THE BERKMAR MYSTERY SITE

Reconnaissance and Recordation
Completed September 2011
In May 2011, members of the Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) cleared vegetation and debris from the “Berkmar Mystery Site” (BMS-1), conducted a Reconnaissance Survey, and prepared the site for Recordation. In September 2011, GARS members, assisted by Berkmar Middle School 8th grade science students, recorded the site.

GARS wishes to thank Berkmar Middle School Principle, Kenny Wells, and 8th grade science teacher, Ryan Manning, for their support in this project.
# Participating Students

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<td>Alvarado</td>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>McLymon</td>
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<td>Montgomery</td>
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<td>Morales</td>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>McCrimmon</td>
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<td>Ekuonyo</td>
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<td>Allen</td>
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<td>Artis</td>
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<td>Dowers</td>
<td>Trenton</td>
<td>Ramirez</td>
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<td>Glover</td>
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<td>Harris</td>
<td>Da’Vonta</td>
<td>Spencer</td>
<td>A.J.</td>
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<td>A’yana</td>
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<td>Jackson</td>
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BMS-1 Location

USGS 7.5’ NORCROSS

GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE
The site exhibits what appears to be a channel cut into the bedrock bottom of a stream. How it was made and for what purpose was a mystery.

Near, but not at the site, a cut stone artifact was found by Robert and Margaret Stuebing, the previous property owners. How it was made and for what purpose was a mystery as well.

Scale = 10 cm/4 in
At BMS-1, we see an exposed portion of the *granite-gneiss* bedrock that underlies much of Gwinnett and DeKalb counties all the way to Stone Mountain. The exposure is due to erosion of upper soils by a stream which can be seen running in the seemingly cut channel.

As seen in a 1902 map, there were several granite quarries, including one in nearby Snellville, operating at that time.
May Clearing & Reconnaissance
Site Component A: The Channel
This is just an ordinary fieldstone wall. Its placement along the channel portion of the stream, on its west side only, is curious, but it is not a foundation wall or retaining wall.
This is a fieldstone retaining wall for an old dirt road that parallels the stream on its east side. Only a portion of the wall, situated at and below the rock ledge, is shown here.
September Recordation With Students

SHOOTING LEVELS

SHOVEL TESTING
VIEW N. FROM LEDGE.
STREAM IS DRY (SEPTEMBER)

VIEW S. TOWARDS LEDGE.
STREAM IS FLOWING (MAY)
“Cut” Scars?

TYPICAL SIDE VIEW OF CHANNEL “CUT”

MORE TOOL MARKS?
Not Cut... Natural

Note Cracks in Rock
Note side seams of an apparent Xenolith.

In this case it would be a seam or inclusion in the granite-gneiss bedrock of either biotite (igneous) or amphibolite (metamorphic). It may also be another type of granite with different mineral ratios. The boundary is sharp, as seen clearly in this and the insert photo.

Where the stream flows, freezing and thawing, expansion and contraction have helped to erode the inclusion thus creating the channel.

The three main classes of rock are sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous. Amphibolite is a metamorphosed sedimentary rock that can be ‘captured’ by the rising granitic pluton (intrusive igneous rock).
The channel is natural. If it was ever made use of by Aboriginal or Euro-American peoples, no evidence for that has been found.
THE STONE IS AMPHIBOLITE, A METAMORPHIC STONE, ORIGINALLY SANDSTONE. THIS IS A "FORMAL" TOOL MEANING THAT IT IS FORMED RATHER THAN NATURAL.

THE TOOL EXHIBITS BATTERED ENDS, PROBABLY FROM USE AS A PICK.

Weight = ~ 7 lbs.

Scale = 10 cm or 4 in.
SEVERAL FORMAL AMPHIBOLITE TOOLS HAVE BEEN RECOVERED FROM THE GRAVES SOAPSTONE SITE.

Amphibolite is harder than Soapstone, but Granite is harder than amphibolite, so this can’t be a tool for working granite.

THE SHAPE OF THIS TOOL RESEMBLES IRON MILLSTONE DRESSING BILLS, WHICH WOULD BE MOUNTED IN A WOOD THRIFT…

…but dressing tools were never made of stone. Yet the thrift suggests a way this tool could have been held.

Bottom line: who made this and for what is still a mystery
GARS Fall Program & Program Ideas

- September 22 – I will speak to the Daughters of 1812 about our work at Fort Daniel. Shannon will bring an artifact display.
- October 8 & 9 (?) - Work Days at the Fort Daniel site preparing for aire
- October 13, 15 &16 – Frontier Faire
  - 15th & 16th – Faire held at the Fort Daniel site. Begin shooting Fort Daniel documentary for the Archaeology Channel.
- October 22 – Society for Georgia Archaeology (SGA) Fall meeting in Athens. I will be giving presentation on Fort Peachtree and connection with Fort Daniel. SGA auction at the Terrapin Brewery.
- November 10 – GARS General Meeting & Elections.
- November 11-13 (?) – 2011 excavations at the Graves Soapstone site.
- November (?) – Wayne Waldrip’s Peachtree Road Tour.
- December 18 – Christmas Holiday Party in Lieu of monthly meeting.
- January 4-8 – Annual Meeting of the Society for Historic Archaeology (SHA) in Baltimore. I will be presenting a paper on Fort Daniel.
- January 12 – GARS General Meeting
- January 19(?) – FDF annual meeting.