New GARS Newsletter

In an effort to increase local awareness of our mission and the projects with which we are involved, the Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) will be distributing a monthly newsletter entitled the “Gwinnett Archaeology Bulletin” (GAB). Here you will find news of what GARS has been up to. Notices from other organizations, such as the Society for Georgia Archaeology (SGA) and the Gwinnett Historical Society (GHS), will also be included. We will also feature interesting archaeological sites identified and recorded in the past by Cultural Resource Management (CRM) firms working in Gwinnett County pursuant to certain types of State or County projects.

Our mailing list is a work in progress. Therefore, to be included (or removed) from our mailing list please contact the GAB editor, Delana Gilmore. If you received this newsletter as an attachment in a forwarded (Fwd) email, you are probably not on our direct email list, so please let us know if you want to be added to the list. If you receive two of these, you must be on our list twice, so let us know that as well in case we don’t catch it ourselves.

GARS Monthly Meeting

Every month GARS members meet in one of the conference rooms at the Gwinnett County Justice and Administration Building located 75 Langley Road in Lawrenceville beginning at 7PM.

On February 9, 2012 Carey Waldrip will be speaking on Janie Loubser’s excavations and findings at Track Rock Gap in Union County, Georgia, a talk which could be subtitled: The Yupaha/Mayan Speculation (See column on page 2).

Janie spoke to us last year about the Track Rock petroglyphs. However, there is much more to the site, and now some folks are claiming that the Loubser’s site is a Mayan site! As a retired electronic engineer living in Track Rock Gap, Carey established the Track Rock Gap Alliance in 1997 to explore, map, and excavate on site 9UN367.
The Yupaha/Mayan Speculation

Has a Mayan site been discovered in north Georgia? According to self-styled scholar Richard Thornton, multiple sites in Georgia and Florida show evidence that the Mayans may have been mining gold and living in the Southeastern United States.

In preparation for Cary Waldrip’s presentation at the GARS monthly meeting on February 9, you should become familiar with this very controversial subject. See the links (highlighted in blue) and read Loubser’s excavation report.

Cultural Resource Management in Gwinnett

What many people don’t realize is that archaeological sites are being discovered and recorded all the time here in Gwinnett County. Of course, sites are being destroyed as well (See Georgia Heritage Loss). However, here we will focus on site discoveries in recent years and the context of those discoveries.

In 2004–2005 TRC (a CRM firm in Norcross) carried out a historical and archaeological investigation of 1795-acre tract for the proposed Harbins-Alcovy Park for the Gwinnett County Department of Community Services. Jim D’Angelo was the Principal Investigator (PI), and Jeff Holland the project’s historian.

Through studying a variety of archival records, TRC was able to give a chronological accounting of the land use history for the Harbins community—making it possible to address questions about settlement density, mobility, agricultural practices, and economic development and decline.

Field reconnaissance of selected areas having the highest potential for significant prehistoric sites resulted in recordation of three sites. Boundaries of two known cemeteries, including Shady Grove, were delineated and mapped. Twelve known historic sites and 15 new historic sites were recorded. These were mostly house sites dating from the early 19th to early 20th centuries but included the location of the Shady Grove Church and School and a detailed recordation of the Hugh Lowe Grist Mill (located on the Alcovy River) dating to at least 1890 but probably much earlier. The site includes: mill pond, dam, head gate, headrace, wheel pit, and two-story mill ruins.

Join GARS and/or FDF to participate and support our efforts in preserving Gwinnett County’s historic sites. Applications are on GARS & FDF Web sites or just email us!

GARS Activity Notes

Several field trips and archaeology projects are planned. They include continuing excavations at the Graves Soapstone Site and Fort Daniel; archaeological investigations of an early house site, a mill site, and a fort site contemporary with Fort Daniel; a tour of Old Peachtree Road; a trip to Fort Hawkins and the Okmulgee Mounds; participation in the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) program at Fort Daniel in May, the Frontier Faire in October, and the GHS Winn Faire also in October. Most of these activities are open only to GARS members, so join GARS and be part of the fun!
Fort Daniel Update

- Because there have not been any new excavations at the site since last November, plans are being made for excavations in the area of the recently discovered “brick feature” within the fort prior to the SHA visit in May.

- Georgia State’s Jeff Glover is working with Georgia Southern’s Sheldon Skaggs on a digital map of the site that will be integrated with the Gwinnett County Digital Elevation Map (DEM) provided to Jeff by the County.

- Site archaeologist Jim D’Angelo reports that his book on the history and archaeology of Fort Daniel will hopefully be ready for the SHA meeting in May.

- Jim also reports that he gave two presentations in January on Fort Daniel and the “Peachtree connection”: one at the SHA Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, and again at the monthly meeting of the Blue Ridge Archaeology Group (BRAG) in Dahlonega. (BRAG is SGA’s newest chapter. Their advisor is Georgia archaeologist Jack Wynn, who worked with Carey Waldrip at 9UN367.) Jim gave a similar presentation at the Fall meeting of the SGA.

- Georgia State grad student Ivey Trapp reports that she is making progress on the Fort Daniel documentary—hoping that it will be accepted for viewing on The Archaeology Channel.

Noteworthy Notes

- From Riverside Kate: Laurence Fishburne narrates “Slavery By Another Name” on February 13th beginning at 8PM on PBS. You can go to YouTube to see a preview.

- Dr. Sheldon Skaggs has published the results of his geophysical surveys at Fort Daniel. To view the report visit the SGA Web site.

- Jim D’Angelo has published a short article on the brick feature found during the 2011 Frontier Faire entitled “Faire Conclusions.” You can view it online on the SGA Web site. For other GARS and Fort Daniel Foundation (FDF) articles go to the SGA Web site archives.

- Several good archaeology videos from around the world and the USA can be found on The Archaeology Channel. We hope to be there someday!
The Society for Georgia (SGA)—which GARS is a chapter—sponsors each May as Georgia Archaeology Month. The theme for the 2012 Archaeology Month is “The Bicentennial of the War of 1812.” The Annual Spring Meeting of SHA (held in conjunction with the State-wide celebration of Archaeology Month) will be held May 19 at Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) and the Fort Daniel site. GGC has graciously offered to host the morning session that will include presentations focused on the 1812 War theme by members of Georgia’s archaeological community.

The afternoon session (which will include lunch) will be at the Fort Daniel site. As with our 2011 Frontier Faire, visitors will see the results of four years of archaeological investigations along with interpretive signage and will be able to observe college anthropology students and grade school students participating in actual excavations. In our 1812 War-era, walled tent visitors will see our Fort Daniel artifact display, and in the new Hog Mountain Trading Post tent they can visit the SGA and the GARS/FDF booths.

SGA is a statewide organization of professional and avocational archaeologists. We feel privileged to have this organization meeting at our site, and we welcome the opportunity to show the rest of the state what we are up to in Gwinnett County!

Mark Your Calendar!
The SGA’s Spring Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 19, 2012, as part of 2012 Archaeology Month celebrations. This year’s Archaeology Month theme is commemorating the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.