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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISER:
Jim D’Angelo, Ph.D. R.P.A.
451 Thornbush Trace
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Email: 4drdee@bellsouth.net

GAB NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Delana M. Gilmore
Email: dgilmore@wordsmithquill.com

Don’t forget to like both
Gwinnett Archaeological
Research Society &
Fort Daniel Foundation on
Facebook.
Since the actual location of Fort Daniel was confirmed in 2007, one feature has remained central: Feature 1, “the hearth feature.” Indeed, this was the first of two features that were found that allowed us to claim that we had pinpointed the location of the fort. The other was a segment of the east wall trench. It was not too long after that we were able to even identify the feature as belonging to the Southwest Blockhouse. During that first (and only) day of mechanical scraping, the bucket uncovered a very dark red stain with charcoal streaking just under the plow zone at about 8–10 inches below the surface. All mechanical scraping was halted, and from there on excavation was done with sharpened flat shovels and/or trowels.

The red clay and charcoal stain (by now seen to include charcoal fragments and hardened bits of baked clay) indicated that burning had taken place. As the area was defined by removing surrounding plow zone material—which screening and a prior metal detection survey showed to be laden with a variety of ceramic and metal artifacts—its center exhibited a concentration of stone slabs and charcoal as well as bits of clay chinking and brick. After a fragment of an iron skillet was recovered, the feature was with confidence pronounced a “hearth” or fireplace. Thus, it has remained until November 20 when Jeff Glover and his Georgia State University (GSU) archaeology students returned to finish up the work begun on the feature during September’s Frontier Faire.

At 33.75cm (13.5”) below the present surface (bps) the bottom of the feature had not been reached (pictured right). [A low resolution 3-D photo produced by GSU’s Quad-Copter and Agisoft Photoscan software can be seen on the Fort Daniel Web site]. On November 20 GSU returned to see just how deep the feature was—reaching bottom at 68.75cm or 27.5” below the present surface! (pictured below).

The pit is filled with charred wood fragments, stone slabs, clay chinking, possible brick or baked clay fragments, and a variety of artifacts. We have interpreted this as debris from cleanup of the site at the time of abandonment or in preparation for cultivation. The artifacts include a sparse amount of ceramics and glass and, of course, more nails. One nail, recovered only about 5cm from the bottom of the feature, was in good enough condition to identify as an Edwards and Wells “type 3 c/d” machine cut, hand-headed nail first made in 1805. These are the dominant cut nail types at Fort Daniel. Near the bottom there were also: a carbonized board, small metal buckle, a flat piece of metal exhibiting a rivet, and a lady’s Jet (lignite) faceted gemstone button (pictured below right).

The depth of the feature is more than would be expected for a fire pit. The sides, as seen in profile on the east wall, are sloping in, but end abruptly where the subsurface soils (Pacolet sandy clay loam, which appears yellow when moist) interface with the underlying red clay subsoil. The top of the subsoil horizon is thus the bottom of the feature and shows no signs of disturbance by either excavation or large roots. That tentatively rules out a “stump pull,” and it would not be a feature from the earlier Hog Mountain fort because of the cut nail found in a classic “sealed locus.” The earlier fort would have used wrought nails. Finally, because the pit is situated where it would have been just inside the Blockhouse doorway, it appears to have been created after occupation. Still, the flat bottom, not expected in ordinary pit, is problematic.

The preponderance of flag stone is explained as coming from the foundation supporting the sill of the Blockhouse although most of these would have been salvaged along with the pickets and other usable lumber when the fort was abandoned. Of course, none of this rules out the presence of a hearth in the center of the Blockhouse. Hence, we will continue to refer to this as our “hearth” feature, while it is clear that more work needs to be done on the right half of the feature to better understand what is going on. For that reason, future plans call for expansion of that unit to the north, east, and south. ■ JJD
More Diggin’s

• Dan Elliot and LAMAR Institute were featured in a recent YouTube video presenting the founding of Georgia’s Revolutionary War site, Fort Carr. GARS member Greg Beavers was among those who worked on the extensive metal detection survey that was conducted and led to this fascinating discovery.

• Candlelight Tours of McDaniel Family Farm (pictured right) will be held throughout the month of December. Discover historic customs and traditions celebrated during the holiday season. The program fee is $5 per person, and preregistration is required. Please visit the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center Web site for information and to register for this event.

• Candlelight Nights at the Atlanta History Center will be on December 4 and 18. Step back in time and experience holiday traditions of years past with interpreters and special activities. This special holiday program is $10 for members; $15 for nonmembers; and $8 for all children. For more information visit the Atlanta History Center Web site.

• Gwinnett Historical Society will be hosting an open house at the Elisha Winn House on December 13 from 12–4 PM.

Yahoola Museum Field Trip

by Leslie Perry

On Saturday, November 8 a field trip to the Yahoola Cherokee Museum in Dahlonega was attended by GARS members. It was a beautiful sunny day, and a bonus Veterans Day Parade passed right in front of the museum as we gathered for our personal tour.

Our host, former GARS speaker Wallace Seabolt, and the museum curator, Charles Blackwell, made us feel right at home as we toured the museum and gift shop and learned Cherokee history and the correct pronunciation of the Cherokee language. (Some of the items displayed at the museum are pictured left.)

Next time you are in Dahlonega, make a point to stop at the Yahoola Cherokee Museum (located in the old Carriage House at 11 South Grove Street) and learn about Cherokee history. Their museum is a growing work in progress, and your contribution will help meet their goals.

Congratulations!

Recently, Delana Gilmore successfully defended her master’s thesis, The Conservation of Archaeological Sites on Private Property: Preserving of Georgia’s Early Iron Works. Pictured right is an unknown metal artifact that she found protruding out of the ground during a pedestrian survey at the Union Foundry site (c. 1790) in Jackson County. Delana will be receiving a Master of Arts in Archaeology and Heritage from the University of Leicester in Leicester, England.
The Board of Directors of the Fort Daniel Foundation (FDF) recently met. Some highlights from that meeting are below:

- John Hopkins, Jr. reported that member Mark Eastland, who is doing all the professional plumbing for the archaeology lab and meeting room, secured the donation of large stainless steel commercial sink. Work on installation of the sink and hooking it up with the new toilet facility will resume in December.

- Catherine Long had reached out to the local scout troop that has been leading the flag raising ceremony at our annual Frontier Faire to allow them to pilot the archaeology merit badge program that she and others have developed for the Boy Scouts. The Teacher Outreach Committee (Carole Boyce, Beverly Paff, Catherine Long, and Paul Willis) will work with the teaching community to determine the best format for our teaching trunk, teaching materials, and other educational efforts in order to ensure we are meeting their needs.

- Board also discussed and then moved to explore the possibility of a fort reconstruction project at some time in the future.

- Nominations for Officers and Board members to be presented to the membership at the Annual Meeting (see below) were approved as follows: Board (class of 2018)–Catherine Long and John Hopkins, Jr.; Officers (one year)–James D’Angelo, President; Wayne Waldrip, Vice President; Betty Warbington, Treasurer; and Vicki Watkins, Secretary.

**Fort Daniel Foundation Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of FDF will be held on Thursday, January 15 from 7–9pm at the Gwinnett Administrative and Justice Center Room A. This is a joint meeting with GARS, and, as always, the public is invited. In addition to the annual report of the Corporation, which will include updates on investigations at the supposed location of Fort Peachtree, the meeting will feature guest speaker and Georgia archaeologist, Scott Butler. Dr. Butler will speak on his work at the War of 1812 Point Peter Battery, Camden County. Many will recall that three forts were featured on the SGA War of 1812 Bicentennial Poster. This southern most fortification in the nation’s naval defense system was overrun by the British who destroyed the fort and barracks. Now, thousands of artifacts and impressive features tell the story.