who had come with his wife (sleeping) in a camper to see the icebergs. He had a grand view of the huge Forteau berg and caught a bunch of trout at the mouth of the Brador Falls. When time came to load, both Perry and I managed places aboard, Perry and trailer being the last to board. From St. Barbe he went direct to Lushes Bight. Before leaving St. Barbe, I paid a visit to Frank Beaudoin at Pigeon Cove whom I had met earlier and asked to check with local elders about the stone mound we found here last year. He had learned it was built as a navigation beacon during the schooner era. One of the local people recalled seeing the remains of a post in the center of the mound and had removed some of its rocks to dry codfish on. Mystery solved—it's not an ancient burial after all.

The drive south was gorgeous—the best I have experienced for viewing the west coast of Newfoundland. We stopped at Port aux Choix to see the Parks Canada museum and met a Rumbolt lady director who recognized me but was too busy to talk, being in the midst of staff meetings. Later, I learned that the lady sitting next to us on the ferry dressed in a Parks Canada uniform was on her way to take a position at the museum and was seeing Port au Choix for the first time. We listened to the orientation talk by a young P-aux-C resident studying international law and diplomacy at Memorial University, who was more familiar with current political issues with the Miq'maw than with the archaeology of the region. All Maritime Archaic materials have been removed from display, and the future disposition of those and other collections is uncertain.

We had lunch at the restaurant opposite the fish plant, left and turned south, taking a break at the Western Brook Pond viewing station, and arrived at the Deer Lake Motel in time for dinner and my zoom interviews with final candidates for the American Center for Mongolian Studies Ulaanbaatar office manager position. The students decided to stay in Deer Lake tomorrow rather than go to Perry's and be driven back to Deer Lake the next day for their flights to Denver (Sofia and Kody) and Chicago (Alyssa). The motel restaurant was where I first interviewed Perry, upon Lloyd Wiseman's recommendation, for the *Pitsulak* skipper position 35 years ago.

18 August (Friday) Deer Lake to Lushes Bight

After breakfast I drove Kody, Alyssa, and Sofia to the Holiday Inn where they had reservations for tonight. Their plan was for a beach swim, a visit to the Insectarium, and dropping in at any of the town bars they could locate. The social break came quickly as we shared goodbys and I headed east for Lushes Bight. They were a great team, worked hard, had fun, and were incredibly adept at learning the ropes— archaeology, boating, mackerel fishing, fog navigation, cooking, and dealing with me. Mostly I will remember the talking, the music play-lists for digging background, and their ability to take on any task and do it well. I am sorry they never had the chance to work from the *Pitsiulak* and learn the nautical side of expedition life.

I arrived at the Long Island ferry an hour early, and a good thing I did, for there is a smaller replacement ferry on duty that does not take many vehicles, and some of those arriving had to wait until the next scheduled departure. Among those getting on was a huge cement mixer coming to pour someone's house foundation. Perry was the only one home when I arrived as the family dames had run off to Grand Falls to see a dinner theater performance the night before. Perry and I got his workshop transformed into an archaeology lab, and I set about organizing the collections and preparing to photograph them before sending them to Anja in Quebec City. The arrival of the women livened up the scene, and my 'lab' soon had visits from Melvin, Stephen, and Kay, eager to see what we found, not much of which is visually exciting. One important suggestion about the mystery lead cup was Melvin's comment that it looked like a pipe bowl, and sure enough, inspection of the interior revealed scale that is probably tobacco residue opposite the hold in the side (tapered) where a pipe stem would be inserted. The dimensions are almost perfect, leading to the question, is it a precursor to the clay pipe, or a copy and therefore a later time-marker? An internet search is called for. I am being put up in one of the bedrooms where Kay is staying, in the old Colbourne residence. It's very comfortable, and Kay is always baking some tasty desert.



View from the 'Smithsonian archaeology lab' in Perry Colbourne's workshop in Lushes Bight.

19 August (Saturday) Lushes Bight

I spent the full day working in Perry's shop on the collections and by the end of the day had gone through the West Trench material. Some required washing, but most were clean and just needed record photography. Alyssa, Sofia, and Kody were to fly out of Deer Lake today; I assume all went well, for I heard nothing from them.

20 August (Sunday) Lushes Bight

I completed the East Trench photography and samples today. By the end of the day, I had all the artifacts and samples packed in two boxes ready for the Canada Post. My phone was not working, but I was able to get through to Lynne and my sister Portia for their regular Sunday morning breakfast and got a bit of news about Lynne buying a new car to replace the old Subaru, which had made its last hurrah on the Rt. 91 Bradford off-ramp when its timing belt broke. This initiated a few days in which Lynne launched a major replacement search, with Portia serving as transport, that ended with first a rental, and then a purchase when a RAV4 was found. This will be Lynne's car for the several years to come. By evening I had all the collections packed except for the barrel staves. Late in the afternoon a major stirring took place when Dennis arrived home from some rod fishing at the entrance to Lushes Bight with a full quota of very large cod. There were so numerous they could be seen from the surface. Perry had just received a bunch of cod purchased for his winter supply from a local fisherman and had been splitting and corning (light salting) them in his butcher shed. The arrival of huge shoals of fish created a sensation in this village of "former fishermen" and perhaps is an indication of a rebounding cod stock after years of depletion and government moratoriums.

21 August (Monday) Lushes Bight

I've been staying in the old Colbourne house, now being occupied by Perry's sister Kay who is home for the summer from Calgary. Nan, their mother, had decorated the place with hundreds of pictures of the family, most of which Kay has removed to simplify the décor. I had a long discussion with her about her daughter, who has had a troubled life. Perry and I took the 8 am ferry and spent an hour on the *Pitsiulak* sorting through the chart table drawers for things I need to take home—mostly books, an air mattress, and some mementos, including a chunk of Ramah chert and a barnacle-encrusted roof tile from my diving days at Hare Harbor. Perry is going to drain off four barrels of fuel remaining in the tanks to use for his furnace this winter. I took a few pictures, and then Perry and I had a discussion with Pete Windsor about what to do with the boat. My present plan is to have a marine surveyor check her over for seaworthiness, and based on the results, either offer her for sale or have her salvaged, perhaps with Pete's assistance. Her major assets at present are the main engine (old but not that many hours on it), the diesel generator (hardly any hours), the remaining fuel (for Perry to use); her shaft, prop, and rudder; her life-rails, and her anchors, chain, and windlass. Her electronic gear is mostly out of date, as is her iron mast and rigging. My first task is to see what requirements the Smithsonian has for disposal, whether sale is possible or turning her over to Pete for cannibalization to defray the cost of demolition—basically crunching her up and hauling her off to a dump.

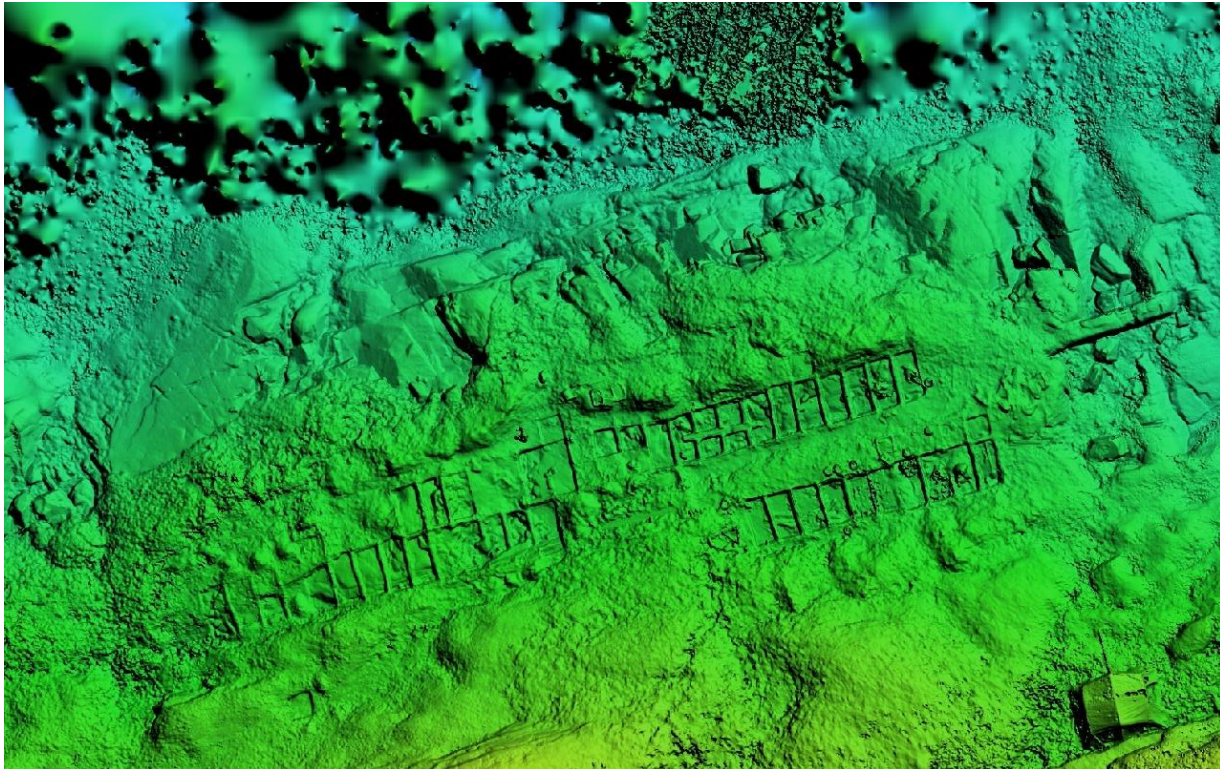


Captain Perry Colbourne and the Pitsiulak at the Triton marine center. Right: Perry, happy to see schools of large codfish returning to Long Island waters.

I returned from the distressing *Pitsiulak* business to the shed and completed photography of the barrel staves and boxed them up. An email from Anja Herzog confirmed her address, and I got my three boxes into the Canada Post's Beaumont office just before closing at 5 pm—express mail (3-5 days) to the tune of \$280, a steep cost for 40 pounds of material. I later learned everything arrived safely at Anja's and is now in the MCC conservation and storage center.



Aerial view of Bonne Espérance-4 (EiBk-61) excavation at completion, shot and assembled by Francisco Rivera-Amaro from drone photography.th to right.



Digital Elevation Map of BE-4 created by Francisco Rivera Amaro using drone data. North to right.

PART II. Summary and Preliminary Results

William Fitzhugh and Francisco Rivera-Amaro

This summer the Gateways Project concluded what *may* be its final field season since Smithsonian explorations on the Quebec Lower North Shore began in 2001. In the early years our focus was on regional surveys, extending as far west as the Mingan Islands and Havre St. Pierre, to refine knowledge of the western-most limit of Paleoeskimo and Inuit occupations. Our 2001 survey determined that these groups never occupied the western reaches of the LNS. Since then, we have focused on the region between Blanc Sablon and Harrington Harbor, where we investigated Maritime Archaic sites and longhouses, Groswater Paleoeskimo sites (of which there are many as far west as Cape Whittle), and Dorset sites (very few west of Blanc Sablon). But these studies soon became side-tracks to our prime mission: investigating Inuit and Basque sites and the interactions between these pioneers who arrived on the Lower North Shore nearly simultaneously in the early 16th century. The 2017-19 seasons focused on summer and winter Inuit sites on Grand Isle in the St. Paul River archipelago, and on a small Basque whaling station on nearby Bonne Espérance Island, code-named BE-4. This site was found by our University of Montreal diving partners led by Brad Loewen in 2019 based on information provided by St. Paul River fishermen and museum officials who knew of the area's earlier Basque-derived name as 'Chaloupe Channel'. We tested the site in 2022 following the covid hiatus and excavated it during a three-week period in July and August 2023.

BE-4 is located on the steep western shore of Bonne Espérance Island where the hillside drops to the water in a series of ledges, the lowest of which served the Basque requirements for constructing ovens and associated cooperage and food preparation facilities. A prime requirement was a deep-water approach so boats and whales (if not also ships) could be brought alongside and blubber could be cut and rendered into oil, packed in barrel sets brought from Europe, and loaded on a ship. Another requirement met by BE-4 was a shore protected from wind and sea swells, and the narrow channel known formerly to St. Paul residents as Chaloupe Channel (the Basque word for their sailing whaleboats) met that need as well, since it was only a short distance from the whaling grounds of the open Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The site itself is situated in a narrow trough in the bedrock, only 8-10 meters wide from the shore edge to the steeply-rising hillside behind it. Excavations were conducted in a 5-meter wide strip of land paralleling the shore ledge, which dips gently to the north. This trough created a level space for Basque activities, but it also collected precipitation draining down the hillside, resulting in the development of 50-60 cm of peat and low shrub vegetation that restricted drainage, making the excavation pits major water-collectors. In the northern part of the site, we had to excavate 40-60 cms of sterile peat to reach the Basque occupation level, which was identified by the appearance of roof tile, charcoal, wood, iron nails, and ceramics. Peat build-up was less extensive in the southern part of the site, where the bedrock trough disappeared, drainage was not restricted, and tryworks had been constructed by raising a stone wall to support ovens.

When Basques arrived the site vegetation was probably similar to that of today, without trees but with a growth of low birch, willow, alders, blackberries (*Empetrum*), bakeapple (*Rubus*), horsetail, angelica, and grass. Stratigraphy showed that when Basques arrived, they prepared the site by burning off the vegetation and drier upper peat layer. In the southern industrial area where bedrock was close to the surface, vegetation and peat had burned to bedrock, and the occupation layer was mixed with charcoal directly on the bedrock. In the northern part of the site the peat was too thick and wet to burn, and the occupation layer was bedded between underlying unburned peat and post-occupation peat and surface vegetation.

BE-4 has three structural zones: **Zone 1**, a southern area consisting of a stone wall which ends in a pile of boulders where the wall ends; **Zone 2**, a refuse pit at the north end of the boulder pile; and **Zone 3**, a domestic work area north of the refuse pit extending 15 meters to the northern end of the occupation area. The Zone 1 wall was constructed with 3-4 layers of laid-up rocks positioned 2-meters west of a ledge outcrop following the north-south '0' baseline through the middle of the site. The 1.5 m wide gap between the wall and the ledge produced tile, worked wood, and a fragment of a skin garment in a 1x2 m unit at 15S/0W in 2022. West of the wall in 15S/2W was a thick layer of industrial midden consisting of charcoal mixed with burned, broken, and blubber-encrusted rock and tile. Since no artifacts were found in this deposit (which we excavated to a depth of 50 cm), we did not excavate west of the wall in 2023. The southern end of the wall ends where the ground drops into a drainage gully. The wall seems to have been constructed as the foundation for a timber frame structure that supported the tryworks. A small piece of blubber-encrusted sheet copper found here is probably a fragment of one of the cauldrons. A few large iron spikes suitable for nailing logs indicates an open-sided tryworks structure had been erected here.

At its north end, the wall 'peters out' at 13S and merges with bedrock whose top is extended north by a pile of boulders level with the stone wall. This pile is made of large head-size boulders without interstitial fill, and its upper portion on its west and north sides had a mantle of fist-size, blubber-encrusted cinders. The north side of the pile was made of roughly stacked rocks to achieve a stable vertical face, but post-occupation, some of the rocks had fallen out of place into the Zone II pit to the north. The purpose of this boulder construction seems to have been to raise the level of the ground to the same level as the stone wall to the south, so that the three components could serve as a foundation for a timber tryworks.

The Zone 2 pit lies immediately north of the boulder pile. When we excavated here in 2019 this area appeared as a level depression bounded by the boulder pile to the south and a vertical, meter-high ledge to the east, creating a level spot that made it an obvious attraction in the otherwise steep and ledge-filled shore. A small, shallow test pit produced charcoal, seeds, and the jawbone of a small mammal, leading us to imagine a small tent site or Basque camp. Excavation in 2022 proved the location to be a nearly meter-deep pit filled with stratified layers of charcoal, baleen, and tile fragments, whose lower levels contained water-logged layers of baleen, barrel staves, sticks, and log fragments. In 2023 we excavated to bedrock on the south, east, and north sides of this pit, finding large masses of baleen and water-logged wood beneath rocks that had fallen from the north side of the boulder pile. We saved several half-gallon size bags of baleen and blubber cinder for technical study. Several one-meter units were excavated west of the baleen pit, and these produced nails, fragments of one or more marmite earthenware pots, a twisted and knotted strand of baleen, raw baleen, and tiles. The function of this pit is not clear, but it was not for a blubber oven and contained no blubber cinders. Despite layers of charcoal and baleen, the baleen had not been burned, so the pit may have simply been for refuse disposal.

As our excavation proceeded from south to north, the arrival of students from the University of Montreal enabled us to expand work into the northern part of the site where two small 50 cm test pits in 2022 produced tile, charcoal, preserved wood, and ceramics absent in the industrial zone to the south. We opened two 2-meter wide north-south trenches leaving space between them to provide a corridor for excavator access to the often water-filled excavation trenches on either side. The east side of the 2-m wide West Trench followed the 2W line from 5 South to 13 North. Its west side bottomed on a rising granite ledge separating the trough from the shore, while on the east side the ledge dipped into the trough and was filled with 50-70 cm of peat, with the cultural layer sandwiched between sterile peat. These deposits grew wetter toward the north and ended with beach cobbles packed closely together, with cultural materials in the interstices. The cobbles appear to have been placed to facilitate down-slope drainage from the trough and were not a natural beach deposit. The West Trench contained tiles, preserved bark and wood in its

deeper parts, a few nails, and clusters of plain or lightly-glazed earthenware, some of which carried the centimeter-wide vertical decorated bands found on Basque marmite cooking pots. A cluster of blue-and-white glazed faience ceramic was recovered at the very northern end of the trench.

The East Trench, appropriately named the ‘mud pit’, paralleled the West Trench from 2 North to 12 North, was 2-2.5 m wide (1 West to 2 East), and abutted the hillslope on its east side. The deposits in this trench were saturated with water, and the excavation pits filled from run-off and seepage when not bailed. This made for messy digging and difficulties recovering and recording finds, but it had preserved—though not perfectly—wood materials better than other areas of the site. Here we recovered most of the barrel staves and end panels. Some logs 10-15 cm thick in the culture level may have been parts of surface structures, but none had nails or architectural modification. The southern units in this trench were nearly barren of tiles and artifacts, while the northern units had large amounts of earthenware, leading to the supposition that the northern end of the East Trench was a place for food preparation, while the central areas where most of the barrel parts were found may have been used for storage and assembling barrels. This area is the only area of the site level enough for domestic activities, which is why we had pitched our storage tent here initially, until having to move it to another location upslope to dig beneath it. The units beneath the tent site produced large collections of marmite sherds, and in one area we found the remains of a hearth and a flooring or mat of burned sticks. Nothing in either trench provided evidence of surface structures, which we suppose must have been present, and which were indicated by the stone wall foundation in Zone 1. If wood floors or timber structures had been erected here, we found no sign of supporting structures such as vertical posts.



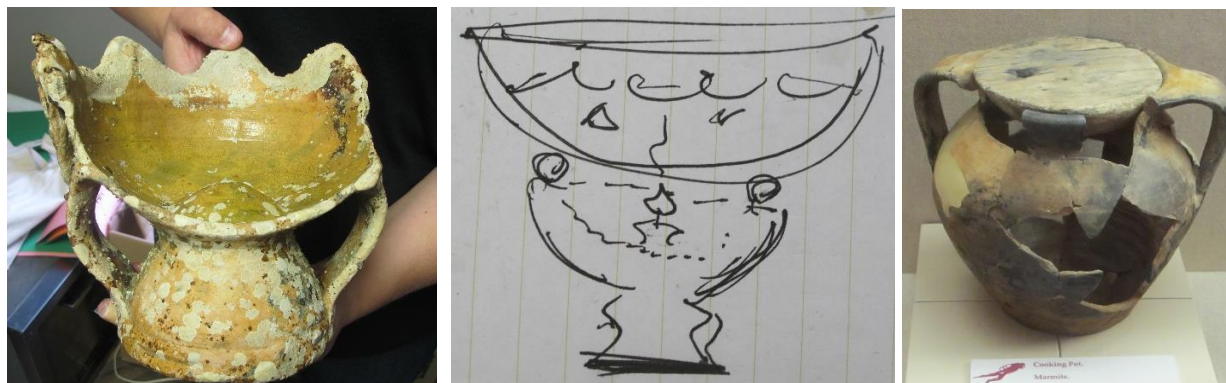
An artist's reconstruction by Martin Lowe of a Basque store-shed and shore operations at the Middle Bay Basque site. (source: Middle Bay Museum)

The primary purpose of the current project was to document a small Basque whaling station. BE-4 was an ideal target because of its small size and accessibility. Our results indicate the site was used for a relatively short period of time—perhaps only a single or a few seasons. The location had quick access to whaling grounds and enabled whales to be delivered to a sheltered processing facility with a deep-water approach. Timber was available in the inner bays for fuel and for constructing a wooden frame over tryworks and other facilities. The south end of the site was the industrial zone and had a stone wall and

stone pile that must have served as the foundation for the blubber works. While there is a sheet midden west of the stone wall filled with burned tile, stone, charcoal, and cinder, we did not locate the type of oven piles with pot depressions known at other sites like Red Bay, or Five Leagues or Middle Bay on the LNS. These characteristics configure a unique site, suggesting different strategies of occupation and provisioning of maritime resources that further complicate the historical picture of the Basque presence in the LNS. Perhaps these structures are present at BE-4 above the ledge east of the wall, but it seems unlikely. If so, a hypothetical reconstruction of the works might have been positioned next to a wood platform using the wall as a foundation and the top of the ledge to the east. However, there was no indication of such structures in the vegetation on the slope above the wall. So perhaps some other type of trywork system was used to produce all the waste and burned materials surrounding the wall and boulder pile. The latter was also a construction feature that was surrounded by charcoal, tiles, and cinder. The baleen pit seems to have served as a dump for baleen and other waste products.

The prevalence of baleen, which was especially evident in and around the baleen pit, was a conspicuous feature at the site. Basque whaling structures frequently used baleen between the roof frames and the tiles. This might explain why baleen was found throughout the site, but it does not explain the large masses that occurred around the baleen pit. Its abundance suggests baleen was not yet a commercial product at the time the site was occupied. Often present in the deep, water-logged areas were barrel staves and tops, as well as axe- and saw-cut wood, some large enough to have been trywork or shed frames.

Roof tile was present in abundance, especially for roofing but also for drying up muddy areas. Many tile varieties were present, for example, different clay and tempers, density, color, methods of forming, and surface textures. Tiles, used as ship ballast on outbound voyages, were replaced by oil on the return voyages and were left on site over the winter. Low-fired and porous, tiles were prone to frost fracture, so roofs had to be replaced annually. Nails—always abundant on Basque sites where large spikes were required to fasten logs and timber framing—were rare finds at BE-4, and only 4 or 5 large spikes were found, along with larger quantities of medium-size nails, few of which survived 400 years of corrosion. Two small copper nails with flat, round heads might have been used as decoration in ornamental patterns on trunks. Smaller nails were more common in the southern industrial area than in the northern zone. The absence of large spikes in the domestic areas suggests that timber frame structures were not present here, or that these nails were scavenged by later Basque explorers or Inuit who arrived after ca. 1600. The absence of burned timber frames makes this scenario unlikely.



Not found this summer, but of interest: a Basque/French charcoal rechauffeur (warming) vessel for heating a pot suspended on the 'teeth' at top, dredged up in a scallop net in the St. Paul River waters; and (right) a marmite cooking pot recovered by Parks Canada divers in Red Bay (PC Red Bay Museum).

Unlike nails, ceramics were more common in the northern part of the site. Almost all were thin-walled, low-fired earthenware vessels known as marmites, a vessel type that served as the common Basque cooking pot. Their use in open fires resulted in frequent breakage. No fragments of *rechaufleurs* or oil-fired heating pots were found. Decorative vertical bands were present on some body sherds, and many fragments bear remnants of burned glaze and food or oil residue on their inner surfaces. Most sherds were small fragments; rims, shoulder pieces, strap handles, and decorative bands all conform to common marmite typology. A half dozen sherds of tan or grey stoneware were present, indicating some early availability of this ceramic type not generally common until the 17th century. The other unusual ceramic appearance was a highly fragmented blue-and-white glazed faience vessel, possibly a teapot.

Nodules of European flint were common as were flakes struck off while starting fires, and a flake of Ramah chert scavenged from an indigenous site may have been collected for the same purpose. Several gunflints were present including one of quartz. Highly unusual was a small, thick-walled, cup-shaped bowl made of solid lead with a tapered hole in its lower side and charred residue on the inside opposite the hole, exactly reproducing the form of a clay pipe bowl. This pipe may have been a homemade item, because we also found a puddle of lead sprue and three round musket balls with tiny holes in one side, marks that seem related to manufacture. Another curious item is a small silver(?) pendant with a grooved top and an arrow or harpoon mark on one side—possibly a whaler’s talisman.

One of the many unanswered questions is the site’s date, for we found no coins. The absence of oven mounds with central pot hollows is peculiar given their presence at other sites in southern Labrador and the LNS, including one found but not excavated 100 meters south of BE-4 at BE-3. We tested this mound in 2019 and found burned tiles. Could this have been the trywork site for BE-4? Probably not, given all the blubber residue at BE-4. One of the certain indicators of a pre-1600 date is the absence of clay pipes. If the lead pipe bowl was a reproduction, clay pipes should also have been present. Perhaps the lead bowl was a clay pipe proto-type, suggesting a mid-16th century date when tobacco smoking in Europe was still rare. The abundance of baleen also suggests a time in the early period of Basque whaling before it was considered of economic value. Marmite styles and the few pieces of stoneware may provide dating clues. More specific results may come from radiocarbon dating our organic samples.

Given their physical proximity, it seems unlikely that BE-3 and BE-4 were separate operations. We did not have time to investigate BE-3, and this should be a priority if further work is possible in 2024. Possibly BE-3 was a second station operated by another whaling team connected with a mothership supporting both sites. The character of the BE-4 operation may be imagined in a 2009 rendition of the Middle Bay Basque site produced by the artist Martin Lowe, on exhibit in the Middle Bay Museum.

A film summary of our 2023 project appears in a short film by Alyssa Miulli titled “Life Among the Coasters”, prepared for the Whiteley Museum to orient visitors to the history and heritage of the Lower North Shore.



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The combined team's first dinner at Brenda and Ross Thomas' home in St. Paul River. Left to right: Perry, Kody, Sofia, Alyssa, Francisco, Thomas, Marie, and Clarence.