

# Archaeology



## WHAT IS IT?

The Society for Georgia Archaeology & Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society

Selected images and text from: *Frontiers in the Soil: The Archaeology of Georgia*, Roy S. Dickens Jr. & James L. McKinley, The Society for Georgia Archaeology ©1979

Photos are from archaeological projects of the SGA chapter,

The Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society

2013

# THE SOCIETY FOR GEORGIA ARCHAEOLOGY

SGA's mission is to unite all persons interested in the archaeology of Georgia to work actively to preserve, study, and interpret Georgia's historic and prehistoric remains.

Our vision is to reach out to all Georgians and help them understand the significance of archaeological sites so that they support archaeological preservation, education, and research.

How do we do that?

# SGA's Public Outreach

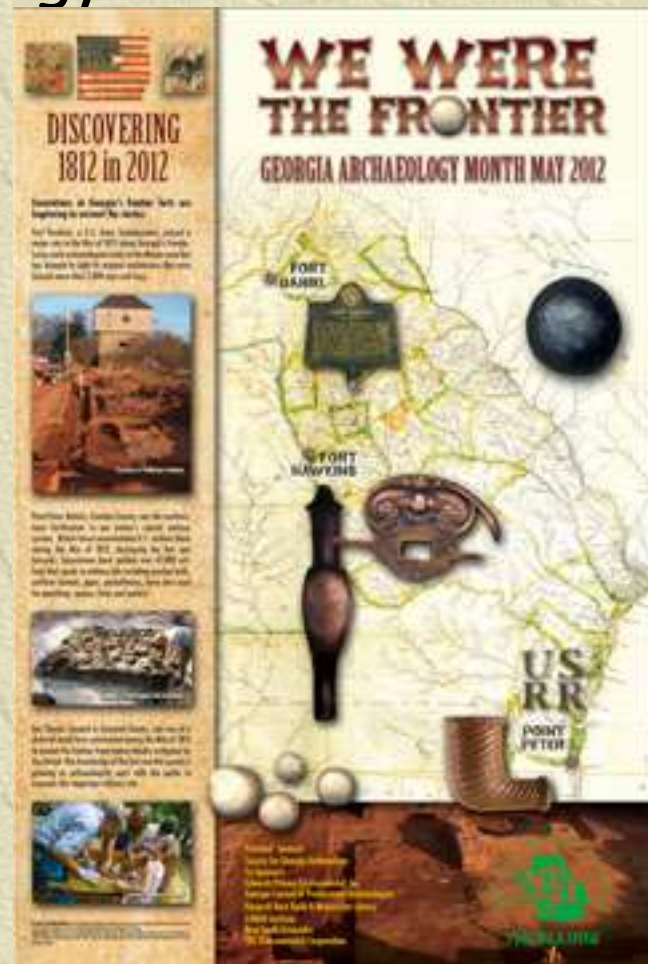
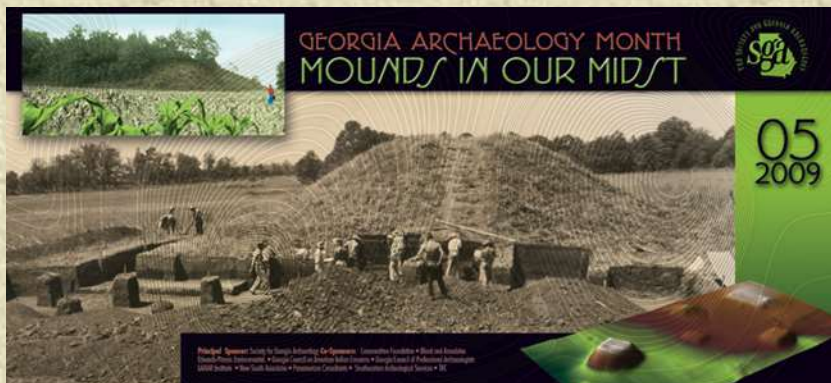
- Educating the public about the significance of our state's archaeological sites and sponsoring a month long promotion every May
- Participating in outreach initiatives:
  - Archaeology Month Events
  - Coastfest
  - Georgia National Fair
  - Supporting the Efforts of our Chapters Across the State



# Archaeology Month

Proclaimed by the Governor & Celebrated during the month of May, Archaeology Month features:

- ✦ Programs and events scheduled statewide
- ✦ Educational resources, including lesson plans and posters, distributed to 8th grade history teachers throughout Georgia
- ✦ Emphasis on using *Frontiers In the Soil*



# Historical Background Research is very important for the Archaeologist...



General Daniel letter courtesy of Georgia Archives

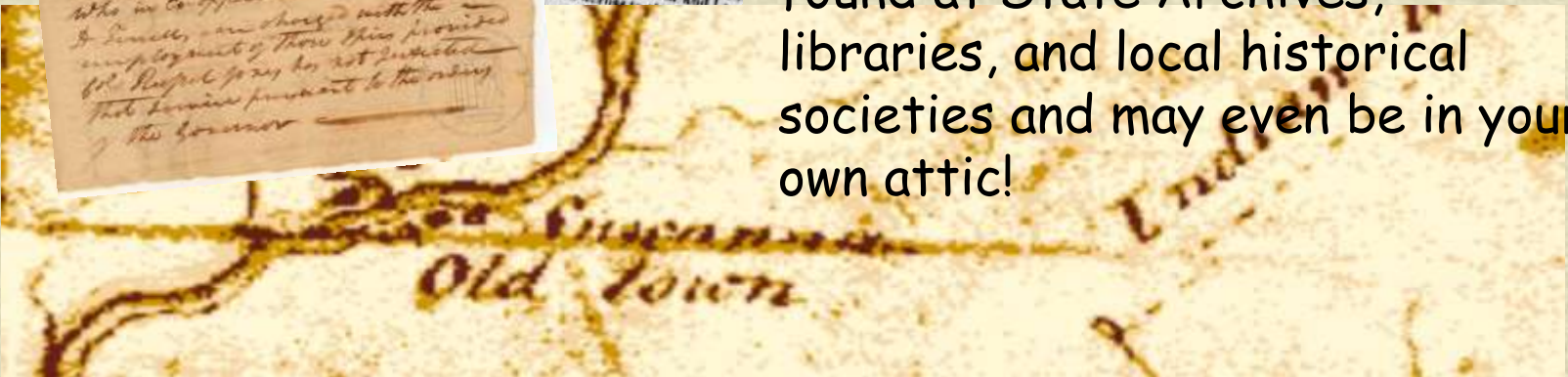


Documents such as:

- ◆ Letters
- ◆ Maps
- ◆ Deeds
- ◆ Diaries
- ◆ Newspapers



These types of materials are found at State Archives, libraries, and local historical societies and may even be in your own attic!



# 1793 Frontier Fort Plan



Sent to the Governor of Georgia by President Washington by way of Secretary of War, Henry Knox, this plan soon became the basis for design of many Georgia and Alabama frontier forts, including Fort Daniel, during the Creek Indian Wars.

This and the preceding examples are known as "primary sources."

Courtesy of Georgia Archives

# What does an Archaeologist do?

✦ An archaeologist is someone who studies what *people* did in the past based on the *things* they made (artifacts) and then left behind... like these artifacts from Fort Daniel.



Clay pipe fragment



Bone-handle knife



Gun flint

# Archaeology is Separated into:

Prehistoric Archaeology  
Cultures lacking written history

Historic Archaeology  
Cultures having written history



In the SE, US, cultures are divided into Periods: Paleoindian (ca.12,000-10,000 BP), Archaic (ca. 10,000-3,000 BP), Woodland (ca. 3000-900 BP), & Mississippian (ca. 1000-400 BP.) The Historic Period in the SE US begins with DeSoto.



19<sup>th</sup> c.  
Grist Mill  
at  
Hurricane  
Shoals  
Park,  
Jackson  
County,  
GA

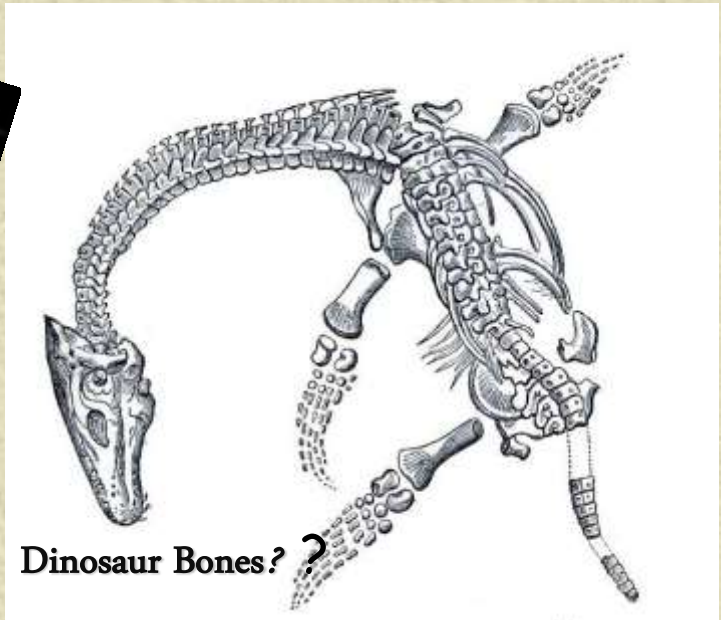


Like A Detective,  
An Archaeologist Looks for Clues to Solve A Mystery  
What Kinds of Clues?

*Mummies?*



*Arrowheads?*



*Dinosaur Bones? ?*

*Daddies?*



*Golden Treasures?*



**ROCKS?**

Remember, archaeologists study *people*...

# *And, Like Solving Any Mystery... It requires...*



- ✦ Careful recording
  - ◆ Writing
  - ◆ Photography
  - ◆ Drawing
  - ◆ And Lots of Pondering

It is a slow process and  
patience is a must!

Recording a... whatzit?

The Yerkes Site in Gwinnet County, GA

A Sorghum Mill site, of course.

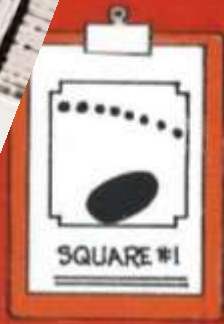


It's not just about artifacts, but "features" such as stains, charcoal concentrations, food remains, and other clues...



Volunteers digging an archaeological feature at Fort Daniel

# Some tools used by Archaeologists



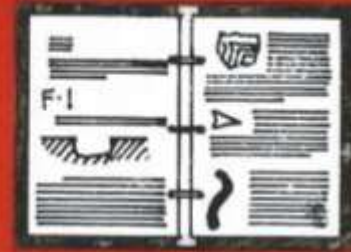
A MAP IS  
MADE OF EACH  
SQUARE THAT  
IS EXCAVATED.



CAREFUL  
MEASURING  
IS VERY  
IMPORTANT  
IN MAKING  
THE MAPS.



EVERYTHING  
FOUND IN  
EACH SQUARE  
IS PUT INTO A  
MARKED BAG.



NOTEBOOK



CAMERAS

PHOTOGRAPHS AND NOTES ARE  
AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR WORK



Line level & String



# Places archaeologists study are called "sites"

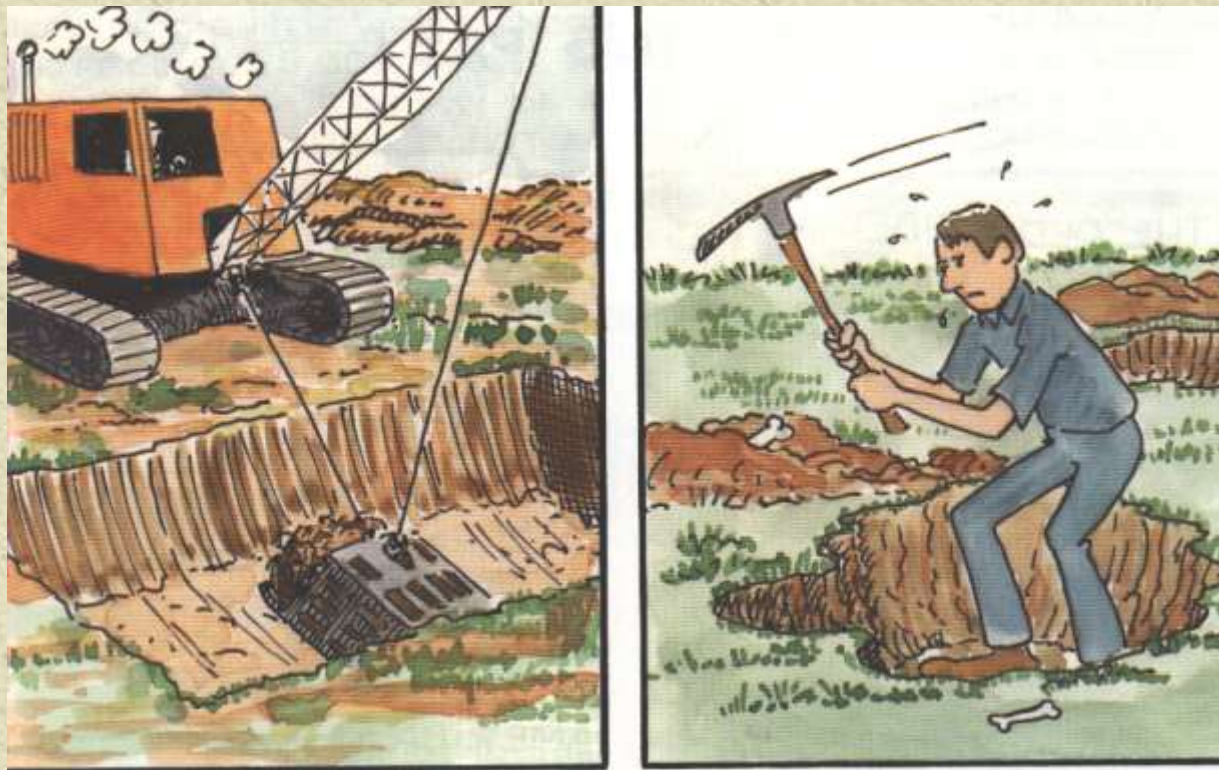


"Pine Tree" Projectile Point - Early Archaic (11,600 to 8,000 BP)



Creekside Rock Shelter, Dacula, GA.

# Why is the study of sites important?



Sites are often destroyed by construction projects, amateur "archaeologists", and by illegal looting.

# How can sites be saved?

Sites need to be scientifically studied by archaeologists and their helpers.



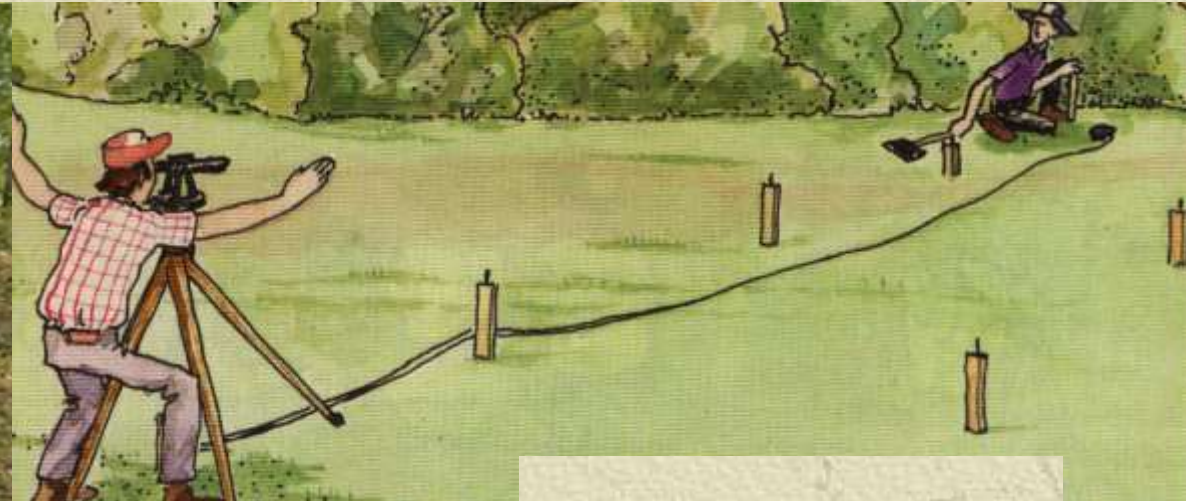
Boy, do I love to play in the dirt... but not unless the site is properly recorded... Hand me my Wacom Bamboo Splash Pen Tablet, please.



This Fort Daniel feature is a fireplace inside a corner blockhouse...

# The Site Recordation Process

The first step, after clearing away any overgrowth, is to carefully measure out and map where the study will be done.



Measuring & mapping is done with survey instruments and the site may be divided up into "squares" for excavation.

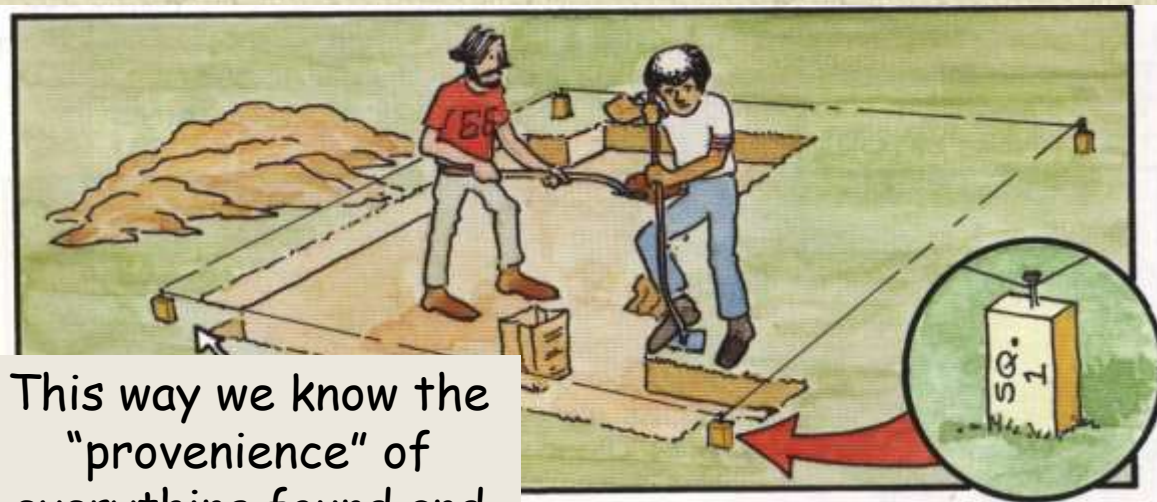


The squares make it look like a giant checkerboard.



The grid is used for plotting surface, as well as buried artifacts and features on the horizontal plane.

# Excavation begins inside one of these squares.



This way we know the "provenience" of everything found and recorded.



Digging at Fort Daniel inside "squares"

# An Archaeologist Digs Scientifically...

1. Dirt is carefully shoveled or troweled in thin layers so that features like post-hole stains can be seen.



2. Dirt is screened in order to recover all artifacts.

Since the same excavation can't be done again, scientific investigations require careful record keeping that includes...

**Measurements**

**Written**

**Descriptions**

**Photographs**

**Drawings**

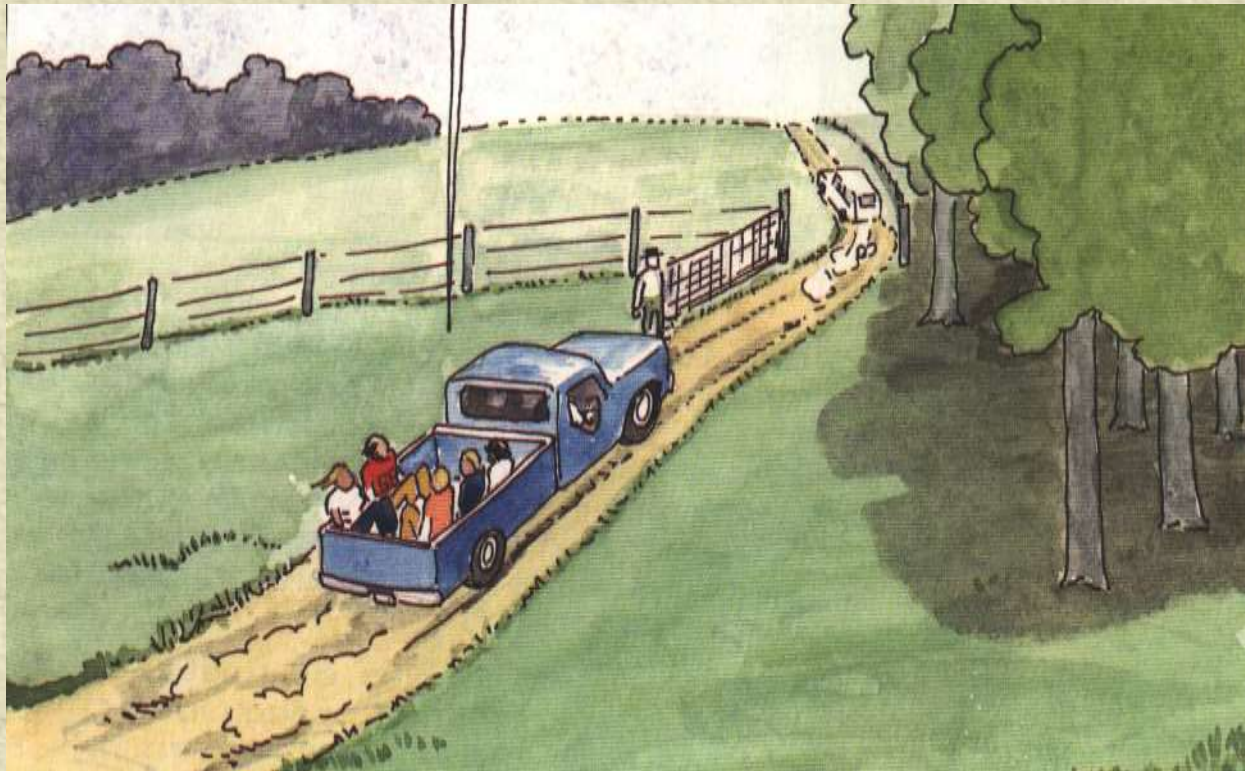


# Buried sites contain layers of soil called "strata" (singular = stratum)

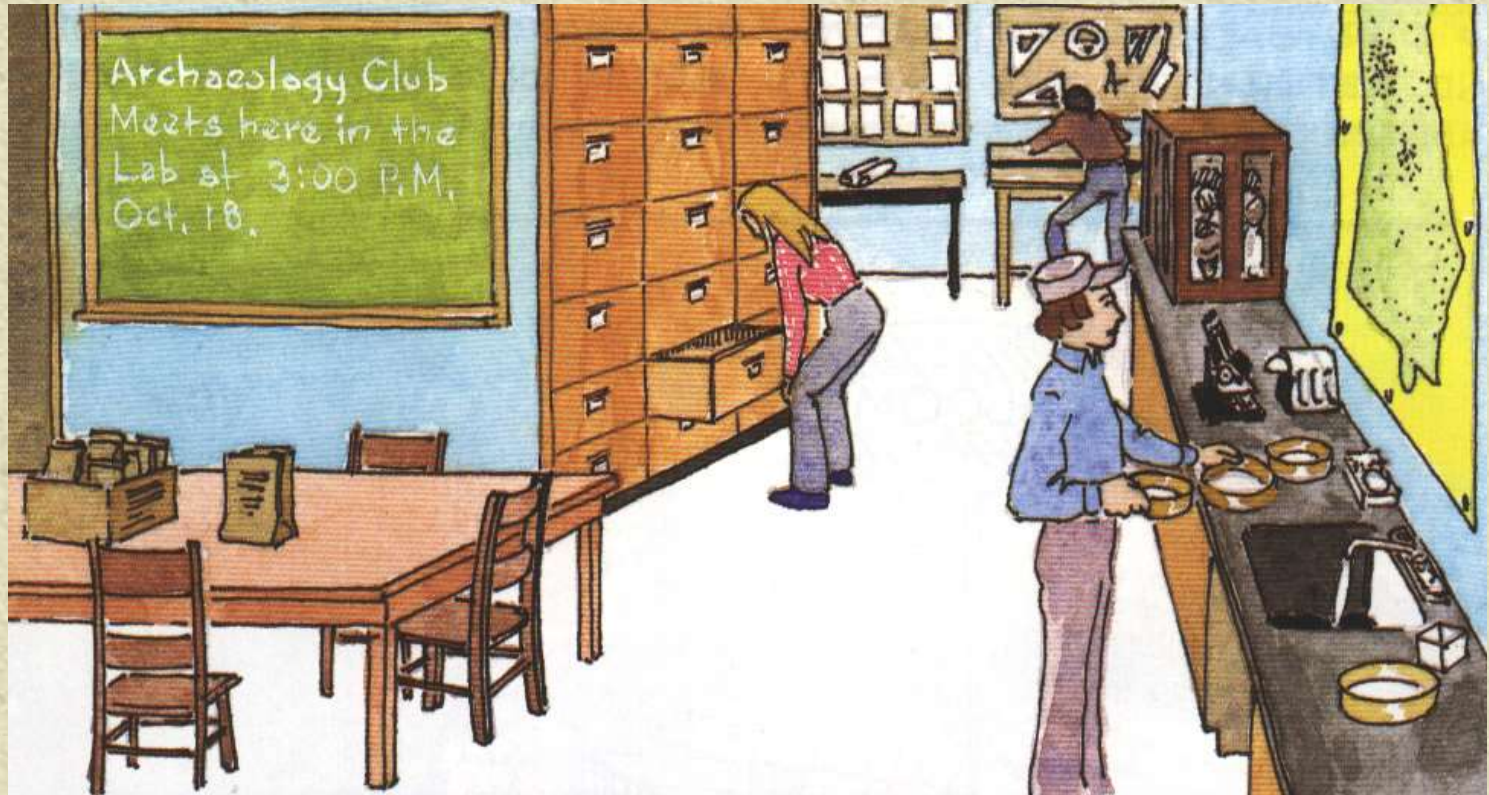


A strata will contain artifacts and features left by the people who came before us. Those excavated in the upper strata are typically left behind more recently than artifacts in the lower strata. Recording the vertical dimension, as well as the horizontal plane, results in a 3-D record of everything found. So, what is destroyed by excavation can be reconstructed from the record.

# What happens when the digging is finished?



There is still lab work to be done...



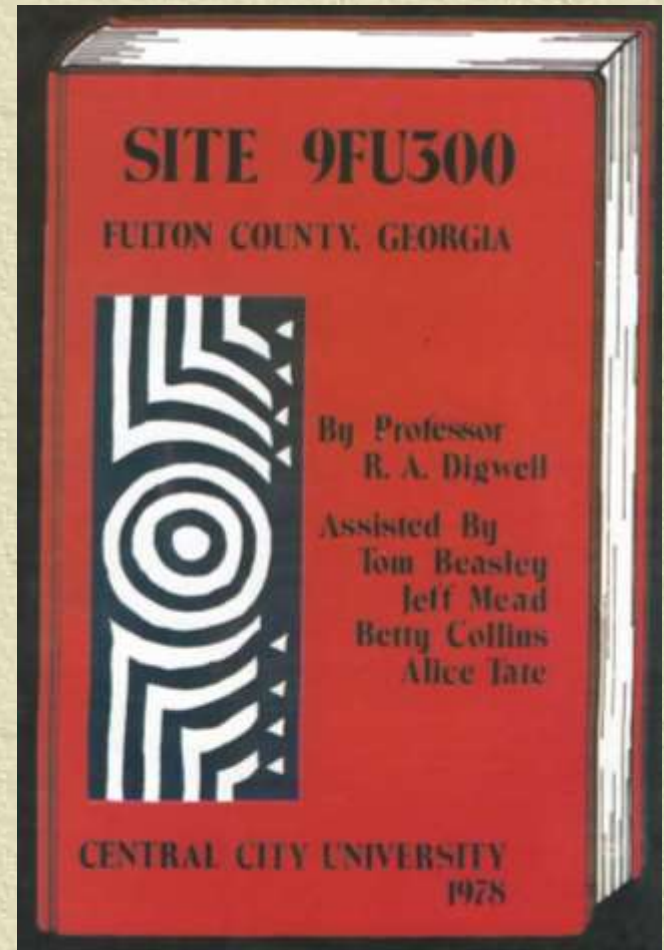
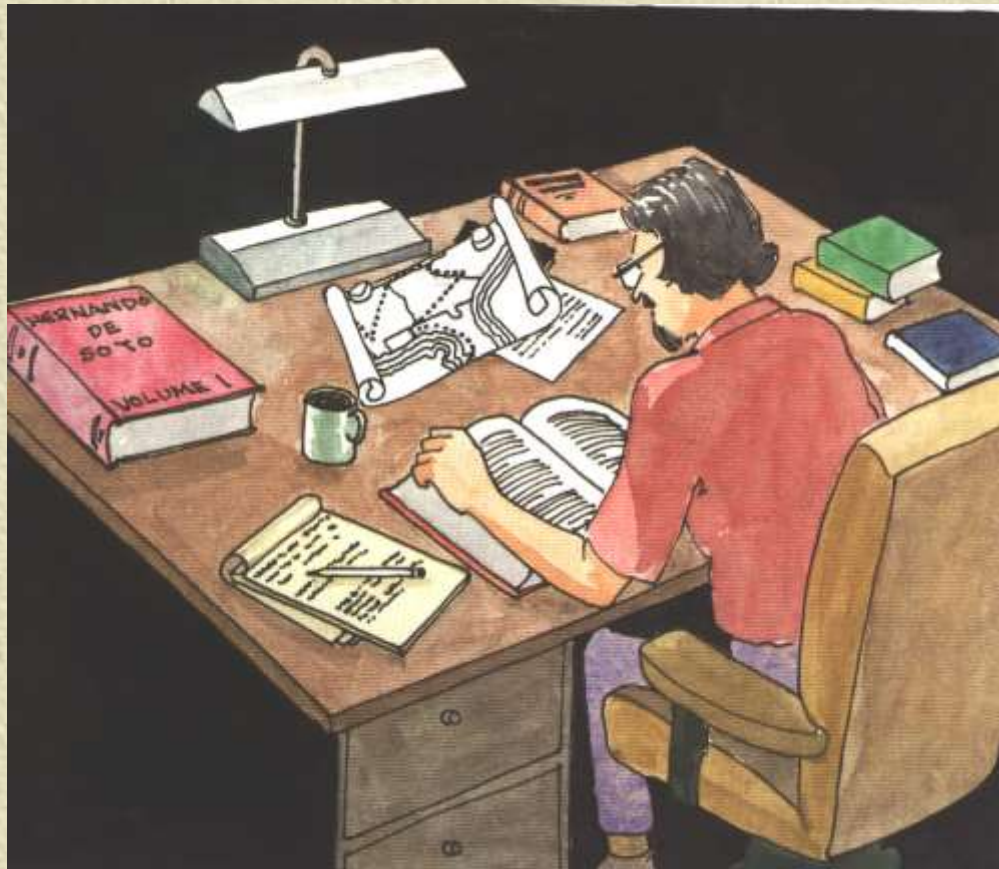
# Artifact identification, cleaning, and restoration...



TRC Environmental's Archaeology Lab, Norcross, GA



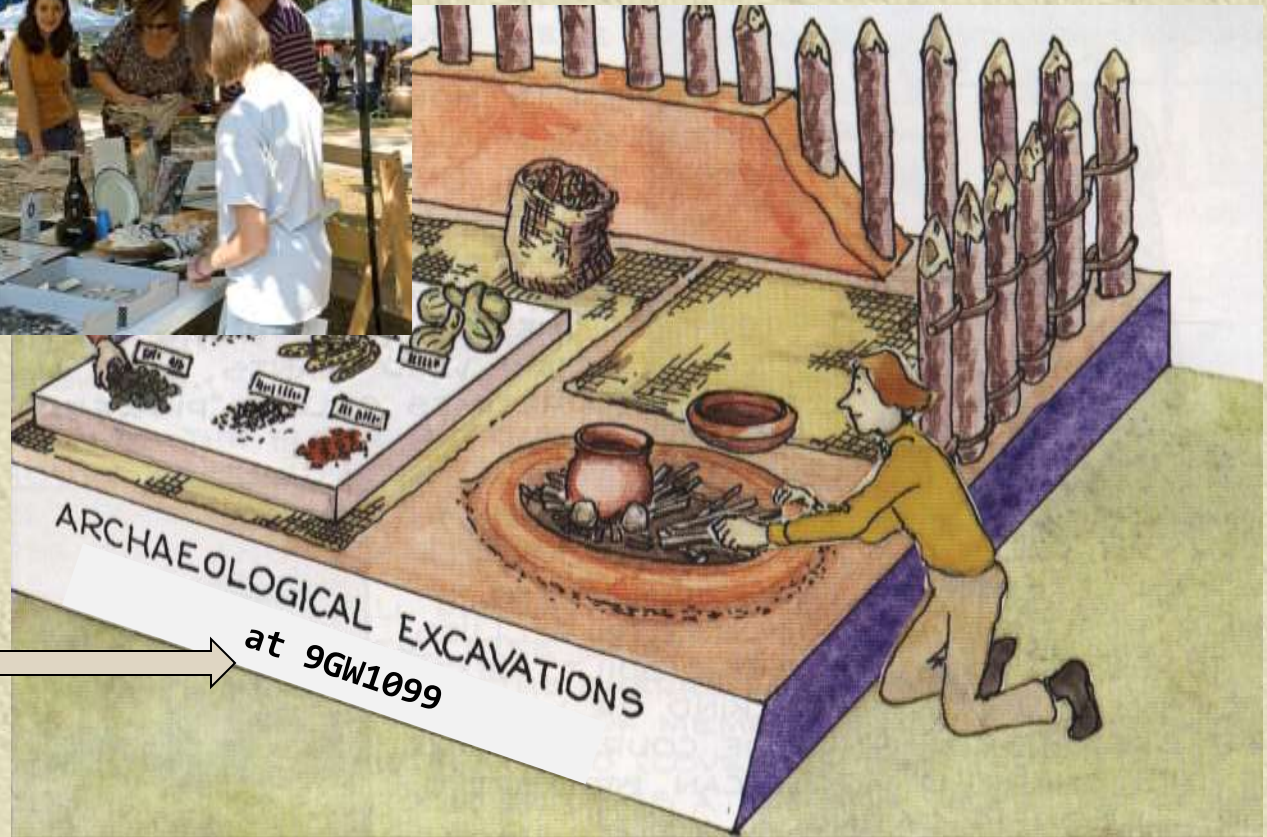
# ...Research, Writing, and Publishing a scientific report...



# ...And finally, creating a traveling or museum exhibit.



GARS members explain artifacts to visitors at the Annual Elisha Winn Faire in Dacula, Ga.



9=Georgia

GW = Gwinnett

1099 = a  
Prehistoric site in  
Gwinnett County  
GA.

# Educational Resources

- ✦ *Frontiers in the Soil* (print)
- ✦ Point Peter website and teaching trunk;  
[www.forgotteninvasion.com](http://www.forgotteninvasion.com)
- ✦ University of West Georgia teaching trunk
- ✦ Archaeology's Interactive Dig:  
<http://interactive.archaeology.org/digs.html>
- ✦ Archaeology for Kids: National Park Service:  
<http://www.nps.gov/archeology/public/kids/index.htm>
- ✦ Fort Daniel teaching trunk

For more information please  
visit

[www.thesga.org](http://www.thesga.org), [www.thesga.org](http://www.thesga.org), &  
[www.thefortdanielfoundation.org](http://www.thefortdanielfoundation.org)

