Dynamic Borders:
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CUMBERLAND ISLAND, GEORGIA

The Society for Georgia Archaeology

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Dynamic Borders:
The Archaeology of Cumberland Island, Georgia

Borders
Much of the world’s history can be tied to the establishment, maintenance, and loss of borders. This includes the prehistory of Native Americans in North America, as well as the later history of North America and the United States. Likewise, the theme of borders runs throughout this lesson plan.

- Cumberland Island lies on Georgia’s southeastern border. Like other barrier islands, it has helped protect the mainland from storms, erosion, and attacks.

- The Atlantic Ocean borders Cumberland Island on the east. It is an open border allowing the flow of goods, people, and ideas throughout time.

- Cumberland Island currently lies adjacent to the border of Georgia and Florida. Historically, this border was a boundary between Spanish occupied Florida and British claimed Georgia.

- The Cumberland River is a natural border between the mainland and Cumberland Island. This border, however, facilitates movement rather than stopping it. Native Americans used canoes to travel between the mainland and the island. This allowed them to harvest fish, shellfish, plants, and other resources as long ago as 3,000 B.C. Later, Europeans used the same waterway for travel.

- Cumberland Island contains its own internal borders, both natural and cultural. Natural borders include inlets, estuaries, steep dunes, and maritime forests. Historically, cultural borders consisted of agricultural fields, plantation structures, and social-economic borders between the enslaved and the elite.
CUMBERLAND ISLAND: A UNIQUE PREHISTORIC & HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Encompassing approximately 36,000 acres of land and salt marsh, Cumberland Island is the largest of Georgia’s “golden isles.” For millions of years, sediments have eroded from the Piedmont region of Georgia. Throughout time, these sediments have been carried by Georgia’s rivers and streams to the coast. Once released at the mouth of the rivers and streams, these deposits of silt and sand eventually formed the barrier islands. These islands are ever-changing as they are continually sculpted by the ebb and flow of the tides. Just as the island itself changes, so too have its inhabitants through time.

Native Americans may have visited the island many years ago to hunt, fish, and perhaps gather shells for use as tools and items of exchange with other groups. They did not begin to use the island intensively until about 4,000 years ago; from about 2200 B.C. to 1000 B.C. Native Americans during this period of prehistory (time before written history) had not yet formed tribes. Archaeologists named this the Archaic period. During this period, people supplemented their diet by exploiting resources from the sea and tidal marshes, as well as harvesting some plants for food and medicines. They also used Spanish moss mixed with clay to craft some of the oldest pottery found in the North America, known as fiber-tempered pottery. Native Americans used river canes, shells, and sticks to create designs in the wet clay of newly made pots before hardening the pots by “firing” them in a smoldering pit. Since different designs were made during different periods of time, archaeologists can identify how old the pottery is by the type of decoration. For example, pottery designs made by “dragging and jabbing” a sharp stick into the clay were common during the late Archaic period. A row of circles made by pressing or “punctating” cane into the wet clay was another design popular during this period.

Native Americans using canoes, spears, and weirs to catch fish. By John White. British Museum.
By 500 B.C., Native Americans living on Cumberland Island and elsewhere in what is now the southeastern United States began changing the way they made pottery as well as the ways they did other things. These cultural changes led archaeologists this the Woodland period (from 500 B.C. to A.D. 700). Native Americans of the Woodland period began making pottery using sand mixed with clay, rather than Spanish moss. They also wrapped wooden paddles with cord and carved wooden paddles with checkerboard-like patterns (check stamped) and elaborate designs, then pressed the paddles into wet clay pots. When fired, the designs became permanent in the hardened pots. Woodland period Indians also began gardening in addition to gathering wild plants. They began building mounds during this period, too.

Native American culture changed enough after A.D. 700 that archaeologists call the new period the Mississippian period. It lasted until the 1541 in what is now Georgia, when Europeans made contact with Native Americans. By this time Native American societies were highly structured, with a strict social order and permanent political officers. One’s rank in society was determined by who one’s relatives were – kinship. These kinship rules guided social ranking at all levels, including political officers who received the right to rule by virtue of birth. Chiefs were both political and religious leaders, and ruled until death. From the temple and home atop the mound overlooking the village, the chief could rule the people and perform religious ceremonies. Trading networks blossomed, and goods such as copper, salt, seeds, shells, and raw material for crafting weapons exchanged hands across the land. An increased reliance on crops, such as corn (maize), for subsistence led to a more sedentary lifestyle and larger villages.

Other traits of the Mississippian period included construction and use of pyramidal shaped mounds, exotic grave goods, and trade items bearing design elements of a shared ceremonial culture known as the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex. On Cumberland Island and in the St. Marys Region (the land between the Satilla River in Georgia and the St. Johns River in north Florida), it is rare to find traits of the Mississippian culture typically found in other parts of Georgia. Archaeologists did find pottery from this period near the site of the Dungeness mansion dating ruins situated on of pottery suggested that some Native Americans from the Mississippian period used and possibly lived on the island at least briefly.

The Historic period marks the time when people had a written language, or were in contact with people who had a written language. During the Historic period, European explorers encountered a group of Timucuan-speaking people known as the Tacatacuru living on Cumberland Island. Other people with the same dialect were known to have lived along the coast of Florida. Timucuan was a spoken, not written language. The European explorers wrote about the Tacatacuru that they encountered. The Tacatacuru lived in villages on the northeast and southern portions of the island. Their diet consisted of shellfish and other sea creatures, as well as animals and domesticated plants. The large shell mounds that accumulated as a result of their diet were later used in the construction of roads and tabby structures, such as the 19th-century mansion called Dungeness.
In the early 1500s, the Spanish explorers Juan Ponce de Leon, Francisco Gordillo, and Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon explored the Atlantic coastline and had only brief contact with Native Americans living in the region. On the other hand, Hernando de Soto made lengthy explorations of Florida, Georgia, and other portions of the southeast beginning in 1539. This led to devastating consequences for the Native Americans and drastically changed the environment of the region. The Spanish brought a number of diseases with them that Native Americans had never been exposed to and had no natural immunities. As a result, one estimate suggests that half of the native population died of European diseases by the mid-1560s. Because so many died, social and political systems had to be reorganized. In many cases, survivors fled to other villages in an attempt to stay alive. This resulted in assimilation (being absorbed into another cultural tradition) among the various Native American tribes. One of the most significant effects of this assimilation was the loss of culture (beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a given social group). Many traditions that had been handed down for generations were lost.

Aside from European diseases, the explorers brought new technologies (guns and armor), strange animals, new material culture (bottle glass, high-fired ceramics, cotton and wool textiles, mirrors, and brass and iron) and peculiar beliefs that the natives had never seen or heard of before. These oddities would also change the native culture and the natural environment of Georgia. Large numbers of hogs, horses, Irish hounds, and mules were introduced to the New World to serve as either service animals (carrying packs, hunting, and means of transportation) or food for DeSoto’s army. What effect(s) do you think these things had on Native American culture? How did the newly introduced animals impact the natural environment of Georgia? How do you think Native American culture influenced Europeans?

The 17th century saw continued settlement of Spanish missions along coastal Georgia and Florida. This included the San Pedro de Mocama mission established on the southern end of Cumberland Island in 1587. Here, Spanish missionaries sought to convert Timucua Indians to Catholicism and use Indian labor to support Spanish settlement and control of the New World. Epidemics continued to decrease Native American populations. Warfare and raids among Indians and Indian attacks on English and Spanish settlements were encouraged by each nation. Indians such as the Guale and Yamassee became displaced by raids, and came to Cumberland Island where they replaced many of the native Timucuans who died from disease. The Mocama mission continued to decline, however, and ended in the early 1660s. The Spanish mission, San Phelipe, experienced many of the same problems, and relocated in 1670 to the north end of Cumberland Island from the mainland near St. Catherines Island. Disease, displacement of refugee populations, and raids by Indians and French pirates created upheaval and changes in traditional native societies. By 1684, the last Spanish mission in Georgia was abandoned. What influences did missions have on Native American culture? What evidence of this remains?

By the 18th century, Europeans were entrenched in the new world of North America as fur traders, soldiers, and colonists. European interaction with each other and Native Americans varied depending on their differing methods of trying to achieve their common goals of claiming and occupying the new world in order to prosper from its resources. For example, Juan Ygnacio de los Reyes was an Ibajan Native American from the village of Pocotalaca in Florida. In the late 1730s, Reyes led a Native American militia of over 20 men in service to the Spanish Governor of Florida. Service included spying on the British and seeking alliances and trade between Native
Americans and the Spanish. Spanish in Florida included people like Don Antonio de Arredondo. He was an Engineer, 2nd Class, affiliated with the Spanish military. Arredondo kept a journal recording some of his activities related to military maneuvers in Florida and Georgia in the early 1740s. Spain, France, and Britain each established military forts in an effort to hold their precarious grip on their land possessions. British soldiers constructed two forts on Cumberland, Fort St. Andrews on the north end and Fort William on the south end.

The long conflict between Spain in Florida and the British in Georgia ended briefly when Spain ceded Florida to the British at the end of the French and Indian War in 1763. Meanwhile, the American Revolution in the 1770s touched the Cumberland Island area, but not as much as the War of 1812 did later. Florida became a Spanish possession again from 1783 until 1821 when Spain ceded it back to the United States. Meanwhile, during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Cumberland Island became home to a planter class of renowned and wealthy Americans.

Nathanael Greene, a Revolutionary War hero, received land on Cumberland in repayment of debt owed him by the fledgling country of America during the war. Ten years after Nathanael’s death, his wife Catharine Greene remarried. She and her new husband Phineas Miller had a 26-room, four story mansion built on a Native American shell mound located at the southern end of Cumberland Island. They named it Dungeness, and moved into it in 1802. The Millers were the first of the wealthy planter class to move to Cumberland Island, taking advantage of marshes for growing rice and higher ground for cultivating Sea Island cotton. The mansion burned in 1867.

Other wealthy Americans acquired land on Cumberland Island, including planter and banker Robert Stafford. With such wealth in the 19th century came others to the island, including African Americans enslaved by planters. Stafford was the largest slaveholder on the island, holding an astonishing number of 348 African Americans in bondage.

“Picking Cotton” by Launey & Goebel. Savannah, Georgia circa 1867-1890.
The African Americans brought their rich traditions of Gullah-Geechee culture to Cumberland. This culture of music, stomping, stories told and passed down, religion, and foods like rice, peas, fish and other items was a mix of African traditions shaped by the coastal environment, and was unique to the southeastern coast. These traditions helped African Americans as they toiled through hard manual labor of rice and cotton agriculture and as household servants. Later freedmen and women continued these traditions as they settled on the island during the American Civil War. Initially, 64 freedmen settled on the island and 125 acres of Robert Stafford’s 8,000 acres was used for sharecropping by the freedmen. Archaeologists have studied the Stafford plantation to learn more about what life was like for the enslaved, as well as for the freedmen and women, starting new lives after the Civil War.


By the late 19th century Cumberland continued to attract wealthy individuals. The famous Carnegie steel magnate family of Pittsburg came to Cumberland after Thomas Morrison
Carnegie purchased houses, gardens, and 4,000 acres in 1881 of what had been the Dungeness property. The Carnegies began construction of a new mansion on the grounds in 1884 that they named Dungeness after the previous structure that burned. A total of 200 servants kept the 59-room mansion in order. The Carnegies lived at Dungeness until 1925.

In addition to the wealthy, Cumberland Island was home at this time to small farmers, river pilots, innkeepers, and the descendants of enslaved and freed people. Many of these individuals worked in the service industry as cooks, drivers, laundresses, and waiters among the wealthy and at the Hotel Cumberland.

Change continued on Cumberland, most notably in the mid-20th century. A fire in 1959 destroyed the second Dungeness mansion and it was never rebuilt. Four years prior, some Carnegie family members asked the National Park Service to consider it as a National Seashore. In 1968, however, other Carnegie family sold 3,000 acres of the island to a developer. Public pressure from individuals and environmental groups resulted in the developer selling the 3,000 acres to the National Park Foundation. After a great deal of lobbying, the U.S. Congress officially established Cumberland Island as a National Seashore in 1972. At about the same time, members of the Carnegie family deeded large acreage to the National Parks Foundation. A large portion - but not all of Cumberland Island - is now owned by the National Park Service.
POINTS TO PONDER

1. Why do archaeologists give periods of pre-history different names?

2. How and why did Native Americans use Cumberland Island?

3. What characteristics of Cumberland Island and its surroundings resulted in historic use and settlement?

4. What is the difference between prehistory and history?

5. What countries were vying for power in America in the 16th-18th centuries and why?

6. How did the methods of France, Spain, and Britain differ in their attempts to gain control of the environment, Native Americans, and each other?

7. Why are archaeologists interested in studying prehistoric, military, African American, and other sites?

8. Why were wealthy people attracted to Cumberland Island in the 18th and 19th centuries?

9. What is Gullah-Geechee?

10. How and why did Cumberland Island become a National Seashore and National Park?

RIDDLES TO RESEARCH

- It has been theorized that the combined effect of European diseases may have killed as much as 90 percent of the Native population. Research the 16th and early 17th centuries to learn what the estimated Native American population was just prior to European exploration of the southeastern United States.

- Research this time period to see what European diseases were brought to the New World. What effect do you think this would have had on Native American culture and society, and on the natural environment?

FACTS AND FICTION

After completing the “Points to Ponder” and “Riddles to Research”, write a short historical fiction story from the perspective of a 17th-century Spanish missionary or French fur trader, or an 18th-century British soldier in the New World. Include topics such as the environment, interaction with Native Americans and other Europeans, your daily life, special events, etc. Then, write another short historical fiction story from the viewpoint of a Native American living in what is now Georgia. Describe your interaction with Europeans and how you see your environment, daily life, special events, etc.
POINTS TO PONDER (SOME ANSWERS TO CONSIDER)

1. Why do archaeologists give periods of pre-history different names? As changes in environment, technology, material culture, religious practices, and/or social customs or rules among Native Americans became apparent in the archaeological evidence, archaeologists realized they had to give the new culture a name in order to differentiate between it and previous or later Native American cultures.

2. How and why did Native Americans use Cumberland Island? Native Americans visited and lived on Cumberland because they could harvest a wide range of food such as fish, shellfish, turtles, and marsh plants. They also may have taken shells from the island to trade with other Native American groups. Some Native Americans living in the 16th-18th centuries may have come to Cumberland to be near European traders, missionaries, forts, and settlements.

3. What characteristics of Cumberland Island and its surroundings resulted in historic use and settlement? Many of the characteristics of the island that appealed to Native Americans also appealed to historic people. Historic people would have enjoyed the same fish and shellfish, as well as a smaller variety of plants that Natives ate. Africans and Europeans would have used the marshes for growing rice and the fields for cultivating Sea Island cotton, beans, corn, squash, and other vegetables. Cumberland Island was a strategic military location and Britain chose it as a good spot to locate two forts to protect Georgia’s southeastern coastline and to keep watch over Spanish activity in Florida. The forts were located on the southern point and near the northern end. The latter, Fort St. Andrews, was located on the river side (western side of the island) across from the mainland. This enabled soldiers to keep enemy boats from entering the river to access Georgia’s mainland from the sea. It also kept enemy soldiers from using the protected inlet during time of rough seas in the Atlantic Ocean.

4. What is the difference between prehistory and history? Prehistory refers to cultures that did not have writing and did not interact with cultures that had writing. History refers to cultures that either had writing or engaged with people that had a written language.

5. What countries were vying for power in America in the 16th-18th centuries and why? Britain, France, and Spain all wanted part or all of the New World, including what would become the U.S. They wanted to exploit its resources, establish dominion over Natives, and expand their empires.

6. How did the methods of France, Spain, and Britain differ in their attempts to gain control of the environment, Native Americans, and each other? France utilized fur traders to gather resources and galvanize ties with Native groups through intermarriage. Spain encouraged missionaries to establish missions to convert Natives to Catholicism and subject the new converts to labor to feed and protect the mission. Britain encouraged settlers to establish villages and towns throughout the new lands to help claim contested lands. All countries used warfare, military strategy, and fortifications to attempt to gain control of as much territory in the New World as possible.

7. Why are archaeologists interested in studying prehistoric, military, African American, and other sites? Since prehistoric cultures had no writing, virtually the only way we can learn about 90% of this human history is through archaeology. While historic archaeologists have the luxury of using maps, diaries,
account books, journals, newspapers, and other written documents, they cannot rely on these to tell the entire story truthfully. Documents often are biased (intentionally or unintentionally), do not always tell the entire story, can be inaccurate, and don’t always survive over time. Archaeology is needed, therefore, to get a more complete, less biased story of how all people lived – rich or poor; male or female; famous or ordinary; young, middle age, or old; Native American, African American, Asian, or European.

8. Why were wealthy people attracted to Cumberland Island in the 18th and 19th centuries? The island provided an excellent environment for growing rice in marshes converted to rice fields. The rich soil there and the ability to use the incoming and outgoing tides to drain and fill the fields made rice cultivation particularly successful. Rice cultivation was very labor intensive crop. It was a skill many Africans knew from their homeland. Wealthy people could afford to buy African and African American slaves for this labor. So, the island attracted the wealthy planter class who later used the island’s fertile fields and the labor of the enslaved for cultivation of Sea Island cotton.

9. What is Gullah-Geechee?
See [http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/geechee-and-gullah-culture](http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/geechee-and-gullah-culture)

10. How and why did Cumberland Island become a National Seashore and National Park? It took the active interest of island property owners (primarily many members of the Carnegie family), the deeding of their lands to the U.S. government, and the support of many environmental groups to get Congress to sign the laws to get these designations.

RIDDLES TO RESEARCH

- It has been theorized that the combined effect of European diseases may have killed as much as 90 percent of the Native population. Research the 16th and early 17th century periods to learn what the estimated Native American population was just prior to European exploration of the southeastern United States. See [http://www.britannica.com/topic/Native-American/Native-American-history](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Native-American/Native-American-history)

- Research this time period to see what European diseases were brought to the New World. What effect do you think this would have had on Native American culture and society? European diseases unfamiliar to Native Americans included smallpox, mumps, measles, and typhus. Disease devastated Native Americans, and decimated their populations. In addition, the massive depopulation created huge social upheaval resulting in migrations, refugee populations, and the disintegration of kinship systems as well as the destruction of social, economic, and religious life.

FACTS AND FICTION
(See description on page 8.)
Imagine living in Georgia and having France as your western neighbor and Spain as your southern neighbor. Then imagine that both countries wanted your property, and you wanted theirs. Add to this the many different groups of Native Americans fighting for or against each country. Welcome to 18th-century Georgia!

Note the labels added to the 1747 map above, showing the areas where each country staked its claim in North America. Spain claimed Florida. France took control of the western portion from the Gulf of Mexico, up the Mississippi, and into Canada. Great Britain settled land from north of Florida and up the Atlantic seaboard as far as New Hampshire.

If you lived in Georgia during this time, who would you be most worried about attacking you? Great Britain saw Spanish Florida as the greatest threat to British settlers in Georgia and the Carolinas.
Great Britain was so concerned about possible Spanish attacks that the leader of the Georgia colony, General James Oglethorpe, began building coastal forts as early as 1721. The map above is a close-up of part of the 1747 map. *How many times do you see either the word “Fort” or the circular symbol for one? Are any of them Spanish? Can you find Fort St. Andrews? Oglethorpe had it built in 1736.*

“Highland Men” refers to Scottish Highlanders. They were fierce warriors recruited by Oglethorpe from the highlands of Scotland. Many settled in Darien and at Fort Frederica, Georgia.

*Could you do this?*
The fort was built on the northern end of the Cumberland Island. Why do you think it was put next to the river on the inlet side of the island across from the mainland, instead of on the Atlantic Ocean side of the island?
“On the extreme western part of a hill, the foot of which touched the inland waterway, General Oglethorpe directed Hugh Mackay to build a fort. Upon returning to Cumberland Island after a few days absence, Oglethorpe found the fort in an advanced state of construction, which pleased him very much. He named the fort Saint Andrews after the patron saint of Scotland. Fort Saint Andrews was not a large fort, but it was intended to serve two purposes. First, as an outlying defensive position, it was to intercept any enemy force approaching through the inland waterway and hold it in check until word was relayed to Fort Frederica, the main line of defense. Second, it was to act as a base for reconnoitering the Florida waters in order to determine what preparations the Spanish were making.” Anonymous 20th-century report

“Tis Built like the rest [other forts Oglethorpe had constructed along the coast] and so strong by situation that 30 Men, of which the Garrison consists can defend it against 300.” Highlander Mr. McBane [He also mentioned a well in the middle of the fort.]

In May, 1736, a pirogue carrying supplies to build Fort St. Andrews contained wooden boards to make the gun platforms, cannons, and ammunition. Oglethorpe modified the fort design to include a ravelin, and around the base of the hill, a palisade.

Fort St. Andrews was constructed between June of 1736 and June of 1737. During this time several cannon were mounted facing the river. Inside the fort’s palisades were springs of “fine” water and an 18 ft. by 30 ft. “well-framed” log house above a magazine for provisions and ammunition. The fort had a scout boat nearby. Colonial Records

“The fort is situated upon an eminence which commands the entire beach ... Within this enclosure was a house of limited accommodation and in an angle an underground room which appeared to be a powder magazine; about one hundred paces beyond this circle were three houses at a short distance one from the other, the largest of which, from its construction seemed to be a storehouse; the next one was a stable because it was surrounded by a fence inside of which we found fifty to sixty horses...The third house was immediately at the landing which showed that it was a tavern or a low eating house.”

Journal of Don Antonio de Arredondo, Spanish engineer & soldier
“...number of soldiers drilling with spears...a number of houses, newly built and close together as in Havana, a number of English women, wives of the soldiers...there is also a square Fort, with four cannon, toward the sea...there was small guardhouses around it.”

— Juan Ygnacio de los Reyes [a Native American used by the Spaniards to spy on British fortifications in Georgia]

“July 26, 1742. We found the fort abandoned and containing only a few things, such as a four-pounder gun spiked, two swivel guns unspiked, fifty hand grenades, six empty jars and number of iron hoops.”

Journal of Don Antonio de Arrendondo, Spanish engineer & soldier

Historical Documents

Archaeologists use historical documents to learn more about sites they study. Are documents always true? Why or why not? Look at the map below of Fort St. Andrews. No one knows for sure if this is an accurate map of the fort. No one even knows who made the map, written in French. How could you determine if all, part, or none of the map was accurate? Often archaeology is the only way to learn what really happened in the past!
Drawing of Fort St. Andrews, circa 1736. The map text is written in French. A translation shows the fort plan to include a three-story barracks, a bakery, a blacksmith shop, two latrines, and a parade ground. The plan contains a magazine for gunpowder and a barracks for 200-220 men.
Archaeologists started thinking about Fort St. Andrews in the 1970s. Over thirty years later, they realized that the land where the fort may have stood was eroding into the Cumberland River. The National Park Service (NPS), which oversees this and other archaeological sites on Cumberland Island, decided to work with its own and other archaeologists to determine the fort’s location.

Archaeologists first conducted historical research, looking at plans of the fort, maps, and historical accounts. (They knew that none of the wooden fort structures would have survived above ground, but there should be lots of features, artifacts, and other clues below ground.) The historical documents did not provide an exact location of the fort, however, so archaeologists excavated small holes across the land where they thought it might have been located, mapping the exact location of artifacts found in each hole. These included Native American artifacts and historic 18th-century artifacts dating to the period when the fort would have been in use. Archaeologists also used ground penetrating radar (GPR) to survey the area. The radar indicated that there were a large amount of underground features present. The artifacts, features, and historical description of the fort environment on a high bluff led archaeologists to believe the fort was probably located at this spot on the northwestern bank of Cumberland Island.

The rapid rate of erosion of the property led the NPS to conduct a series of large digs on the site in order to learn more about the fort, its construction and use, and about the people who were involved with it.

**Above.** Archaeologists excavate a block unit where they uncovered part of the fort’s palisade ditches. They are scraping the wall of the unit to document with photographs the import clues visible in the layers of soil.

**Above.** This part of the block unit is right on the very edge of the bluff, looking down to the beach and inlet far below. Some of the fort has already eroded into the water.
Archaeologists used Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) in the red area. The radar can locate disturbed areas below ground, but cannot determine what they might be. (North is up on map.)

Below. This is a map made by the GPR. The dark blue areas show where the ground is not very disturbed. The aqua, orange, and yellow areas are many small areas of disturbance. An experienced GPR archaeologist can study the shapes on a GPR map and get an idea of what they might be. In most cases, however, archaeologists must excavate the disturbances to know if they are historic features, such as a fort palisade ditch dug into the ground, or a well, or a trash pit, or any other number of features. In this case, the GPR archaeologist felt confident that at least some of the disturbances were created when the fort was constructed and used.
Left. See unusual stains in the soil? Archaeologists photographed and drew these stains at the bottom of one of their excavation levels. Right. The outlines show clearly that people dug a wide ditch, put upright wooden posts in the ditch, and then threw soil around the posts and into the bottom part of the ditch to help hold the posts up, and make a secure palisade wall around the fort.

Left. See unusual stains in the soil? Archaeologists photographed and drew these stains in the wall of their excavation. Right. The outlines show clearly that people dug several palisade ditches at the fort at different times, some perhaps to repair the palisade and others probably to enlarge or modify the fort.
Imagine that you are the lead archaeologist and you will begin another season of work at Fort St. Andrews. You are racing against time before the fort site erodes completely into the river. You also have a limited budget to do the work. Use all the hand-outs above to learn about the site and what has been done there already to write a document about what you propose to do, what you are looking for, and why you are looking where you propose. Supplement the hand-outs by using research from the internet and other sources about this period of history and about how archaeologists learn things from features, artifacts, and ecofacts.

Your proposal should have an introductory paragraph about the fort and its history. It should have a paragraph about what archaeologists have done there. Another important part of your proposal should include research questions. These should be specific to what you hope to learn and how you can learn those things. (Use the historical information to help you.) For example, one research question might be, “How healthy were the soldiers stationed at the fort?” You may propose to look for and excavate a latrine, which might contain evidence of what they ate, as well as parasites they may have had. Use specific research questions to help identify what types of things you would like to know about who used the site, how, why, and when – and how you might, as an archaeologist, go about finding the answers to those questions. Research questions might involve how the fort was constructed, when events occurred, the social and economic status of soldiers, their interaction with Native Americans, the natural environment around the fort, and many other issues. Wrap up your proposal with a hypothesis. This can be an over-arching statement of what you expect to discover from your season of work. For example, you might think that, “If soldiers at Fort St. Andrews were healthy, then we will find large amounts of animal bone, few medicine bottles, and no evidence of parasites in the soil analyses.”
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Archaeology and History Websites of Interest

Archaeological Institute of America: http://www.archaeological.org/
The AIA is a non-profit organization that was established in 1879 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1906. The AIA is the nation’s “oldest and largest organization devoted to the world of archaeology.” The Education section of the website offers an Introduction to Archaeology, Lesson Plans, and announcements about Archaeology Fairs taking place across the country, and more. In case you need a definition of an archaeological term, the AIA website has a great glossary at http://www.archaeological.org/education/glossary.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources—Historic Preservation Division, Archaeology:
http://georgiashpo.org/archaeology
“The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) is Georgia’s state historic preservation office, or SHPO.” The mission of the HPD “is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia.” Visit this website to learn more about Georgia’s historic preservation efforts, archaeological site protection, and stewardship.

National Park Service: http://www.nps.gov/history/
• Archeology in the Parks: http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/sites/parks.htm
• Archeology Nationwide: http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/sites/nationwide.htm
• Teacher Resources: http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/PUBLIC/teach.htm

The NPS “invites you to discover American history in all its diversity, from ancient archaeological places to the homes of poets and Presidents to the sobering stories of Civil War soldiers and civilians to the legacy of a courageous woman who refused to give up her seat on a bus. Our history is part of who we were, who we are, and who we will be….We invite you to explore historic preservation and the tools we use to help preserve and protect the places where history happened.”

Society for American Archaeology: www.saa.org
The SAA website features a great educational webpage through “Archaeology for the Public.” It includes Teacher Training & Fieldwork Opportunities, Educational Resources for Educators, Archaeological Law & Ethics, Frequently Asked Questions About Archaeology and Archaeologists, Mystery Artifact, and much more!

Teaching with Historic Places: http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/
This website “uses properties listed in the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places to enliven history, social studies, geography, civics, and other subjects. TwpHP has created a variety of
products and activities that help teachers bring historic places into the classroom.” By visiting the “Preserve America” section of the website, you can view examples of how historic sites have been preserved in Georgia.

The Archaeological Conservancy: http://www.archaeologicalconservancy.org/
This national non-profit organization was established in 1980 and is the only organization of its kind in North America “dedicated to acquiring and preserving the best of our nation’s remaining archaeological sites.”

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/
Learn about Georgia’s heritage. This is a great resource for history and archaeology buffs.

The Society for Georgia Archaeology (SGA): www.thesga.org
Interested in learning more about Georgia archaeology and how you can preserve it? Visit the SGA website to learn more about upcoming events and resources. Several local chapters exist throughout the state, so find information about where a chapter meets near you and attend a meeting to learn about archaeology that it is being conducted in your area. You can follow us on Facebook, too!