

corresponded with the zones identified in plan view. Zone D, underlying Zones A and C, consisted of a dark yellowish-brown (10YR4/6) silt loam mottled with of dark yellowish-brown (10YR3/4) clayey silt loam. The soil was dry and compact with gravel throughout. Light charcoal flecking was also present. While excavating this feature, it was often difficult to distinguish between the pit fill and the surrounding matrix, and excavation was hindered by the high gravel content. The feature contained very little cultural material and had obviously been opened and completely refilled with the homogeneous gravelly silt loam during a single event.

Initially, the feature was thought to represent a ramp and pit for a substantial central post. However, the profile indicated that the anomaly, while curving slightly on the north end, did not demonstrate the sloping base typical of a post pit. The REU excavation was concluded with an incomplete understanding of the function of Feature 46.

When this feature was re-opened during Indiana Archaeology Month, the excavation continued until a small, shell-tempered Taylor Village mortuary vessel (see chapter 4) was encountered along the profile wall of the south block. Instead of a large post pit, the feature proved to be a deeply excavated, extended burial. When the mortuary vessel was identified, the excavation of Feature 46 was terminated to avoid disturbing the burial. The maximum depth of the excavation was 134 cmbd (datum 07-F, 144 cmbd 07-A). The depth of the vessel ranged between 117 to 130 cmbd (datum 07-F).

After the appropriate consultation, it was decided that the vessel would be removed for study for a period of one year. Unit 152 (1x1 m) was laid out south of Unit 121 in order to excavate a narrow column down over that portion of the vessel that extended into the south wall (see Figure 3.3). Only the north half of Unit 152 was excavated (Figure 3.57) down to the base of the plowzone where the southern edge of Feature 46 was identified. After the feature limits were identified, the overburden was removed to the level of the vessel, and it was removed (Figure 3.58). During this process some soil spalled off the profile wall, exposing a small area of the cranium. The bone was not damaged or removed. Immediately beneath the cranium, a thin copper sheet was visible, which continued into the profile wall. This also was left in place. The copper probably represents a portion of a headdress, but it is unknown whether it was part of a larger piece or has decoration. At the present time there are no plans to investigate further.

In addition to the mortuary vessel, which contained an inverted mussel shell too deteriorated to identify by species, artifacts recovered from Feature 46 included 20 pieces of chert debitage; 2 pieces of FCR; 12 sherds (5 shell tempered and 7 grit/sand tempered); 0.1 g flora; and 83.4 g non-human bone, which included a bear maxilla with both right and left elements (44 g). Small soil samples from within the mortuary vessel and the area around it were also retained for future analysis. The light density of mostly small fragments in Feature 46 is consistent with fill originating in the central plaza, an area that was kept relatively clear of settlement debris.