

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

Scaling up data collection

Memorial University Field School 2025

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Figure 1: Extract from an Anonymous world map held at the Vatican Library (Urb.lat.274) dating from 1530 showing *Terra delosa Bacalaos* (Newfoundland) and *P.S. Lorenzo*

After the 2024 survey, which enabled the identification of several features on the site of Turpin's Island (ChAu-05), historical and archaeological analysis continued, and several aspects of the site's past were documented in greater detail. Much of this new historical information emerged from research conducted by Kassandra Drake (2025) in the context of her Master's thesis entitled *An Investigation of Human Activity and Environmental Change at Turpin's Island through Palaeoenvironmental and Historical Archives*. It must first be mentioned that Kassandra Drake (2025: 69) discovered a new map bearing the toponym *P.S. Lorenzo*, which probably means "Puerto San Lorenzo" (figure 1). This map was made in 1530, making it one of the oldest known maps of Newfoundland. The first mention of the Chapeau Rouge, the mountain that sits at the entrance of St. Lawrence harbour, is visible on a map made by Gaspar Viegas in 1534. On this map we read

the toponym *C. do Piloto* which is a direct reference to the importance the Chapeau Rouge as a navigation landmark (Drake 2025: 69). Other new information regarding a possible interruption in the site occupation after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (Drake 2025: 137-139) and the occupation of the site by the Thorne family was also discovered (Drake 2025: 77-80). This new knowledge will be described in greater detail in later sections of the report.

During the 2025 fieldwork, we continued the test-pitting survey initiated in 2024 and focused on two larger sectors in order to gather additional data on both the French occupation of the site, and the Newman & Co. fishing premises. In total, 12 test pits were excavated (bringing the number to 54 since 2023). Two larger units (1B and 3A) were excavated, and four additional features were identified and described during the campaign, which took place between June 24 and July 18, 2025. As in 2024, the



Figure 2: The 2025 Memorial Archaeology field school crew (from Left to right): Brendan Ryan, Clarke Simonsen, James Foss, Kassandra Drake (MA student and teaching assistant), Sanaa Mrad, Kayla Low (MA student and research assistant), Anna Pugh (MA student and teaching assistant), Valentin De Filippo (PhD student and research assistant), Adam Farrell, Mark Stephenson, Samuel Gregory, Raphaëlle Gascon, Rosalie Collette, Maya Loredo, Dr. Catherine Losier

fieldwork was devoted to research and student training. Ten undergrad students and four teaching assistants (three MA and one PhD student) took part in the project (figure 2). In addition to the excavations, we conducted a georadar survey in targeted areas of the site and an underwater survey of the harbour.

New Insights into the Historical Context of Turpin's Island

Our current objective is to produce a biography of the site from the earliest human occupation to the twentieth century, and to link the occupants of Turpin's Island, including their continuity and change, to the evolving geopolitics of the Atlantic world, particularly in relation to European expansion from the sixteenth century onward. This project is part of the *Transforming Climate Action* initiative, through which our research team aims to document adaptation to coastal life on the South Coast of Newfoundland, mitigate the loss of heritage caused by climate change, and preserve data that are crucial for enhancing tourism opportunities in the *Chapeau Rouge* region (<https://www.ofi.ca/fr/tca-projects/the-future-of-coastal-communities>).

Considering the results of the 2024 survey, our objectives for the 2025 fieldwork were as such: 1) to continue the test pit campaign in discrete locations, 2) to open larger excavation units in selected sectors: in Feature 3 associated with Newman & Co. and in the sector of stage 1 where numerous French artifacts were recovered during previous excavation (figure 3).

Once again, Turpin's Island did not disappoint. We had our share of surprises during the 2025 excavations: additional features were identified, and we gathered more precise information on the site's occupation (table 1). During the field season of 2025, activities were concentrated on the west side of the site, where most discoveries have been made to date. Interestingly, the discovery of some features occurred simply because the team happened to walk along different paths while moving across the site.

As in the paper presented in the 2024 Provincial Archaeology Office Review, the results of the 2025 season will be discussed according to the different periods of the site occupation. This approach represents the most meaningful way to interpret the various archaeological discoveries. The historical context, however, will be addressed only briefly in this report. We invite readers to consult last year's Provincial Archaeology Office 2024 Archaeology Review (Losier 2025: 188–201) or Kassandra Drake's MA thesis (Drake 2025) for further information.

From the initial occupation of the site to 1713

As noted in the introduction, the earliest known reference to the St. Lawrence area currently appears on a map dating to 1530 (figure 1). This indicates that the area of St. Lawrence was known in the early days of exploitation of the marine resources of Newfoundland by European fishing crews. The specific mention *P.S. Lorenzo* is an Iberic toponym suggesting a Basque presence in the area. This is supported by a few archival discoveries relating to the Basque presence in



Figure 3: Map of Turpin's Island showing test pits, units, features, stages and landscape characteristics. The features and sectors of the site are identified to their archaeological contexts (map: V. de Filippo and C. Losier)

Table 1: Description of the features identified at Turpin's Island, 2023-2025

	Identification	Elevation of feature top (m)	Diagnostic artefacts	Size of Feature (m) (NS X EW)	Context	Description
1	Stone cellar?	6,767	Dark green glass bottle, cut nail	8.00m X 5.50m	19th-20th century	A large feature, approximately 1.5 m deep and rectangular in shape, is excavated into a small hill. The base of the feature is filled with large rounded and sub-rounded stones. It appears to be a structure that collapsed inward, with remnants of "walls" visible on all four sides. This feature may represent a stone cellar. Mortar is abundant throughout the soil, and cement mortar is affixed to many of the large stones and bricks at the base. The feature is possibly associated with families who lived on the Island, such as the Thornes (mid-19th century) and the Turpins (early to mid-20th century). It also seems to correspond to the Orlebar survey conducted in 1860–1861.
2	Foundation	3,877	Pearlware, Metal, Nail, Fresh bones (big mammal)	12.60m X 7.90m	19th-20th century	Rectangular stone foundation, the interior as been excavated. On the south side, there is a large accumulation of rounded stones ranging from 15–35 cm in size. In TP#24, the foundation of the feature is represented by a line of large stones, approximately 30 cm in diameter. This feature is located near the shoreline and may be associated with a fishing stage. Artefacts and ecofacts (particularly fresh large mammal bones) suggest an occupation during the 20th century. Local community members have reported that a fishing stage once stood north of Feature 2.
3	Platform surrounded by a drain	2,551	Pearlware, Pipe stem, English stoneware, glass	20.10m X 7.90m	18th-19th century	This feature is the most intriguing on the site. It consists of a wall enclosing the northern, eastern, and southern sides, forming the exterior limit of the feature. Immediately inside this wall is a drain approximately 0.50 m wide, defined by another line of stones identified in TP#29. We are not certain if it was present in TP#32, as the position of that test pit may not have allowed us to locate it. Excavation in TP#29 suggests there is no constructed "floor" or built base on the platform in the center of the feature; however, we were working at the edge of the platform, and more extensive excavation will be needed to better understand its middle section. The western side, which faces the shoreline, appears to be a retaining wall made of large stones. In 2025, TP#43 was excavated to document the interior of the feature; however, it did not reveal any built elements or evidence of disturbance within the matrix. This feature is most likely associated with the Newman & Co. occupation of the site. Its elevation corresponds to the surface of the terrace. In 2025, unit 3A was excavated to better document this feature.
4	House	4,681	Whiteware, Pipe stem, Nails, Window Glass, Wine bottle, Splitting wedge	9.15m X 12.00m	18th-19th century	Large 12.40m X 9.50m depression. Excavation in TP#31 on the north side of the feature revealed the exterior wall of a building and, on the interior side, a brick hearth in an excellent state of preservation. There is potentially a trench or drain running parallel to the exterior of the northern wall, which appears to align with the southern drain of Feature #3. It is possible that the wall collapsed inward on the south side of the feature. The building is constructed of stones joined with mortar, and the hearth is made of bricks also bonded with mortar. Current hypotheses suggest that this feature may be associated with either the Newman & Co. occupation of the site or the Thorne family.
5	House pit?	9,087	No artefacts	10.70m X 9.50m	?	A large depression measuring approximately 10.70 m by 9.50 m was identified in the landscape. No obvious walls or cultural remains were observed, and no artefacts were recovered. We initially believed this to be the location of a building. The feature slopes downward from south to north and from west to east, with the lowest point located at the northeast corner. In 2024, test pit #42 was excavated and in 2025, two test pits #47 and #48 were excavated to document this feature. It was impossible to determine its function.

6	Trench	3,106	Normandy stoneware, wine bottle, pipe stem	Estimation: 3.40m X 1.30m	18th century	A test pit was excavated on the western edge of a pit or trench. The west side of the test pit is higher, sloping toward the east, with a height difference of approximately 30 cm. Within the trench, almost exclusively Normandy stoneware was recovered, along with a piece of wood at its base. TP#38 was excavated on the western side of the trench. Based on these findings, it appears that this trench may be associated with the French occupation of the site.
7	House	5,5	Window glass, Nails, Ceramics	Estimation: 14.80m X 16.00m	20th century	The Turpin house is represented by two concrete blocks and a slight rise, likely marking the northern side of the structure. This feature was documented after the field season during lab work, using the GIS database and field observations. According to Leo Molloy, this is the location of the Turpin house, which he recalls visiting as a child. In 2025, TP#46 was excavated within the feature and revealed a significant quantity of window glass (consistent with the historic photograph of the house) as well as 20th-century artefacts.
8	Oven	5,98	Cut nails	7.00m X 5.5m	after 1790 - 20th century	A brick-and-stone oven, conical in shape, was identified. Test Pit 45 (1 m × 0.50 m) was excavated on the south-facing side of the feature. The stones are joined with mortar, and the foundation of the oven is constructed of red bricks that have been darkened by exposure to fire. On the west side of the feature, there appears to be a built section still in place. A charcoal layer was present directly above the brick foundation. The exact purpose of the oven is unknown; however, no metalworking refuse was found, suggesting it may have been used for food preparation rather than industrial purposes.
9	Trench	3,44	Pearlware, Mineral Coal	3,42m X 14,34	18th-20th century	A trench oriented at approximately 330 degrees was identified. Its purpose remains unclear. The most significant observation is the large quantity of mineral coal found in association with Pearlware in Test Pit #44, which was excavated on the northern side of the trench. The proximity of Feature 2 raises the possibility of a functional or spatial link between the two features.
10	Building?	2,34	20th century artefacts, French Normandy stoneware	19,20m X 9,25	18th-20th century	A large rectangular feature runs parallel to the shoreline, situated between Stage 1 and Stage 2. The feature follows the slope rising from south to north and west to east, with the lowest point at the southwest corner (1.68 m) and the highest point at the northeast corner (3.24 m). The structure is built using dry masonry. Only the southwest wall was documented through excavation (TP#54). A line of stones was traced on the ground, and GPR detected contrasts on the north side of the feature, although the grid did not fully cover it. Dating this feature is challenging: modern artefacts were found near the surface of TP#54, while French 17th- and 18th-century artefacts were recovered from deeper layers. Inside the feature, TP#49 and TP#50 were excavated; in both, a dark brown (almost black) silty layer was identified above the natural substrate. The presence of this layer is consistent with 17th and 18th century occupation. Perhaps a posthole is present in TP#50. *It is possible that what we currently identify as Feature 10 actually consists of two separate features. One may represent a 20th-century store/stage, potentially associated with a circular pile of rocks observed in the water near the shoreline in front of the southern part of Feature 10. This hypothesis requires further investigation.*

11	Stone Wall	5,53	Pearlware	27,98m X n/a	18th-19th century	A stone wall, oriented north–south, is located on the eastern side of the oven (Feature 8). The wall appears to support a terrace, and future investigations should verify whether a building once stood on this terrace. TP#51 was excavated to document the wall, revealing that it is constructed using dry masonry. Artefacts associated with the Newman & Co. occupation were found in association with this feature.
	Stage 1	-	-	8.50m X ?	16th-20th century	Remains of a fishing stage are located on the western side of Turpin’s Island. This is the southern stage, constructed of large stones measuring approximately 30–60 cm. Archival sources suggest that this stage is quite old, likely dating back to the 16th century. It is associated with the sector where evidence of French occupation—and potentially Basque activity—has been identified.
	Stage 2	-	-	6.00m X ?	16th-20th century	Remains of the fishing stage on the west of Turpin's island. This is the northern stage. It is made of large stones approximately 30-60 centimeter. Some pieces of wood pare present in the stones they are leaying east to west. Archives are suggesting this stage to be old, probably already there in the 16th century. It is associated to the sector where the Newman and co features are located, but it could be older.

Little St. Lawrence during the 16th century (Losier 2025: 191) and the Basque roof tiles found at the site. In 2025, more Basque tile sherds were found at the site, but no feature or archaeological contexts were associated directly with a Basque occupation at the site. According to archives and historians, Basque cod fishers were replaced by French crews around 1640 (Losier 2025: 191).

The French occupation of the site was again documented during the 2025 field season. A new building was identified (Feature 10), which seems to be a large rectangular stone structure (figure 3). A line of stones was traced on the ground on the north, east and south sides of the presumed feature, and GPR detected contrasts on the north side of the feature, although the grid did not fully cover this area (this will be discussed later in the report). Feature 10 (or at

least part of it) is running parallel to the shoreline and situated between Stage 1 and Stage 2. It is interesting to note that cow parsley and stinging nettles have been identified in what we think is the interior of Feature 10. This is the only location in the site where these species have been identified which might reflect a difference in the nature of the soil. The feature follows the natural topography of the land, rising from south to north and west to east, with the lowest point at the southwest corner (1.68 m above sea level) and the highest point at the northeast corner (3.24 m above sea level). The foundation of the structure is built using dry masonry. Only the southwest wall was documented through excavation (Test Pit 54) (figure 4).

Dating this feature is challenging. Modern artifacts were recovered near the surface of Test Pit

Figure 4: Part of Feature 10 in Test Pit 54 and artifacts found in layer 6, Most relate to the French occupation of the site





Figure 5: Location of rust stain on the stones of the feature in unit 1B.

6 meter trench (Unit 1B) was opened just east of the remains of Stage 1 (figure 3). This trench was placed immediately west of, and contiguous with, Unit 1A excavated in 2023. The objective was to further document the area associated with Stage 1, where a significant quantity of French ceramics was recovered in 2023. Alongside a substantial assemblage of French artifacts, the stone foundation of a structure was identified between 1.20 m and 1.40 m above sea level. It should be noted that this feature was not identified in the 1 by 1 meter unit (1A) excavated in 2023, and we believe that the limited area investigated at

54, while French 17th and 18th century artifacts were found in deeper layers. Within the feature, Test Pits 49 and 50 were excavated, and in both cases a dark brown (almost black) silty layer was identified above the natural substrate, matching what was documented in Test Pit 36 during the 2024 season. The presence of this layer is consistent with the 17th or 18th century occupation of the site. It is also important to note that a possible posthole may be present in Test Pit 50.

If an association with the French occupation of the site is hypothesized, it remains possible that Feature 10, as currently defined, represents two distinct features. One may be associated with a 19th to early 20th century small stage visible on the 1861 *Map of Burin Harbours* (Losier 2025:198), potentially corresponding to a circular pile of rocks observed in the water near the shoreline in front of the southern portion of Feature 10. This could explain the important number of 20th century artifacts found in the first few layers of Test Pit 54. This hypothesis will require further investigation.

In addition to the test pits excavated in what we identify as the “French sector” of the site, a 1 x

that time prevented us from recognizing the structure.

It must also be said that the feature was not easy to recognize even in the bigger trench. Indeed, the feature slopes down toward the shoreline (west) which logically follows the topography. The matrix accumulations in the west side of the trench were different and thicker than in the east, most probably cause by the events affecting the shoreline of the harbour (important winter storms, ice pushing on the shore, the 1929 tsunami or the burst of the damn of Little St. Lawrence in 1941) generating important accumulation of sediments.

In the end, the feature was identified thanks to the many rusted nails found directly on top of it and rust from nails staining the stones (figure 5). This is most probably an indication that a wooden structure was standing on the stone foundation. It fell into disrepair and eventually decayed on top of the stone foundation. The chronological association to the French occupation of the site was done thanks to the artifacts found on top of the stones feature, the vast majority of them being French (Normandy stoneware, Saintonge and Breton coarse earthenware) and

dating from the 17th century to the beginning of the 18th century (most probably from before 1713, the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht).

It is also necessary to try to determine the function of the feature. Its location suggests an association with stage 1, which we suspect was present during the French occupation of the site. In his 1713 survey, William Taverner recorded that a French planter fished from Little St. Lawrence during his visit to the harbour and that two stages were present there (Losier 2025: 192). We also realised that the trench is most probably a very small section of the feature as according to the pictures of French *chafaud* (stage) in the Petit Nord taken by Paul-Émile Miot these features were most probably 25-35 meters long by 10-15 meters wide (figure 6). These dimensions could match the remains of the stages. Additionally, the cod bone layer – most likely deposited during the French occupation of the site, as indicated by the artifacts recovered within it in Test Pit 36 – may be located outside the feature, the cod remains being discarded outside of the stage (Losier 2025:193–195). If so, this would suggest that the northern limit of the feature lies between Unit 1B and Test Pit 36. More investigation will be needed to fully document this sector of the site, but the data are so far really interesting.

The French fished in *Petit St. Laurent* until the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht. Taverner reports that when he surveyed the harbour two fishing rooms were present and that the French inhabitant he met did not take the Oath to the British crown. It is therefore presumed that he had to leave his fishing premises. When James Cook drew his chart of the Burin Peninsula, he mentions that the harbour of Little St. Lawrence was not occupied, at the difference of the one of St. Lawrence (Losier et al. 2024: 97). It is presumed that Turpin's Island remained unoccupied from the treaty of Utrecht until Newman & Co. settled a fishing station on the island in 1784.

The pollen analysis performed by Kassandra Drake suggests that between in the 16th-17th century (cal. 1470-1685 AD) there was a shift from a primarily forested landscape to a heath-shrub dominant community due to deforestation, along with an abrupt increase in charcoal due to fire activity. This episode of deforestation is associated with the initial Basque and French occupation of the site. The sec-

ond phase of occupation (cal. 1675-1815) reflected in the paleoenvironmental data is a continued opening of the landscape followed by an apparent rebound in vegetation (Drake 2025: 138). This seems to suggest that the site was abandoned at some point during this period and it would make sense that the abandonment coincided with the departure of the French fisherfolks around 1713 and the settlement of Turpin's Island as a base for the Newman & Co.

Newman & Co. 1784 to 1810

It is in 1784 that Little St. Lawrence was established as a base for the Newman & Co. fishing enterprise (Matthews 2003). 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) to Newfoundland (Losier et al. 2024: 98). In 2024, two features (3, a platform and 4, a house) were associated with the Newman & Co. fishing premises (Losier 2025: 194-197).

In 2025, a new feature (Feature 11) was associated to the Newman & Co. occupation of the site. It is a stone wall-oriented north-south, this wall is located on the eastern side of the oven (Feature 8). It appears to support a terrace, and future investigations should verify whether a building once stood on this terrace. Test Pit 51 was excavated to document the wall, revealing that it is constructed using dry masonry. Artifacts associated with the Newman & Co. occupation were found in association with this feature.

Feature 3 already documented in 2024 was at the heart of the project this year. A big unit of 4 meters x 2.5 meters was partially excavated at the southwest corner of the structure. The unit 3A was placed so the exterior of the feature, the drain and stones bordering it and the interior of the features was captured. This was an ambitious endeavour as we have begun the excavation at the end of the second week of fieldwork. The result was that after removing the sod (3A1) and the layer representing the abandonment of the site 3A2, only the interior of the drain 3A3 was excavated. This unit will need to be reopened in 2026 to finish the excavation, and perhaps gain a better understanding of the purpose of this feature (figure 7).

The excavation of the drain was extremely interesting in terms of material culture recovered and it confirmed its construction method. The drain was

a)



b)

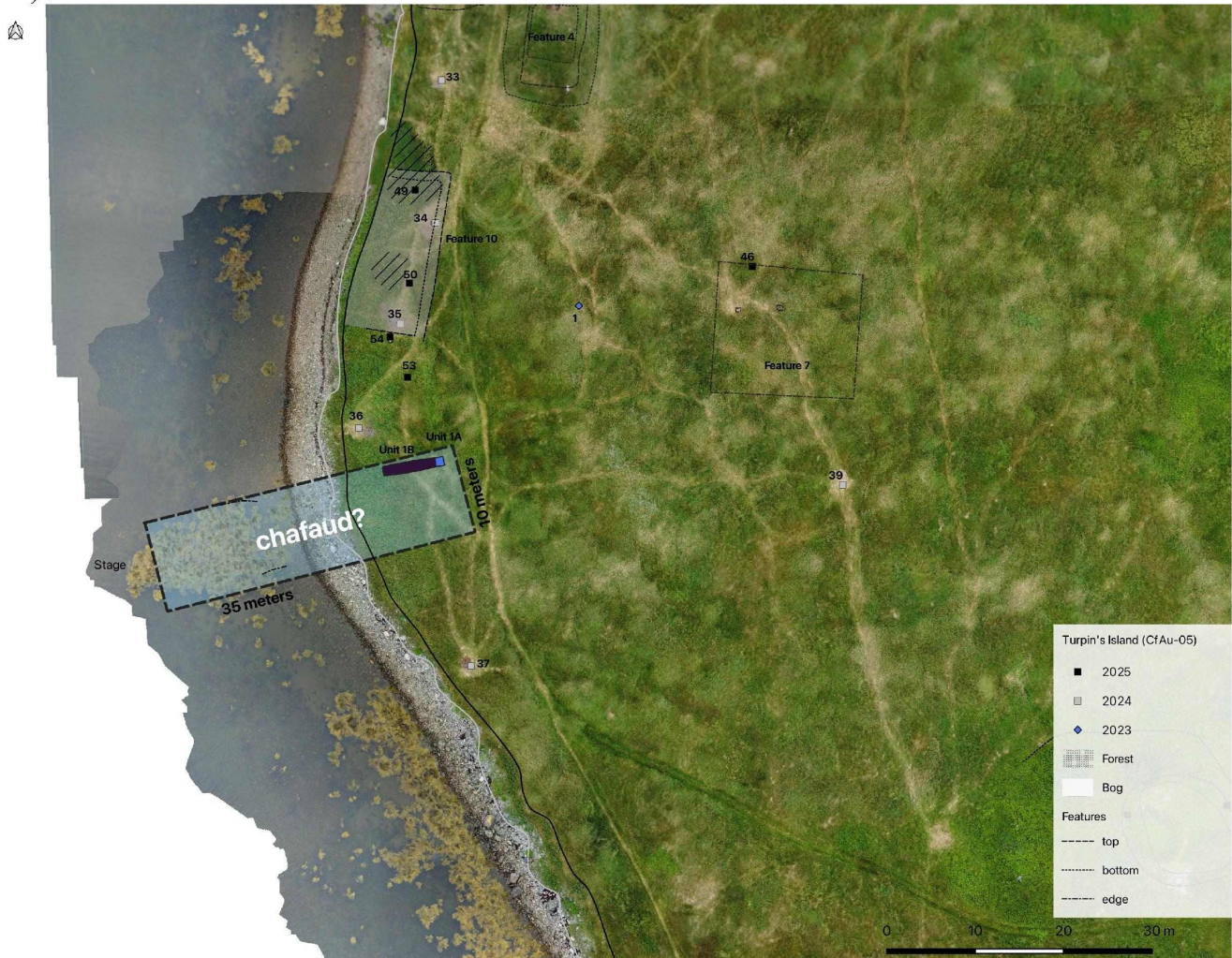


Figure 6: a) Chafaud in a French fishing station, Petit Nord (credit : Paul-Émile Miot (1857-1859) / Bibliothèque et Archives Canada/PA-202292) and b) hypothesis regarding the location of the chafaud in relation to stage 1



Figure 7: Drain in 3A excavated

simply excavated in the natural soil, and its bottom is covered with small 10-15 centimeters rocks not evenly distributed. The drain was bordered by a row of stones on each side most of them being 25-30 centimeters in diameter but other being as big as 60 centimeters (on the south side of the drain). The most interesting aspect of this feature is that a lot of objects were collected in it. The artifacts are undoubtedly associated with the occupation of the site by the workers of Newman & Co. The analysis is on going, but the material world of the people living at Turpin’s Island between 1783 and 1810 is represented by the assemblage, and the connection between Newfoundland and England is also reflected.

The Thorne and Turpin occupation in the 20th century

In 2024 we reported that, between October 12th and 16th, 1839, Joseph Jukes (a geologist) “was hospitably entertained by Mr. J. T [horne]—and his lady, who reside at Little St. Lawrence together with two younger brothers” (Jukes 1842:203 in Losier 2025: 199). Kassandra Drake found that “the remains of Newman & Co.’s premises at St. Lawrence, were [...] occupied by Mr. Thorn,

son of the late Mr. Thorn, who was forty-nine years agent of Newman & Co., and on his retirement from the trade, was allowed by them a pension of £40 per annum, in consideration of his services” (Tocque 1877: 178 in Drake 2025: 77). This indicates that there was a direct link between the Newman & Co. premises and the subsequent occupation by the Thorne family. Beside Feature 1 that is on the map of Burin

Harbour from 1860-1861, no features are directly associated with the Thorne family. However, it must also be considered that some buildings of the Newman & Co. premises may have been used by the Thorne family between 1810s (?) and 1860 (when the Burin harbour map was made).

The Turpin’s house (Feature 7) is marked by two concrete blocks and a slight rise in the north of the feature was formally identified as the location of the 20th century house of the Turpin family thanks to the help of our friend Leo Mulloy. In 2025, Test Pit 46 was excavated within the feature and revealed a significant quantity of window glass (consistent with the historic photograph of the house) as well as 20th

Figure 8: Artifacts associated with the Turpin’s house found in Test Pit 46. Of note is the overwhelming quantity of window glass





Figure 9: Views of the brick-and-stone oven

century artifacts (figure 8). It was also our intention to document the foundation of the house, but the 0.50 meters by 0.50 meters test pit did not allow us to fulfill this objective.

Features and contexts without dating

Feature 8 was by far the biggest surprise of the 2025 field season. The feature is, in fact, familiar to all visitors of Turpin's Island – a conical mound located north of Feature 4 and east of Feature 3. Its identification, however, was not straightforward. Because the structure was not indented, it was unlikely to be a root cellar, which often collapse inward when abandoned. It was therefore assumed to be a simple pile of stones cleared from fields to facilitate agriculture. We know that the Turpin family grew hay, making this interpretation plausible, but Test Pit 45 (1 m × 0.50 m) excavated on the south-facing side of the feature revealed otherwise.

To our surprise, we uncovered a brick-and-stone oven (figure 9). The feature measures 7.00 m x 5.50 m. The stones forming the oven are bonded with mortar, and the foundation consists of red bricks that have been darkened by exposure to heat and fire. On the east side of the feature, a built section still appears to be intact. A charcoal layer was present directly above the brick foundation.

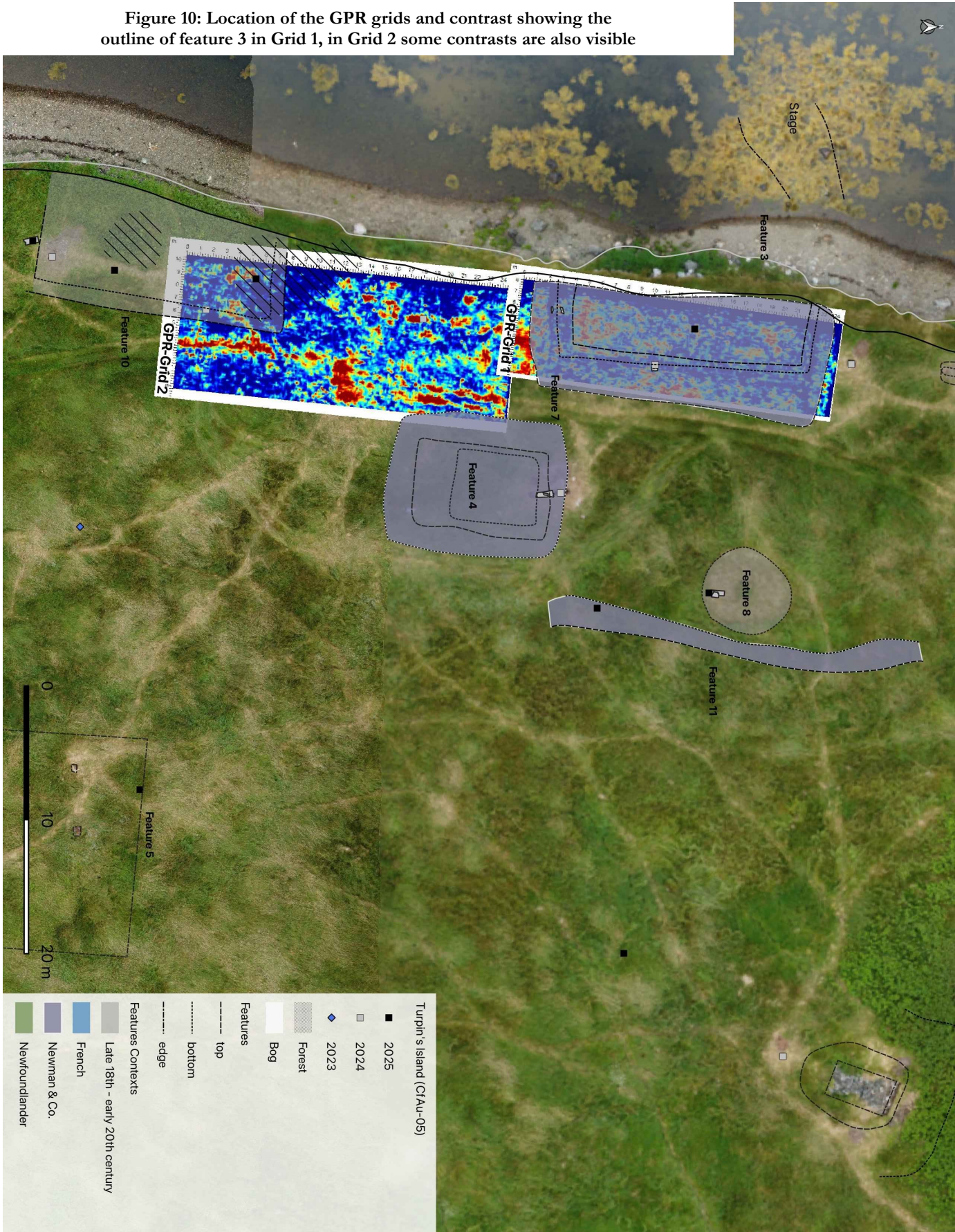
The exact purpose of the oven remains unknown; however, no metalworking refuse was recovered, suggesting it was likely used for food preparation rather than metal working activities. No artifacts

other than cut nails were found in association with the structure. This was somewhat disappointing, as the lack of diagnostic material makes the feature difficult to date. Nevertheless, the presence of cut nails indicates that the oven was likely built after 1790, when cut nail technology first became available.

Feature 9 is a trench oriented at approximately 330 degrees north, and its purpose remains unclear. The most notable finding is the substantial amount of mineral coal recovered alongside pearlware in Test Pit 44, which was excavated on the northern side of the trench. The presence of these materials raises questions about activity in this area. The proximity of Feature 2 also suggests the possibility of a functional or spatial relationship between the two features, though further investigation is needed to clarify this connection.

In 2024, we excavated Test Pit 42 to better document a large depression measuring 10.70 m by 9.50 m in the south area of the site, which we identified as Feature 5. The excavation did not provide any indication of the feature's function, and no artifacts were recovered. In 2025, we opened two additional test pits (Test Pits 47 and 48) on the east and west sides of the feature. Once again, we were unable to determine its purpose. Only a single sherd of blue decorated porcelain was recovered, found in Test Pit 47. This feature is not easy to document.

Figure 10: Location of the GPR grids and contrast showing the outline of feature 3 in Grid 1, in Grid 2 some contrasts are also visible



Scaling up data collection effort

To better understand the site, we conducted a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey led by Maria Lear, as well as an underwater survey with Neil Burgess. Maria arrived in St. Lawrence on June 30th, 2025. On Canada Day, we began setting up a grid to document Feature 3 with the GPR. The grid measured 24 meters north south and 7 meters east west. Because the feature is visible in the landscape and is surrounded by a drain, our goal was to document its interior. Unfortunately, the scan revealed very little. The rocky nature of the terrain on Turpin’s Island (and, truthfully, much of Newfoundland) often makes GPR data difficult to interpret. However,

ground truthing the site frequently helps clarify the results. It took a day and a half to complete the scan of the first grid.

On July 3rd, Maria set up a second grid contiguous to the first one. This grid measured 25 meters north-south and 10 meters east-west. The goal was to better understand the sector of the site where cow parsley and stinging nettles grow, as this vegetation is peculiar to that specific area of the site. It was also at this point that we began to suspect a feature associated with Test Pit 54 that would intersect the second GPR grid to the north. Unfortunately, the grid does not cover the entire extent of the feature, and we will need to rescan the area in full in 2026. The data is quite difficult to interpret, but since we have the opportunity to excavate the site, we can gain a better understanding of the data (figure 10).

On July 4th, 2025, Shipwreck Preservation Society of Newfoundland & Labrador diver Neil Burgess arrived in St. Lawrence with his boat, the

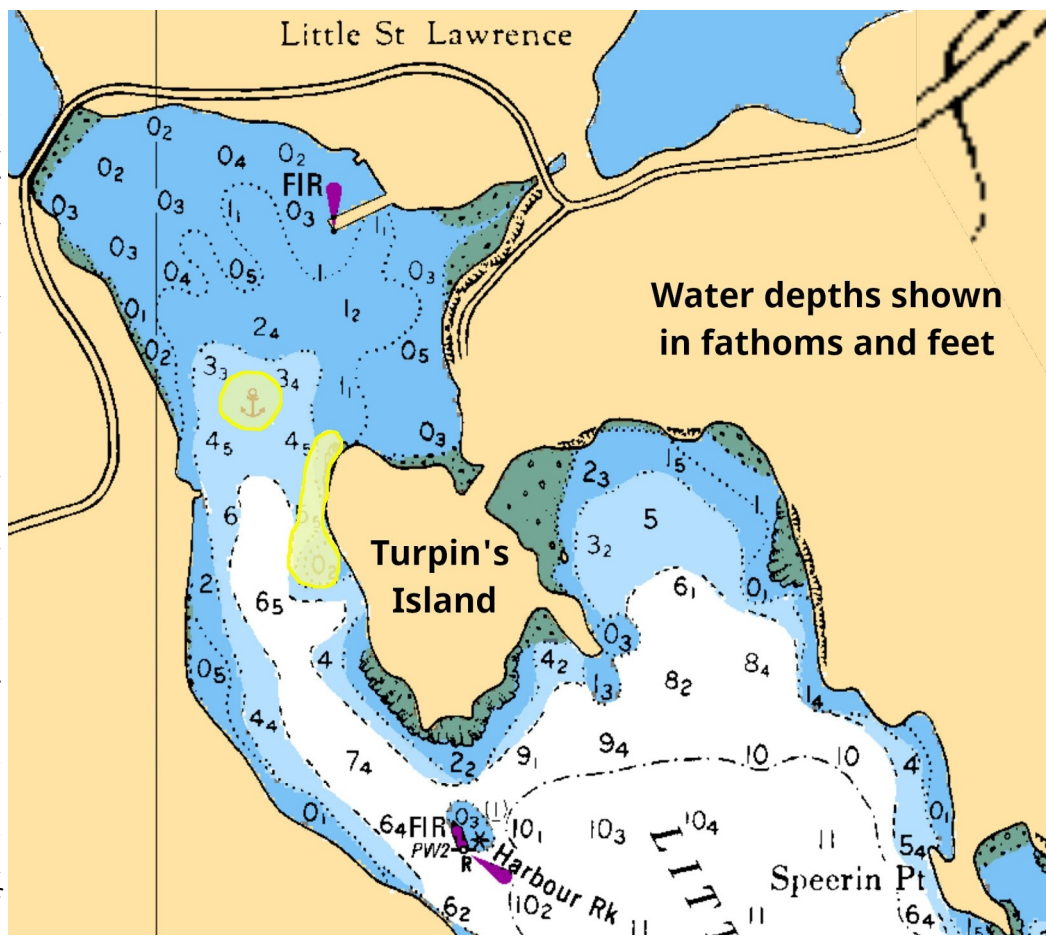


Figure 11: Map of the area (in yellow) surveyed by Neil Burgess and Brendan Ryan during their dives

Wreckfinder. Sidescan sonar surveys were conducted around the entire shoreline of Turpin’s Island and the anchorage using a Humminbird Solix 10 fishfinder. These sonar surveys revealed no visible archaeological remains on the seafloor. The sonar allowed us to record the stages at CfAu-05 and a possible post/tree south of the isthmus leading to Turpin’s Peninsula. Nothing was found at the buoy that indicates a very shallow area directly southwest of Turpin’s Island.

In the afternoon, Neil Burgess and Brendan Ryan performed two dives. First, they swam slowly south for 19 minutes along the northwest shoreline of Turpin’s Island at depths between 0 and 2.5 m (figure 11). They then swam back north along the same shoreline for 10 minutes, this time at depths between 3 and 6 m. They conducted a visual survey for archaeological remains and took *in situ* photographs of anything observed along the rocky bottom. During the shallow transect, we encountered six ceramic vessel fragments, including pieces of a recently

broken teacup and a jar. No artifacts were found along the deeper transect. They also swam around two shoreline rock piles that may represent the remains of old wharves, but no wooden timbers were observed.

The same divers also conducted a 12-minute visual inspection of an area labelled as an anchorage on Canadian Hydrographic Service nautical chart 4642 (Great St. Lawrence Harbour) at depths between 8 and 10 m. This area is located 180 m north-west of the northern tip of Turpin's Island, in the middle of Little St. Lawrence Harbour. The bottom in this area consisted of soft sediment with few rocks, and no archaeological remains were observed. These surveys were carried out under PAO permit 25.19 issued to Neil Burgess and the Shipwreck Preservation Society of Newfoundland & Labrador.

Community engagement

To enhance local awareness and engagement, the team developed a set of outreach materials – including a storyboard, road sign, and 300 printed brochures, distributed at several community locations – to inform residents about the project. These initiatives were very well received, generating numerous positive comments and noticeably increased visits to the site; several residents noted that they had not realized the site was open to visitors during the 2024 excavation, and the road sign served as a clear invitation to the public. At least 41 individuals visited the site while the team was present, with many more likely stopping by after work hours or on weekends.

Building on growing community interest, the team continued its tradition of presenting fieldwork results through public events, hosting two engagement sessions on July 17th, 2025: an afternoon workshop with the St. Lawrence Community Youth Network, where 18 participants aged 7 to 16 attended a presentation by Dr. Catherine Losier and took part in

an artifact workshop with the crew, and an evening Community Night at the St. Lawrence Recreation Center, which drew 56 attendees for a public lecture and artifacts display. Throughout their stay, team members actively participated in community life interactions that proved essential for fostering dialogue, answering questions, and strengthening relationships. During fieldwork, the students wrote blog posts, that acted as weekly reports. We invite readers to consult them to get further detail regarding this project (<https://www.thecodroad.com/blog>).

Acknowledgement

The 2025 field school was extraordinary. A heartfelt thank you to the entire field crew for being so wonderful. Your positive attitudes, hard work, and dedication made the season both productive and enjoyable, and we created countless memories along the way. Many thanks as well to the team at the Provincial Archaeology Office for their support, trust, and time. We are deeply grateful for support from SSHRC, TCA and Memorial University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, all of which made the fieldwork possible. A huge thank you to the communities of Little St. Lawrence and St. Lawrence for welcoming us so warmly and for sharing in our excitement about the project. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Karen Lundrigan of the Little St. Lawrence Service District and the St. Lawrence Historical Advisory Committee for their invaluable assistance. Finally, we are beyond grateful to the Town of St. Lawrence and Amanda Reeves for providing us with the lab space that supported so much of our work.

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