

The Search for Distinguishing Characteristics of Hearths and Earth Ovens by Kelly Lytle

Background

- Cooking is important to people
- Identifying features is a key part of excavating
- Hearths and earth ovens are examples of such features
 - Hearths are defined as an open-air type of cooking
 - Earth ovens, on the contrary, are a closed pit type of cooking

Introduction

- The experiment
 - Create both the hearth and the earth oven
 - Profile each to test soil signatures

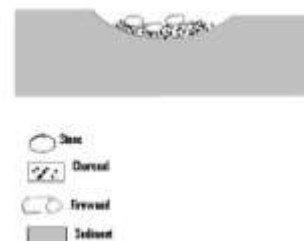
The Purpose

- To establish criteria for identification of hearths and earth ovens

The Experiment



The Hearth



The Earth Oven



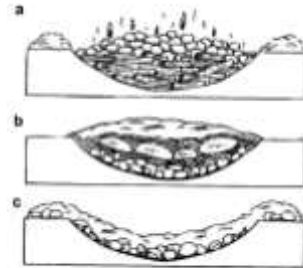
Previous work

- Alston Thoms has conducted research into rock cookery features found in the archaeological record.
- I used his previous work as my initial reference for the construction of the earth oven

Problems

Using Alston Thoms' previous work with earth ovens as my primary reference proved unsuccessful

Alston Thoms' earth oven



Time to Dig

The Hearth



The Earth Oven



Expected Characteristics

The Hearth

- Fire cracked rock
- Leeching of soil
- Burnt clay
- Animal remains
 - Venison
 - Other
- Plant remains
 - Seeds
 - Corn

The Earth Oven

- Fire cracked rock
- Burnt clay
- Limestone and igneous rock
- Certain types of plant remains
 - Root type foods
 - Squash

Observed Characteristics

The Hearth

- Fire cracked rock
- Leeching of the soil
- Burnt clay

The Earth Oven

- Fire cracked rock
- Cache of rock
- Bits of plant remains
- Mixing of soil with ash

Burnt clay in hearth



Fire Cracked Rock



Conclusion

Much More Work to Be Done

- Very little was assessed from this experiment, but I feel it supports the need for more research

Thank You