

Experimental Archaeology Laboratory

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Permit 2001-2

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Primary aim of project

To provide an area for students to engage in experimental archaeological research to understand the ways in which materials are processed and discarded, and eventually become a part of the archaeological record. This outdoor lab is an essential component of the Department of Anthropology's teaching program in archaeology. Since it was first established in 1988 it has had a very positive impact on the teaching of both undergraduate and graduate students. It has served as an important laboratory for many research projects that have developed into doctoral dissertations or major publications in archaeological journals.

Results/accomplishments Summer 2005 and Fall 2005

Used area for teaching the following classes

Anthro 352 - Summer 2005, (8 weeks session) 25 students

Anthro 120 – Fall 2005, Freshman Interest Group course- 13 students

The area is also used periodically for experimental projects by graduate students and faculty.

During the Summer of 05 the students were involved in stone working and pottery making and firing, as well as forging of iron and steel. A portable forge was brought to the site and removed at the end of the demonstrations. We dismantled the glass kiln that had been maintained for two years to record the nature of its weathering and begin filling in the pit to create a distinctive archaeological feature that could be excavated in the future. The class also constructed one pit kiln that was used for firing pottery. The updraft kiln was used and then covered with a tarp to preserve it for use in the Fall. Students from the Ancient Technology class also participated in the firing of the Anagama kiln that is maintained by the Art Department. The pit kiln was left to weather and allowed to fall apart as part of the teaching process to demonstrate how the archaeological record is created. One student project involved the construction of a small "monument" made of fallen branches and twigs. This has now weathered away and is no longer visible.

Data available

I have kept detailed photographs of activities in this area, and also have a wonderful set of student presentations in Powerpoint format that could be used to show the kinds of projects produced through the use of this site.