Possible Graves Discovered at a Golf Course

Part of Atlanta’s Chastain Park golf course recently was covered with several orange flags to mark the sites of dozens of possible unmarked graves. Chastain Park Conservancy Operations Director Ray Mock said he always suspected there were graves somewhere in the park, and then he discovered an old map of the area that showed a cemetery (pictured right circled in red).

Mock hired Len Strozier of Omega Mapping Services to try and find the graves. Strozier used ground penetrating radar and identified up to 84 possible grave sites just feet from the fifth green at the course. Fulton County ran two almshouses—homes for poor people—in the park from 1911 to the 1960s, and the golf course was built in the 1930s. Mock speculates that people buried under the course lived in those houses.

The Chastain Park Conservancy plans to leave the sites undisturbed and may place a sign detailing the story of the rediscovered cemetery and plant wildflowers on them. — Associated Press

Summer Break!

Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) will NOT be meeting in June, July, or August. The next monthly meeting will be in September. However, GARS is tentatively planning a canoe trip down the Etowah River on Saturday, August 2. Keep an eye on your email and Facebook for details about this and other upcoming summer events.
In Search of Fergus Iron Works

It all started with a name on a map. While looking over Daniel Sturges’ 1818 map of Georgia for any indications of iron works for my master’s thesis, I came across Fergus’s I.W. (or Fergus) in Madison County (pictured right). From research and with help from several people I had been able to find about seven iron works to investigate; however, the Fergus Iron Works has been a mystery from the start. After searching local newspapers and history books I was able to find out a little more about the Fergus family.

John Fergus and his brother William moved from York County, South Carolina, to Wilkes County, Georgia (later Madison) in the late 18th century. Wilkes County was opened for settlement as part of the Ceded Lands of 1773, whereby the Creek and Cherokee Indians were forced to give up the land. Before the close of the Revolutionary War the Governor of Georgia offered 200 acres of land to any veteran willing to farm in Wilkes County for just the cost of the survey—with additional acreage for each white member of the household and for building a mill, bloomery, or forge. John was drawn to this new frontier since he was familiar with the area because of his time spent there during the Revolutionary War. The earliest record of John in Georgia was in 1786, which he later became a Justice of the Peace in Wilkes County and a land surveyor. He owned several acres of land including some along the Broad River. John also held land in his name for his brother William who came to the area in 1791.

According to local church history William built an iron furnace for the manufacture of wrought iron on the Broad River at the mouth of Scull Shoal Creek. (His last name Fergus was sometimes mispronounced as Forgey.) William was also an elder at the New Hope Presbyterian Church—which being established n 1788 is Georgia’s third oldest church. William’s daughter Rachel married Colonel Samuel Groves who in 1808 partnered with William in the iron furnace. Nevertheless, according to an ad in the Georgia Journal dating July 6, 1814 (pictured left) William and his son-in-law put the furnace up for sale. This newspaper ad provided some important information: the location of the iron works! (See the part underlined in red.) That was the end of Fergus Iron Works, but why was it still placed on the 1818 Sturgis map? The answer is that the map was published in 1818, but the survey most likely occurred a few years earlier.

While researching the Fergus Iron Works, I received some information from John Hopkins who was in contact with Madison County Heritage Foundation—his family is from the area. After some research a Heritage Foundation member with help from John has found the current property information of the Fergus Iron Works. The next step in this journey will be to visit the iron works site, which will be occurring later on this month.

Meanwhile, the search continues for the other possible locations of iron works. ■ DMG
Summer at McDaniel Farm Park

By Catherine Long

During the summer the GEHC invites you and your family to visit the McDaniel Farm Park. Located in Duluth, McDaniel Farm is a 125-acre park comprising an assemblage of historic farm buildings including a late 19th century farmhouse, an early 20th century barn, and several outbuildings characterizing a turn of the century farm in Gwinnett.

Your family will have a chance to participate in several events occurring at McDaniel Farm. During the Summer Celebration at McDaniel Farm you can take a tour of the 1930s McDaniel Farm property. You can examine tools and technology from Gwinnett’s early farming days and spend time making (and eating!) homemade ice cream while listening to engaging stories of life on the McDaniel Family Farm. The Summer Celebration at McDaniel Farm will be held on June 7, 21 and July 12, 26 from 10AM to 12NOON. Preregistration is required, and the cost is $6 for children (3 and up) and adults. For children under 2 it is free.

The Saturday Nature Walks at McDaniel Farm will be on June 14, 28 and July 19 at 10:30AM and 1:30PM. (The nature walk will last one hour.) Your family can enjoy the beauty of nature on McDaniel Farm which includes a patchwork of forest, pasture, and cultivated fields and is home to a variety of wildlife and native flora. Preregistration is also required for this event. The program fee is $5 per person. Children 2 and under are free.

You can visit GEHC’s Web site to register for these (and many more) events. Please register early to secure your spot in these fun, family programs!
Fort Daniel News

- Last month John Hopkins gave a presentation about Fort Daniel to the Madison County Heritage Foundation in Danielsville, Georgia (which is also named after General Allen Daniel). He also spoke about the history of Georgia’s involvement in the War of 1812—especially the Creek War. John also showed some of the artifacts found at Fort Daniel, and the Heritage Foundation members were surprised to see the fine ceramic pieces. John’s wife, Perry, and Delana Gilmore tagged along for assistance and technical support. (The Heritage Foundation even helped Delana by giving her information about early iron works located in Madison County. See Page 2 about the Fergus Iron Works located in Madison County.)

- An **Events Committee Meeting** for the upcoming 6th Annual Frontier Faire will be held on Sunday, June 8 at Fort Daniel beginning at 3pm. If you are interested in helping out, please attend the meeting. If you cannot attend but are still interested in helping, please email Wayne Waldrip.