Burrell Orchard 2014: Cleveland Archaeological Society Internship
Amanda Ponomarenko
The Ohio State University
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Selected for the 2014 Cleveland Archaeological Society Internship in Archaeology, I spent my summer learning and increasing my skills as an archaeologist. The first four weeks were spent at the Burrell Orchard site working alongside Dr. Brian Redmond and others from the Firelands Archaeological Research Center (FARC) and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s (CMNH) Archaeology-in-Action program. The Burrell Orchard site (33Ln15) is located in the Lorain County Metro Parks, north of the Burrell Homestead in Sheffield Village, Ohio. Through the dating of midden deposits, this site dates back to the Late Archaic period. I then spent my final four weeks of my internship working under the direction of Dr. Redmond in the archaeology lab at the CMNH.

The first week on site began with an orientation and introduction of the Burrell Orchard site, the rules and field procedures of the CMNH, and a brief instruction of archaeological field methods. Dr. Eddie Herdendorf introduced us to the area and gave a short geological overview of the Metro Parks and the site. Dr. Redmond and Brian Scanlan went over the history of excavation at Burrell Orchard and outlined the research objectives for the current field season. After going over the use and care of the tools for the field, the first week of excavation began.

During the first week, I worked with Char Shryock and Dr. Herdendorf on a number of shovel test units. The purpose of these shovel tests was to determine the maximum spatial extent of the Burrell Orchard site and the overall extent of sub-plow zone midden deposits. In our first unit, 490N 530E, we found a possible post mold (PPM) approximately 40cm below datum. I
learned the procedures for digging post molds which are to bisect and follow them down until the bottom is reached. Then after graphing and photographing the profile of the post mold, the second half is to be dug out and taken as a sample for flotation. Several more test units including 470N 551.5E and 470N 540E yielded flint flakes, fire-cracked rock, and burned bone. The midden deposits for these first few test units were beginning at around 30cm below datum and continuing another 20-25cm until subsoil was reached.

Also during the first week, two larger excavation units were opened. I was assigned to 2x2m unit 490N 497.5E with Brian Scanlan and several other field school students. This was the toughest work of the field season! A large number of fire-cracked rock appeared immediately within the plow zone, making it a slow and difficult process to expose the midden deposits. Using hoes and a number of other methods to break through the plow zone, the top of the midden was reached in the SW corner at around 30cm below datum. This was apparent by its dark color, dense and compact nature, and appearance of carbon and many more inclusions. A stone celt was found at 491.52N 498.20E, the first substantial artifact to be found.

The second week was spent digging many more shovel test units, at five meter intervals on transects running north-south and east-west. I dug with two field school students on units 460N 495E, 450N 520E, 450N 530E, 450N 555E, and 450N 500E. Fire-cracked rock, burned bone, block shatter, flint flakes, a drill tip, and carbon flecks were common artifact finds within these units. One day a journalist and photographer visited site, interviewing workers and volunteers for a story in the Elyria local newspaper. At the end of the week, the two other students and I opened up a shovel test unit but it filled with water, making it nearly impossible to screen. We decided to take a lunch field trip to the Burrell Fort site across the road, but we ended up being rained out for the remainder of the day. The last day of week two, I worked with
Jim Bowers and others in the 2x2m unit 500N 512E. By this point, we worked on trowel-skimming the unit in halves, in 5cm increments. A muskrat mandible, a few flint flakes, many fragments of burned bone, and a large amount of fire-cracked rock was recovered. A semi-circular formation of large rocks in the NW corner of the Western half appeared.

During the third and fourth weeks of the field season, I continued working with Jim Bowers in 500N 512E. Time was spent graphing features and completing paperwork, which was great practice. Several small rock clusters, and a larger burned soil area appeared (later identified as feature 14-6). All features were bisected, one half was dug out, and the profile was drawn and photographed; the second half was taken for flotation. Other features were encountered including several dark pits, very moist and containing a large number of artifacts including burned bone, carbon, and fire-cracked rock. Four features in total, 14-5 to 14-8, and twelve PPMs were excavated at approximately 50cm below datum. The PPMs were identified, mapped, bisected, munselled, and completed. Many of these post molds were positive, and a pattern seemed to emerge along the border of a yellow-brown clay platform. Additional pit features and a few PPMs were found beneath feature 14-5, including 14-13 and 14-14. One day, Leon Bibb from NewsChannel 5 visited and did a story about the field school and excavation of the site. The final week was the busiest, as we sought to finish the excavation of all features and close the 2x2m units. Dr. Redmond noted the possibility of 500N 512E containing remnants of a prehistoric dwelling, evidenced by the clay floor, post mold patterns, and pit features.

A couple days of week five were spent back on the site, finishing up the excavation of features, mapping the wall profiles, taking photographs, and closing the site. When I arrived for my first day of work in the laboratory at the CMNH, I was introduced to Ann DuFresne and a large group of museum volunteers, eager to share with me the laboratory procedures and
workings of the museum. I started by helping to wash, inventory, and catalog recovered artifacts from the site.

By the start of the second week in the CMNH archaeology lab, Dr. Redmond gave me an independent project to work on. I was given the artifact collection and all excavation materials from the Harbour Site (33Er280) of Sandusky, Erie County, Ohio. First excavated as part of a CRM project in 1983, the site was to be intensively developed for commercial use. A site report was never completed at the end of excavation, so I was given the task of looking at a particular cluster of interesting features near the northeast area of the site and creating a miniature report of its findings. I sought to describe how the feature group was excavated, what we could tell about its use, to analyze the materials recovered within the feature, to propose a cultural and temporal affiliation, and to describe near-by associated features. I created many data tables of artifact counts and what information I could give about the lithic, faunal, ceramic, and botanical remains. I compared the findings in each of the features, noted ones which were diagnostic of the time period, and made some preliminary interpretations. I concluded that the excavation and artifact assemblage indicates that possibly during the late 15th century and into the middle 16th century, the feature may have been a wall-trench dwelling for people living along the eastern bank of Pipe Creek. The independent project took up the remainder of my time during the internship.

I cannot begin to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Cleveland Archaeological Society for giving me the opportunity to develop my skills as an archaeologist, and to grow both as an individual and as a professional. I would first like to thank Dr. Redmond, not only for his direction and guidance, but for presenting me with this opportunity and helping me along every step of the way. Thank you to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History for their share in the project. Additionally, I am grateful for the experience of working with the many wonderful
members of the Archaeology-in-Action program, including those from FARC, and the many
great staff and volunteers from the CMNH. The skills I have acquired and the experience I have
gained will no doubt help me as I finish both of my degrees at The Ohio State University this
year and as I continue my education for a career in archaeology. I enjoyed every moment of this
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