

# Preserving History Through Archaeology



September 2023  
Volume XII, Issue 7

## GWINNETT ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

MRB Archaeology Project.....1  
More Diggin's .....2

SECHSA 2023 Conference .....3  
West Point 1828 Time Capsule .....4

### Mobile River Bridge Archaeology Project

Excerpts from the [Center for Archaeological Studies at University of South Alabama Web site](#)

The Center for Archaeological Studies at the University of South Alabama's Mobile River Bridge (MRB) Archaeology Project investigated and promoted the archaeology and history of the 1-10 Bridge area. From November 2021 to June 2023 archaeologists excavated 15 sites in the right-of-way of the new bridge. These sites enhanced the knowledge of the past of the Mobile Bay—ranging from Native sites to French and Spanish colonial occupations to recent history.

The acquisition of land to build a new bridge over Mobile River was acquired to solve the ongoing traffic problems. This acquisition provided opportunities to conduct archaeological research. Oral history studies and examination of historic documents were also included in the investigation.



One of the sites called the Mardi Gras Camp Site (1MB564) dates to about the 19th and 20th centuries. During this time period the area was a residential

neighborhood. The most common feature identified at this site were privies or outhouses. These were often used as trash pits when they were no longer used, so they contained dense artifact deposits. One of these privies was wood-lined (*pictured left*) and contained fruit remains (e.g.; grape, muscadine, blackberry, raspberry, etc.), peanut shells, coffee beans, and grain. These remains gives a glimpse in what people were eating and if they had access to local or imported food sources.

Read more about this project on the [Center for Archaeological Studies at University of South Alabama Web Site](#) ■ CAS

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## More Diggin's

- **BRAG Meeting:** Blue Ridge Archaeology Guild (BRAG), a chapter of the Society for Georgia Archaeology, will be having their next meeting on Wednesday, September 13 at Lumpkin County Library beginning at 7PM. The University of North Georgia (UNG) Archaeologist Dr. Kendy Altizer and some of her field school students will talk about their findings and their experiences in the Santee Delta this past May. The Santee Delta was once the heart of rice culture in the Atlantic world, and the field program is part of a larger project to document enslaved lifeways in this region. Students are trained in archaeological field methods, as well as archival research, while contributing to an important research project. Dr Altizer is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology on UNG's Dahlonega Campus where she teaches courses in Anthropology and Archaeology. Her concentration is historical archaeology with research interests in plantation archaeology, Southeastern archaeology, cultural landscapes, African enslaved lifeways, the effects of colonialism, rice culture, climate change, and geospatial analysis. Her fieldwork is located in the South Carolina Low country, focusing predominantly on plantation landscapes.
- **Elisha Winn Fair** The Annual Elisha Winn Fair will be on October 7 and 8 from 10AM to 5PM each day. The Winn House and all buildings will be open for guided tours. There will be food vendors, craft vendors, period demonstrations, a period garden, blacksmith demonstrations, and live music. The cost is \$5 for everyone over 12. For more information visit the [Gwinnett Historical Society Web site](#).

# Defending the Frontier

## 15th Annual Frontier Faire

### Saturday, October 21, 2023

*Rain Date: Saturday October 28, 2023*

### 10AM–4PM

## Fort Daniel Historic Site

(2505 Braselton Highway/GA 124, Buford)

## FREE Admission

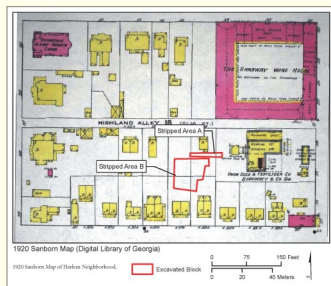


# SECHSA 2023 Conference

Last month New South Associates staff had participated in the Southeastern Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology (SECHSA) conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. There was a wonderful reception at the Blandwood Museum Carriage House on Friday night, and presentations were on Saturday. The New South Associates representatives shared their recent archaeological work and received feedback that would help to refine their skills. Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) President Anne Dorland presented the below poster on African-American resilience in Albany at the SECHSA. ■ NSA



In 2020, New South Associates (NSA) conducted an archaeological data recovery and monitored demolition activities at Site 9DU286, Phase I and Phase II work was also completed by NSA in 2015 and 2017, respectively. This site is in the historic Harlem neighborhood in Albany, GA, an important location for African American history in Albany and the surrounding region. The excavation of Site 9DU286 was partially funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to mitigate the construction of the Albany Multimodal Transportation Center – opened to the public in March 2023. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) served as the reviewing agency, while Niles Bolton Associates (NBA) contracted NSA to complete the fieldwork. This investigation was conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the FTA, GDOT, the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the City of Albany that was ratified on December 10, 2018.



## RESEARCH TOPICS

### Ethnic Foodways

Does the faunal assemblage from 9DU286 follow patterns typically observed at urban historic African American sites in Georgia? If so, what are the implications? In what ways did the inhabitants of Site 9DU286 express ethnic identity through foodways? What types of cultural expressions or aspirations are evident in the ways that inhabitants of 9DU286 interacted with food?

### Race & Urban Landscapes

What evidence of racial residential integration or Jim Crow era segregation exists at Site 9DU286 and Downtown Albany in general? Were other racial or ethnic groups present in the Harlem neighborhood during the residential occupation of Site 9DU286 (ca. 1880-1950)? How was the Black community of Albany spatially organized to reflect racial segregation as established during the Jim Crow era? Is historic racial inequality evident in the organization of space within and surrounding Site 9DU286?

### Race, Class, & Consumerism

Does the ceramic and glass assemblage reflect Victorian ideologies or individualization and self-expression? Is there evidence of material culture that suggests that residents pushed back against racial discourses with

consumer behavior, education, or other actions? What class categories are evident through archival and archaeological evidence? Is there variation in class between contemporaneous households? Do classes present change over time? Do the identified classes shed light on social relations in the historic Albany community?



## METHODS

The methods used during the mitigation of Site 9DU286 integrate the fields of history, archaeology, public outreach, and various specialized analyses. This project successfully illustrates the impact of interdisciplinary work in Cultural Resource Management efforts.

## ORAL HISTORY & ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

To engage with the Albany community, NSA conducted oral history interviews. Ten volunteers ranging in age from mid-60s to 101 years old were interviewed. Interviewees shared information about Harlem, the African American business district, and the protest for desegregation of the former Trailways Bus station known as the Albany Movement (1961-1962). Their stories capture the struggles, triumphs, and pride of Albany's African American community. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all interviews were conducted and recorded via telephone.

The song performed by oral history interviewee Rutha Mae Harris that inspired the report title "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around" was adopted by the Civil Rights Movement in Albany during the early 1960s.

Following Emancipation, African Americans in and around Dougherty County, GA migrated to Albany, finding safety in numbers. They settled in the southern portion of the city in the area that would later become known as the Harlem Neighborhood. Development and occupation of the area began in the late 19th century and included residential homes, commercial properties, and light industry. Archival research conducted during Phase I & II work at the site indicated that African Americans owned houses in the project area at this time, most of which faced Highland Avenue. This discovery led NSA to focus data recovery excavations on the rear yards of those houses in order to collect information about the African American inhabitants of the site.

## DATA RECOVERY EXCAVATIONS

Data recovery excavations focused on the rear yards of houses where the potential for data-rich features was highest. NSA mechanically stripped two areas for feature excavation. The primary goals of fieldwork were to identify, record, and excavate cultural deposits and features dating to the 19th and 20th century occupation of the historic Harlem neighborhood.

The location of Stripped Area A and the eastern section of Stripped Area B suffered heavy disturbances, likely from a bulldozing or structural razing event. However, most of Stripped Area B was undisturbed and contained a significant number of cultural features.

Mechanical stripping exposed 84 features including 56 structural features, and 14 pit features. The remaining 14 represented bulldozer disturbances and natural stains or low areas. All of the structural features were found in Stripped Area B.



## ETHNIC FOODWAYS

The data suggests that the historic Black community of Albany expressed a dedication to their African culinary roots and a desire to elevate their societal class. A diet centered on pork and corn is evident from the faunal, archaeobotanical, and pollen remains found across the site. The presence of a fire-exposed clay-lined cooking pit indicates that the African culinary tradition of open-fire cooking was practiced by inhabitants of 9DU286. A trend toward animal husbandry and the purchase of meat from market evidenced by foodways artifacts and faunal remains may indicate that site inhabitants aspired to detach from the lower-class foodways practice of procuring wild species for consumption.

## RACE AND URBAN LANDSCAPES

An examination of race, class, and urban landscapes revealed a stark division of Black and white neighborhoods in Albany. Jim Crow era segregation is visible in the historic maps, census data, and oral histories. In his oral history account, Deacon J.D. Armstrong offered remembrances of the Jim Crow era in Albany by discussing how segregation was implemented when going to the theatres in town: "The Albany Theatre was right there on Jackson. Just up a ways from the Liberty Theatre, which was on Broad, and the other theater was right almost at an angle on Jackson from the Ritz Theatre... So, we, had the opportunity to go to both, but you always had to upstairs on all of them, all but the Ritz."



## RACE, CLASS, AND CONSUMERISM

Consumer behavior, as evidenced by ceramic and faunal analyses, depicts a community that valued self-expression and maintained ideals that elevated their social standing. Purchasing choices among the historic households represented at 9DU286 reflects a varied and complex Black experience. Some households were more focused on expressing the Victorian ideals of the time, while others valued individualization. The fabric of their social network appeared to shift over the course of the site's history. The types of occupations held by site inhabitants changed somewhat over time, indicating that the Black community of Albany achieved aspirations of elevating their class in spite of oppression and segregation.

The archaeological evidence from Site 9DU286 indicates that the African American community of Albany expressed values of individualism and dedication to their African roots despite the oppression that they experienced during the post-emancipation era – perfectly encapsulating the meaning of the song in a collection of physical items directly associated with the occupation of the Harlem neighborhood.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Albany Data Recovery involved a multi-tiered approach to community engagement. A Facebook page was created and maintained throughout the project to share about background research, fieldwork, oral history collection, analyses, and reporting. A local news agency released a story on the project and the City of Albany published a post on their website to promote the project and recruit oral history participants. We also created a project website where the public can view the site tour video and download the full report.

### Acknowledgements

NSA appreciates the assistance provided by Lester Love of Niles Bolton Associates, Mark Lambert of the Georgia Department of Transportation, Carrie Walker of the Federal Transit Administration, and the City of Albany Transit System Department staff, especially Tennesha Gresham, Superintendent of Operations, and David Hamilton, Transportation Director. We are grateful for the help of Parker Security and Investigative Services for protecting the site during fieldwork, and Jim Boyd, Wade Kren, and Blake Jones of Jim Boyd Construction, who supplied equipment and operators during the fieldwork, and particularly Jeremy Provencio who proved to be a dedicated and trustworthy operator.

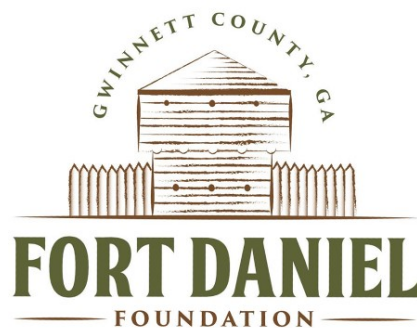
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## West Point Discovers Artifacts Inside 1828 Time Capsule

During a live event last month artifacts were uncovered in a time capsule from 1828 opened by the US Military Academy's archaeological team. The one-cubic foot lead time capsule was discovered in the sediment of the Thaddeus Kosciuszko monument's base during recent renovations. Six coins and a medal were implanted in the time capsule. The items date from 1795 to 1828 and include an 1800 Liberty dollar coin (*pictured top right*); an 1828 50-cent coin; an 1818 25-cent coin; an 1827 10-cent coin; a 1795 5-cent coin; an 1827 1-cent coin; and an 1826 Erie Canal commemorative medal (*pictured bottom right*).

During the event the U.S. Military Academy's Dean of the Academic Board Brig. Gen. Shane Reeves articulated.

"This is an incredible story that involves so many of West Point's heroes and many of them are the Army's and our nation's heroes. We should reflect upon and be inspired by our history to pause and realize we have the immense honor and responsibility to continue the legacy that Kosciuszko started, and that West Point continues to live up to his vision from so long ago," he said. "There is no better opportunity to take a moment and be inspired by our Army and academy's connection through time that is represented by that capsule and one of our nation's true heroes."

The historical preservation process will continue, and updates will be provided when new information is available.

To see photos of the recent artifacts, please visit the [Kosciuszko Monument Time Capsule | Flickr](#).

■ USMA



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