Public Archaeology at the Lyon Farm

Most of our history is unwritten. Join archaeologists on an exploration and discover stories about people who were unable to share their own.
About the project:
The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) is partnering with the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, Inc. in a public archaeology project at the Lyon Farm in DeKalb County.

Excavations are planned over two weekends - one in the spring and one in the fall of 2012. These excavations are open to the public and public participation is encouraged.

What can we discover?
During the first phase of excavation, we will attempt to locate the cabins that housed slaves who lived on the property prior to the Civil War. Once the remains of these cabins are located, additional excavations may reveal more about the lives of the families that called them home. Creek settlements were also reported in the area and there is a good chance of encountering Native American artifacts during the investigations. As a working farm for generations, there is a also a high likely hood of finding interesting clues about past residents.

What is the Lyon Farm?
The Lyon Farm was settled around 1800 by a Revolutionary War soldier on land ceded by the Creek Nation. The Lyon family lived on the property until 2006 and farmed there into modern times. Through their occupancy, they encountered native people, owned slaves and worked the land through a variety of farming techniques.

Some accounts suggest the Lyon family slaves lived in the basement of the main house. 1860 census data indicates the Lyon family owned 17 slaves and family accounts say there were in three houses for them located east of the main house. The exact location of these cabins is not known.

Why is this important?
Discovery of the remains of these three houses will prevent the location from being disturbed during future activity on the property. Though the Lyon Farm is eligible for to the National Register of Historic Places and a report has been prepared on the buildings themselves, little work has focused on the lives of the enslaved people who lived there. Archaeology provides a means to present the untold story of these enslaved families.

How Can I Participate?
The local community, amateur historians and the descendants of the people who lived on the Lyon Farm are all welcome to participate. The first dig is scheduled for April 28, 2012.

If you are interested in participating in the excavations please contact Ms. Rachel Black at the Historic Preservation Division by mail or email at the address below to be added to the list. Please note, participation is limited.

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