

Extra-Housepit Excavation 6 Excavation Results

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Extra Housepit Excavation (EHPE) 6 was dug into a small flat-topped mound-like feature located in the western section of the site about 35 m southeast of HP 1 (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig. 1**). It measures ca. 4.0 m north-south by 4.0 m east-west, and is about 1.0 m higher than the terrain to the immediate south. An excavation square measuring 2.0 m north-south by 0.5 m east-west was placed in the central aspect of the mound. Square A provided a view of the internal structure of the “mound” and permitted an interpretation of its natural and cultural significance, and formation history. The unit was excavated using 10 cm thick arbitrary levels below ground surface. It was dug primarily using trowels, although the basal deposits (VIIa, and VIIb) were removed by square-nosed spade.

Six separate strata were identified during the excavations. They are indicated on the profile drawing of the west wall (**Fig. 1**).

Stratigraphy

Stratum I

A fairly loose gray brown (10 YR 2/1) sandy silt with some pea gravels and small pebbles. The uppermost 1 cm consisted of littermat. This Stratum extends from between about 0–7 cm below surface and the lower half contains small pieces of FCR (<3 cm), and small scattered pieces of charcoal. A small number of flakes were secured from the lower aspect of this stratum. It represents recent deposits.

Stratum II

Stratum II extends from about 7–35 cm below surface in the southern half of the unit and between about 7.0–15.0 cm below surface in the northern half of the square. It is a compact, yellow brown (5 Y 2.5/1) sandy silt with about 30% pea gravel. Charcoal bits and chunks are scattered uniformly throughout this stratum. Lithic frequency increases compared with Stratum I. This matrix appears to have been secondarily deposited by the small ephemeral runoff channels that pass on either side of the mound, evidenced by microstratigraphic lenses of loosely sorted silts and sand contained within this stratum. Several of the other strata appear to have also been deposited by this agency.

Stratum III

Stratum III was confined to the northern half of the unit, and was a loose light gray brown (10 YR 2/2) sandy silt with a high proportion of pea gravels and angular pebbles. The incidence of cultural material was greater in this stratum than the previous stratum, and included several utilized flakes, numerous flakes, rodent tooth fragments, birch bark, scattered charcoal chunks, and some FCR. Because it also contained microstratigraphic lenses of loosely sorted sand and silt, Stratum III is interpreted to have been secondarily deposited by fluvial action, which incorporated cultural materials during transport. It resembles rim-deposits somewhat, however, there is no housepit surficially evident to the immediate north of this mound-like feature.

Stratum IV

Stratum IV was encountered between about 30–45 cm below surface and varies in thickness between 10–20 cm. It is a loose, medium gray brown

(10 YR 2/1) silty sand with a high (40%) pea gravel content and some (10%) small pebbles. It dips slightly to the south. Several thin lenses of partially-sorted sand and pea gravel indicate a fluvial deposition history. Cultural material included charcoal, FCR, a utilized flake, and a large quartzite flake, and some bark fragments.

Stratum V

Stratum V extended from about 50–70 cm below surface throughout the excavation square, and is relatively horizontally disposed. It is slightly variable in thickness ranging from 15-20 cm. It is a loose, medium gray brown (10 YR 2/1) silty sand with very high pea gravel (50%) content and lots (20%) of small pebbles. This stratum may have been secondarily deposited from the north by fluvial action from the ephemeral stream, however, in general the matrix resembles rim/refuse deposits. Cultural materials included a quartzite unidirectional core, a small triangular biface, an end scraper, numerous flakes, a few small bone fragments and small bits of charcoal (minimal).

Stratum VI

Stratum VI was a loose, dark gray brown (5 Y 2.5/1) sandy silt with some (10%) pea gravel and the occasional small pebble. It extends throughout the unit between about 70-78 cm below surface and varies in thickness from 4-8 cm. It is horizontally disposed and its dark color is owing to high organic content. It appears to be the "A" horizon of a buried paleosol. Cultural materials included a high frequency of flakes of medium-grained basalt, FCR, some bits of charcoal, and a few small pieces of bone. The general increase in cultural material compared to the strata above and below is attributed to

cultural activities occurring on the stable paleosol surface. It represents the initial use of this area of the site.

Stratum VII

Stratum VII consists of two sub-strata which vary slightly in color and texture. Stratum VIIa was a fairly consolidated, light yellow brown (2.5 Y 3/2) clayey silt with some sand (20%), lots of pea gravel (30%), and a few small pebbles (10%). No cultural materials were recovered although a few scattered pieces of charcoal were noted. It extends from about 78- 85 cm below surface and appears to be the "B" horizon of a buried paleosol. Stratum VIIb was a compact, light yellow gray (2.5 Y 3/3) sandy clayey silt with high pea gravel content (40%) and moderate (20%) pebble content. It represents sterile "C" horizon deposits of the paleosol.

Summary and Conclusions

Extra Housepit Excavation 6 revealed that this small mound-like feature was formed primarily by natural depositional agents. Similar terrace-like features are evident to the immediate east and west of the investigated "mound". The incision of this small terrace by two ephemeral stream channels is responsible for the "mounded" appearance. The terrace appears to have formed by aggraded fluvial sediments deposited during periods of increased precipitation.

Strata II - V all appear to have been deposited by fluvial activity associated with the ephemeral stream activity. Cultural materials contained within them were probably initially deposited in areas to the north, and were incorporated into fluvial sediments during periods of intense precipitation. Some items, particularly the larger ones such as cores, may

have been deposited in primary content in this area of the site during dry and stable conditions.

Strata VI and VII represent a buried paleosol that was capped with the fluvial sediments. Stratum VI represents the stable ground surface, and it yielded a fair amount of cultural material which relates to the initial use of this area of the site, although no diagnostic artifacts were recovered that could provide a relative age for this surface.

The majority of the cultural material was recovered between about 0.5 and 80 cm below surface. It consisted primarily of lithic debitage and tools, FCR, scattered charcoal, and the rare piece of birch bark, and small pieces of mammal bone. The greatest density of cultural materials was noted in Strata IV, V and especially VI. No diagnostic artifacts were recovered.

In conclusion, the low, flat-topped "mound" feature was produced by natural agency associated with intensive fluvial activity in this section of the site. It appears that there has been several episodes of intensive fluvial activity which resulted in rapid deposition of poorly sorted clastic debris and cultural materials from portions of the site to the north.

Figures

Figure 1: Extra-Housepit excavation 6 post-excavation profile of west wall of Square A.

Extra Housepit Excavation 6 Post-Excavation Profile of West Wall of Square "A"

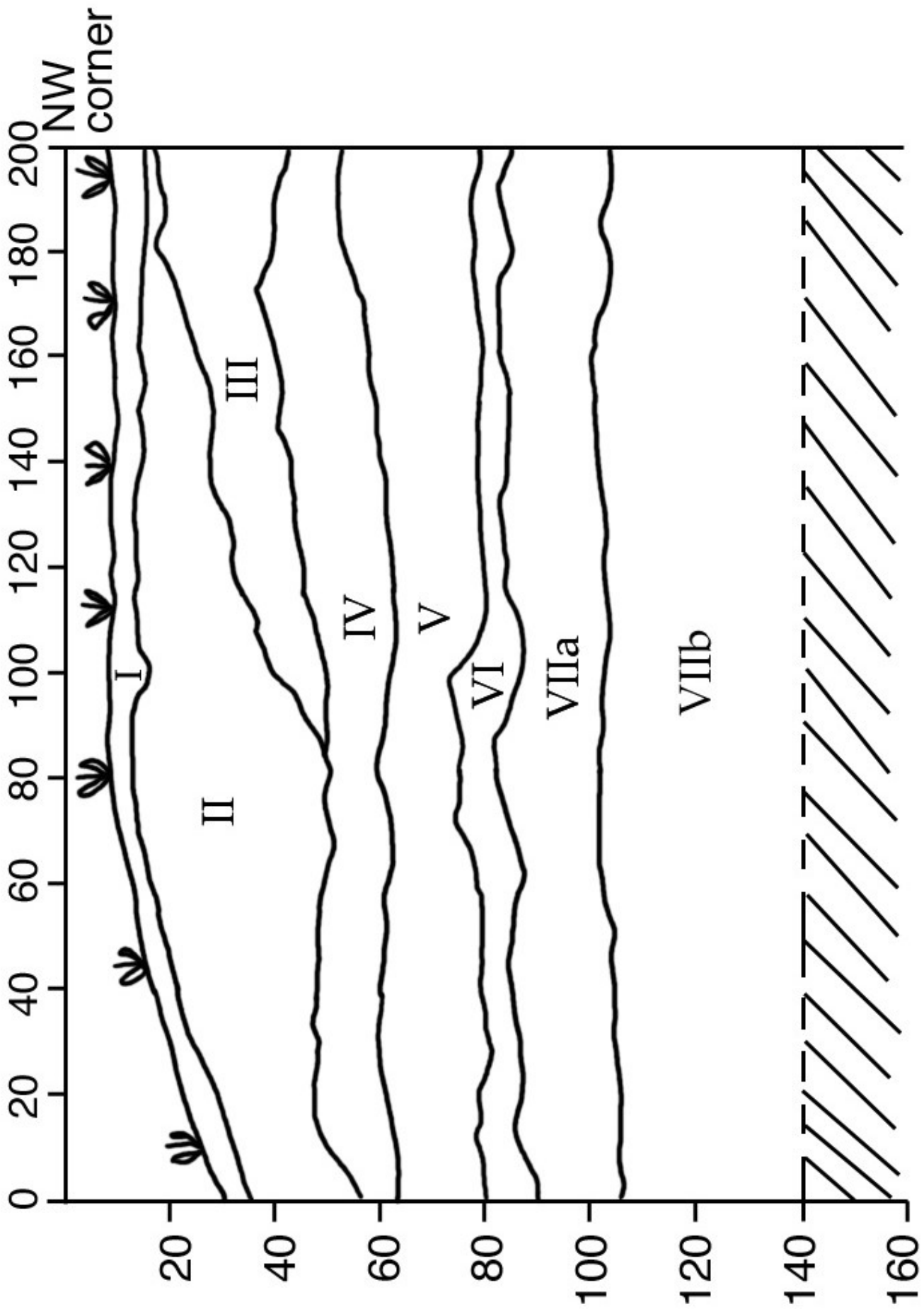


Figure 1. Extra-Housepit excavation 6 post-excitation profile of west wall of Square A.