

Archaeology in Action: The Latest in Georgia Archaeology (SGA Part II)

Organizer: Amanda D. Roberts Thompson and Kate Deeley

Session Abstracts:

Kate Deeley: From the Ground Up: Beginning Archaeological Research at the William Harris Homestead, Monroe, GA

The William Harris Homestead is an example of an intact early nineteenth-century small plantation in Walton County. The Harris family moved to the still-standing log-cabin Homestead in 1823, and descendants of the Harris family continue to own the property to the present. This continuous occupation and ownership, combined with the fact that the site is already actively encouraging educational tourism, makes the Harris Homestead an ideal site for public archaeology. This paper describes the beginnings of the archaeological research project at the Harris Homestead to locate and investigate the Homestead's slave quarters and the lives of the enslaved people who inhabited them. This includes the initial excavations at the property, the challenges facing archaeologists trying to establish a field program at a college that doesn't have an archaeology program, or major, as well as the plans for next steps as the project moves forward.

Savana Deems, William Heflin, Brian Trufley, and Terry Powis: A Preliminary Reconstruction of the Middle Woodland Period in the Etowah River Valley: A View from the Lower Dabbs Site

Recent investigations have taken place at a small village located across the Etowah River from the Leake site. Excavations at the Lower Dabbs Site have yielded substantial cultural deposits and Middle Woodland artifacts over the past two field seasons. Leake is regarded as the pre-eminent site in the region during this time period, and based on the data produced from both sites allow us to discuss the nature, structure, and extent of the relationships between them. However, despite their proximity we identified very little in the way of a shared cultural identity. This paper will discuss these differences in the context of the Etowah River Valley during the Middle Woodland period.

Carey J. Garland*, Laurie J. Reitsema, and Elliot H. Blair: Intracemetery Comparison of Childhood Stress Histories at Mission Santa Catalina de Guale, St Catherines Island, GA.

This study takes an intracemetery approach to compare childhood stress histories among Guale individuals interred at Mission Santa Catalina de Guale (n=45) on St. Catherines Island, Georgia. Previous analyses of material cultural distinguished nine social groups at the mission. Moreover, some individuals date earlier in the Mission period (A.D. ~1605-1650), while others date later in the Mission period (A.D. ~1650-1680), with the latter characterized by increased population aggregation. Temporal and spatial differences in early life stress histories as indicated by the frequency and chronology of enamel micro-defects points to variations in lived experiences of children within this single mission setting.

Lori Thompson and Jeffrey Glover: The Phoenix Project: The Resurrection of the MARTA Collection

The MARTA Collection is an enormous resource for archaeological research of the history of Atlanta born from excavations conducted by Dr. Roy Dickens and his students in the late 1970s when the MARTA rail lines were being constructed. The research resulted in 40 identified sites and 29 artifact concentrations and fills around 500 banker boxes, now housed at Georgia State University's Archaeology Lab. The Phoenix Project is our current effort to resurrect this collection through the use of Heurist, a web-based, data management system, student projects, and public outreach, including popular media exposure. This paper will discuss the value of the collection and how its resurrection is enhancing the availability of this resource for future research opportunities.

Dennis Blanton: Soto's Capachequi Province: A Developmental History

The Native American province of Capachequi was first known from accounts of Soto's entrada. Now it is possible to chronicle its long, developmental trajectory based on the findings of a decade-long project in the Chickasawhatchee Creek drainage of southwestern Georgia. The provincial history is defined by three distinctive phases of expansion and contraction, initiated in the thirteenth century by an immigrant Middle Mississippian population and ending in the seventeenth century with mission system refugees. The results of geophysical survey, LIDAR mapping, and excavation will be summarized.

Elizabeth Straub, Christopher Moore, and Richard Jefferies : The Irene/Altamaha Transition on Sapelo Island

The discovery of sherds with both Late Pre-contact and Mission Period traits at Site 9Mc23 on Sapelo Island led to the investigation of a possible transitional context. Using macroscopic, thin section, and scanning electron microscope (SEM) analysis, as well as statistical comparisons, this paper characterizes the transition between Irene and Altamaha ceramics on Sapelo Island.

Through these analyses we determine that the possible transitional context is unique at the assemblage level, though this may be the result of social, as well as temporal factors. Along with oft-cited diagnostic traits, a change in temper recipes between the two periods is noted.

Ryan McNutt: Grey Ghosts: Searching for Confederates at Camp Lawton, Georgia, USA

POW camps were transitory and ephemeral places, existing in a liminal state during warfare. Yet, this ephemeral nature makes POW camps ideal to examine myriad aspects of human behavior. Camp Lawton was a Confederate camp for Union POWs, inhabited for six weeks and abandoned in advance of Sherman's march in 1864. Previous research uncovered extensive archaeological material from the POW occupation; but areas related to Confederate guard occupation were unknown. This paper summarizes recent excavations of Confederate loci and presents the results with some initial interpretations to begin to untangle the story of groups at war, but not in war.

Lisa Russell: What was lost and buried in the Lakes of North Georgia?

When Lake Blue Ridge was drained for repairs on the dam, treasure hunters were arrested. While laws preventing scavengers from digging up the past, the lakes have buried many truths. Only a fraction of the findings has been preserved. In Underwater Ghost Towns of North Georgia, deep history is lying just below the surface. While most stories remain buried in the lake's mud - leaving the past murky, family towns, cemeteries, churches, schools, and Native American civilizations are surfaced. While I am not an archeologist, I am a writer who likes to tell true stories. I am compelled to read the work of the experts to reconstruct what once was. In this case, what lies beneath the waters of North Georgia.

Jana Futch, Brockington: Data Recovery Investigations of the Early Nineteenth-Century Lawrence-Wooten Farm, Greene County, Georgia

Brockington recently completed Data Recovery investigations at Site 9GE1649, one of the earliest known historic farms on the Oconee River. This site is associated with the Stephen Lawrence family, who occupied it from 1805 until Lawrence died in 1816, the family of Branson Wooten, who likely occupied the site from 1818 until Wooten lost it to foreclosure in 1821, and up to 15 enslaved individuals. Our investigation utilized archaeological and extensive archival evidence to reveal the lives of these families, and to explore how both the white and black residents of 9GE1649 were affected by Lawrence's prosperity and Wooten's insolvency.

Scott Butler: Phase III Excavations at the Horseshoe Bend Site (9GE552), a Lamar Farmstead at Reynolds Lake Oconee, Greene County, Georgia.

Phase III excavations at 9GE552 indicate a Late Dyar to Bell Phase Late Mississippian occupation, about 1580 to 1610. The 30-year occupation is 2-3 times the normal occupation span of Lamar farmsteads. Machinery scraping revealed 18 postholes representing an oval house pattern measuring 7 x 12 meters. Two large daub/refuse pits recovered much faunal material, showing fish and turtles were heavily exploited. Most Lamar "red pebbles" were discarded in and near refuse pits and midden. Three small Bell phase projectile points have unusual middle Florida Tampa/Ichetucknee characteristic