

It's a Well, It's a Cellar, It's a... "Large Deep Pit"

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This preliminary analysis of ceramics recovered from excavations at 1MB513 as part of the MRB project focuses specifically on Feature 261 – a "large deep pit." This colonial feature type has been recognized at other French colonial occupations, specifically the La Pointe-Krebs plantation site in Mississippi and the Dog River site in Alabama.



Other Large Deep Pit Assemblages

Fill from the Large Deep Pit (LDP) Feature 163 at La Pointe-Krebs plantation site (MS) dates between the 1750s and 1780s. Its initial usage is not obvious, but at some point, was filled with refuse. The LDP is 1.75-x-2.6-x-1.25 m deep. A second LDP, Feature 105, is similar in size and form, as well as exhibiting multiple depositional episodes and dense colonial refuse infilling. The LDP from the Dog River/Rochon Plantation site, Feature 142, is referred to as a "very large refuse pit" with barrel staves and hoops at the bottom. While it may have originally been a barrel well, excavators were unsure because no intact barrels were found. This LDP is 1.75-x-2.25-x-1 m deep.



In progress bisection of Feature 163 from the La Pointe Krebs excavations (Gums and Waselkov 2015). Barrel staves and hoops found below this elevation.



Excavated Feature 105 at La Pointe Krebs, another LDP, in planview (Gums and Waselkov 2015).



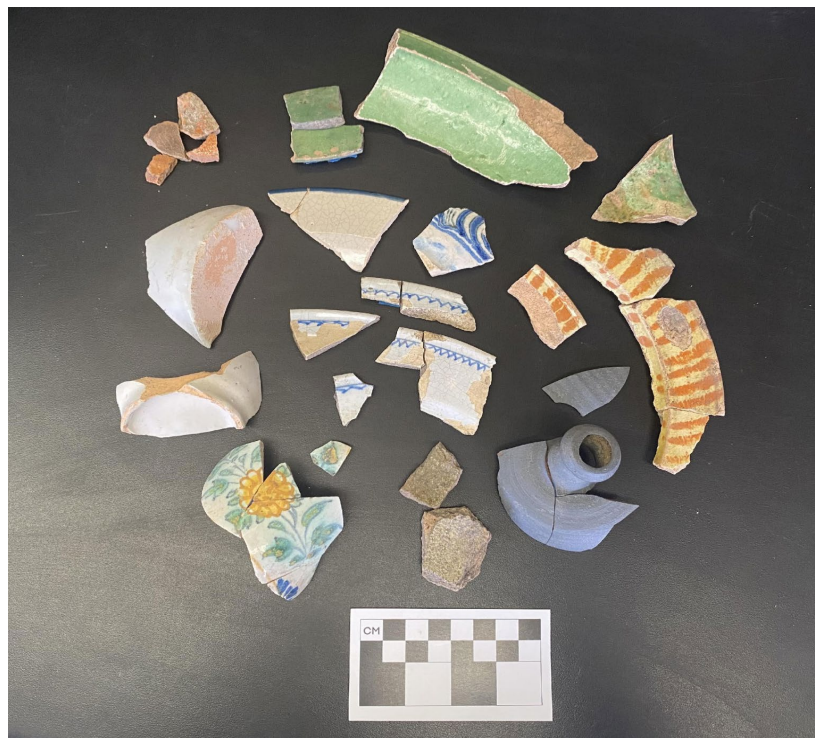
East profile of Feature 261, site 1MB513, in progress, barrel staves and basal structure located below this elevation.



Photos of Feature 261, site 1MB513, showing the wood stakes before and after heavy machinery removed deep deposits in the water table.

1MB513 "Large Deep Pit" Assemblage

The preliminary typing of the Feature 261 ceramic assemblage is strikingly similar to the other LDP features. A mixture of wares originating in European countries arriving in North America during the colonial period but pointing to a creation and filling of the feature during the British period. Like the other LDP features, the MRB LDP also contained a significant number of historical Native American vessel fragments. The datable types are not specific enough to refine the period of when the feature was created and utilized initially as compared to how long it remained open and when it was filled in.



Sample of European ceramics recovered from Feature 261.

More detailed and refined analyses of the deposits and material culture from Feature 261 will lead to a better understanding of this feature type within colonial contexts, and a more appropriate designation than “Large Deep Pit.”

References

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