

# Turpin's Island, Little St. Lawrence, CfAu-05

## Small Scale Archaeological and Paleoenvironmental Excavation

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**Figure 1: Turpin's Island (CfAu-05) location in Little St. Lawrence Harbour.**

Little St. Lawrence is located on the southeastern side of the Burin Peninsula, on what is called the Chapeau Rouge Coast after the mountain that borders the western side of the entrance of St. Lawrence Harbour (Figure 1). Little St. Lawrence Bay lay just east of St. Lawrence Harbour. Turpin's Island (CfAu-05), a small peninsula extending from the east side of Little St. Lawrence Harbour, has been recognized as a high

potential site since 2006, associated with European and possibly precontact occupations.

### The Great History of Little St. Lawrence

The earliest accounts and maps of Newfoundland mention St. Lawrence or Chapeau Rouge (the Mountain located on the west side of St. Lawrence Harbour) suggesting that the area was known since the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The toponym St. Lorens first appears in *Cosmographie universelle, selon les navigateurs tant anciens que modernes* written and illustrated by the cartographer Guillaume Le Testu, published in 1555 (Figure 2). More than the antiquity of the designation of St. Lawrence Harbour by European cartographers, it seems that in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, St. Lawrence, and especially the very noticeable feature of the Chapeau Rouge Mountain, became a landmark in pilot books and navigation charts of Newfoundland and the Strait of Cabot. A good example is the pilot book of Martin de Hoyarsabal (1579) which gives routes to and from St. Lawrence: “[...] Giset port de Belin & **S. Laures**, est suest & oest norroest, y a 6. L. [...] Gisent la **montaigne qu'est à l'entrée de S. Laures**, & le cap de S. Marie Norroest & suest, y a 15. Lieuës”. This information entails that St. Lawrence was used by fishing crews in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, as cod fishing was the reason for the European presence in the area.

In terms of cultural affiliation, it is likely that Basque crews fished in the area during the 16<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Laurier Turgeon (1986:532-533) demonstrated that a majority of the vessels outfitted in Bordeaux in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were from the Basque Country (Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Gipuzkoa), and that the majority of them fished for cod. His research also showed that Placentia Bay was an important fishing destination for the Basque ships in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. An archival record mentions a Basque ship in Little St. Lawrence in 1597: In “Great and Little St. Lawrence, encountering



Figure 2: Detail of *Cosmographie universelle, selon les navigateurs tant anciens que modernes* by Guillaume Le Testu (1555) showing Saint Lorenz (Gallica).

one Spanish ship at the former and “certain Basks” at the latter” (David Quinn 1979:68-75 cited in Penney 2009:13-14). Prowse (1895:48) cites an archive indicating that the “French fishery of 1640 superseded an earlier Basque presence at both San Lorenz Audia and San Lorenz Chumea, Great and Little St. Lawrence”. Besides the discovery of Basque tiles in Placentia, the Basque cod fishery of the South Coast of Newfoundland and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon is almost totally unknown archaeologically. Indeed, most archaeological projects pertaining to Basque settlements have been associated with the iconic whaling stations located in the Strait of Belle Isle and along the St. Lawrence River (Losier et al. 2018).

Archives provide further insight into the French occupation of Little St. Lawrence. The 1662 *Règlement établi à Saint-Malo suite aux « abus des capitaines qui vont à la pesche de la morue à la coste du chapeau rouge et lieux circonuoisins* mentions that Little St. Lawrence Harbour can accommodate a fishing crew of 60 men while Great St. Lawrence can welcome 150 men (Harvut 1893:23-26). The census written in 1676 by Lieutenant Courcelle on the back of a Newfoundland map reports one fishing vessel in St. Lawrence, and five in Great St. Lawrence. The French accounts of Great and Little St. Lawrence are very interesting, but the relationship between the French (Bretons or Normans) and Basques fisherfolks is difficult to deci-

pher. As it will be discussed later, it seems that Basque tile fragments are found in association with French artefacts, which can suggest contemporaneity between the occupations, or be evidence of mixed crews. However, archives indicate that there is a distinction between the French and Basque ships, and maybe by extension, of the Chapeau Rouge Coast settlements (Prowse 1895:48; Turgeon 1986:532). This question is interesting and will command in-depth study of documentary sources and archaeological contexts.

Amanda Crompton (2017) in her publication “The Atlantic Travels of Henri Brunet, a Migrant Merchant in the Seventeenth-Century French Newfoundland” mentions two accounts of Henri Brunet travelling to St. Lawrence and Little St. Lawrence. First, in 1672, Henri Brunet goes to Petit St. Laurence to visit a man named Fontanelle from Grandville in Normandy (Crompton 2017: 121-122). In 1674, Henri Brunet visits St. Laurence again and meets a man named La Rue who sent for his brother fishing in a nearby harbour to join them for the night (Crompton 2017: 122). This harbour could be Little St. Lawrence. This information is invaluable as it gives us the names of two people associated with St. Lawrence and Little St. Lawrence during the French tenure of the South Coast of Newfoundland.

Another account of the French presence at Little St. Lawrence is provided by William Taverner, who mentions in his second report (1718) written in the aftermath of the War of the Spanish Succession: “There ffishes one planter, who hath not taken the Oath, he caught the last year about 280 Quintls of ffish p boat, there are Two ffish<sup>s</sup> Roomes. for Ships, which is all fflakes”. The important aspect of this quote is the fact that there are two fishing rooms in Little St. Lawrence Harbour. William Taverner also mentions that the planter living in Little St. Lawrence during his visit did not take the Oath to the British crown during his visit, suggesting that this man was

French and probably left for Île Royale or France soon after (Taverner 1718:230-231). This archive supports the fact that Little St. Lawrence was used by French crews for fishing and processing cod that was laid out to dry on the shore installations.

The replacement of French by English fisherfolk in Newfoundland<sup>1</sup> and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) is certainly not as drastic as it is sometimes portrayed in the historical narrative. French settlers were given the choice to either retreat to France, or another French territory like Île Royale (Cape Breton Island), or to take the Oath to the British Crown in order to keep their fishing premises. In fact, Taverner's survey (1714; 1718) along with some research by Olaf Janzen (1987; 2013) and Livingston & Losier (2021) indicate

that the French presence continued after 1713, particularly in Saint-Pierre, in Baie d'Espoir and on the Southwest Coast of Newfoundland (Cape Ray, Codroy) up until 1755 depending on the settlement (Janzen 2013).

The state of Little St. Lawrence occupation is (for the moment) unknown until 1767. English planters and merchants were active in Placentia, Placentia Bay and in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. Therefore, we can assume that it was connected to the English fishery if any activities were taking place in Little St. Lawrence between 1718 and 1767. In 1767, Captain James Cook charted Great and Little St. Lawrence and noted "...severall inhabitants employ'd in the Fishery and likewise severall Stages and Fishing Rooms and convenient places for severall more" at

**Figure 3: Canada Archives *A chart of the sea-coast of Newfoundland between St. Laurence and Point May survey'd by order of Hugh Palliser esqr. commodore & c. & c. by James Cook (1765) (Archives Canada).***



Great St. Lawrence, but no inhabitants at Little St. Lawrence (Cook 1767 cited in Penney 2009: 15). Indeed, Cook's 1767 map seems to suggest that no fishing stations were active in Little St. Lawrence as the stages depicted in yellow on his map indicate a convenient place to build a stage, not an actual one (Figure 3). It seems likely that Cook placed the stages on the foundations of the two fishing rooms described by Taverner in 1718. Indeed, as it is the case today, the foundations of the stages may have been visible at low tide when he visited the harbour. This map was probably made to encourage English planters to settle on the South Coast of Newfoundland as it indicates 47 sites suitable for new fishing establishments

<sup>1</sup>It needs to be mentioned that the first iteration of the French Shore was put in place in 1713. French crews were allowed to fish but not overwinter in Newfoundland between Pointe Riche and Cap Bonavista.

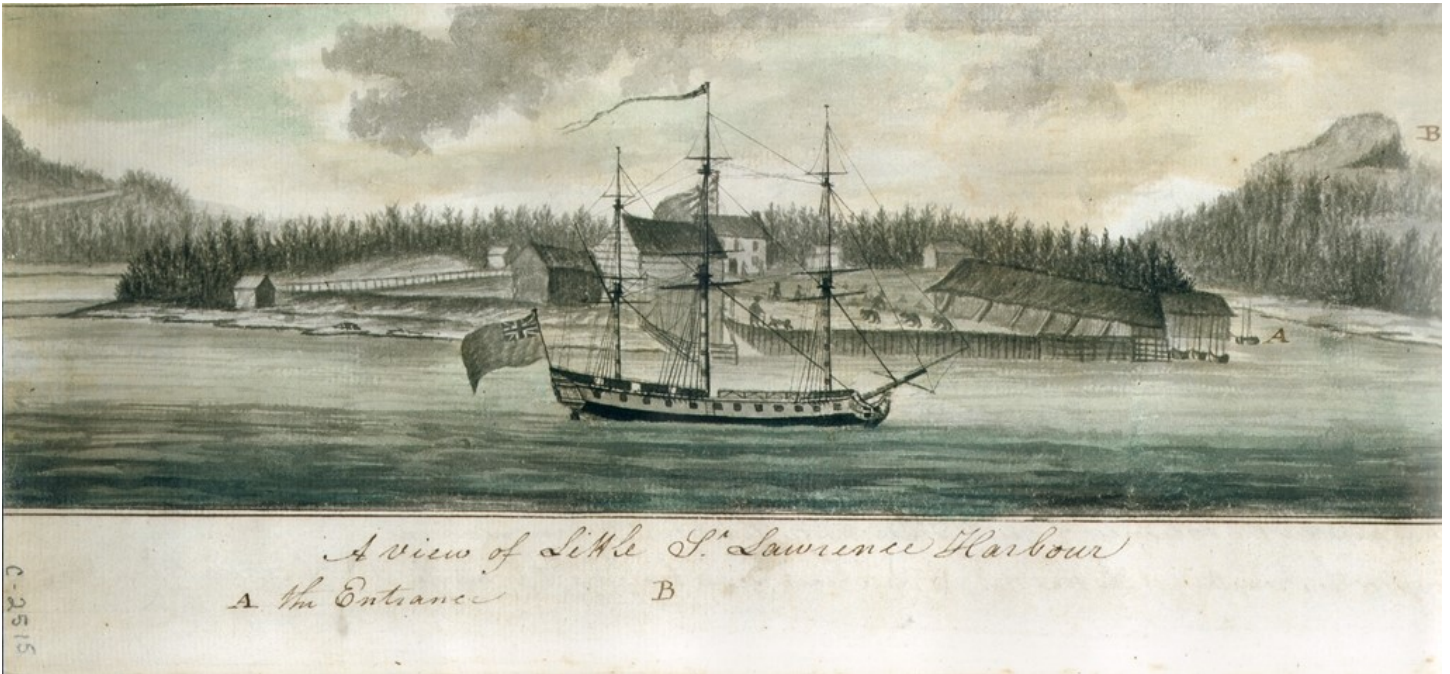


Figure 4: View of Turpin's Island (Penney 2015: 23) (Top).

Figure 5: Little St. Lawrence Harbour (Meres, HMS Pegasus, July 14th 1786) (Canada Archives) (Bottom).

(Whiteley 1975: 20). This survey may have influenced the decision of Robert Newman & Co. to use Little St. Lawrence as a company base.

It is in 1784 that Little St. Lawrence was established as a base for the Newman & Co. fishing enterprise (Matthews 2003). Soon after, the bustling trade in Little St. Lawrence prompted the opening of additional branches in Burin and Little Bay in Fortune Bay (Matthews 2003). When Newman & Co. move its headquarters from St. John's to Harbour Breton in 1812 (Maritime Archives), records leave us uncertain about the continued operation of the Little St. Lawrence premise. However, the company persisted in its operations along the South Coast of Newfoundland until 1907, when Newman & Co. finally withdrew from Newfoundland (Maritime Archives). The Newman & Co. fishing settlement was captured

in drawing by James S. Meres a member of the crew of the *HMS Pegasus*, which brought Prince William Henry (future King William IV, 1830-1837) in Newfoundland. *HMS Pegasus* sailed along the Chapeau Rouge Coast and visited several harbours including Little St. Lawrence (Figures 4 and 5). James S. Meres also draws a chart of Little St. Lawrence harbour with the mooring emplacement of the *Pegasus* (*Pegasus Log Book 1786*: c-2516). In the *Pegasus* logbook where the chart is visible, it is mentioned, "people are employed variously" in Little St. Lawrence.

Information pertaining to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century occupation of Little St. Lawrence as not yet been collected. We can assume that fishing continued in Little St. Lawrence whether associated with Newman & Co or not. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a short-lived economic revolution took place in Little St.

Lawrence with the construction of a whaling station by Ludwig Rissmüller in 1903. Hunting began on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1903, when the Norwegian-built catcher *St. Lawrence* was commissioned. That year, seven whales were caught before the end of the season (Dickinson and Sanger 2005: 57). Little St. Lawrence station's catch in 1904 was 112 whales, including 37 blue whales, 65 fin whales, 9 humpback whales and 1 sei whale. Of the fourteen shore stations in Newfoundland and Labrador, Little St. Lawrence comes at the fifth rank in terms of the number of whales caught. This is a testament to the importance of the station. The factory produced 192 024 gallons of oil, 502 tons of guano (fertilizer) and 200 tons of bones (Dickinson and Sanger 2005:67) along with “glue, canned meat and sausages developed by Ludwig Rissmüller as an experiment that is thought will become a marketable commodity” (Dickinson and Sanger 2005:73).

Already in 1905, whale catches began to decline, and the Department of Fisheries suggested that caution be exercised against over-hunting, as it was unlikely that the stock could sustain the level of exploitation of 1903 and 1904 (Dickinson and Sanger 2005:73). This recommendation was ignored. In 1905, the *St. Lawrence* catcher brought in 70 whales, the station processed 21 whales in 1906 and 30 in 1907, before the Little St. Lawrence station was liqui-

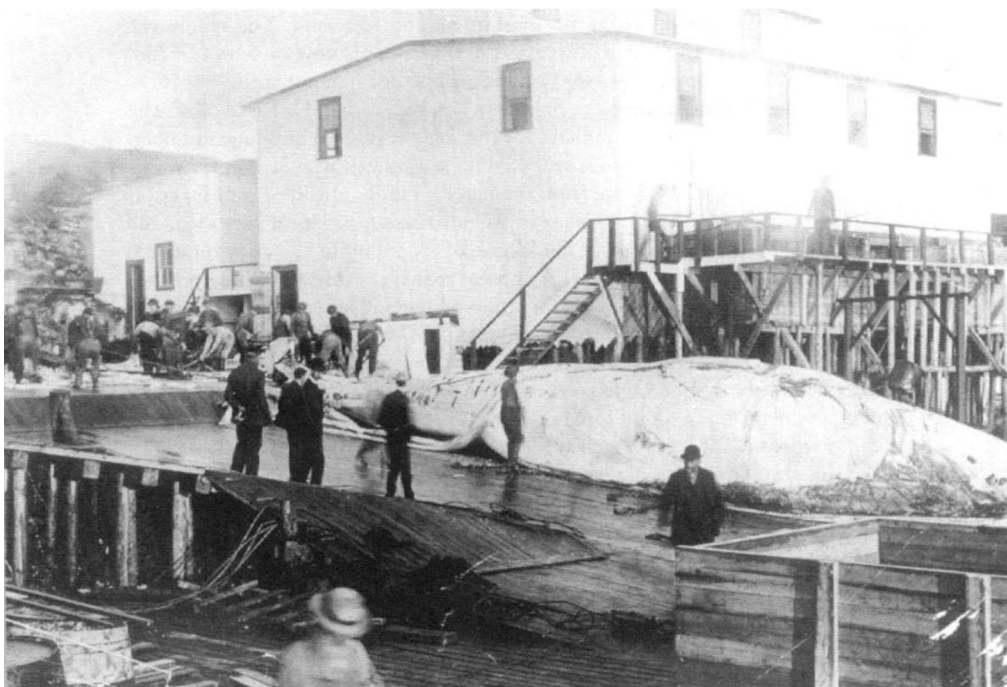
dated that year. Ludwig Rissmüller and the catchers *St. Lawrence* and *Mic Mac* (who was also in activity on the South Coast of Newfoundland) sets sail to British Columbia to continue their careers in the whaling industry (Dickinson and Sanger 2005:107-113). Ludwig Rissmüller, who moved from Newfoundland to British Columbia to work with Sprott Balcom at the Pacific Whaling Company, informs us of the names of some of the workers at the Little St. Lawrence station between 1903 and 1907. Indeed, some of them followed Ludwig Rissmüller to British Columbia. We learn that Charles Smith and Edward “Ned” Scalpen were involved in construction of the Little St. Lawrence station, M.F. Carrol supervised the sale of Little St. Lawrence and Captain George Le Marquand was the manager of Little St. Lawrence station.

According to Little St. Lawrence community members and K. Stuart Barnable (2006:14), the St. Lawrence Whaling Co. was not located on Turpin's Island proper, but across the bay on the west coast of the harbour. The photograph of the station also suggests this, as the hill in the background does not match Turpin's Island landscape (Figure 6). The detailed account of whaling in Little St. Lawrence was provided because it is not impossible that some activities associated with the whaling industry could have affected Turpin's Island landscape.

To conclude this section based on archives

and secondary sources, it should be noted that Turpin's Island might have been affected by the Burin tsunami of 1929. Alan Ruffman (1996: Map 1 cited in Penney 2009: 10) “concludes that the tsunami flooded to 13 meters above sea level in Great St. Lawrence Harbour, swamping Shingle Point and the near-shore to the southeast, as well as penetrating well into the woods backing Blue Beach Cove”. The impact of this event must be considered with respect to Little St. Lawrence archaeology. An aerial photograph took in 1949 shows two buildings on

**Figure 6: Flensing at Little St. Lawrence, c. 1906**  
(R. Street in Dickinson and Sanger 2005:58).



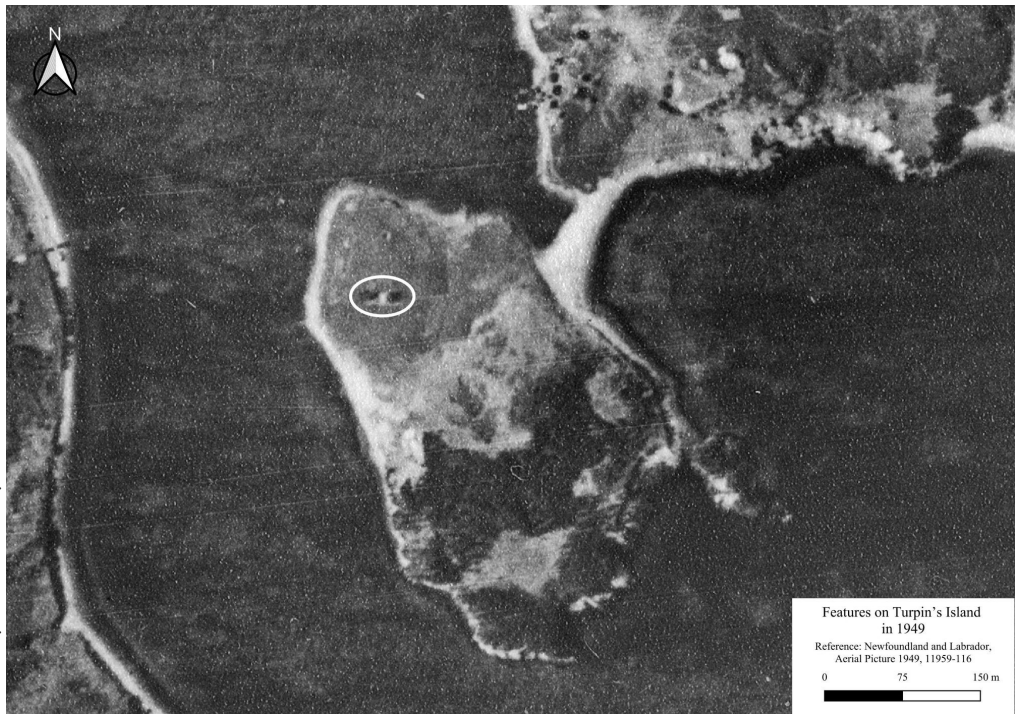
Turpin’s Island, in the area where we can still see two concrete blocks on the site (Figure 7). These buildings are most likely associated with the Turpin family who lived on the peninsula in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The whaling station, the tsunami, and 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings may have disturbed earlier occupations.

### Turpin’s Island Archaeology

Historical accounts of the Chapeau Rouge, St. Lawrence, and Little St. Lawrence, as well as the maps depicting the west side of Placentia Bay, the Burin Peninsula and more generally the South Coast of Newfoundland leave little doubt regarding the continued importance

of the Chapeau Rouge region since the beginning of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Little St. Lawrence was identified as a high potential site when K. Stuart Barnable conducted the Heritage Inventory of the Burin Peninsula in 2006. K. Stuart Barnable listed five places of interest in Little St. Lawrence as reported by local informants (Barnable 2006:10). While the interpretation of some features and places of interest may need to be re-evaluated, this does not diminish the historical importance of Little St. Lawrence, and brought this site to the attention of archaeologists. Turpin’s Island was assigned a Borden number CfAu-05 by the Provincial Archaeology Office in 2007 after a field survey led by Stephen Hull.

Gerry Penney revisited the site in 2009 and collected archival and cartographic information about Little St. Lawrence. He highlighted that although information seems scarce (which is not the case, as demonstrated above), it is evident that this harbour was used by Basque, French and English fisherfolks. He was also the first archaeologist to visit the site with James S. Meres’ drawing in hand, and suggested that some of the features still visible in the landscape could be associated with an 18<sup>th</sup> century fishing premise. Gerry Penney was therefore the first to hypothe-



**Figure 7: Aerial picture of 1949 showing buildings on Turpin’s Island, likely associated with the Turpin family according to local residents (detail of aerial picture NL- 11959-116).**

size that Turpin’s Island was the site of the premises of the Newman & Co. built in 1784 (Figures 4 and 5).

In 2015, the Provincial Archaeology Office (NLArchaeology 2015) published the blog post *The Prince, the merchant and the Pegasus at Little St. Lawrence*. The post summarizes what was known about the harbour; point out some of the features visible in the landscape, and artefacts found during testing (wine bottle, ceramic, pipe stem, red coarse earthenware). Additional information is provided about the visit of *HMS Pegasus* on which Prince William Henry sailed. The Prince and the crew of *HMS Pegasus* spent five days in Great and Little St. Lawrence, from July 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 1786. William Henry wrote in a letter to George III (his father) that he considered the western coast of Placentia “as far more preferable to that [country] we left to the eastward.” “The Guernsey and Jersey people”, he writes, “are settled in these parts & are peaceable & well behaved” (Rollman cited in PAO 2015). Steve Mills (2018) has written a research note on the *Pegasus* voyage and how the work of James S. Meres can inform archaeological research. Given the details of James S. Meres’ drawing of Little St. Lawrence, there is little doubt that this is the case. In fact, the foundations of the two stages shown to

the right of James S. Meres' drawing can be seen at low tide on Turpin's Island (Figure 8).

In 2021, Dr. Amanda Crompton prepared the *Historic Resources Overview Assessment and Archaeological Potential Study of the South Coast of Newfoundland from Baie d'Espoir to Burgeo*. The Burin Peninsula falls just outside of the study area, but its proximity makes the study extremely relevant to Little St. Lawrence. Indeed, the collection of maps presented in the report's appendix is a bounty of information, showing that the harbours of St. Lawrence, Little St. Lawrence and the Chapeau Rouge Mountain have been landmarks since the beginning of the European exploration of Newfoundland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the study presents references to various archives and secondary sources that are very useful to get a better sense of Little St. Lawrence occupations and the Chapeau Rouge area in general (Crompton 2021: 16-21).

In 2020, during a trip to Fortune to take delivery of the artefact collection from Anse à Bertrand site in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, students Meghann Livingston and Mallory Champagne, and Dr. Catherine Losier stopped at several locations on the Burin Peninsula to better assess the archaeological potential

of the peninsula. Little St. Lawrence was one of these sites. While exploring the site, we saw some of the features identified by Gerry Penney (2009) and the Provincial Archaeology Office (2015); we also identified two linear heaps of stones located in the intertidal zone on the northwestern tip of Turpin's Island. We interpreted these as the foundations of fishing stages, as they are similar to what we saw along Saint-Pierre Harbour (Figure 8). These features are very likely to be associated with the two stages that we can see in James S. Meres' drawing of 1786 (Figure 5), but they could be older. Let us recall that during his survey in 1713, Taverner (1718:230-231) reported that two fishing rooms were present in Little St. Lawrence harbour: "of ffish p boat, **there are Two ffishg Roomes.** for Ships". In addition, it cannot be a coincidence that the convenient place for building stages on Cook's map (1765) are located exactly where the stages are located on James S. Meres' drawing, and where we find the foundations today (Figure 3).

While looking at the western side of the island (near to the southern stage foundation), we found what looked like a Basque tile in the intertidal zone. This discovery was officially reported by Meghann

Figure 8: Foundation of the two stages in the intertidal zone on the western side of Turpin's Island and excavation of unit 1A (Pete Whitridge, June 2023).





**Figure 9: Location of the archaeological (1A) and paleoenvironmental testing area (2A) excavated in June 2023.**

the site. Fieldwork took place between June 12<sup>th</sup> and June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The objectives were threefold: 1) Conduct a high-resolution drone survey of Turpin's Island and its surroundings; 2) Get a better sense of the archaeological context of Turpin's Island by excavating a 1 meter by 1 meter unit on the western side of Turpin's Island; 3) Acquire a chronological sequence of the paleoenvironmental changes induced by the presence of human populations at the site by collecting a sample in the peat bog to analyze pollen, insects, and date the stratigraphy with the help of radiocarbon to establish a

Livingston during her 2022 survey when she found another, more convincing, fragment (along with French Normandy stoneware and a gunflint). In January 2023, during the SHA meeting in Lisbon, Meghann Livingston presented this finding and it was confirmed by Dr. Iosu Etxezarraga Ortuondo (archaeologist from the Basque Country) that these were most likely Basque tiles. This discovery is thrilling and can be tied to the fact that the toponym of St. Lawrence has certainly Iberic roots (San Lorenzo) and that as suggested by the pilot book of Martin de Hoyarsabal (1579) and Pierre Detcheverry (1677 map), Basque mariners were aware of these harbours. It should be noted that another fragment of what appears to be Basque tile was found (but not recovered) on the beach in the same area during a visit by Drs. Jamie Brake and Catherine Losier on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### June 2023 Small-Scale Excavation

This was the state of the historical and archaeological knowledge before a team of six archaeologists from Memorial University (Dr. Catherine Losier (PI); Drs. Paul Ledger, Pete Withridge and Véronique Forbes; graduate students Kassandra Drake and Pier-Ann Milliard) undertook a limited testing of Turpin's Island to better assess the archaeological potential of

a fine-grained chronology of the site (Figure 9).

The first objective proved to be straightforward thanks to excellent weather. Dr. Pete Withridge employed three DJI drones on site: a Phantom 3 Pro, a Mavic 2 Pro and a Mavic Mini. In addition, time lapse videos were generated with an iPhone 14 Pro and DJI Osmo Mobile 3 gimbal mounted on a camera tripod. Table 1 summarizes the number of files and file sizes. In total, 1623 still images (17.67 GB) and 13 videos (0.92 GB) were created of the site and hillslope on the adjacent mainland. The Phantom 3 Pro represents an earlier generation (2016) of camera drone that is relatively bulky, hence exceptionally stable in windy conditions, and yielded stills of 4.9-5.8 MB each. The newer Mavic 2 Pro is much more compact and has an improved camera that produced vertical stills (i.e., while mapping) of 11.3-15.7 MB each. The Mavic Mini produced small stills (4.0-5.0 MB), but is small, agile and was useful for generating video in flyovers of the site. Each worked most effectively when operated with different mapping apps (DJI GS Pro, PIX4D, or Copterius) and different devices connected to the controllers (iPad, iPad Air or iPhone). The iPhone 14 Pro mounted on a tripod was used for



creating time-lapse videos of the test excavations in Mimo that will be useful for public outreach.

The Mavic 2 Pro imagery proved to be far superior to the others for photogrammetry. 3D models, orthophotomosaics and false colour 2D digital elevation models (DEMs) were created in Agisoft Metashape Pro (1.7.3) based on images generated by flying the drone in DJI GS Pro. Four ground control points (GCPs) were laid out around the margins of the mapped areas and later shot in with the total station. While the orthophotomosaics provide a valuable high resolution photographic overview of the site, suitable for a GIS base map, the 3D and DEM models are especially useful for detecting features on the site surface that are often not legible in photographs

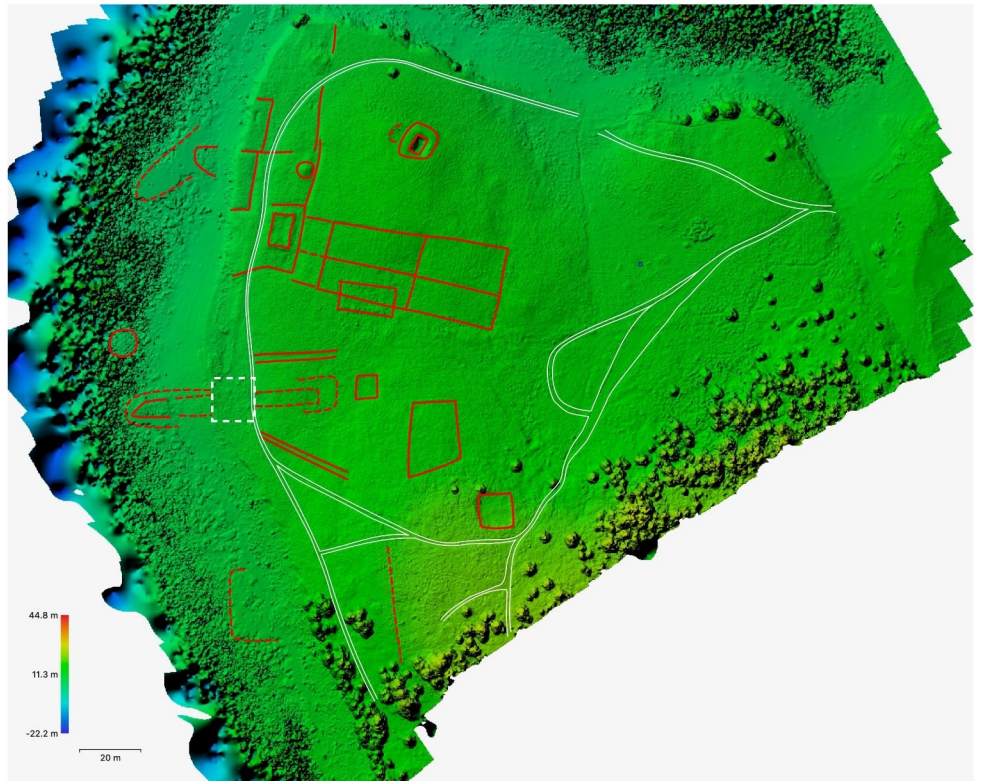


Figure 10: Digital elevation model (DEM) of Turpin’s Island with features highlighted in red (Pete Whitridge, 2023).

due to the highly variable colouring of the vegetation, which ranged from tan to dark green at this time of year. The false colour models, in particular, capture elevation changes on a scale of a couple of centimetres using subtle variance in shading that allows surficial features to be readily discerned in plan view. On this basis, rectilinear ditches, cellars and walls, as well as offshore footings for wharves, were outlined on the model (Figure 10) and will be used to guide further investigation.

The second objective was to excavate a trench at the head of a stage to get a sense of past human occupations. The placement of the trench was motivated by the fact that in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, the excavation associated with the stage gave fantastic

results and allowed to obtain a complete chronology of the occupation of the Anse à Bertrand site (Losier 2021; Losier et al. 2023). Although, the results diverged from the initial expectations, they are far from being uninteresting. We excavated a unit of 1 meter by 1 meter down to the natural layer. The recording system used is the lot system used by Park Canada and this unit is named 1A.

The sod (1A1; average thickness of 10 centimetres) was first remove and a small assemblage of artefacts was recovered. Artefacts dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century were found together: a plastic gun cartridge, ballast flints, transfer print whiteware, a wine bottle sherd, a pipe stem and a fragment of brick or roof tile. The first soil layer (1A2; average thickness of 10 centimetres) rich with artefacts can be associated with a French occupation. The assemblage is described below. The next layer (1A3; excavated on 30 centimetres) differed from 1A2 by the pres-

Table 1: Turpin’s Island drone and phone imagery inventory, June 2023.

Device	Date	Nbr. stills	File size (GB)	Nbr. videos	File size (GB)
Phantom 3 Pro	13-juin	379	2,03	-	-
Mavic 2 Pro	13-juin	577	7,41	-	-
Mavic 2 Pro	14-juin	651	8,17	-	-
Mavic Mini	14-juin	16	0,06	7	0,56
iPhone 14 Pro	14-juin	-	-	6	0,36
<b>Total</b>		1623	17,67	13	0,92



**Figure 11: Artefacts testifying of a French occupation recovered in layer 1A2, Unit 1A.**

ence of a silty soil and an increased in the proportion of rock in the matrix. 1A3 was extremely compact and essentially consisted mainly of rocks (1 to 20 centimetres in diameter) that were rounded at the surface of the layer and angular toward the base. This is most likely a natural layer (undisturbed and non-anthropic) as the only artefact was found in the upper part of

layer 1A3: one fragment of flint and three fragments of nails. No feature was found in this unit.

The stratigraphy of this sector of Turpin's Island appears peculiar. It almost looks like the top of the profile has been shaved off. Indeed, after removing the sod and a thin layer representing modern disturbance of the site (1A1), the next layer is the testi-

mony of the French occupation of the site, dating most likely from before 1713. It looks like the layers representing the occupations dating from later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century are missing. It is to be expected that some erosion of the shoreline created this situation. It seems that the sector where we excavated was disturbed, the DEM map shows that the terrestrial part of a feature, likely the stage, is missing in the area where we excavated (see white rectangle with dotted line on Figure 10). It is not impossible that perturbation of this sector took place during the 1929 tsunami or another erosion episode, but more research needs to be done regarding this hypothesis.

The most exciting aspect of the excavation of unit 1A is the artefact assemblage recovered in 1A2 representing the French occupation of the site. The assemblage dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is very similar to the assemblage dating from the same period found at Anse à Bertrand in Saint-Pierre. The collection consists of 15 sherds of Bessin-Cotentin stoneware (Normandy), 12 sherds of Mortainais-Domfrontais stoneware (Normandy), 18 fragments of pipe stems, one with a maker's mark identified as Reuben Sidney, Southampton (1687-1748), one fragment of pipe bowl, four sherds of wine bottles, two sherds of blue-green French glass, one sherd of window glass (probably out of context), two sherds of translucent glass (probably out of context); one sherd of a Saintonge pitcher? handle, one sherd of a Saintonge bowl, three

sherds of whiteware with a blue transfer print decoration (probably out of context), one sherd of porcelain, one opaque white glass button, 19 fragments of flint (only samples of the flint was recovered) (Figure 11). In terms of metal, 27 nails or nail fragments, five iron concretions and one lead nodule were recovered.

The only major difference with the Anse à Bertrand collection is the discovery of 14 small fragments of Basque roof tiles as these objects are not present in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century context in Saint-Pierre. This observation raises three questions: 1) are the Basque tile fragments present in a French layer due to disturbance of the soil profile, after all whiteware and window glass are present in the layer; 2) are the Basque tiles associated with the French occupation of Little St. Lawrence, we know that Basque ships were regularly outfitted in Bordeaux (Turgeon 1986: 532; 1998); or 3) is there a distinct Basque occupation at Little St. Lawrence? Archives seems to suggest it might be the case. These questions will only be answered by further excavations at the site. But either perspective is interesting.

The third objective of the field work was to undertake a palaeoenvironmental sampling in a small peatland that developed in lower lying areas in the north of Turpin's Island. The basin measures approximately 100 meters north-south by 30 meters east-west and appears to be fed by groundwater and runoff from surrounding slopes (Figure 12). The topography of the peatland is relatively level and dominated

**Figure 12: View across the peatland to the east of Turpin's Island. The sampling location is visible at the centre of the photograph.**



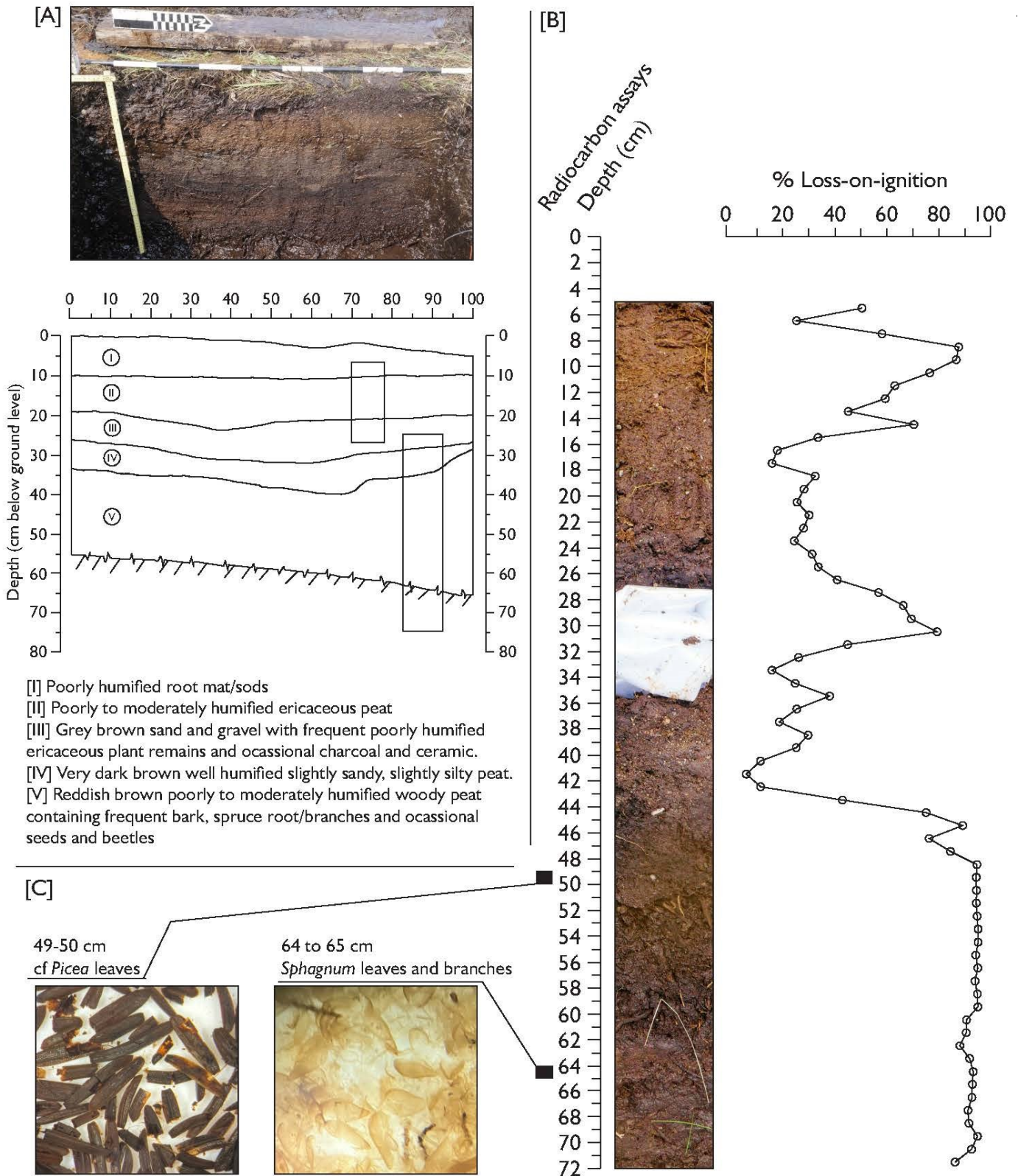


Figure 13: [A] Photography and profile drawing and sediment descriptions of the western profile of palaeoenvironmental sampling trench 2A illustrating location of monoliths collected for pollen analysis. [B] Composite photograph of the monolith samples collected from trench 2A. The plastic bag between 27 and 36 centimetres was placed in a void where there was incomplete recovery of sediment. Loss-on-ignition (LOI) analysis of sediments showing the relative flux of minerogenic sediment into the peatland (lower LOI values indicate mineral sediment). [C] Images of the two samples of macrofossils submitted to the Lalonde AMS laboratory at the University of Ottawa for radiocarbon dating.

by sedges and *Sphagnum* mosses with only rare occurrences of ericaceous and other woody heaths/shrubs.

A cursory auger survey was undertaken to establish the general depth of peat across the basin. Little variation in sediment depth and type was observed and a location was selected near the centre of the basin for a 1 meter by 1 meter sampling trench identified as unit 2A. The root mat and upper sods (2A1) were removed in approximately 15 centimetre thick blocks across the trench using a knife, trowel and spade. The excavation of 2A2 was then undertaken in arbitrary levels through alternately sandy-rich and well-humified peat deposits to a depth of approximately 40 centimetres below ground level. These deposits contained occasional fragments of ceramic between 20 to 25 centimetres below ground level and small fragments of charcoal were observed throughout. Between 40 and 45 centimetres below ground level the deposit transitioned to a poorly humified wood peat (2A3) containing frequent roots and branches and stems of above ground elements of species of *Picea* (Spruce), *Alnus* (Alder) and *Betula* (Birch). From around 55 centimetres below ground level a large log/trunk, dipping at an approximately 30-degree angle, was encountered in the southeast corner of the trench.

The trench was terminated at approximately 60 to 65 centimetres below ground level and the west profile was selected for palaeoenvironmental sampling. Prior to sampling, the west face was recorded and the trench deepened in the northwest corner to a depth of 80 centimetres below ground level to permit the collection of samples. Two overlapping monolith tins were inserted into the western profile of the trench to recover palaeoenvironmental samples for pollen analysis (Figure 13). The monolith tins were cut from the profile using a knife, trowel and spade before being wrapped in plastic and transferred to the PEAT lab at Memorial University for sub-sampling.

The analysis of the palaeoenvironmental samples is currently ongoing. However, the stratigraphy

and the loss-on-ignition test indicates changes in the paleoenvironment of Turpin's island (Figure 13). The two samples sent to the Lalonde AMS laboratory at the University of Ottawa for radiocarbon dating will allow us to better understand if and when these changes occur, and according to the dates, they will indicate which of the groups that settled on Turpin's Island they are associated with. We are planning to send additional samples for radiocarbon dating with the objective of developing a fine-grained chronology to precisely date evidence of anthropogenic disturbance in the landscape.

The results of the initial historical, archaeological and paleoenvironmental analysis are absolutely exciting. There is no doubt that Turpin's Island holds tremendous research potential spanning over the 500 years of occupation of the site. As of now, our goal is to produce a biography of the site from the first human occupation to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and to link the occupations of Turpin's Island, their continuity and changes, to the geopolitics of the Atlantic world, particularly in relation with European expansion from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward.

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