Frontier Faire 2012

What does a clothesmaker, a signmaker, and a soapmaker have in common? They will be at the 4th Annual Frontier Faire! Along with these vendors demonstrations from a blacksmith, a flintknapper, a quilt maker, and a pottery maker will be set up among the elementary, middle school, and college students participating in archaeological excavations. You can talk to the reenactors who will be strolling through the fort following the steps of the early settlers of what became Gwinnett County. Additionally, don’t forget to visit the Hog Mountain Trading Post and the Fort Daniel Museum Tent where the artifacts found at the site will be displayed.

Remember to put October 20 and 21 on your calendar now! And tell your friends! For more information visit the Fort Daniel Foundation’s Web site.

GARS Monthly Meeting

The GARS monthly meeting, which is open to the public, is held on the second Thursday at the Gwinnett County Justice and Administration Building located at 75 Langley Road in Lawrenceville. Gathering at 7PM with program starting at 7:30PM.

The next Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) meeting will be November 8. Since GARS members will be participating in the Winn Fair, the Frontier Faire, and the Georgia Council for the Social Studies Conference, there will not be an October meeting. Remember you can attend Dr. Jim D’Angelo’s presentation on October 18 at the Fort Daniel Elementary School beginning at 7PM (see page 4).

The SGA’s Fall Meeting will be on Saturday, October 27, 2012 at the Columbus Museum in Columbus, Georgia. For information visit their Web site.

You can now find GARS on Facebook!
Because this is going to be such a busy time of year for GARS, continuing excavations at the Graves Soapstone site have been put on hold. A field trip to Fort Hollingsworth with the GGC History Club, which is open to GARS and FDF members, has been scheduled for Friday, November 9. Fort Hollingsworth is a frontier fort built in 1793 and located in Hollingsworth, Georgia. Several such forts were constructed along the 1785 and 1790 treaty line that extended from Tugaloo to the head of the Appalachee at Hog Mountain, Fort Daniel being one of them.

You are cordially invited to the 34th Annual Winn Fair to be held on October 6–7, 2012 from 10AM–5PM on Saturday and 10AM–4PM on Sunday. Admission is $3, and children under 12 get in for free. There will be tours of the house, crafts, reenactors, and much more. The Winn House is located on 908 Dacula Road in Dacula. For more information visit the Gwinnett Historical Society’s Web site. Come celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Winn House, the birthplace of Gwinnett County!

Archaeologists are called upon to record everything that is over 50 years of age when conducting an archaeological survey—including standing structures, whether lived in or falling down. One of Gwinnett County’s oldest standing structures is the Chessure-Williams House (pictured below) in Hog Mountain (just down the road apiece from Fort Daniel). I am featuring it here because it is in the process of being moved, section by section, to the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center where it will be preserved.

The house is a classic “I” house, a variation of which is called “Plantation Plain.” The Winn House (pictured left) is the same type of structure. Variations were common from Georgia to New England to Texas and Oklahoma for almost 150 years beginning in the 18th century. They are characteristically two stories, one-room deep (four rooms) with a central entrance and central stair case. Chimneys on each end (This house exhibits only one chimney on the west façade) would provide as many as one fireplace per room. Heating only the downstairs was common. Kitchens were typically located in an outbuilding or a rear attachment as we see with both these Gwinnett houses. Other common variations had a rear one or two-story wing, which gave an “L” shape to the roof line.

There is some disagreement over the age of this structure (and the Winn House too). Dates of 1850s and 1880s have been cited; either could be correct. [Note the chimney stone work on west façade in the LA&S link below. This is similar to the Winn House and many others in Gwinnett County that I have documented, and I doubt this is original.] However, detailed drawings are being made as the structure is moved, and we may get a better idea of its age and evolution from that. Hmmm… an archaeological study might help. Just sayin’.

These houses are pretty common, so the architecture of the Chessure-Williams house is not the reason why so much money has been invested in moving and preserving it. You will see, if you look at the following links, that it is mainly the unique and very rare folk art amazingly preserved on the interior walls and ceilings (and some on the exterior) that makes this the treasure that it is.

For excellent views of the house’s interior and elevations visit the Lord, Aeck, and Sargent Architecture Firm’s Web site. For video about the house visit YouTube video and Fox 5 coverage.
More Diggin’s

- Promotion of Jim’s book on the history and archaeology of Fort Daniel—which will be available by the 200th anniversary of the construction of Fort Daniel in October 2013—will begin with the Gwinnett Historical Society’s Winn Fair on October 5–6. GARS and FDF will have a booth there. See the front of the free bookmark (pictured right) that will be available as part of the 2012-2013 promotion. Design is by our own Shannon Coffey.

- Colonial America is spreading the word about the Fort Daniel Foundation on its Web site—and so is the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA)! The Foundation is proud to be part of the Second Annual National Archaeology Day sponsored by the AIA (publishers of *Archaeology Magazine*). The date is October 20—same day as the Frontier Faire! Visit the National Archaeology Day Web site and click on Collaborating Organizations. It’s nice to see other Web sites mentioning the Faire or the Foundation. Actually, just Google Frontier Faire, Fort Daniel, or Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society, and see all the hits you get!

- The next Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society (GAAS) meeting will be on October 9, and the new meeting time is at 6:30 PM. The speaker is Jim Langford, President of the Coosawattee Foundation, who will provide a review of the remote sensing tests and excavations that took place in 2010 and 2011 to determine the possible presence of an earthlodge at the Etowah Mounds similar the one at the Ocmulgee site. Jim will also talk about earthlodge construction and function.

The Closing of the Georgia State Archives

With all the work that Bill Field, Wayne Waldrip, and I have been doing at the State Archives over the last several years with regard to both Fort Daniel and Fort Peachtree, it came quite a shock when we learned that, effective November 1, the Georgia State Archives located in Morrow, Georgia, will be closed to the public. After November 1 the public will only be allowed to access the building by appointment; however, the number of appointments could be limited based on the schedule of the remaining employees. Since public access had already been restricted to Fridays and Saturdays for some time now, this announcement was the straw that really broke the researcher’s back!

Last week a false statement circulated that the Governor had ordered that the Archives would remain open. Not only was this false—although Governor Deal is apparently working on this—but Secretary of State Kemp had fired all but three of the staff as of November 1—even though the final decision on this matter apparently will not be made until the Legislature votes on it in their 2013 session. I am told that one or more of these persons has already found work elsewhere. This leaves the Archives with a Director, Assistant Director, and a facilities maintenance manager. Loss of the seven staff members who possessed intimate knowledge of the collections acquired after years of service will make it much harder to access the records even if one can get an appointment!

The Society of Georgia Archivists (SGA) and the Friends of Georgia Archives and History (FOGAH) on behalf of the Coalition to Preserve the Georgia Archives are sponsoring a “Support the Archives/Save the Seven” rally in the State Capitol Rotunda in Atlanta on Wednesday, October 3 at noon. Former US Representative Bob Barr will speak at the rally. There is also a rally TBA at the Georgia Archives in Morrow. For more information or more current updates, please visit the home of the Society for Georgia Archivists. Additionally, you can check out a new blog, Georgia Archives Matters. ■ JJD
Fort Daniel Updates

- On September 25th Jim D’Angelo gave a presentation to approximately 50 or more historians and history buffs at a meeting of the Oglethorpe Historical Society in Lexington. He presented the results of his latest research on Fort Daniel’s connection with the building of Fort Peachtree, the road from Hog Mountain to Standing Peachtree, and the enigmatic flatboat trip down the Chattahoochee to Fort Mitchell. The enthusiastic audience—interested in the many frontier forts in their part of the State—had lots of questions and even some important information to share with Jim. The invitation to speak was from the Society’s President and Georgia archaeologist, Tom Gresham, who has shared his experience studying the famous rock piles of Northwest Georgia and Gwinnett County in particular with GARS members.

- Speaking of current research, did you know that:
  - The first 18 of approximately 40 miles of the road from Fort Daniel to Standing Peachtree already existed when work was started on it in 1814? All of this was in Creek Territory—extending from Hog Mountain to what is now downtown Duluth!
  - There were two boats built for the experiment—a flatboat and a Skiff—and that they were built and launched at Vann’s Ferry?
  - That the military name for the location of Fort Peachtree was Floydsville?
  - That Floydsville was a station on an Express Mail Route (e.g. the Pony Express) connecting Georgia with Andrew Jackson deep in Mississippi Territory?
  - That “Peachtree Road” is named as such as early as in the 1821 surveyor’s field notes? In 1819, Gwinnett surveyors call it, “The Road to Standing Peachtree.”

*This and much more is part of the presentation that will be given at the Fort Daniel Elementary School October 18 beginning at 7PM.*