

The Mayan Archeology Dig



Photo provided by Mary Ann O'Rourke

Day One:

When I got to the dig late (a first), Big Dog got us all in an archaeological frame of mind. He did this with a slide show. Then we tramped off to start work on the dig.

We dug down about four inches and found stones arranged in an oval shape. Around the stones were red pottery and decorated pottery. Big Dog said that the decorated pottery came from Mexico and the red pottery from the Mayan area. The oval of stones generally means that there is a grave in that spot! Perhaps we'll find the grave tomorrow. If only it would stop raining! We were nearly washed away (well, not really).

In the afternoon we played a game called Lost Cities. It was quite fun. The object of the game was to visit lost cities and pay for your trip there by finding artifacts. After that a few people went outdoors and secured the dig with buckets to keep it water proof.

Day Two:

I didn't arrive late to the dig today! Anyway, our bucket wall held, and the dig was dry-ish. Well, not as wet as it could have been.

Today we found a skeleton, which is quite normal considering that it was in a

grave. The skeleton was buried with an assortment of clay vessels and two black clay skulls next to his skull. We think they were probably funeral offerings! We also found pottery from an earlier level mixed in with this one, so we are going to dig farther.

How did this guy die? Well, for one thing we found a huge obsidian ax blade stuck in his spine. Ouch! But for another thing, this fellow was having such severe tooth problems, he could barely eat. Double ouch! We think that he was probably killed in a fight, and a fight that he shouldn't have been fighting. Remember that this guy had terrible tooth problems. While he was killed, it's clearly that he was buried properly, so his side must have won.

After digging, we had lunch and played a game called Settlers of Catan.

Day Three:

Today I arrived extra early because I came with Big Dog, the archaeologist (he came over for dinner last night). We removed the skeleton and the grave goods, and discovered that there was pottery and what appeared to be a floor underneath. As we dug down, we found more pottery vessels, some whole and some broken. They did seem to be lying on a floor, but the floor seemed to be a design, not a floor at all. You'll never guess what it was...

It was a picture, made from the stones, that formed a stylized weird jaguar. What on earth is a weird jaguar, you might ask. Well, in the Mayan mythology, the weird jaguar is a jaguar that can turn into a person. This is a very honorable creature, because it embodies the best attributes of a person and a jaguar. The Mayans believed that the jaguar was a very mysterious animal, which is acceptable because it is a nocturnal predator and is very silent.

We cleared off the stones, removed all level two artifacts, and got ready for tomorrow, when we make our museum! After the dig, we all played a game called Tikal, which was all about the politics of archeology.

Day Four:

Today we cleared out the dig (which included pulling out all the stones in the weird tiger symbol and the surrounding artifacts) and filled it in (which included shoveling earth into buckets until the tarp which we emptied the earth onto was light enough to roll into the dig). We assembled the museum, which was when we discovered something chilling. The skeleton with the missing teeth was also missing hands and feet, and some evidence pointed towards him having been sacrificed. His hands, feet and teeth were removed after death. He may have been

sacrificed because of the weird jaguar design below.

After we cleaned up and set up the museum, we had a pot luck lunch. After the pot luck lunch, we gave tours around the museum. Big Dog told us all about the different artifacts and gave a talk about the skeleton. Then we cleaned up and left.

I really enjoyed this archeology dig and I am looking forward to the one in the fall!