

Preserving History Through Archaeology



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GWINNETT ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

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Exploring The Conquistadors and the Catawba

Excerpt from an article by Cass Herrington as featured on [Blue Ridge Public Radio Web site](#) on October 22, 2019

About 450 years ago Spanish soldiers on an expedition from Florida took over the native Catawba town of Joara, about 60 miles east of Asheville, North Carolina. Fort San Juan is the earliest known European settlement in the Southeastern US, which was established about 40 years before the English arrived in Jamestown. *That made Spanish the first European language spoken in Appalachia.*

Like much of American colonial history, the story of the Spanish soldiers' arrival on native Catawba land is one marked by conquest and ethnocentrism. "There's this sense of

who is the other," David Moore, an archaeology professor at Warren Wilson College, said. Moore is the executive archaeologist leading the research and excavations at the site called the Berry Site for nearly three decades (pictured left). Fort San Juan was about the size of a modern day basketball court. He says the remains of the structure are more intact than any other colonial fort in North America.



Aerial photo of the Berry Site
([Photo courtesy of the Exploring Joara Web site](#))

"In effect, it's 100 percent intact. We have the entire outline of it," Moore said. "Unfortunately, plowing over the years has destroyed the upper levels of it, but it's still far more intact than any other Spanish colonial fort."

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GARS/Fort Daniel News

- **GARS Meeting:** *The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 19 at Fort Daniel beginning at 7PM.* Guest speaker will be Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) Vice President, Jenna Tran (Historian at New South Associates). She will be presenting on her recent oral history and community research project that resulted in a book called *Farming for a Better Future*, which brings together oral history, research from local library, archive, and online, and interdisciplinary resources from archaeology and history to complete a project mandated by a federal agency and carried out by a private firm—highlighting what may arguably become the future of our discipline.



- **GARS Officers Nominations:** **It is that time of the year again—Officers Elections. Positions available are President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer. If you are interested in serving in a leadership role in GARS, please let Leslie Perry know.**

- **Fort Happenings:** Fall has finally come to the Fort! The new walkway from the drive to the basement has been finished, and the steps from the fort to the basement have been built. All of these projects were ready by the time of the Frontier Faire. (See details on Page 3.)

Grave Marking Ceremony for John McMillian

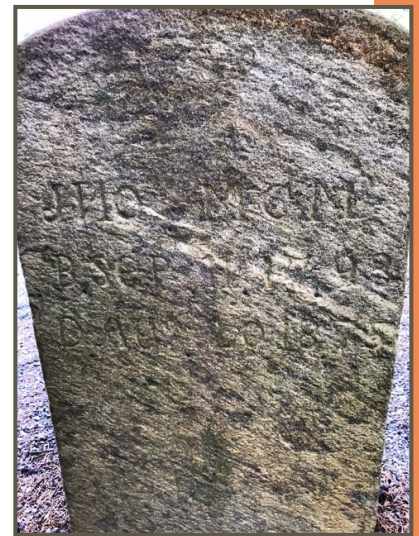
Article by Beverly Paff

The grave marking of one of Gwinnett County's original citizens took place on Saturday, October 19, 2019 at the McMillian Family Cemetery in Dacula, Georgia.

John McMillian (*grave pictured right*) was born September 11, 1793 in Abbeville County, South Carolina. He was the son of Samuel and Margaret Elizabeth Jolley McMillian. His father, Samuel, served in the South Carolina Regiment, commanded by Lt. Col. Francis Marion during the Revolutionary War. The family moved to Jackson County, Georgia, around 1802 and settled in the Mulberry community of Jackson County. John's father-in-law, George Reid Jr., served as spy on the frontier of Jackson County. George Reid Jr. also represented Jackson County in the Georgia legislature in 1798, 1804, and 1817 and would go on to serve as one of the first Inferior Court Judges of Gwinnett County.

John was not yet 20 years old when he joined the militia and served under his neighbor, Captain Joseph Whorton. As a member of the militia, he was ordered to report to the Hog Mountain area of then Jackson County in December of 1812 to build a new fort on the frontier, which was named Fort Daniel.

In celebration wreaths were presented by: Georgia State Society, National Society United States Daughters of 1812, Sharon Sowders, President; General John Clarke Chapter, Georgia State Society, National Society United States Daughters of 1812, Linda Hartung, President; McMillian Family, Ann Snead; Governor Francis Loveless Chapter, Colonial Dames CDXVIIC, Montez Hammack, President; Dr. Andrew Turnbull Chapter, Daughters of American Colonists, Gail Jennings, President; Martha Stewart Bulloch Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Cathy Hellming, First Vice Regent; Philadelphia Winn Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Ann Story, Regent; Sunbury Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Susan Gwaltney, Regent; Fort Daniel Foundation, Beverly Paff, Legacy Member; Georgia Society War of 1812, Shep Hammack, State President; James Tharpe Circle, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, Dr. Sheilia Richards, Georgia Past President; and United Daughters of the Confederacy – Atlanta #18, Mary Williams, President. ■ BP



11th Annual Frontier Faire

Though the rain and wind came, many brave people faced the weather frontier style. At this year's Faire the true purpose of what we envisioned at Fort Daniel manifested in the educational outreach to the Scouts and to the Georgia State students. This is the purpose of Fort Daniel: an educational park and archaeological site teaching the next generation about history and archaeology. Thank you some much to the vendors, exhibitors, Scouts, Dr. Jeff Glover and his Georgia State students, and the visitors who came out!

SAVE THE DATE: 12th Annual Frontier Faire will be on Saturday, October 17, 2020.



Exhibitors and Visitors braving the weather



Public Archaeology at Fort Daniel



Reenactors help to tell the story of Fort Daniel and Gwinnett County

More Diggin's

- **Gwinnett Historical Society** will be **meeting on Monday, November 18** at the **Historic Courthouse** in downtown Lawrenceville **beginning at 6:30PM**. Guest speaker will be Carter Wood, who will be speaking about the McIntosh-Gwinnett Duel. For more information visit the [GHS Web site](#).
- **Special Lecture at Fernbank Museum “Things New and Strange: A Southerner’s Journey through the Smithsonian Collections”** will be held **on Sunday, November 19** in the Frances Wood Wilson Foundation Theater **at the Fernbank beginning at 4:30PM**. Join Dr. G. Wayne Clough, former Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and President of Georgia Tech, for a conversation inspired by his book, *Things New and Strange*. A book signing will follow the lecture. Admission is free but advance reservation is suggested. For more information visit the [Fernbank Web site](#).
- **Society of Georgia Archaeology Fall Meeting** will be held **on Saturday, November 23** at **Georgia Gwinnett College**. The theme this year **“Georgia Archaeology for the Next Decade: Bringing Together the Stakeholders of the Past and the Researchers of the Future.”** More details will be emailed to you soon.
- **Christmas in Dacula** will be **on Saturday, December 14** at the **Elisha Winn House**. Christmas in Dacula brings together the very best of Dacula and surrounding communities for a variety of family-friendly activities to celebrate the holiday season and foster the spirit of Christmas. Admission is \$3, and parking is available. For information visit the [Christmas in Dacula Web site](#).
- **Candlelight Nights at Atlanta History Center** will be on **December 13 and 20 from 5:30–9:30PM**. Visit the three historic houses to experience how Southerners celebrated Christmas during the pioneer days (*pictured right*), the Civil War era, and the 1930s. This special holiday program is \$20 for the general public; \$15 for members; \$10 for children. For information visit the [Atlanta History Center’s Web site](#).



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 Friday in September. In Illinois, for example, legislators enacted such a day in 1919. Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day, but it continues to be observed without any recognition as a national legal holiday. In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 “National American Indian Heritage Month.” Similar proclamations, under variants on the name

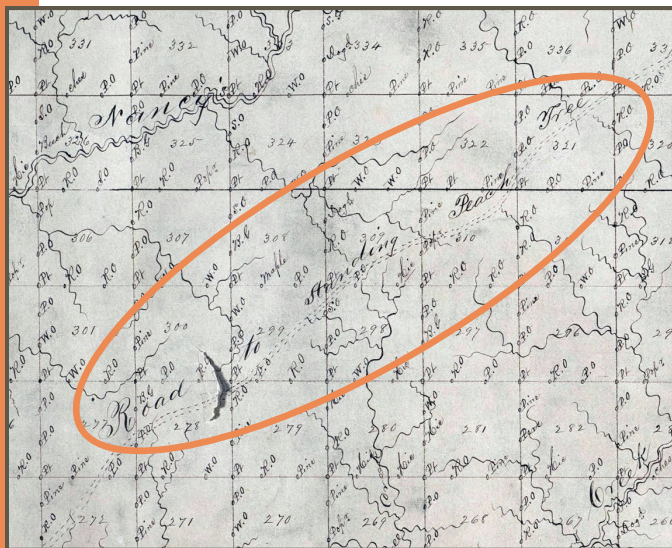
(including “Native American Heritage Month” and “National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month”) have been issued each year since 1994.

Some events in Georgia celebrating the heritage of Native people are: [Native American Heritage Day at New Echota on Saturday, November 2](#); and [Native American Festival and Pow Wow at Stone Mountain on November 7–10](#). ■



Revisiting Peachtree vs. Pitchtree

Our recent focus on the Peachtree Military Road linking Fort Daniel to Fort Peachtree with respect to the US Daughters of 1812 placement of an historic marker at Fort Daniel (*See Page 7*) has resurrected an old discussion about the correct name for Standing Peachtree. As one [Web site](#) puts it: “There is some debate as to the origin of this name, but historians generally agree that the term was actually ‘pitch’ tree which referred to pine trees that were used for their pitch, or sap. *Pakanahuili* was translated to English as “standing peachtree,” even though there were no known Georgia peach trees near this village.”



It is true that an older generation of historians and many others seem to agree on this, but the reason why is not the result of sound historic reach but rather hearsay. The hearsay seems to be based on at least two misunderstandings. As the Web site stated that *Pakanahuili* was translated as “standing peachtree” though there were no peach trees near this village, the claim that there were no known peach trees near the site is a bit of a jump. Yes, the Muscogee Creek name for the site was *Pvkan-v'pe*—*pvkan* meaning “peach” (and “plumb”).

One of the earliest writers about the site was Washington Collier. In an 1897 interview published in the April 25 issue of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Collier’s recollections included that: “There was a great huge mound of earth

heaped up there—big as this house, maybe bigger—and right on top of it grew a big peach tree.” Collier continued, “It bore fruit and was a useful and beautiful tree.” [This was probably one of several Indian Mounds associated with the Standing Peachtree site long ago destroyed by development.]

Though not specifying Standing Peachtree, in William Bartram’s account of his travels through Georgia he mentions seeing “old Peach and Plumb Orchards” at many Native American village sites (*Travels and Other Writings* by William Bartram, Library of America, Thomas P. Slaughter, ed. 1996). We have the witness of Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins who on numerous occasions in his journals (1796–1806) mentions peach orchards at Indian villages. For example: “We went on to Timossa . . . an Indian Town before the Revolutionary War . . . I saw some fine peach trees, which had been planted by the original inhabitants . . . There were two settlements . . . the lowest surrounded with peach trees, which are very thriving . . . a view of a settlement over the river prettily situated on a rising found surrounded with peach trees.”

Peach pits were among the trash items recovered at the Fort Mitchell site. In Justin Stickler’s “Plant Utilization at Fort Mitchell 1813–1840: An Archaeobotanical Analysis” we learn that “Peach is the most common Old World fruit recovered at archaeological sites throughout the Southeast . . . It arrived in the New World via the Spanish and quickly made its way into the interior by the late Seventeenth Century . . . By the late eighteenth century, few Southeastern Indian towns were without peach orchards.”

Further, Muscogee Creek words for Pine, Pine-tree (*culi*), pitch and tar (*Cluk'cuwv*) sound nothing like *Pvkan*; one has to wonder who it was who was confused about “pitch” being “peach.” Only in *English* could that happen. The story seems to have begun with Eugene Michell’s 1928 article, “The Story of Standing Peachtree,” although he likely got it from someone before him, but at a time when pine was replacing hardwoods in Georgia. It was then repeated by Franklin Garrett in “Atlanta and its Environs.” As everyone knows, if something is in print, especially more than once, and in a history book no less, then it must be true. But it’s not! ■ **JJD**

US Daughters of 1812 Marker Dedication

The threat of rain did not keep dignitaries, Fort Daniel members, and others to attend the dedication ceremony of the US Daughters of 1812 Historic Marker at Fort Daniel on Saturday, October 26. Dr. Jim D'Angelo remarked about remembering the past by discovering the true story. He stated, "For the last 12 years members of the Fort Daniel Foundation and the Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society have been digging the past: figuratively in the available archives and literally through our archaeological investigations. This research has added greatly to our understanding of the site and the history with which it is associated."

Almost daily new historical tidbits are being discovered through the muster roll research performed by Eli Stancel, Richard Lux, and Tyler Holman—becoming the cleanest record of the men who served at Fort Daniel—and through the archaeological digs performed through public archaeology events at Fort Daniel. As Dr. D'Angelo stated, "The placement of this marker gives us a permanent and tangible link to that which we are memorializing."

After the dedication wreaths were presented by several organizations in honor and in remembrance of those men who were stationed at Fort Daniel. The organizations that presented wreaths were: Georgia Society, USD 1812; Francis DeVane, USD 1812; General John Clarke, USD 1812; General John Baytop Scott, USD 1812; Governor Francis Loveless, Colonial Dames CDXVIIC; The Fort Daniel Foundation; Private John McMillian Family; Captain Nehemiah J. Garrison Family; Daughters of American Colonists State Society (DAC); Dr. Andrew Turnbull Chapter, DAC; Philadelphia Winn Chapter, Daughters of American Revolution (DAR); Sequoyah Chapter, DAR; Sunbury Chapter, DAR; Department of Georgia, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War; and Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic State Society. ■ DMG

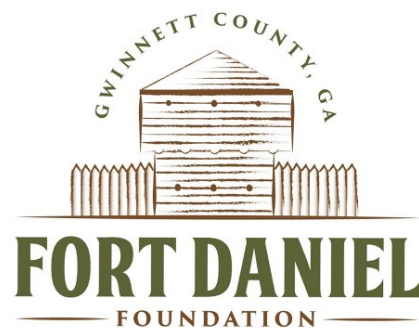


(pictured from left to right) View of the Historic Marker through the Original Gate; Past meeting the Present; and over 80 People attending the Dedication



(pictured from left to right) Dr. D'Angelo with County Commissioner Marlene Fosque and Jim Nitkowski, Vice Chair of Gwinnett Historic Preservation and Restoration Board; Fort Daniel Legacy Members; and Musket Salute

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Update on Saving 152 Nassau

The past couple of weeks have had some ups and downs in the dealing of saving 152 Nassau (the place where the first country music hit was recorded in the early 1920s). In August demolition started and part of the building was knocked down, but Fulton County Superior Court Judge Kimberly M. Esmond Adams issued a temporary restraining order—stopping any more destruction. Then in mid October the stop work order was removed with a court case being settled and claims dismissed; however, three days later another stop work order was put in place. Fulton County Superior Court Judge Paige Reese Whitaker stated that further review of the proposal to demolish the building is warranted. The building could still be saved!

However, Kyle Kessler, the main person behind the preservation drive to save 152 Nassau, decided

to dismiss his case against the City of Atlanta. On the Save 152 Nassau Facebook page, Kessler stated, “Despite my best efforts and hopes I cannot repair through litigation the problems for our city caused by an apathetic

Mayor, City Council, and City Attorney. It became evident upon further diligence surrounding the facts of the 152 Nassau Street and 141 Walton Street properties that the judicial system was not a way for myself or any other citizen to force our public officials to care about our city and their obligations to its citizens, including the right of the people to the protection of our city’s history.”

Though this is sad, hopefully, more people are aware of Atlanta’s history being lost. Thank you Kessler and Historic Atlanta for your hard work in trying to save 152 Nassau and preserving Atlanta’s history. ■ DMG



152 Nassau being razed
(Photo from of the Save 152 Nassau Facebook Page)

GARS OFFICERS

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Secretary/Treasurer: Kay McKenna

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

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