

On May 9th 2016 I and several other students from Mississippi State University set out to Allendale County in Martin South Carolina to dig at a site that is just to the east of Topper. The area that we were excavating was named The East Swag by Dr. Goodyear. The site is in fact the east swell of the Savana River. Our main goal was to see if we could prove the theory of Dr. Goodyear that this smaller site was in fact a site of secondary reduction for stone tool production. Also we were looking for any artifacts that may have given any clue as to any past activity of humans.

We arrived after an eight hour drive and set our tents up at base camp. The next morning we were given a tour of the site and the surrounding sites in the area. We toured two other sites that were being worked by two other schools. Then we returned to camp where we had lunch and safety meetings. The largest concern was that of snakes and the fact that we were guest at Archroma chemical plant, so the areas we were allowed to be in were restricted. Then after our meeting we loaded our equipment into our van to set up our working area. We worked on site for a few hours setting everything up so that the following morning we could start our excavation.

Our units were standard 1x1 units 1 meter by 1 meter. We took five elevation shots (four corners and center) with a total station to set our opening elevation. We were told to set a 5cm wall and a 25 by 25cm square in the southwest corner of our units. We were to dig 5cm deep and screen all dirt, bag all artifacts from the screens, and then to remove the 5cm borders which was also to be screened. Also to measure all artifacts, the ones that were 5cm or greater we were to set them on pedestals to piece plot the unit. After we finished mapping the unit with piece plots we took elevation shots of the artifacts. Then we were to remove the 25cm square and bag it for water screening. We then took closing elevations which also set as our opening elevations for the next level.

In the unit I was working in we found a nice piece of chert in level 2 making it the first artifact over 5cm to be found. As my partner and I formed the pedestal for our artifact we found a second artifact that was in fact a blade core. These two artifacts were removed at level 4 which puts them to the depth of around 20cm. Photos were taken of every step and the artifacts were removed and bagged into their own artifact bags. We also set elevation points of features that were found. These features that were found were in fact root burns that leads to the thought of people burning the chert to harden it.

As the unit got deeper we were told to start piece plotting artifacts that were 3cm or larger once we were below the plow zone. As a group we found that the debitage was very dense and we were finding more flakes than anyone thought we would find. In fact by the time the unit I was working on was on level 10 there were 38 pedestaled artifacts in that single level. In this level I found a biface and a blade core that had been reshaped into a scrapper. A large amount

for sure but the most dense unit was 3 units south of mine which yielded over five hundred artifacts in a single level. This set a record for the entire artifact record of all sites around the Topper site as the single densest unit ever recorded.

At the end of our third week on site disaster struck. Tropical storm Bonnie hit and there was sever damage to all of our units. Even though the units were covered to help protect them the storm was just too strong. The following Monday after the storm we look at the damage and tried to remove as much water as we could. After we removed over 50 gallons of water from the units we stopped for the day, the water table had rising and our unit floor were below the water table. So we left the units for the day and worked in our field lab. The following day we returned to the units to remove the remaining artifacts and to get elevations of the artifacts. The day after we did our back fill and covered our units and with heavy hearts said bye to our units and can only wonder at what is lying beneath undiscovered. The remainder of our time in field school was done in our field lab. Here we washed artifacts, and size sorted all debitage.

As to down time at camp, every Thursday night Dr. Goodyear came to camp and he would bring guest speakers that talked about all kinds of different archaeology projects form around the United States. There was also a master flint knapper that came twice a week who taught anyone that wanted to learn how to flint knapp.

On our very last day in South Carolina as a group we went to tour a shell ring excavation. After we toured the shell ring we went to the beach to just have fun and to forget about Bonnie and the damage she did, well the best we could anyway.