Fourth Annual Frontier Faire

Article by Betty Warbington

We had beautiful fall weather for the Frontier Faire! Approximately 250 adults, including college students, visited the site over Saturday and Sunday. Most people said this was their first time to visit our Faire. We had a total of 13 vendors for both days, and the visitors enjoyed visiting the booths and the historical exhibits along with touring the fort site. Demonstrations occurred throughout the weekend from blacksmithing to fingerweaving to pottery making to flintknapping. Once again the Boy Scouts helped with the raising of the 15-Star US Flag. This year the music enriched the atmosphere at the Faire, and the visitors enjoyed this new addition. As far as promoting public awareness of the fort and its historical value to Gwinnett County, everyone agrees it was a successful fair! If you were not able to attend, do not fret—you can look at the picture collage of the Frontier Faire in the GAB’s Special Insert!

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 approximately 7:30PM. The next meeting will be November 8—featuring speaker Richard Johnston. Many of you met Richard at the Frontier Faire. Did you know that a special Calvary unit of Choctaw warriors (image right) fought on the side of the Confederacy during the Civil War? Richard will recount tribal history and stories that are part of Choctaw Woman (available on Amazon), his novel based on the lives of a Choctaw family. Richard will be signing his new book at the meeting.

You can now find GARS on Facebook!
Cultural Resource Management

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). In each issue we focus on site discoveries in recent years and the context of those discoveries.

As an introduction to what is called the “Section 106” process for recording, evaluating, and mitigating archaeological sites in the US, consider site 9GW453. This site was recorded by Brockington & Associates in 2000. The 20 x 45m “lithic scatter” was situated on the nose of a ridge that had been clear-cut and then bulldozed. Although the site was shovel tested, the shovel tests were negative and only 16 pieces of quartz debitage (waste) were recovered from the surface.

In the absence of diagnostic artifacts a cultural affiliation could not be assigned (e.g.; Early Archaic, Mississippian), and because of the disturbed nature of the site and negative shovel tests, Brockington recommended the site as not “eligible for the NRHP” (National Register of Historic Places). If the State Historic Preservation Office agrees with the archaeologist’s recommendation (as was the case) that means that the site is judged to have no information potential beyond what has been recorded in the survey, and that construction could proceed (as was the case). (However, it appears the construction had already started when the archaeologists got there!)

While the notion of cultural resources preservation has been around since the mid-19th century, there was no national preservation policy until President Johnson signed the National Preservation Act (NHP) in 1966. That act created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the State Historic Preservation Office, the National Register of Historic Places, and the Section 106 review process. It is that process that most directly relates to the finding of “not eligible for the NRHP” for 9GW453.

It is in the Section 106 process that we find the criteria for evaluation of historic properties that have “the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and: A) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or B) That are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; or C) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or D) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.”

It is the last of these, D, that is the main consideration for prehistoric archaeological sites like 9GW453. (A, B, and D would be considered for a site like Fort Daniel, and C would have to be considered for a site like the Elisha Winn house.) Most archaeological sites are, in fact, found “not eligible.” However, Gwinnett has its share of prehistoric sites that have been found to have or have the potential for the kinds of intact buried deposits that can yield worthwhile information about how Native Americans once lived. In other words, sites that have been “determined eligible for the NRHP.” We’ll look at one of these in the next issue. ■ JJD
Promotion of Jim’s book on the history and archaeology of Fort Daniel—which will be available for the 200th anniversary of the construction of Fort Daniel in October 2013—has begun. All profits from the sale of this book will go to the Fort Daniel Foundation. To date, the book has been promoted at the Winn Fair, the Frontier Faire, and the Georgia Council on Social Studies Conference in Athens. Anyone wishing to have bookmarks (pictured right) to give out, please contact Jim. They will be available at all GARS and FDF meetings as well. Design of the bookmark and the book cover is by our own Shannon Coffey. Actually the cover design is a work-in-progress and GARS/FDF members will have the opportunity to weigh in on their choice at the annual Christmas party and the FDF annual meeting in January!

The Fort Daniel Foundation was one of the exhibitors at the annual meeting of the Georgia Conference on Social Studies in Athens, Georgia, on October 25–26. Over 550 teachers and educators from around the State were in attendance. Jim and Natasha promoted the Foundation’s program and activities and distributed information. They signed up several teachers and educators for the GAB newsletter emailing list.

Jim and Natasha left the GCSS meeting in Athens for Columbus, Georgia, for the Fall meeting of the GCPA and SGA on the 26th and 27th. On Friday they visited Fort Mitchell (the destination for supplies delivered by flatboat from Fort Peachtree via Peachtree Rd. & Fort Daniel), and, following morning presentations, they toured the Columbus Museum and Confederate Naval Museum before driving back to Atlanta. Jim is Secretary-Treasurer of the GCPA.

The 13th Annual Stone Mountain Indian Festival and Pow Wow will be held on November 1–4. For more information visit Stone Mountain Park’s Web site.

GARS and FDF members are cordially invited to join a GGC History Club-sponsored site visit to Fort Hollingsworth in Hollingsworth, Georgia, on November 9 between 10AM and 2PM. (See Page 2 for more information.)

The next Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society (GAAS) meeting will be on November 13 at the Fernbank Museum beginning at 6:30PM. The speaker will be Tommy Hudson. His talk is titled: “Some Observations on Prehistoric Stone Structures in Georgia.” For more than 40 years he has been researching and recording petroglyphs and man-made rock constructions in Georgia. Tommy will focus on some of the similarities and distinct characteristics of the prehistoric stone constructions in North Georgia.

The Closing of the Georgia State Archives… NOT!

Following the announcement of the closing of the State Archives as of November 1, after which a statement circulated that the Governor had stepped in and the Archives would remain open, after which that information was quickly declared false and the original closing reiterated, it was announced that the Governor had reinstated $125,000 in Sec. of State Brian Kemp’s budget, enabling the Archives to stay open until the end of the budget year.

So the Archives IS still open on Friday and Saturday only—as has been the case for more than a year. At the end of that reprieve period, plans are in the works to turn the Archives as well as the Capital Museum over to the University System. Stay tuned . . . ■ JJD
Fort Daniel Update

Almost 50 students from Fort Daniel Elementary School, Twin Rivers Middle School, Georgia Gwinnett College, and Georgia State College participated in the public archaeology portion of the 4th Annual Frontier Faire. Under the direction of Georgia archaeologists Garrett Silliman and Leslie Perry in Excavation Unit 31, younger students learned basic excavation methods and revealed more of the west wall trench—demonstrating conclusively that there was not a gate on the west side to match the gate on the east or the Henry Knox fort plan.

Working near Unit 31, under the direction of GGC Anthropology teacher and archaeologist, Ken Johnson, GGC students and some younger students (pictured above) learned techniques for excavating a “feature.” Begun by GSU students last year, the feature is being interpreted as a tree stump “pull.” Evidence points to a stump pulled during the fort construction phase—and not for clearing of the land for cultivation at a later time. The inference is based on artifacts found (and not found) within the feature.

Perhaps the most exciting results belong to Georgia archaeologist and GSU Anthropology teacher Jeff Glover and his students who excavated four units within the Northeast Blockhouse. In addition to recovering many artifacts (pictured above, right, and on Page 2), they found the top of a large pit feature… the last hour of the dig! They will be back in November to see what it contains. Shannon Coffey has been instrumental in taking the artifact photos and restoration work on the teacup and bottle. GARS and FDF members will be notified when digging resumes at the site so that they can help out!
Fort Daniel Frontier Faire

College students and GARS members preparing for the Faire and also excavating some

Demonstrators enjoying a wonderful fall day at the Frontier Faire

Fort Daniel Elementary, Georgia State University, and Georgia Gwinnett College students
Fort Daniel Frontier Faire

Visitors enjoying the vendors and music at the Faire

GARS and FDF members as reenactors talking with visitors to Fort Daniel

GARS and FDF members enjoying the Faire