

Extra-Housepit Excavation 19 - Summary of Excavation

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Extra-Housepit Excavation 19 is a circular depression 2.3 m long, and 2.16 m wide rim to rim (**Fig. 1**). At its deepest point it measures 80 cm BD. It is located on the upper terrace of the Keatley Creek site, on a small hill at the edge of the terrace (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig. 1**) and. Excavation was undertaken to determine the function of the feature, and to estimate its date with the aid of artifacts found. From surface indications, EHPE 19 was thought to be a cache pit.

The structure was divided into two Squares, A and B. The excavation took place in Square A. A 50 cm wide trench was dug in the middle of the depression. The trench was divided into 50 x 50 cm subsquares, and were excavated by natural stratigraphy and levels. Only Subsquares 4, 8, and 12 were excavated. Due to the time constraints it was not possible to reach the bottom of Subsquares 8 and 12.

Stratigraphy

Stratum I: This stratum was mostly composed of soil that was dug up when the structure was made. The soil was light in color, and relatively densely packed. The soil was made up of more than 20% pebbles, and close to 10% cobbles. A chert flake was found during screening of soil from the first level of Stratum I. The distal end of a bird humerus was recovered during screening from the first level of Stratum I.

Stratum II: most of the finds made during the excavation were from Stratum II. The soil was considerably darker and was black in places. The pebble content was more than 29%, and about 10% cobbles. On the eastern

side of Subsquare 8, two boulders measuring from 20–25 cm in diameter were found. Charcoal deposits occurred in all three levels of Subsquare 8. A section of partially burnt pine bark was found in Square B, Subsquare 15 and 11, level 2, along with FCR (6.4 cm and smaller) and fire reddened earth along the pit wall. Neither bone or stone remains/artifacts were found in Subsquare 8. The soil of Subsquare 12 seemed to be the same color as in Subsquare 8, but it was less packed down. This soil appeared to have been used to cover up the cache pit. Excavation in those two subsquares was not very difficult. In Subsquare 12 the pebble content increased to more than 20% and the cobble content decreased to about 5%. In the second and first levels, wood planks were found on the north end of the subsquare. The second and third levels produced a high content of charcoal and bone fragments.

Stratum III: This stratum was mostly composed of the sterile till. This was encountered in the second half of Subsquare 4 and the middle of the south wall in Subsquare 8. In two subsquares, portions of articulated salmon head(s) were found. An articulated section of birch bark was found in Square B, Subsquare 11, level 1. Excavation was concluded about 80 cm BD.

The evidence indicates that EHPE 19 was a cache pit. Overall, the pit was very deep, which is characteristic of a pit designed for storage. This feature lacked large quantities of charcoal and FCR, and the faunal remains that were found (fragments of fish and mammal bones, including two sections of articulated salmon heads) were not charred. A roasting pit would have high quantities of charcoal, and remains associated with the pit would be much more likely to be charred.

Figures

Figure 1: Stratigraphic cross-section of EHPE 19, a cache pit.

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