Cultural Resource Management is usually thought of as pertaining to historical properties. In its broadest sense it includes all things cultural—including artifacts. Artifacts—specially if the context in which they were found is known and studied—can tell us a great deal other than what we can learn from studying them as objets d’art. This is the case with the flatware recovered at Fort Daniel.

In larger context the history of flatware can shed some light on what would be available to the militiamen at Fort Daniel. Since the 19th century knives, forks, and spoons have been referred to as flatware, and although we take the table setting for granted, the first flatware “settings” did not appear until the 16th century in the form of spoons and knives that one might even carry while traveling. The Havoverian silver pictured dates to about 1715.

Place settings came into existence as modern formal dining practices developed—among the rich, for the most part. Dining styles such as Service à la Française and Service à la Russe (which we basically follow today) required variations on the basic knife, fork, and spoon, and it was Service à la Russe, that led to the arrangement of eating utensils in an order that followed the order of the various courses.

Archaeologically, not a great deal is known about flatware, because it has only been recently that details about these items have gone into the archaeological record—other than being listed under “metal objects” and as, for example, a “knife blade fragment.” According to Eileen Woodhead, examination of archaeological material at Canadian Parks sites (which detailed records on such items and their trademarks have been maintained since about 1980) and retailers’ records does show that nearly all tableware goods were imported from Great Britain until the 1870s. (See Trademarks on Base Metal Tableware by Eileen Woodhead for more information.)

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This was due to Britain’s Navigation Acts, which severely limited what the colonies could produce and trade and forced any goods going into the American Colonies to go through England first—ensuring taxation, tariffs, ad price gouging. It was the high price of imported tea due to taxation that led to the cry “No taxation without representation,” the Boston Tea Party, and the small size of the teaspoon in America by the time of the Revolution!

The spoon is perhaps the oldest known eating utensil. Archaeological evidence shows that spoons with handles were used in ancient Egypt as early as 1000 BC. The most common material for spoons in ancient times was wood due to its availability and low cost. However, during the Greek and Roman empires, spoons made of bronze and silver were commonplace among the rich.

The knife is perhaps the next oldest eating utensil. Knives have been used both as a weapon and an eating implement since prehistoric times. Predating the fork, this was once the major dining implement of even the well-bred. Knives were typically pointed and sharp and dangerous. One cut and then stabbed his meat with the tip, bringing it carefully to the mouth. Other foods were mashed and carried on the blade to the mouth also carefully. Knives weren’t made exclusively for the table until 16th century France. Soon the dinner knife with the two cutting edges reduced to one (the blunt side becoming the upper edge and the pointed tip ground to rounded ends) appeared.

The fork was last to appear. The Puritans felt it a sin to use forks instead of the forks God gave us: our fingers. The British thought them a sign of effeminacy. Social barriers to the fork notwithstanding, until the Revolutionary War, the colonists could not afford the fork! According to one source, the fork is not found in American Colonial probate records nearly 80 years after its introduction to England in 1633 and wasn’t common in these records until 1770. While it took a long time for the fork to make its way to the colonies, teaspoons and tablespoons were plentiful. (See The Festive Tradition: Table Decoration and Desserts in America, 1650-1900 by Louise Belden.)

With the recently completed conservation of the large spoon recovered by Georgia State University during the Frontier Faire dig in October and the discovery of a second small spoon during follow-up excavation on November 6 (see GAB IV.9:2; IV.10:2-3; and V.1:6), we now have two spoons, one complete bone-handled knife (recovered in 2007 and subsequently conserved), and one knife blade probably from the same kind of knife. While not quite a place setting, they tell us much about the way life must have been for these frontier militiamen. Here are the facts about each of these objects in the order in which they were found:

1) A 19cm (7.5”) long, relatively well-preserved bone-handled knife (pictured left) has an estimated 1–3cm missing from the tip of the blade depending on its configuration. The width of the carbon steel blade at the thumb rise is 2.4cm (.95”). The blade’s heel forms a ~ 20° angle to the handle. The handle and bolster occupy about 8.4cm (3.2”) of the length, leaving 10.6cm (4.2) for the blade itself. Parts of the bone handle are missing from each side, and the exposed tang exhibits three rivets. The knife was found at the bottom of a depression within the Northeast Blockhouse that turned out to be the bottom of a collapsed rodent den. Therefore, the object had previously been within the plowzone material within the Blockhouse area before rodents burrowed under the plowzone.

2) A poorly-preserved carbon steel knife blade (pictured right) is missing the tip and most of the tang beyond the bolster. The preserved portion of the blade is about 10.5cm (4.13”) overall with about 1.5cm (.59”) of the tang and bolster preserved. The tip of the blade suggests that it may have been upturned as in the example found elsewhere (pictured below left) whose blade length from tip to bolster is about 4.88”. Knife #1 could also have had a tip like this. The blade heel here, ~40°, matches the example on the right but not knife #1.

3) A large carbon steel or pewter “porridge” spoon was conserved by continued on next page
Nancy Livengood. The spoon’s top, oblique, and bottom views are pictured left. The handle is missing, but flaring of the stem suggests a handle shape like the c.1800 silver spoon pictured below.

Because the Fort Daniel men were of British stock and the cutlery they brought from home would likely be of British origin, only a few late 18th-century to early 19th-century patterns are likely for our spoon: (pictured below left) Hanoverian (A), Old English (B), Fiddlehead (C-D), and Kings (E). Patterns D and E are ruled out since the stem of our spoon is plain. For the same reason, A is ruled out because the raised center, integral to the “rat’s tail” design for the Hanoverian pattern, is absent.

Further, the Fiddlehead pattern would be expected to have a “fiddle” shoulder (inset “f” pictured left). Despite misleading clumps of corrosion at the shoulder that may suggest otherwise, the macro close-ups of both sides of the stem show that the shoulder is plain. (Close-up of underside of shoulder is pictured right.) Therefore, the missing handle pattern would likely be “Old English.”

Although not apparent in these photos, the spoon appears to have traces of silver plating. While carbon steel can be silver plated, the process of silver plating was not invented until 1840. Since our spoon was found in what is believed to be a “sealed” locus, it is unlikely that it was deposited in the very the bottom of the debris-filled food storage pit 25 years or more after Fort Daniel was abandoned. However, polished carbon steel or pewter can be mistaken for silver, and there is little doubt that that is what we have here.

Close-ups of the cross-section of the broken end of the stem (pictured left) seem to show an iron wire core wrapped by the steel or pewter; this was done to strengthen handles. However, the “outer” shell is not silver, and the spoon has not rusted like carbon steel would. There is an example of this from Colonial Williamsburg: “...handle of a [pewter] tablespoon., lower end of handle melted and revealing iron wire core, 19th century.” (For more information see the George Wythe House Archaeological Report, Block 21 Building 4 report)

4) A small metal spoon (pictured right) completes our present “set.” Conservation is still not complete, but it is probably carbon steel and badly decomposed. It was found adjacent to the large spoon. The diminutive size of the spoon with an estimated bowl width of about 2cm (.75”) and stem diameter of > 6mm (.25”) suggests, as one writer put it, that this reflects the high price of tea. Time and cleaning may tell. ■ JJD

MEMBERSHIP FEES:
If you would like to join or renew your GARS membership, please contact John Hopkins; and for FDF membership please contact Betty Warbington.
DATE CHANGE for GARS Meeting: This month’s GARS meeting will be on Thursday, February 18 at Fort Daniel Archaeological Site beginning at 7PM. (Gathering in the Archaeology Lab and Meeting Room located in the basement of the house.) Guest speaker Corey McQuinn will be presenting his personal research on convict labor used in archaeology throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Corey McQuinn works at New South Associates as an Archaeologist and Outreach Specialist. He conducts all phases of archaeological investigations for projects throughout the Southeast, and as Outreach Specialist, he directs a number of programs providing archaeological education opportunities for schools and organizations—including the Society for Georgia Archaeology’s Abby the ArchaeoBus!

Field Trip: GARS members will be visiting Constitution Lakes Park and Doll Heads Trail on Saturday, February 27 at 1PM (Rain Date: Sunday, March 6 at1PM). Former site of South River Brick Company (1873–1915) was recorded by Jim D’Angelo (TRC) for DeKalb County in 2004. Since then the County and Friends of Constitutions Lakes have transformed the old clay mining pits and brick piles into a beautiful 200-acre scenic wetlands park. GARS members and friends will accompany Jim and Friends members for a tour of this site and discussions about where archaeologically sensitive brick kiln foundations and venting tunnels may be located pursuant to further park development. If you are planning on going, please email Delana Gilmore.

GARS meeting in March will be on Tuesday, March 10 at Fort Daniel. The guest speaker will be Dr. Valerie Pope-Burnes, who will be presenting on her cultural discoveries of the Black Belt region of Alabama. She recently cowrote Visions of the Black Belt: A Cultural Survey of the Heart of Alabama.

Fort Daniel News

For the past few months volunteers have been helping out at the Archaeology Lab. They have been learning how to clean and care for artifacts as well as cataloging. Volunteer Days at the Fort Daniel Archaeology Lab will be on Saturday, February 6 and 20 beginning at 10AM.

In January Fort Daniel had its first school tour! On a wonderful sunny winter day the Dominion Classical Christian Academy Freshmen class (pictured right) visited the site. They were taking a tour of the Hog Mountain area and learning the significance of the area that they live in. After a tour of the archaeological site, the Freshmen visited the Archaeological Lab and Meeting Room and looked over the artifacts from Fort Daniel (pictured bottom right). Hopefully, this will be the first of many school tours!

Congratulations to Catherine Long in her new role as the new Georgia Public Education Coordinator for the Society of American Archaeology. Catherine is also the new Vice President of Fort Daniel Foundation.

The Events Committee for the Frontier Faire will be having a meeting on Sunday, February 21 at the Fort Daniel Archaeology Lab and Meeting Room beginning at 2:30PM. If you are interested in planning the next Faire, please email Delana Gilmore and join us at the meeting!
No museum graces the most important site in Southern history. No visitors center welcomes tourists to Mulberry Grove. There’s a historic marker a mile away, but the rush of 18-wheeler discourages passers-by from stopping and learning about the extraordinary events that took place at the overgrown and forgotten plantation along the Savannah River. It was at Mulberry Grove that slavery was introduced to Georgia. The first woman allowed to possess land in Georgia owned Mulberry Grove and also Revolutionary War hero Major General Nathanael Greene. Eli Whitney built a cotton gin at Mulberry Grove that radically changed the course of US history. “The cotton gin breathed life into this institution of slavery, triggered the massive migration of slaves, and set the North and the South on a course to the Civil War,” said Todd Groce, the president of the Georgia Historical Society. “We know how hard it is to have an honest conversation about these things. Somehow, we’ve got to address the issues of the past to understand the issues of today.”

It isn’t easy visiting Mulberry Grove. Permission first must be given by the Port Authority. A four-wheel-drive truck is then needed to maneuver the rutted, oak-lined avenue surrounded by swamp and vine-tangled forest that leads to a bluff overlooking the Savannah River. A pile of bulldozed red bricks is all that remains of the plantation home.

The Mulberry Grove Foundation unveiled big plans a decade ago to raise $8.7 million to build the Eli Whitney Center and recreate plantation life. Little fundraising and uncertain leadership thwarted the foundation’s dream. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, which owns thousands of nearby acres as wildlife refuges, once tried to buy Mulberry Grove. Holly Gaboriault, the regional director, said the agency would again consider acquiring the plantation and, perhaps, building an interpretive center.

Six historians, who visited Mulberry Grove for a tour, told the AJC that it should be preserved, archaeological digs allowed, and natural or interpretive trails built. The tour guide Vaughnette Goode-Walker said a dock could be built so boats could run tourists upriver from downtown Savannah. Groce, the historical society president, said guided tours (a la Historic Jamestowne in Virginia) might be plausible. “It’s one thing to read about history; it’s another to go to a site and feel what it was like,” said Georgia Southern History Professor Solomon Smith. “There’s so much history here that it would be a loss if nothing’s done.”

“During my walking tours people don’t know that Mulberry Grove is here or why it’s here,” Goode-Walker said. “People don’t really want to deal with history anymore. But they should. We need to tell the whole story.” Groce, other historians, and the Mulberry Grove Foundation are trying to raise awareness about the plantation and its seminal role in US history. The nonprofit foundation and Georgia Southern University began an oral history project last year to hear from white and black descendants of the plantation. Fundraising for an archaeological survey of the property is underway. ■ AJC
Last month the Gwinnett County Commissioners set aside more land to preserve Fort Daniel—one of the earliest non-Native American sites in the county dating back to a time when the area was considered the frontier of Georgia.

The Commissioners voted unanimously to buy 5.4 acres of land next to the archaeological site on Hog Mountain for $285,000 on Tuesday. The money comes from the county’s 2009 SPLOST fund.

“As Gwinnett County prepares to celebrate its 200th birthday in 2018, the preservation of additional property at one of our earliest historic sites seems most appropriate,” Commission Chairwoman Charlotte Nash said. The purchase more than doubles the size of the Fort Daniel site. The land will be added to the existing 4.3-acre fort preservation site.

Local archaeologists and historians discovered the original location of the fort in 2009. Gwinnett later bought the site for $241,000 and leased it to the Fort Daniel Foundation, which maintains and operates it as a permanent archaeological research preserve and educational site.

The new addition means nearly 10 acres of land has now been set aside by the county for preservation of the fort site.