

A SUMMARY OF THE 2010 EXCAVATION OF HOUSE 3 IN INDIAN HARBOUR, LABRADOR

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Figure 1 House 3 after complete excavation, facing south.

In early July 2010, a crew of thirteen composed of students from Memorial University, Simon Fraser University, McMaster University, and Université Laval departed for Indian Harbour, Labrador. My intent for the six-week field season was to excavate a previously recorded and tested Inuit sod house on Huntingdon Island (FkBg-03). The crew was shared with Dr. Lisa Rankin of Memorial University who was also working at Indian Harbour, but I carried out the excavation of House 3 as the basis for my master's thesis research. House 3 is a large Inuit winter sod house with paved stone floor and sunken entrance passage (see Figure 1). A portion of exposed bedrock forms a segment of the central floor space around which flat floor stones were placed. The house measures approxi-

mately six meters by eight meters and is considerably larger than the other houses previously examined on Huntingdon Island. The entrance passage opens to the southeast and is approximately 4.5 meters in length. Raised sleeping platforms of sand and cobble are located along all of the interior walls and are skirted by upright stone slabs. A number of isolated bench or alcove areas are situated along the platform edges. The number of sleeping platforms, the size of the dwelling, and the presence of discrete bench areas suggests that this was a multi-family occupied structure adhering to the communal type house form.

The material culture recovered places the occupation of this house firmly within the contact period as both traditional Inuit items

and goods of European origin, many of which are modified in some manner, are present. In total close to 750 artifacts were collected including soapstone vessels, whalebone implements, baleen fragments, iron nails, ceramics (mainly Normandy coarse stoneware), glass beads, pipe fragments, musket balls, and *ulus* (see Figure 2). Recovered items of interest include perforated coin pendants, a padlock, and a pair of copper-cast French sword hilts (see Figure 3). The assemblage is largely dominated by French in origin items and preliminary examination of the artifacts suggests an early- to mid- 18th century occupation date. Further

analysis of the material culture will serve to refine the suggested period of habitation. In addition, faunal remains were collected and are in the process of examination, with seal species composing the largest proportion of the elements recovered. All of the faunal elements were collected from the interior of the house as no distinct midden area was identified during the course of the excavation. The lack of both a midden deposit and of complex stratigraphy suggests a single period of occupation. It is anticipated that the results of the House 3 excavation will contribute to the knowledge about Inuit-European contact in southern Labrador as well as provide insights about the complexities of the communal house form in this region.



Figure 2 A selection of iron ulu pieces recovered during the excavation of House 3.

Figure 3 A pair of French sword hilts. The hilt on the right has been hammered flat and has leather tied around the top protrusion.

