

## Extra Housepit Excavation 12 Excavation Results

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### **Location and Description**

Extra Housepit Excavation 12 was dug into the eastern half of a small, roughly circular cultural depression measuring 3.0 m north-south by 2.8 m east-west by 30 cm deep. The depression was located about 5 m west of Housepit 105 on the uppermost terrace in the eastern portion of the site (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig. 1**). It resembled a typical "cachepit" on the surface, although the northern edge was not clearly defined.

Three conjoining excavation squares measuring 1.0 m north-south by 0.75 m east-west were dug into the east central portion of the depression, forming a trench 3.0 m by 0.75 m. The squares were designated as A, B, and C from north to south. The western walls intersected the approximate center of the surficial depression.

Excavations were conducted to determine the function of this feature and to secure a sample of its contents. It was reasoned that because the feature was not immediately associated with HP 105 it would not be mixed with house rim deposits, but on the other hand, it may have served as a refuse dump after its primary function had expired.

The squares were excavated in 10 cm thick arbitrary levels primarily using trowels, although square nosed shovels were occasionally used to remove the upper 5 cm of deposit of level 1 (0-10 cm below surface). Proveniences for artifacts were recorded with reference to below ground surface (BS). All excavated matrices were passed through 1/4" mesh screen. Eight distinct stratigraphic units were identified during excavations (**Fig. 1**).

## **Stratigraphy**

### **Stratum I**

Stratum I was subdivided into two sub-strata, both confined to the western edges of Squares B and C.

#### **Stratum Ia**

Stratum Ia was a loose, medium gray brown (10 YR 3/2) sandy silt with low (5%) pea gravel content and no pebbles. It represented recent deposition of silts by slopewash from the slope to the immediate south.

#### **Stratum Ib**

Stratum Ib was a moderately compact, light gray (10 YR 5/2) sandy silt with low (5%) pea gravel content and no pebbles. In composition it resembled Stratum Ia, and it is also interpreted to have been deposited by slopewashing from the south. A few flakes were recovered from these two sub-strata.

### **Stratum II**

Stratum II comprised a large proportion of the stratigraphy in all three excavation squares, and yielded the majority of the cultural remains secured from them. It was a moderately compact, light gray brown (10 YR 4/2) sandy silt with a low proportion (5%) of small pebbles, and scattered flecks and small chunks of charcoal. The depth of this deposit varied from square to square, although it was thickest in the southern end of the excavation trench. This stratum contained Strata III to VI which are interpreted to indicate the use of a large hearth feature. Cultural materials from Square A included a dense concentration of fragmented mammal bone in the northwest corner of the square and a dense concentration of flakes in the

southwest corner. Several pieces of bone and exotic flakes were thermally altered. A uniface was recovered 7 cm below surface.

Square B also contained a high frequency of mammal bone and debitage, many of which were also thermally altered. They were distributed evenly throughout the excavation square. Several pieces of fire cracked rock were also encountered, as was charcoal.

Square C yielded a similar assemblage of materials from Stratum II, including the lateral portion of a large basally-notched early Plateau horizon (ca. 2,400-1,600 BP) projectile point.

Stratum II is interpreted as representing a mixture of naturally and culturally deposited sediments that accumulated during the use of the cultural depression during the early Plateau horizon.

### **Stratum III**

Stratum III was represented in Squares A and B between 10-25 cm below surface. It occupied the southwest corner of Square A, and the northwest corner of Square B. It was lens shaped with a slight saucer-shaped cross-section. It was a moderately loose, mottled dark gray brown/light orange brown (7.5 YR 4/4) sandy ashy silt with low (5%) pea gravel content, fire cracked rock, scattered bits and chunks of charcoal, and the rare small pebble. The frequency of cultural material was rather low in this matrix, and only a few pieces of bone and flakes were found. Several pieces of burnt pine bark, a large birch bark roll, and a concentration of small fire cracked rocks were associated with this deposit.

Stratum III represents the final use of a large hearth feature. The diameter of the fire lens is ca. 1.25 m. It was thickest and most pronounced

in its northern aspect. That it was surrounded by Stratum II deposits indicates that it was early Plateau horizon in age.

#### **Stratum IV**

Stratum IV was confined primarily to the northwest half of Square C and the southwest half of Square B. It was directly associated with Stratum V, and both are interpreted to be related to the same use episode. This stratum was not represented in the east wall profile. It was very similar to Stratum III, being a moderately loose, mottled light orange gray (7.5 YR 4/4)/medium grey brown (10 YR 3/2) ashy sandy silt with low (5%) pea gravel content and the occasional small pebble. It conformed to a shallow saucer-shaped lens, and it lay directly on sterile deposits.

Cultural materials included a high density of scattered charcoal, several pieces of fire cracked rock large chunks of burnt pine bark, a few flakes, and a few pieces of burnt bone. Several fragments of a worked bone awl-like tool were also found.

Stratum IV (and associated Stratum V) represent a hearth feature measuring ca. 1 m in diameter which predates the hearth represented by Stratum III above, and to the north. The recovery of a nearly complete, large, early Plateau horizon projectile point from Stratum V indicates the construction and use of the hearth during the early part of the Plateau horizon.

#### **Stratum V**

Stratum V was associated with Stratum IV, and represents the same hearth use episode. It lay stratigraphically superior to Stratum IV and consisted of a moderately loose, dark gray brown (10 YR 3/1) sandy silt with low (5%) pea gravel content, high charcoal and burnt bark content, and the

occasional fire cracked rock. The association of a large early Plateau horizon point (ca. 2,400-1,600 BP) with this stratum indicate that the hearth use episode represented by Strata IV and V dates to sometime during this period. Stratum V was most prominently represented in the southeast corner of Square B and the northwest corner of Square C between ca. 20-30 cm below surface. Other items associated include a large endscraper (23 cm below surface), and a retouched flake (30 cm below surface).

### **Stratum VI**

Stratum VI was a small lens of moderately loose, medium gray brown (10 YR 3/2) sandy silt with small micro-lenses of light orange gray (10 YR 3/2) ashy silt. It was intersected by the southwest corner of Square C between ca. 10-20 cm below surface. Because only a small portion of it was intersected, its function/genesis is not clear. It may simply represent a small hearth "annex" related to the hearth-use indicated by Strata IV and V.

### **Stratum VII**

Stratum VII was represented throughout Square A and the northwest corner of Square B between 10-25 cm below surface. It was a moderately compact, light gray brown (10 YR 5/3) sandy silt with low (5%) pea gravel content and the occasional pebble. Cultural materials included mostly lithic waste flakes and a few small pieces of bone. Several large cobbles and a boulder were present. Most of the cultural materials were recovered from the upper 10 cm. of this stratum.

### **Stratum VIII**

Stratum VIII represents sterile till deposits, which were encountered at about 20-30 cm below surface throughout the units. It was a very compact,

light gray (10 YR 6/3) sandy clayey silt with low (10%) pea gravel content and a moderate (30%) amount of small pebbles and large cobbles.

### **Stratum VIIIa**

Stratum VIIIa represents a burnt lens of the sterile deposits. It is light grayish orange (7.5 YR 4/6) in color and was encountered beneath Stratum III in the west wall profile at the juncture of Squares A and B.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Extra Housepit Excavation 12 intersected a small, roughly circular cultural depression measuring about 3 m in diameter by about 40 cm deep. The excavations revealed the presence of two individual episodes of hearth construction and use. The initial use is represented by Strata IV and V, and the last by Stratum III. The presence of two large basally-notched projectile points indicate that both use episodes date to sometime during the early part of the Plateau horizon (ca. 2,400-1,200 BP).

The high frequency of burnt and unburnt mammal bone, together with three projectile points associated with the peripheries of the hearths, suggests that meat cooking may have been a major activity associated with the hearths. The presence of bark with these hearths suggests it may have been used as fuel. The high frequency of lithic waste flakes within and beside the hearth lenses suggest that the depression served as a refuse area for lithic waste. Many exotic materials indicated having been thermally altered. The high proportions of chalcedonies represented in the debitage is compatible with that represented in other Plateau horizon components throughout the Canadian Plateau.

There is some possibility that the depression observed on the surface may be the central portion of a small dwelling whose actual floor areas

extend beyond the edges of the surficially observed depression. Stratum II and Stratum VII may represent the floor deposits of such a dwelling, however, this is not confirmed.

Alternately, it may be that this depression simply represents an open hearth feature associated with the initial occupation of Housepit 105 to the immediate east. It may eventually be determined that HP 105 contains a component dating to the early part of the Plateau horizon.

### **Figures**

Figure 1: Floor plan, and east and west wall profiles of EHPE 12, showing Squares A, B, and C.

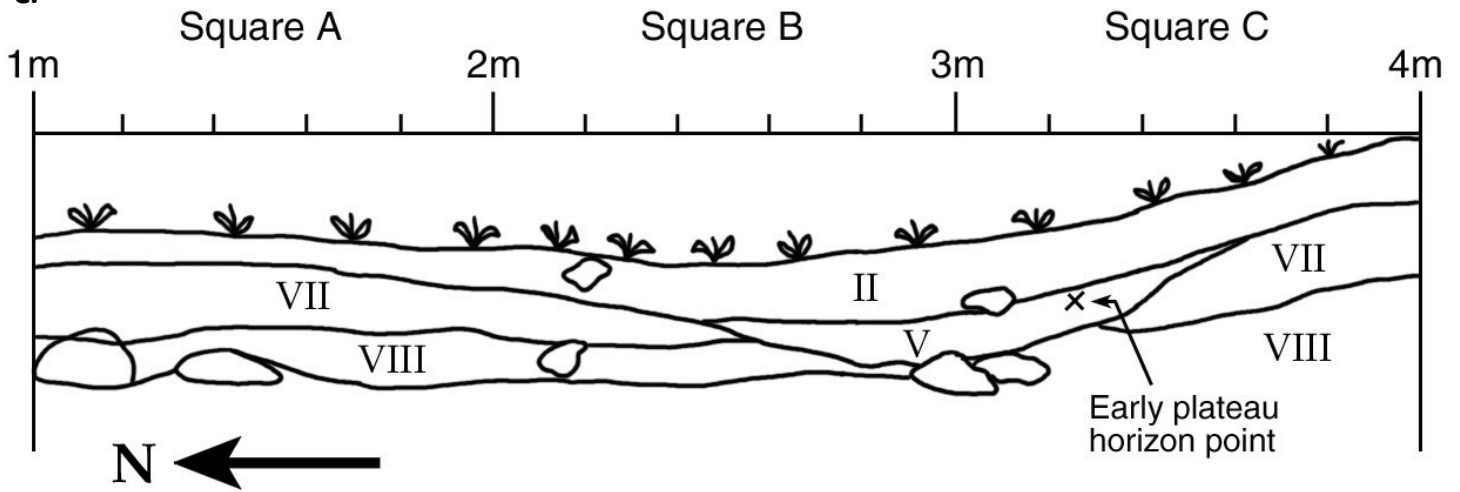
**Figure 1. Floor Plan and East and West wall profiles of EHPE 12, Squares A, B, and C**

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>Munsell (dry)</b>		<b>Description</b>
Ia	10 YR 3/2	Medium gray brown	Loose, sandy silt with 5% pea gravel and pebbles.
Ib	10 YR 5/2	Light gray	Moderately compact, sandy silt with 5% pea gravel and no pebbles.
II	10 YR 4/2	Light gray brown	Moderately compact, sandy silt with 5% pea gravel, 3% small pebbles, and scattered small flecks of charcoal.
III	10 YR 3/1 7.5 YR 4/4	Mottled dark gray brown/orange brown	Moderately loose, sandy ashy silt with 5% pea gravel, fire cracked rock, and scattered charcoal flecks and chunks.
IV	7.5 YR 4/4 10 YR 3/2	Mottled light orange gray/medium gray brown	Moderately loose, ashy sandy silt with 5% pea gravel, occasional small pebbles, high charcoal content, and high FCR content
V	10 YR 3/1	Dark gray brown	Moderately loose, sandy silt with 5% pea gravel and high charcoal content.
VI	10 YR 3/2	Medium gray brown	Moderately loose, sandy silt with low pea gravel content, charcoal staining, and some light orange gray (7.5 YR 5/4) mottling.
VII	10 YR 5/3	Light gray brown	Moderately compact, sandy silt with 5% pea gravel and occasional pebbles.
VIII	10 YR 6/3	Light gray	Very compact, sandy clayey silt with 30% small pebbles and cobbles and 10% pea gravel. Sterile.
VIIIa	7.5 YR 4/6	Light grayish orange	Moderately compact, sandy clayey silt (burnt).

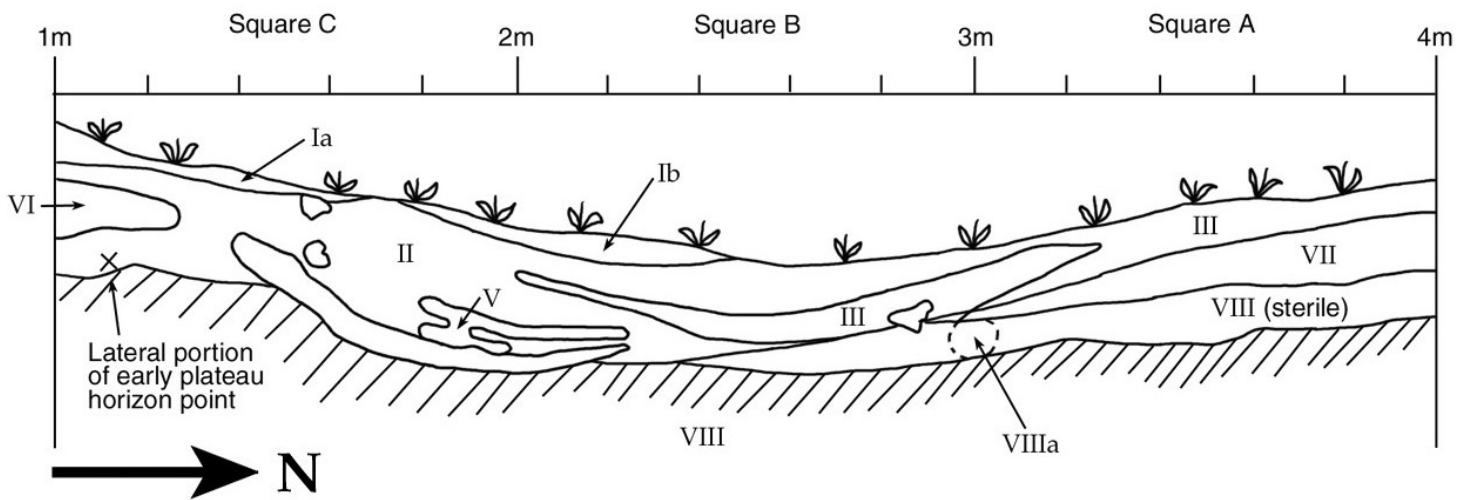


Figure 1. Floor plan, and east and west wall profiles of EHPE 12, showing Squares A, B, and C.

Extra Housepit Excavation #12  
East Wall Profile Squares A, B and C



West Wall Profile: Squares A, B and C



Ground Plan: EHPE #12

