

Preserving History Through Archaeology



November 2022
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GWINNETT ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

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From the Vault: An Earring or Nose Ring?

Since it is Native American Heritage Month, for this month’s “From the Vault” selection I would like to highlight one of the unique artifacts showcased in the Fort Daniel Museum that has a Native origin.

Just from the projectile points that have been found we can assume that Native people have inhabited the area from at least the Middle Archaic period. However, there is one artifact that is from the historic period: the Ball and Cone Earring (pictured right). Only the hoop and the ball were found; the earring is

missing the cone. Traditionally, the ball and cone earrings were called ear bobs, but research has discovered that these earrings could have been used as nose rings.

The function of jewelry for the Native people located in the Southeast was used to showcase rank, history,

or individuality. Jewelry carried down traditions between generations since a written language was never developed by the Native people. During the Mississippian period clay, stone, and pearl beads were worn

along with shell gorgets or pendants were worn around the neck. These gorgets were frequently engraved with images that could tell a story about the Native people’s history or religious beliefs. Before Europeans brought glass beads to the southeast in the 16th century (as evident of the French glass bead found at



the Elisha Winn House during one of the Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society’s excavations on the property and now on display at the Elisha Winn House Museum), ear spoons of stone or wood overlaid with

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EDITOR:

Delana M. Gilmore, MA, RPA

Email: gwinnettarchaeology@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:

Jim D’Angelo, PhD RPA

Email: 4drdee@bellsouth.net

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copper foil were popular, and many have been found at Spiro Mounds in eastern Oklahoma¹. European contact introduced glass beads and silversmithing technology. Silver and brass armbands and gorgets became popular among the Southeaster Native men in the 18th and 19th centuries. To get silver to make jewelry the Native people often melted down silver coins². Sometimes they melted down silver teapots or candlesticks that were received from the European explorers. In the early 1800s Sequoyah (Cherokee native who created the written language of Cherokee syllabary) was a noted silversmith and created various items from silver coins that trappers and traders carried.



Ball and Cone Earrings from the National Museum of the American Indian

The ball and cone earrings were worn by Native people for hundreds of years. Native men and women would wear several pairs of these earrings in their ears or one pair in their noses. At an early age (usually 3 or 4 years old) Native children would have their ears pierced. Ear piercing was considered a rite of passage, and the Native people would wear the earrings the rest of their lives. These pieces of jewelry were also traded to early American settlers along the frontier. We do not know for certain how this ball and cone earring was used, but it could have been a trade good or given to a frontiersman or woman who was stationed or visited the fort. However, we do know that they did make a fashion statement for whoever wore them! ■ DMG

1. "Stone Ear Spools." *Oklahoma Archaeological Survey*. April 2010.
2. "Native American Rings." *Indians.org*. November 2022. <http://indians.org/articles/native-american-rings.html>.

Elisha Winn Fair

Every year Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) and Fort Daniel Foundation (FDF) members participate in the annual Elisha Winn Fair in Dacula, which was held on October 8–9. This year many people took advantage of the beautiful fall weather to enjoy one of Gwinnett County's oldest historic sites.



GARS and FDF members as reenactors performing frontier demonstrations and talking about the early history of Gwinnett County

14th Annual Frontier Faire

At this year's Frontier Faire many people visited Fort Daniel on a beautiful fall day. The purpose of Fort Daniel as an educational park and archaeological site reached many that day and will continue to teach the next generation about history and archaeology. Thank you some much to the vendors, exhibitors, and the visitors who came out!

SAVE THE DATE: 15th Annual Frontier Faire will be on Saturday, October 21, 2023.



Visitors enjoying the beautiful weather

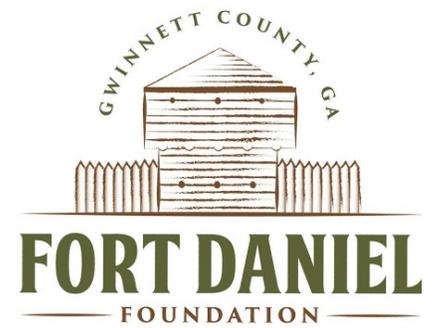


Public Archaeology at Fort Daniel



Exhibitors and reenactors telling the story of Fort Daniel, Gwinnett County, and Georgia

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Native American Heritage Month

November is Native American Heritage Month!

The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in paying tribute to the rich ancestry and traditions of Native people. What started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the US has resulted in a whole month being designated for that purpose.

The first American Indian Day in a state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. Several states celebrate the fourth Fri-



day in September. In Illinois, for example, legislators enacted such a day in 1919. Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American or Indigenous Peoples Day, but it continues to be ob-

served without any recognition as a national legal holiday. Proclamations, under variants on the name (including “Native American Heritage Month” and “National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month”) have been issued each year since 1994. Recently, President Joe Biden issued a proclamation to create Native American Heritage Day to be celebrated on November 25, 2022.

Georgia has a rich Native people history. Visit a state park or tour historic sites like [Etowah Indian Mounds](#), [New Echota](#), or [Chief Vann House](#). ■

GARS OFFICERS

www.thegars.org

President: Anne Dorland
Vice President: Katie Ahern
Secretary/Treasurer: Delana Gilmore

To keep up with the latest digs and activities from GARS follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

FDF OFFICERS

www.fortdaniel.com

President: Eli Stancel
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