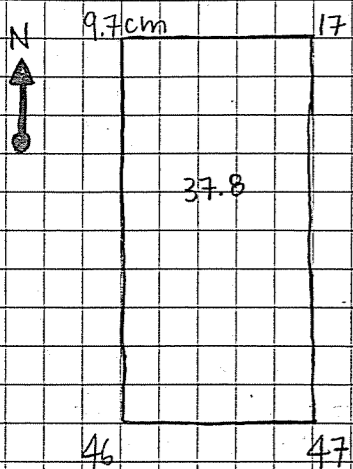


15 May 2013

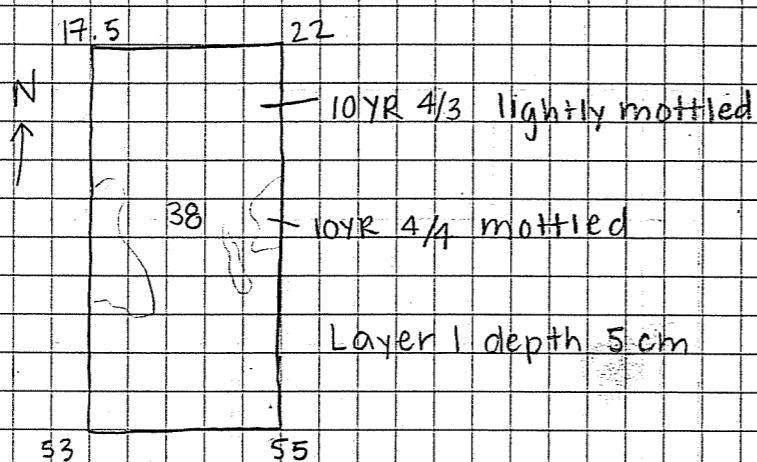
Bates I

Unit No. 361 R964

We started our work today by raking leaves from the unit and marking the sides off with string. After setting up our screening tripods and clearing the grass underneath them, we took line level measurements from the northwest corner:



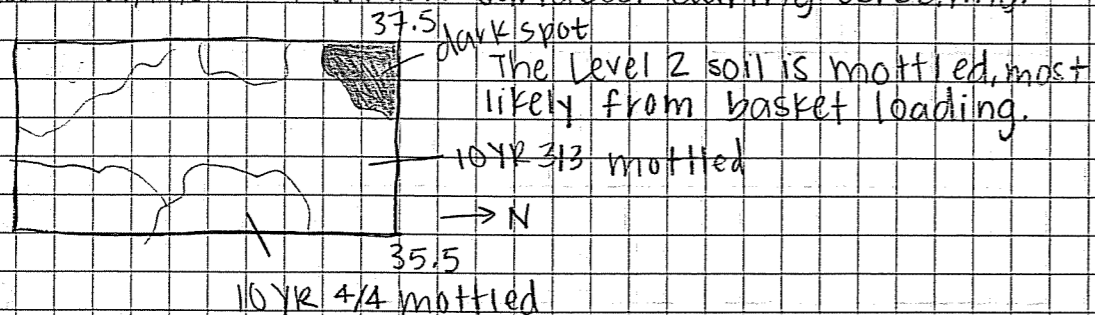
We didn't find any artifacts while screening the topsoil - just acorns, roots, and rotten wood. There is mound fill directly below the topsoil layer, with some lighter blotches of basket fill.



We will be excavating in 20 cm levels. The unit is on the southeast side of the mound and slants upward, so we're digging in arbitrary layers to get a flat surface.

While excavating Level 2, we came across a little white silt, which looked a lot like chalk.

We found a handful of small sherds and rocks in the second level, most of which surfaced during screening.



16 May 2013

Bates I

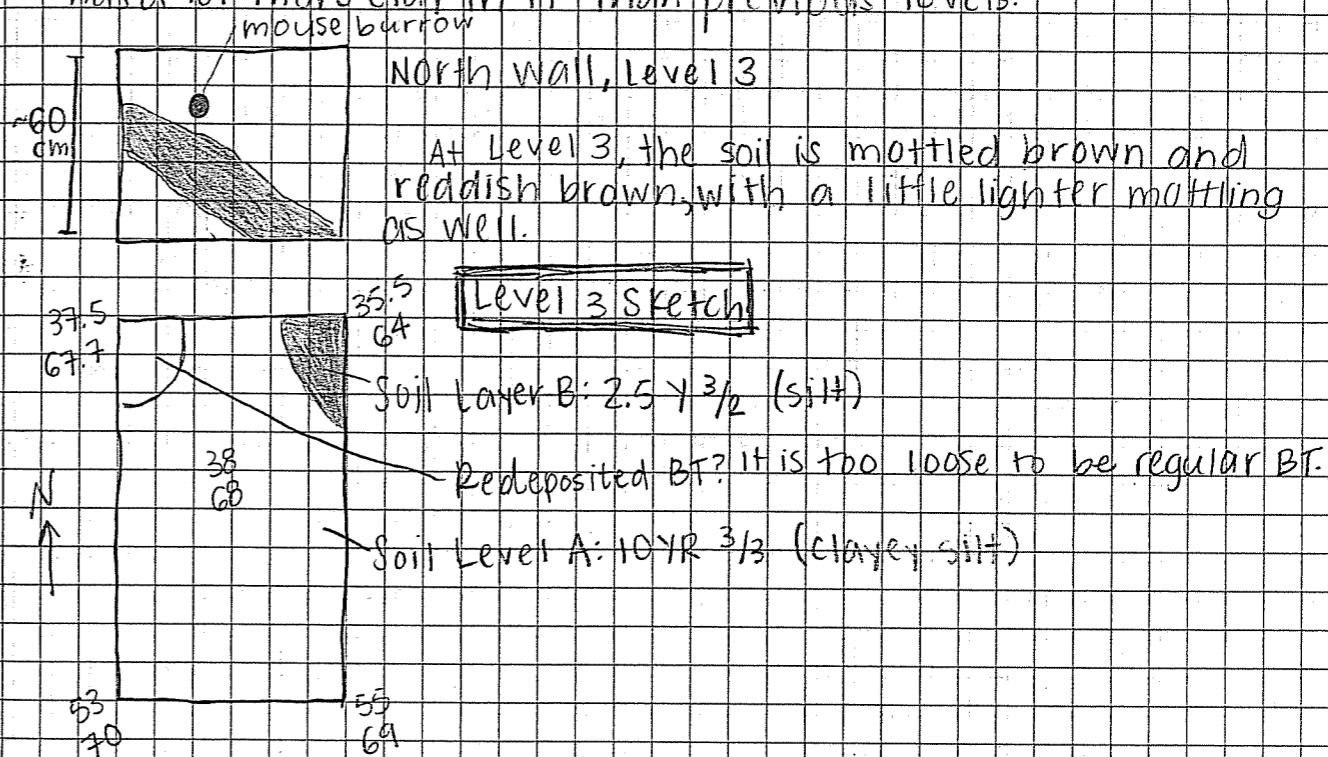
Unit No. 361 R964

We arrived at the unit this morning to find a mouse burrow and two holes in the north profile wall. Today we are deepening our arbitrary levels to 30 cm to speed up the digging; we haven't found a lot of artifacts so far and aren't expecting to.

We found some more pot sherds and rocks during screening. The northwest corner of the unit is darker than the rest, but we suspect it's a basket load, not a special feature.

There was a big plate sherd in Level 3, reddish brown and Anna incised, dating to around 1200 AD. We also found a piece of charcoal, which we saved in aluminum foil. The sherd should be enough for decisive dating, but the charcoal could be used for C14 dating just in case.

We've reached a patch of what looks like BT fill. The soil has a lot more clay in it than previous levels.



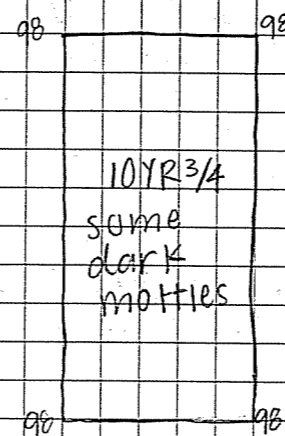
17 May 2013

Bates 1

Unit No. 361 R964

We started on Level 4 this morning, another 30 cm level. During screening, I found a few pottery sherds, one of which was orange, and a piece of thick glass. We think the glass looks like it's from the nineteenth century, maybe from a tumbler. Since there is an armadillo burrow near our unit, we think it's pretty likely that an animal brought it down there, rather than that it indicates the millind's age.

We hit the buried A horizon in Level 4, with what looks like sterile BT beneath it. We switched to quarter-inch screens for these lower layers, but the soil is so moist and clayey that it was strenuous to push it through; we weren't finding artifacts either, so we switched back to half-inch screens. It's getting much harder to shovel through the dense soil. It looks like Level 4 is going to be our last level at this unit.



There is a large semicircular animal burrow in the east wall of the unit, most likely from an armadillo. There are also a few mouse holes in the other wall, as well as a root hole in the northeast corner.

20 May 2013

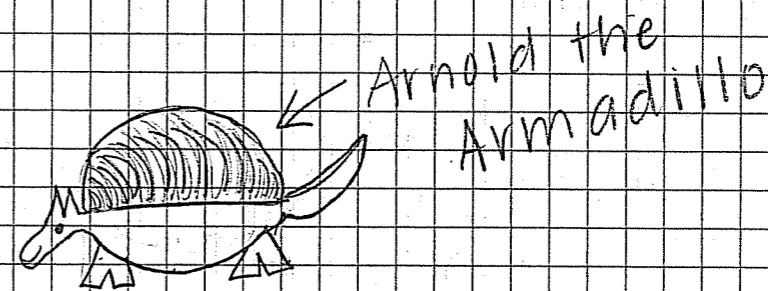
Bates 1

Unit No. 361 R964  
Unit No. 389 R948

I split my time between our two Bates 1 units today. I started at 389 R948, digging 30 cm levels and screening. By the end of the day, we reached level 4, but a fifth level will have to be dug tomorrow. We started to find some interesting artifacts in the fourth level, most notably a lug handle. After lab work later this week, we'll know if any of our pottery sherds are diagnostic.

I also helped Mallory draw the profiles of the east and west walls of unit 361 R964. We switched off measuring and plotting points. It was meticulous work, seeing as root disturbances, sizeable animal burrows, and different basket loads made the profiles very complex. With careful dot-connecting, labelling, and shading, though, we were able to reproduce accurate drawings.

Vin picked me up early from the site today to take me to see a dead armadillo on Giddon Road. I have never seen an armadillo before in my life and am dying to, even if it's roadkill. Unfortunately, it was gone by the time we got there; a scavenger must have carried it off. ☹



I must see an ARMADILLO before I go home!

Today I left Bates 1 for the Lessley Mound in Woodville, Mississippi, about an hour's drive from Natchez. Lessley is a gorgeous steep mound with a graveyard on top and at least two dozen unmarked graves in the surrounding woods. Unfortunately, it is covered in poison ivy and crawling with bugs, many of which are problematic pests: mosquitoes, gnats, ticks, and spiders, as well as centipedes, beetles, worms, and other creepy-crawlies.

Andy and I are working on Unit 211 R625 on the western side of the mound, and Mallory and Cashen are working on the eastern side. After clearing the surface and taking a photo, we dug a 15 cmbd level. We found a lot of artifacts. Most of them were chert and sherds, but we found a piece of green glass and a chunk of historic pearlware. We were fortunate enough to find two pieces of incised pottery that fit together; its clear from the edges that they broke a long time ago.

We dug a second level going down 30 cm in only the eastern end of the unit (it is severely cattywomped to the slope of the mound). This level looks like mound fill and also gave us quite a few artifacts.

We had the chance to meet Bobby Webb, the landowner of this site. He is so nice and seems genuinely interested in the work we are doing. He is even letting us use the bathroom and his house and kept offering us soda, his truck, and a water cooler. Plus, his two dogs are very sweet!

25  
cmbd

0 & measurements taken from SW corner

N ←

22 May 2013

Foster

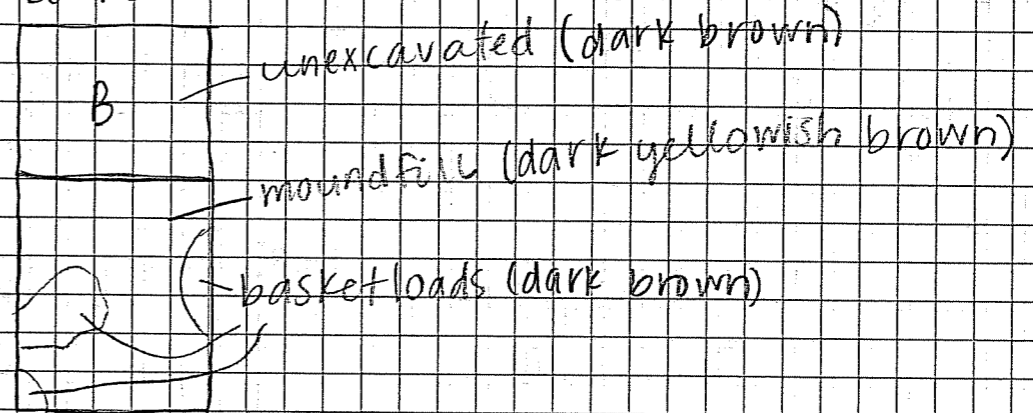
Unit No. 443 2613

- Levels 3 and 4
- some historic
- pure moundfill

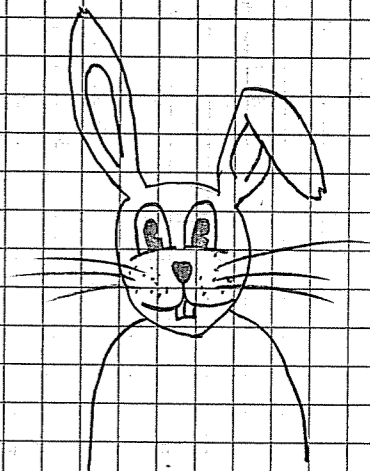
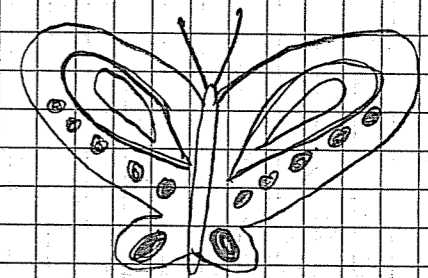
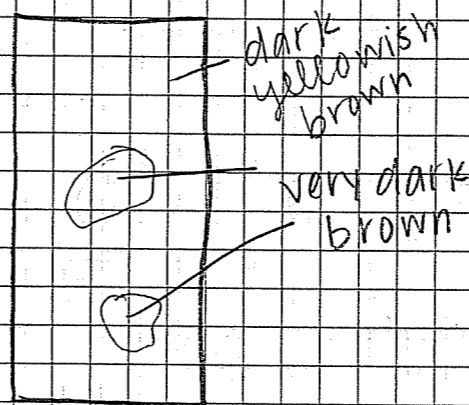
I worked at the Foster site with David and Ben today. It rained last night, but fortunately no water got into the unit. We dug two levels by lunch each 30 cm. The historic artifacts that were prevalent in the upper layers have ceased in the basket loads.

Levels 3 and 4 looked like classic moundfill. The soil profile is very pretty, with dark yellowish brown basketloads mixed in with dark brown. As we dug deeper, the soil became much more clayey, dense, and wet.

Level 3



Level 4



- Levels 5 and 6
- basket fill: dark and tan
- very few artifacts: flakes and sherds
- mucky, moist clay → very hard to clean trowel/dig through

Levels 5 and 6 followed the same pattern as Levels 3 and 4 — the dirt is getting denser, more clayey, and more wet the deeper we go. We are still cutting 30 cm levels but not finding a lot of artifacts. We've been finding some flakes and sherds, but nothing diagnostic. The soil profile is still dark yellowish brown basket fill mottled with big patches of dark brown silt.

Foster is an interesting site because it is surrounded by historic disturbances. There is a house built on top of the mound, a railroad that runs in a ravine under the north flank of the mound, and a road that runs on the south side of the mound:



The historic disturbance definitely explains all of the 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century artifacts we found in the mound's upper layers and would also explain why we still haven't hit the buried A horizon at nearly 2 m deep; earth would probably have been pushed up the top of the mound to flatten it out for the house.

24 May 2013

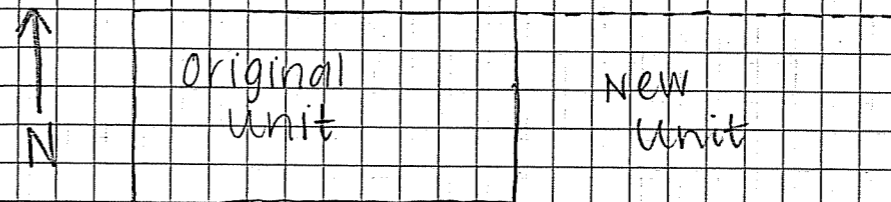
Foster

Unit No. 443 R613

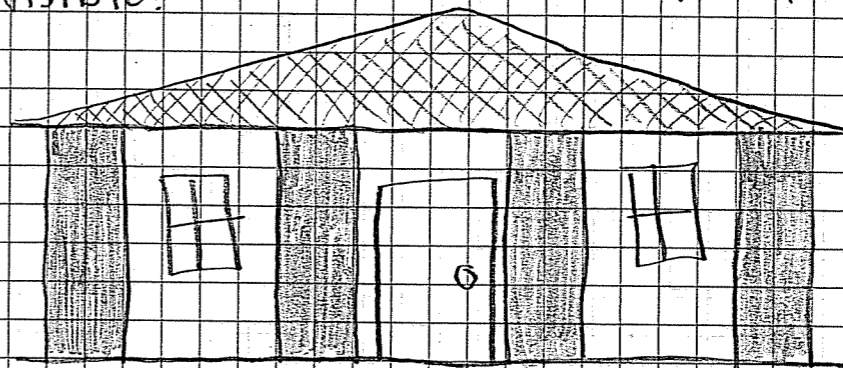
We kept digging difficult, mucky levels today, still 30cm deep. The mud is so thick, we sunk in, leaving huge bootprints. It was exceedingly hard to clean-trowel, especially since it is so much deeper now. I had to lay on my stomach and lean over the side of the unit to clean trowel it. We still haven't found any diagnostic artifacts.

I left Foster after lunch to help David take total station measurements at Henderson Mound and Pumpkin Lake. Henderson Mound is very small, maybe eight feet tall at its highest point. It's in the middle of a gorgeous horse and cattle pasture, with a nineteenth century railroad running behind it like at Foster.

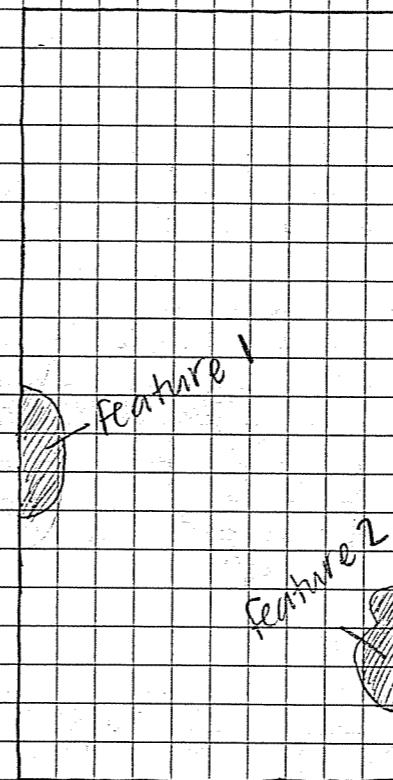
We set in a new unit at Pumpkin Lake as well:



When we got back to Foster, the landowner gave us a tour of the beautiful house on top of the mound. The first structure was set in the 1790s, and the full house was completed in the 1840s. It is a beautiful house in great condition. The windows and columns out front are original, as are the floors and molding. There are logs in the walls like in a log cabin; the owners put in a glass panel so they are visible!



Today was our last day working at Foster. We had a very difficult time clean-troweling because the soil was such dense, mucky clay and because the unit was almost two meters deep. Although we seemed to reach the Buried A in most parts of the unit, the profile got a little wanky in the southern end. It didn't look like there was a clearly defined buried topsoil horizon—it was as if an A and E layer had been redeposited and inverted in the southeast corner. Furthermore, there were two potential post hole features close to that corner and another feature on the west side of the unit. We mapped them into our profile drawings with precision, but here is a rough sketch:



\* Feature 1 included a piece of charcoal

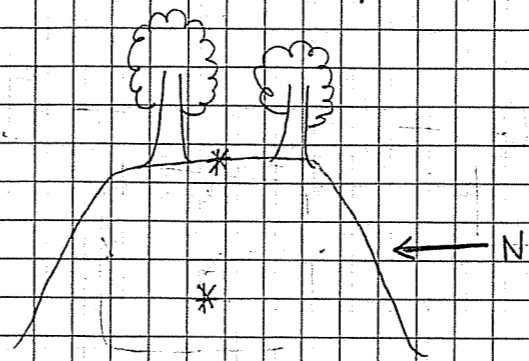


29 May 2013

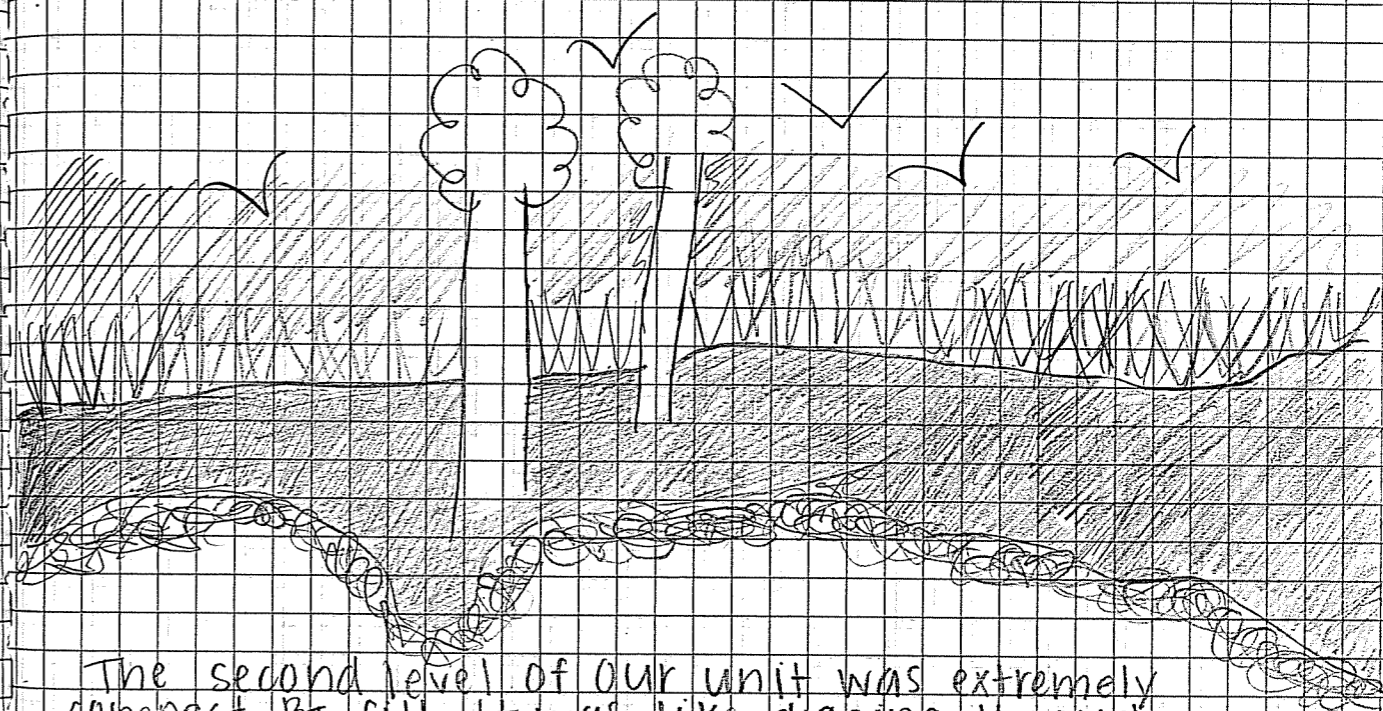
Bayou Pierre,  
Mound D

Unit G23 R975

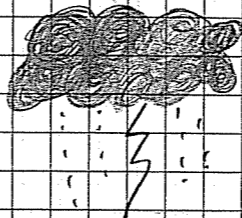
We opened a new unit at Bayou Pierre today (near Port Gibson). There are currently two units on our mound: one on top and one on the west flank (I worked at the latter with Andy and Steven).



We found a huge pot sherd in the first level of our unit, which indicates that the mound is not Archaic. We also found a lot of lithics and additional sherds.



The second level of our unit was extremely compact BT fill. It was like digging through cement, and for very few artifacts (a few more sherds and more flakes). Before we could clean trowel, it started to thunder and rain, so we had to cover our unit and leave the site early.



30 May 2013

Bayou Pierre Mound D

Unit No. 623 & 975

We finally made it through the concrete-like BT fill today, coming down on a layer of siltier mound fill. Towards the end of Level 3 (70 cm bd), the soil became much looser and easier to screen. We started finding more artifacts as well, which was a welcome change from the practically sterile BT fill. After clean troweling, we could see clear pockets of mottled fill - darker brown with splotches of lighter and more orangey brown. We took profile photos of the north and east walls.

31 May 2013

Bayou Pierre, Mound D

Unit No. 623 R975

We dug Level 4 today (70 to 100 cmbd), hitting the Buried A horizon at the very bottom of the level. There was a lot of charcoal and burnt earth in the level, reaching a higher concentration closer to the Buried A. We took a charcoal sample at 97 cmbd from the eastern half of the unit. It looks like there was a lot of activity going on at the Buried A horizon.

Interestingly, the slope of the Buried A was counter-intuitive. Instead of sloping with the mound, it sloped up down the mound's flank.

We didn't find any extraordinary artifacts today—just the usual lithics and sherds.

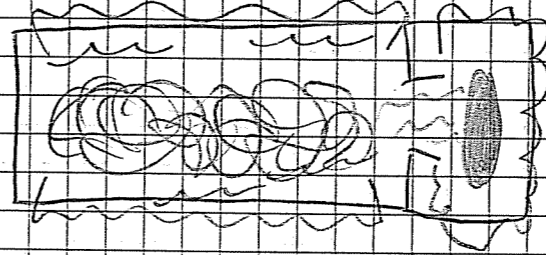
3 June 2013

Lab

I stayed at the shelter today and did lab work with Morgan and Mallory. We started the day with rough sorting then moved on to the flotation machine. Most of the samples that we floated didn't have much in them, but one sample from the midden at Pumpkin Lake was very rich.

Unfortunatly I wasn't feeling well today, so I had to stop lab work early and skip dinner. //

Flotation Machine



Sheeps on  
sheds on  
SHEEPS!

4 June 2013

A haiku about my day:

I worked in the lab  
Washing pot sherds and lithics  
Menstruating sucks.

5 June 2013

Bayou Pierre, Mound A

Unit No. 25H 249

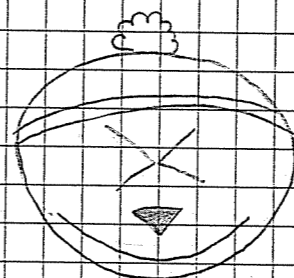
There was some confusing stratigraphy in our unit today. What looked like the Buried A turned out to be a layer of dark fill instead. We found the real A around 130 cm, but there are still some unanswered questions about the E horizon. We took two augers, one from the northeast corner and one from the northwest. Our northwest auger showed the E around 3 cm down, but the northeast showed it between 7 and 10 cm down. We're hoping that our digging tomorrow will show the E's slope better and help us understand what's going on.

On the bayou...

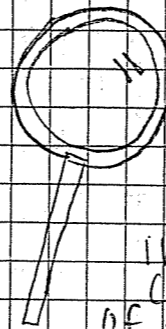
On a humid Mississippi morning

On the bayou...

ON THE BAYOU!

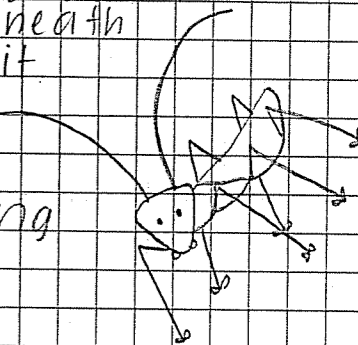


## Nancy Drew and the Case of the Mysterious Buried A Horizon

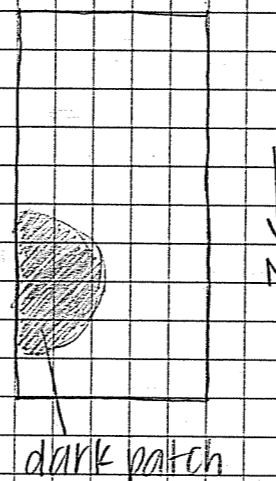


Emily and Amanda arrived at Bayou Pierre early this morning looking for a clue about the mysterious buried A horizon. Their augers from the previous day had left them befuddled. The E was appearing several centimeters deeper in the northwest corner than in the northeast corner on what should have been the gradient of the slope. The two sleuths set to shoveling.

The dark layer of soil immediately underneath the dark yellowish brown BT fill turned out to be a red herring. Even though it appeared to be a buried A horizon, it was really just a layer of darker mound fill. The real A showed up underneath the dark fill in most parts of the unit although it fizzled out on the northern end of the east profile wall. Think! It appears that the mound's builders altered the A horizon before beginning the mound's construction.



Amanda and I wrapped up our unit at Bayou Pierre today. We clean troweled down past the E, but it didn't look like there were any features\*. We decided not to take out another level—we weren't finding any diagnostic pottery or other spectacular artifacts yesterday, even with a quarter-inch screen, so we didn't have a reason to suspect there would be much to gain from continuing to dig. Most of the artifacts we had from the Buried A were lithics and pebbles; there was hardly any pottery.



We listened to Bob Dylan while we profile mapped. The weather was cooler than usual but still sunny; it was a great Friday in the field!

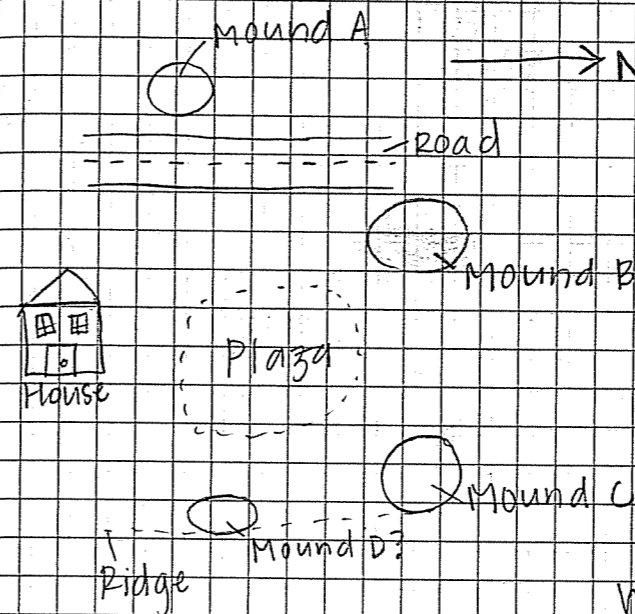
♪ On the strata, they are a'changin'!

♪ Subterranean BT Blues ♪

\* There was a patch of dark soil in the northern half of the unit, but we decided not to excavate it.



Today I'm digging in the plaza at the Smith Creek mounds. The layout here is very similar to Feltus. There are three (possibly four) mounds around a central area. One mound has a deep moat around it; looters in the 1970s disturbed its structure and destroyed several burials in it. Its similarities to the burial mound at Feltus indicate that Smith Creek is also a Coles Creek site.



There was a big rain storm last night, which collapsed the sun shelters at the site. Some water unfortunately got into the unit - although it wasn't waterlogged, the soil is wet and mucky and difficult to dig through.

We dug down about 25 cm because the auger showed a living surface at around that depth.

We found a lot of artifacts in the level, especially fired clay and huge diagnostic sherds. We know that we are in a midden because of the high artifact count and dark soil color. Interestingly, we aren't really finding organic waste such as bone, even though there are very well-preserved bone samples at Mound C.

11 June 2013

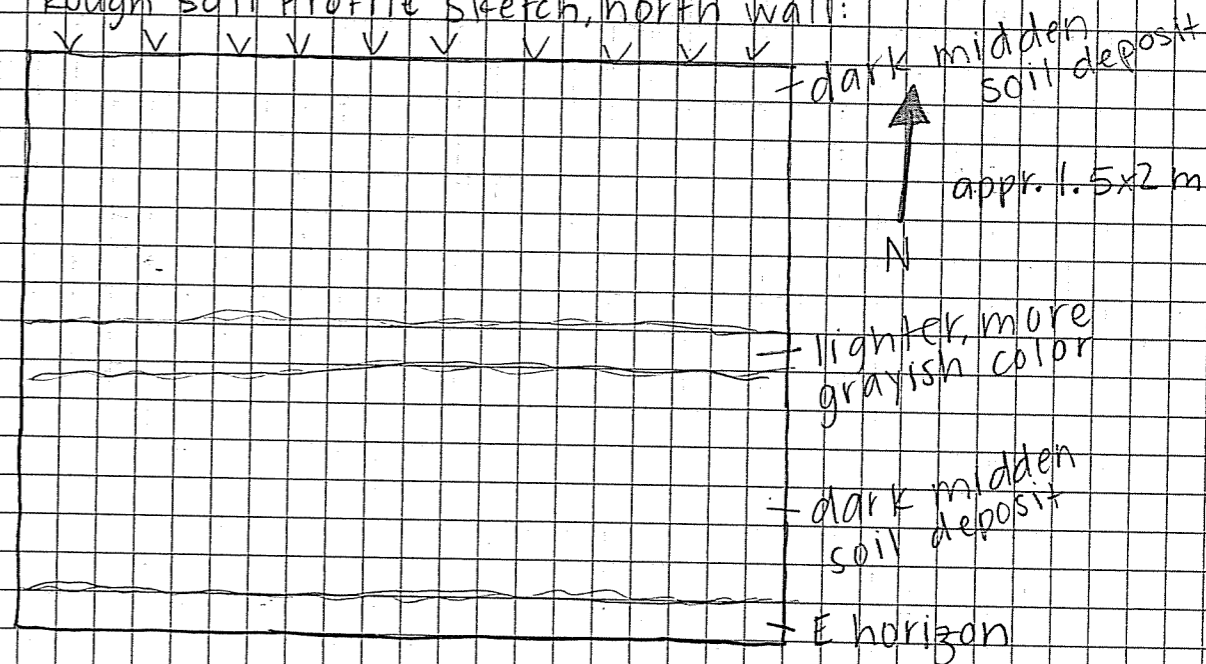
Lab

I stayed home with Kelly W. to do lab work today. She rough sorted, and I spent most of the day at the float machine. We finished all of the floating that needed to get done. Unfortunately, there was a sludge pump malfunction while I was floating a sample from Bayou Pierre Mound B, and the cloth screen came detached when the light tank flooded. I did my best to trowel the light sample onto the screen and double-bagged it in another cloth. (Heads up to the next sorters/baggers!)

I'm back in the plaza at Smith Creek today. In the morning, we finished up Level 5, which took us to a depth of about 135 cm. The BT isn't for another 15 cm below that, so we're going to take out another level after lunch to look for features. The soil is still a homogenous dark brown color, and we've been finding less sherds.

I found the E 15 cm below Level 5. The soil was easier to screen the lower down we dug. There weren't very many artifacts in Level 6, but we still found sherds. We'll look for features after the floor is clean-trowelled tomorrow.

Rough soil profile sketch, north wall:



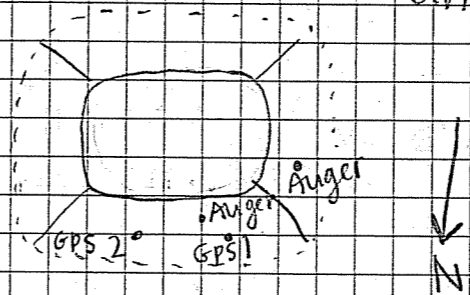
It looks like the moundbuilders piled up to 2 m of midden fill in the plaza - I wonder why? The sherds looked like secondary deposits in the darker layers but primary deposit in the lighter layer, indicating varying increments of construction.

13 June 2013

Bayou Pierre & Windsor Mounds

I spent the first half of the day helping to backfill the units on Bayou Pierre Mounds A and B. The mound A unit was partially done using a tractor, but we did the rest by hand.

After lunch I headed to Windsor Mounds to help Andy place GPS points and auger. We put the points in a clearing on the southern side of the big mound and took an auger on the southern flank. We saw nothing but moundfill in the core, so we scouted out the other sides of the mound to look for a steeper place to auger. Unfortunately, the mound has been subject to heavy erosion and is very overgrown, so it was difficult to find a good spot. In the auger on the western flank, we found the Buried A under about 20 cm of fill.



14 June 2013

Windsor Mounds

Andy and I are doing more work at the Windsor Mounds today. The first mound we're working on has been heavily plowed and is barely there anymore.

We set in a unit on the plowed mound using the total station. I used the machine to calculate the distances of the points and shouted out to Andy what direction to move them in. The grass was giving us some issues at first, but we managed to set the points within a 5 mm margin.

After the plowed mound, we moved on to the private mound. We set up the Topcon GPS machine over the points that we put in yesterday. While we were waiting for them to calibrate, we took our lunch break and then explored the flanks of the mound. We took augers on the surface and each flank. Andy decided to put in a unit on top of the mound because a hard, gray layer came up in the auger—it could be a buried surface. We also flagged a unit on the western flank. Neither of them have been formally set in with the total station yet.

WARNING: Windsor Private Mound is

super overgrown! Beware of the thorn bushes.

15 June 2013

The Shelter

We all cleaned up around the shelter today. Morgan and I spiced, measured, and washed tarps as well as swept up and cleaned out the coolers. We had a great lunch at Calum Cookin' and then cleaned our room thoroughly afterward. We're taking a group photo at Church Hill later and then going to Fat Mamas and La Fiesta Grande.

I've really enjoyed this field season in Natchez and will miss everyone a lot! I've dug at lots of mounds and gained some great archaeological experience. 😊