GARS Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings, open to the public, are held at the Gwinnett County Justice and Administration Building located at 75 Langley Road in Lawrenceville. Gathering at 7PM, the program begins at 7:30PM.

This month’s meeting will be held on Thursday, February 13. The speaker will be Senior Archaeologist and Principal Investigator for Terracon Consultants Inc., Erin Andrews Drake. She is a cultural resource management professional with over 10 years of experience in field and laboratory archaeology. Ms. Drake is a member of the Register of Professional Archaeologists and has completed archaeological projects funded by the National Park Service, National Geographic, and NOAA. She has also worked for the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Georgia State University, the Funk Heritage Center, and Georgia Archaeological Site File. Currently, Ms. Drake oversees Terracon’s Archaeology Department for the East Coast Region of the United States.

At this month’s meeting Ms. Drake will present “Headstones and History: The Mysteries of Oak Grove Cemetery in Brunswick, Georgia.” Established in the mid-nineteenth century, Oak Grove Cemetery was opened for interment overflow in Brunswick located in coastal Georgia.

During a field investigation for a proposed water and sewer line, Terracon archaeologists discovered former cemetery boundaries leading to the identification of three unknown grave shafts. Historical research and archival review unveiled some of Oak Grove’s untold secrets while leaving more questions than answers. Ms. Drake will discuss the results of the investigations and present opportunities for further research about Oak Grove Cemetery.
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 this issue we resume with a feature that focuses on discoveries, and archaeological methods or issues associated with them.

A 2004 study of 1,795-acres for what is now known as Harbins Park provides an excellent example of how historical research—the sine qua non of historical archaeology—can pay off in the field. The project was carried out by TRC Solutions, and I was the principal investigator (PI). The Harbins Road–Alcovy River area (part of the Harbins Military District) had been from the post-Civil War period to 1950 dominated by small to moderate-sized family-run farms—many of whom were African American. However, the area was now relatively undeveloped and most of these farms sites, landforms, and features such as roads had been abandoned since the late 1940s and where largely overgrown and wooded.

Pursuant to field work, deed research had led to several land plats done between 1926 and 1935. These and one other important plat done in 1890 (see picture on right) depicted the locations of roads, streams, bridges, two cemeteries, a school lot, and several structures including houses and, the case of the Hugh Lowe plat, a grist mill and gin mill. The graphic designer at TRC scanned the plats and superimposed them on a modern 7.5 minute Quadrangle map (see picture below) for use during the field work.

In all 14 structures were identified from the plats, and using the quad and GPS coordinates derived from the quad for general vicinity of potential features, the archaeological survey located all but one of these. The cemeteries and other features including several prehistoric sites were also located. Of course, methods other than following historic plat maps are employed in locating prehistoric sites! Because the archaeological survey component of the study involved a limited reconnaissance survey rather than a full-blown comprehensive survey of the study area, it is doubtful that such a high percentage of historic sites would have been found without using modern methods in this way.

Except for the Hugh Lowe Grist Mill (for photo see page 2 of the February 2012 GAB) no structures remained standing. Some were collapsed, and these dated after the 1920s based on structural remains and artifacts, including machine brick and wire nails. Most house sites, however, exhibited only (stone) chimney fall, including the twin chimneys of the house depicted on the upper left of the Lowe plat. These dated between 1880 and 1914 based on glass and exclusive use of hand-molded ordinary brick for the hearth. Some house sites appeared to be much older. The chimney on the right was the most impressive of all. Masked as it was by the surrounding trees, it was not until a second pass on the old road running by it that I happened to see it due to sunlight reflecting off some stones near the top! (The house is depicted on the Lowe plat in the most southwestern lot.)

Most of these house sites can be accessed by trails within Harbins Park. The Lowe Mill site is, however, on private property just over the line in Walton County, and no longer legally accessible. ■ JJD
More Diggin’s

♦ **Hail to the Chief at McDaniel Farm** will be on **Saturdays throughout February from 8AM–5PM**. Children (9 and up) and adults can celebrate Presidents’ Day at McDaniel Farm and learn about two leaders who played critical roles in America’s history. Examine photographs of Abraham Lincoln and listen to the famous words of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s fireside chats. The cost is $5, and to register for this event and for more information visit the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center Web site.

♦ **2014 Georgia History Festival’s Colonial Faire and Muster** will be held on **February 8–9 at the Wormsloe State Historic Site in Savannah from 10AM–4PM**. Experience the everyday life of colonial times through historical reenactments, cannon firings, demonstrations of craft techniques, music, and dance. *Free and open to the public.* (Thank you to Leslie Perry for submitting this info.)

♦ **Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society (GAAS)** will be having their next meeting on **February 11 at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History beginning at 6:30pm**. The guest speaker will be Adam King, and he will give an update on his exciting research on the Etowah Mounds. His current work concentrated on using remote sensing devices to “see” below the ground and to verify information on the community of Etowah.

♦ **Civil War 150 Program: An Evening with James McPherson**: On **February 19** James McPherson takes himself as his subject, reflecting on a long, immensely successful career as America’s chief interpreter of the nation’s defining event. Moderated by Stephen Berry, Gregory Professor of the Civil War Era at the University of Georgia, the evening features a free-ranging interview in which McPherson ruminates on the war, its legacy, and its changing place in American memory. This lecture will be held at the Atlanta History Center, and admission for all lectures is $5 for members, $10 for nonmembers. Reservations are required for all lectures. Please call (404) 814-4150 or reserve your tickets online. For information you can visit the AHC Web site.

♦ In celebration of Georgia History Month the **Elisha Winn House** will be open on **February 22 from 10AM–2PM**. For directions visit the Gwinnett Historical Society Web site.

♦ **Georgia’s Native People** event will be held at **McDaniel Farm Park on March 1 from 10AM to 12PM**. Discover the heritage of the Cherokee and Muskogee people through traditional stories and games. Learn about the 3 Sisters Garden and the significance of these vegetables. You may choose to bring a sack lunch to enjoy on the farm property at the end of the program. The cost is $5, and to register for this event and for more information

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**Georgia’s Early Iron Works**

In the June 2013 issue of the GAB Jim D’Angelo wrote an article exploring some iron works that were on the frontier of Georgia. Fast forwarding a few months, you get a graduate student who is starting her Master’s thesis on a similar topic and needs your help!

GARS Secretary Delana Gilmore will be working on her Master’s thesis on the subject of Georgia’s frontier iron works that were built between 1790–1815. She has researched the newspapers dating from that period and has found a few. However, she does not want to overlook any. If you know of any iron works through oral history or even hearsay, please email Delana Gilmore.
On the January 24 our own Wayne Waldrip talked to the Smyrna Optimist Club on “A Trip Down the Old Peachtree Road.” He discussed the building of Old Peachtree Road and its connection to Fort Daniel.

Most of us know that Old Peachtree Road connects Fort Daniel to Fort Peachtree located at the confluence of Peachtree Creek and Chattahoochee River. Old Peachtree Road was used to get supplies to Fort Peachtree and then down the Chattahoochee to Alabama during the Creek War. If you ask him, Wayne might just show you some of his maps of the region at the time within Georgia.

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE! This is a reminder that both GARS and FDF membership fees for 2014 are now due. If you would also like to join or renew your GARS membership, please contact John Hopkins; and for FDF membership please contact Betty Warbington.

Suwanee “Old Town” on National Register

Recently, approximately 40 properties within a 67-acre area of Suwanee’s historic Old Town district was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic district is centered on Main Street, Stonecypher Road, Russell Street, and the railroad corridor. According to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, having property listed on the National Register listing encourages historic preservation of properties and also promotes public awareness of the property.

Contributing properties within the historic district of Suwanee Old Town can now be eligible for federal and state tax incentives for improvements that will help preserve the historic value of Suwanee.