

## Extra Housepit Excavation 9 Excavation Results

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### **Location and Description**

Extra Housepit Excavation 9 explored a small, roughly circular cultural depression measuring 4.4 m north-south by 4.5 m east-west by 0.4 m deep at the surface. It is situated on the southern edge of the site about 400 m south of the main village on the south side of Keatley Creek (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig. 1**). It is located about 5 m southeast of the southeast rim of Housepit 9, which was tested in 1987, and determined to contain a Kamloops horizon component. Two adjoining excavation squares were dug into the southwest section of the feature. Square A lay in the north; Square B to the south. Both measured 1 m north-south by 0.75 m east-west. The approximate center of the pit feature was intersected by the eastern walls of these two squares. The purpose of the excavation was to determine the nature and function of the small circular feature. Excavation was undertaken using trowels and 1/4" mesh screening. The first 40 cm were excavated in 10 cm arbitrary levels below surface (BS). The remaining deposits between 40-85 cm below surface were removed as a single level (level 5).

The excavations revealed the presence of four main stratigraphic deposits, and two of the strata were subdivided into "a" and "b" because of color changes.

## **Stratum I**

### **Stratum Ia**

Stratum Ia (**Fig. 1**) lay between 0-5 cm below surface throughout the excavation squares. It was a moderately compact, light gray brown (10 YR 5/2) sandy silt with low (5%) small pebble content.

### **Stratum Ib**

Stratum Ib is identical to Stratum Ia in composition, however, it is darker in color (dark gray black [10 YR 3/11]) and has a moderate pebble content (25%) at the juncture of Squares A and B. Its dark color is attributed to the development of an "A" soil horizon in the center of the depression rather than owing to cultural activities. Stratum Ib lay between ca. 5 cm and 10 cm below surface throughout most of the squares.

Stratum Ia and Ib yielded several pieces of fire-cracked rock, scattered pieces of charcoal, and a few flakes and pieces of mammal bone. The majority of the cultural material was recovered from Stratum Ib. Stratum Ia primarily represents post-occupational recent aeolian infilling. Stratum Ib is interpreted to represent aeolian infilling and casual disposal of cultural materials into the depression during the latter part of the Kamloops horizon occupation of HP 9 to the immediate northwest. There is no reason to suspect that this pit functioned as a storage pit or hearth when Stratum Ib was being deposited. Casual discard of refuse into the abandoned pit seems more probable.

## **Stratum II**

### **Stratum IIa**

Stratum IIa was represented between ca. 10-20 cm in the northern one-fifth of Square A and the southern two-thirds of Square B. Stratum IIa and IIb are identical in composition, differing only in color. The two meld seamlessly into each other and there is no distinct break. Stratum IIa is a moderately compact, light gray brown (10 YR 5/3) sandy silt with moderate (30%) pea gravel content and a moderate amount (20%) of small pebbles.

### **Stratum IIb**

Stratum IIb was encountered between ca. 10 cm to 40 cm below surface in the southern four-fifths of Square A and the northern one-third of Square B. It is identical in composition to Stratum IIa, but it is medium gray brown (10 YR 4/1) in color. Both Strata IIa and IIb are interpreted to represent the same deposition episode. Cultural materials included basalt flakes and tools, burnt and unburnt mammal bone, a few fire cracked rocks, and scattered bits of charcoal. Stratum IIb yielded the majority of the materials, as it lay in the center of the depression. During excavation, mottled lenses of reddish-brown ashy silt and charcoal were noted between 30-40 cm below surface in the bottom of Stratum IIb. These lenses were not represented on either wall profile. The bottom of Stratum IIb conformed to a shallow saucer-shaped cross-section that roughly paralleled the present ground surface. The lower half of Stratum II deposits appear to represent post-use cultural infilling of the pit feature with ash dumps and other refuse from nearby HP 9. Cultural material was most dense in level 4 (30-40 cm below surface) which corresponds with the bottom of Stratum IIb. The upper half of Stratum IIb,

and Stratum IIa, appear to represent casual discard of cultural items into the pit while it was being infilled primarily by aeolian and slopewash processes. These latter processes also contributed, to some degree, to the deposition of the lower half of Stratum IIb.

### **Stratum III**

Stratum III was present in the south half of Square A and the north edge of Square B between ca. 40 cm and 85 cm below surface. It was a very compact, medium gray brown (10 YR 4/1) sandy silt with high proportion of pea gravel (40%) and pebbles and cobbles (40%), some of them quite large. Two flakes were recovered from this portion of the stratum. One from between 40-50 cm below surface, and the other between 50-60 cm below surface. Small flecks of charcoal were noted throughout the matrix. This stratum conforms to a somewhat leaning V-shaped outline, with the southern wall being the steepest and the northern wall more gently sloping. It represents the initial pit excavation into sterile glacial deposits (Stratum IV). It is important to note, however, that no other cultural materials (charcoal excepted) were recovered beneath 60 cm below surface. The bottom of this pit may have been lined. Removal of the liner may have involved removal of the debris associated with the goods being stored. The paucity of cultural debris from this stratum suggests that it was rapidly and intentionally infilled by a rocky matrix from a nearby source, such as the very rocky rim deposits at nearby Housepit 9. Why it was rapidly infilled is not readily apparent, but it may have been filled to prevent children or dogs falling in. The somewhat "triangular" outline of the plan view of the initial pit is also unusual. The precise form can only be assessed by removing the other half of the center of the feature.

### **Stratum IV**

Stratum IV represents sterile glacial till deposits into which the pit was dug. It is a very compact, yellow gray (2.5 Y 6/4) sandy clayey silt with moderate proportions (30%) pea gravel and high (40%) pebble and cobble proportions.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The results of Extra Housepit Excavation 9 revealed that the small depression appears to have initially functioned as a somewhat V-shaped cross-sectioned cachepit having a roughly triangular plan view. The lack of cultural materials other than small flecks of charcoal from Stratum III below 60 cm below surface may reflect the fact that the pit had a liner (i.e., stitched birch bark, basket, or hide) which was removed upon its use-abandonment. Excavation revealed that its initial storage capacity was about 0.35 m<sup>3</sup>.

Subsequent to its initial use as a cache/storage pit it was rapidly infilled with very gravelly/cobbly deposits which may have been derived from the rim of nearby HP 9, characterized by a very pebbly/cobbly matrix. This event is interpreted to have been intentional, perhaps as a safety measure during latter occupation of HP 9 (Kamloops horizon).

Casual intentional infilling and natural depositional agencies (e.g., aeolian, slopewash) are considered to be responsible for the deposition of Stratum II. The lower half of Stratum IIb contained lenses of ashy silt which may have been intentionally dumped during the late occupation of HP 9.

Casual discard and natural depositional agencies are also considered to have contributed to the formation of Strata Ia and Ib during the end of HP 9's occupation (probably late Kamloops horizon).

### Figures

Figure 1: East wall profile of EHPE 9, showing Squares A and B.

**Figure 1. East wall profile of EHPE 9, Squares A and B**

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Munsell (dry)</b>		<b>Description</b>
Ia	10 YR 5/2	Light gray brown	Moderately compact, sandy silt with 5% pea gravel and 5% small pebbles.
Ib	10 YR 3/1	Dark gray black	Moderately compact, sandy silt with 25% small pebbles and 5% pea gravel.
IIa	10 YR 5/3	Light gray brown	Moderately compact, sandy silt with 30% pea gravel and 20% small pebbles.
IIb	10 YR 4/1	Medium gray brown	Moderately compact, sandy silt with 30% pea gravel and 20% small pebbles.
III	10 YR 4/1	Medium gray brown	Very compact, sandy silt with 40% pea gravel and 40% small pebbles and cobbles.
IV	2.5 Y 6/4	Yellow-gray	Very compact, sandy-clayey silt with 40% pebbles and cobbles, and 30% pea gravel.

Figure 1. East wall profile of EHPE #9, showing Squares A and B.

Extra Housepit Excavation (EHPE) #9  
Squares A and B  
East Wall Profile

