

THE BERKMAR MYSTERY SITE

Reconnaissance and Recordation
Completed September 2011



A person wearing a bright blue t-shirt, a dark blue baseball cap, and khaki pants is leaning over a shallow stream. They appear to be working with a tool in the water, possibly for archaeological excavation or surveying. The stream is surrounded by rocks and some green vegetation like ferns. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the natural setting.

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

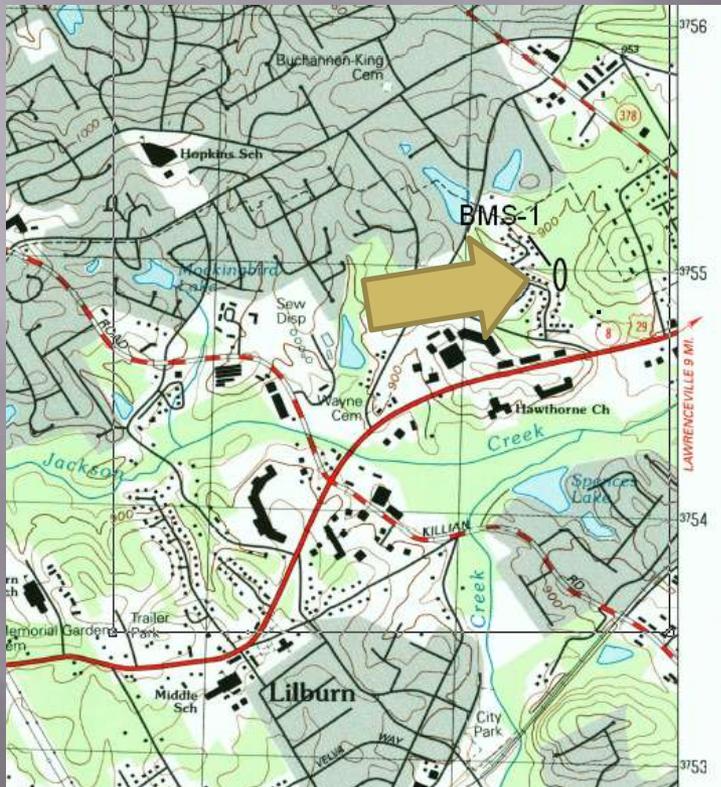
Last	First	Last	First
Alvarado	Brandon	McLymon	Sterling
Montgomery	Tiave	McNeely	Juwan
Morales	Franciso	McCrimmon	Nyasia
Ekuonyo	Tinzi	Obregon	Marvin
Allen	Laverne	Perez	Paloma
Artis	Justin	Perez	Lia
Dowers	Trenton	Ramirez	Patricia
Glover	Chontavious	Reyna	Rebecca
Gomez	Efrain	Santamania	Giselle
Harris	Da'Vonta	Spencer	A.J.
Hollins	A'yana	Terraza	Wendy
Jackson	Akila	Thompson	Rakeem
Lawton	Fiona	Torres	Jose
Burgos	Maryori	Torres	Samuel
		Toscano	Carlos



BMS-1 Location

USGS 7.5' NORCROSS

GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE



Why A “Mystery” Site?

- ▣ 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.

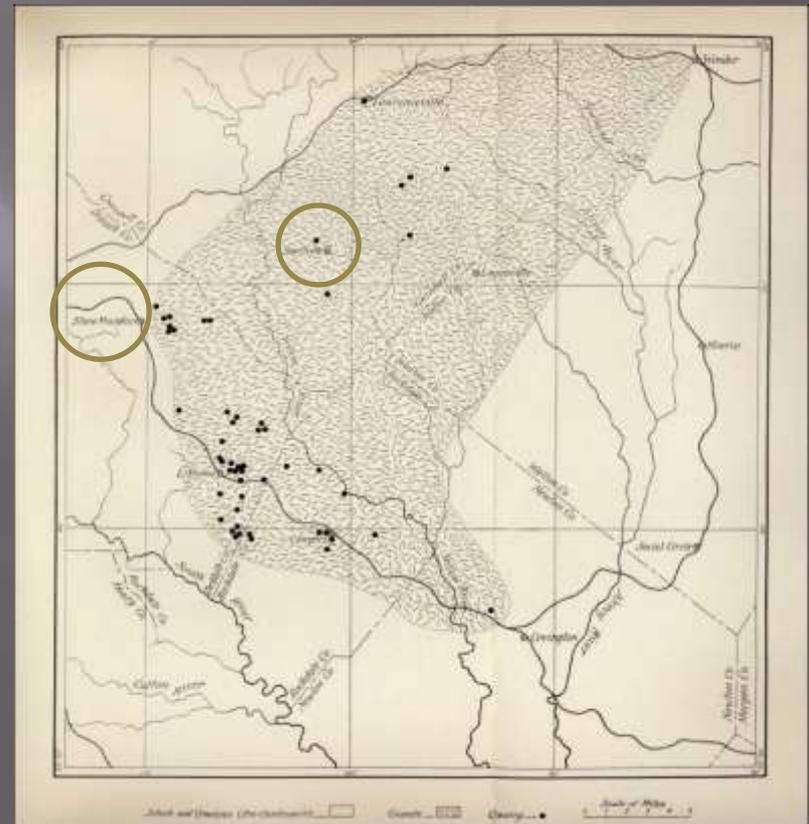


Scale = 10 cm/4 in

The Granite

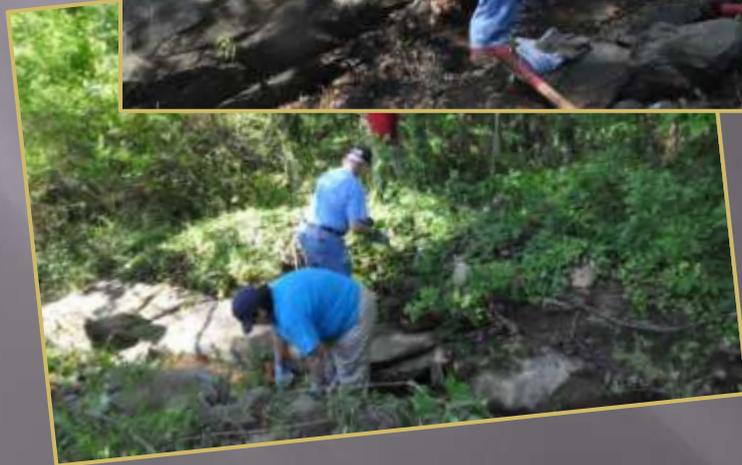
At BMS-1, we see an exposed portion of the *granite-gneiss* bedrock that underlies much of Gwinnett and DeKalb counties all the way to Stone Mountain. The exposure is due to erosion of upper soils by a stream which can be seen running in the seemingly cut channel.

MAP OF THE UNDERLYING GRANITE PLUTON AND QUARRIES IN 1902
GSG BULLETIN 9-A



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



Site Component B: Fieldstone Wall



This is just an ordinary fieldstone wall. It's 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.

Site Component C: Retaining Wall and Road

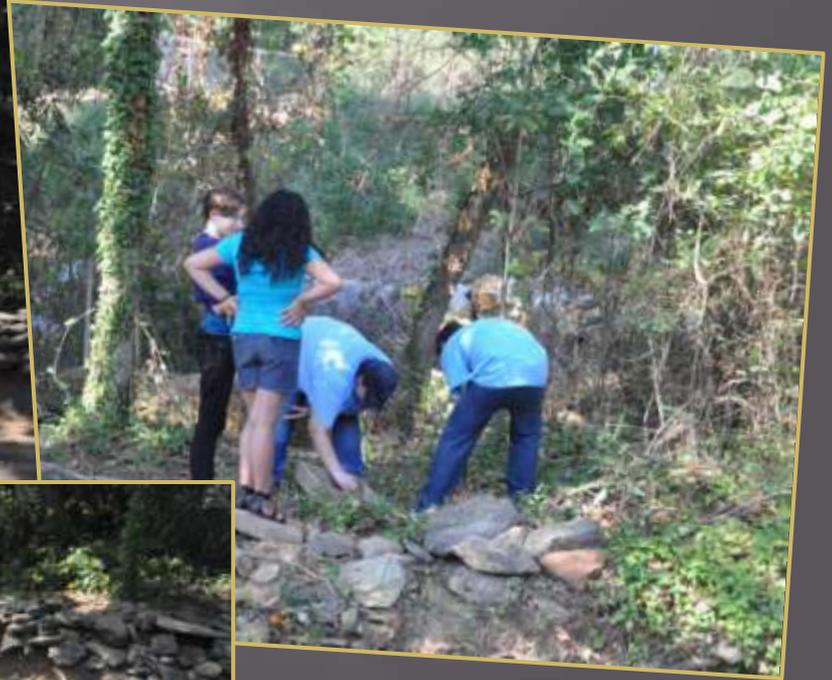
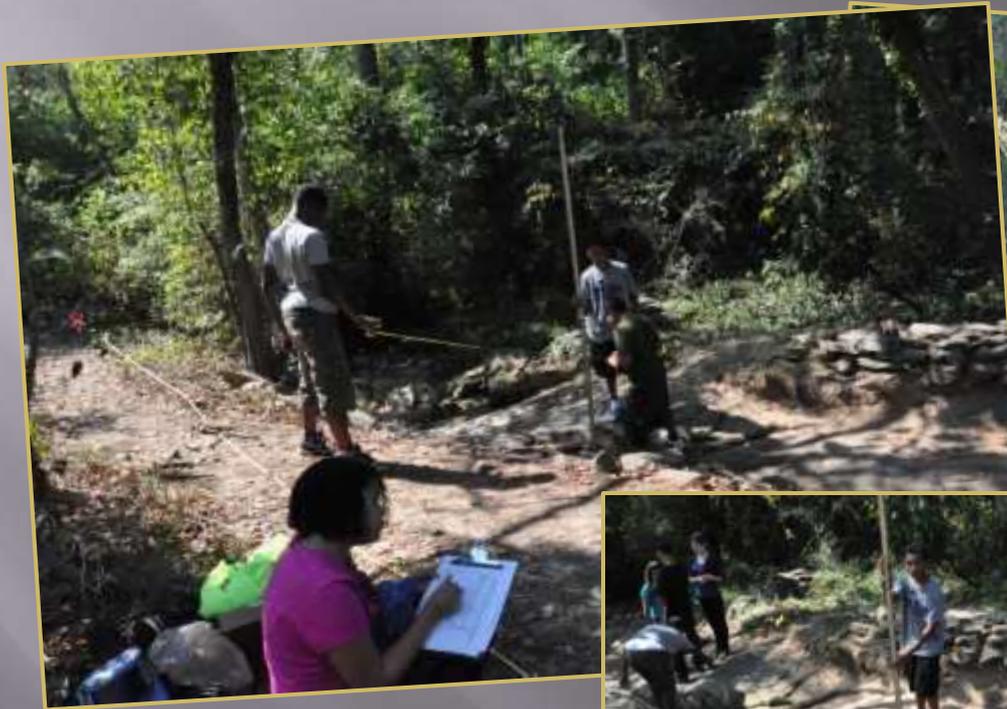


This is a fieldstone retaining wall for an old dirt road that parallels the stream on its east side. Only a portion of the wall, situated at and below the rock ledge, is shown here.

September Recordation With Students

SHOOTING LEVELS

SHOVEL TESTING

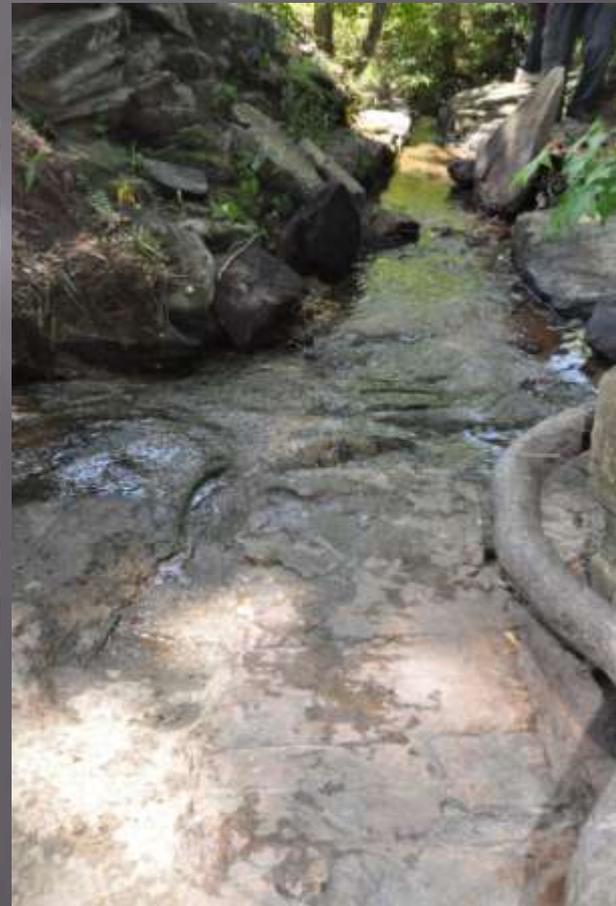


Channel Cleared

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?



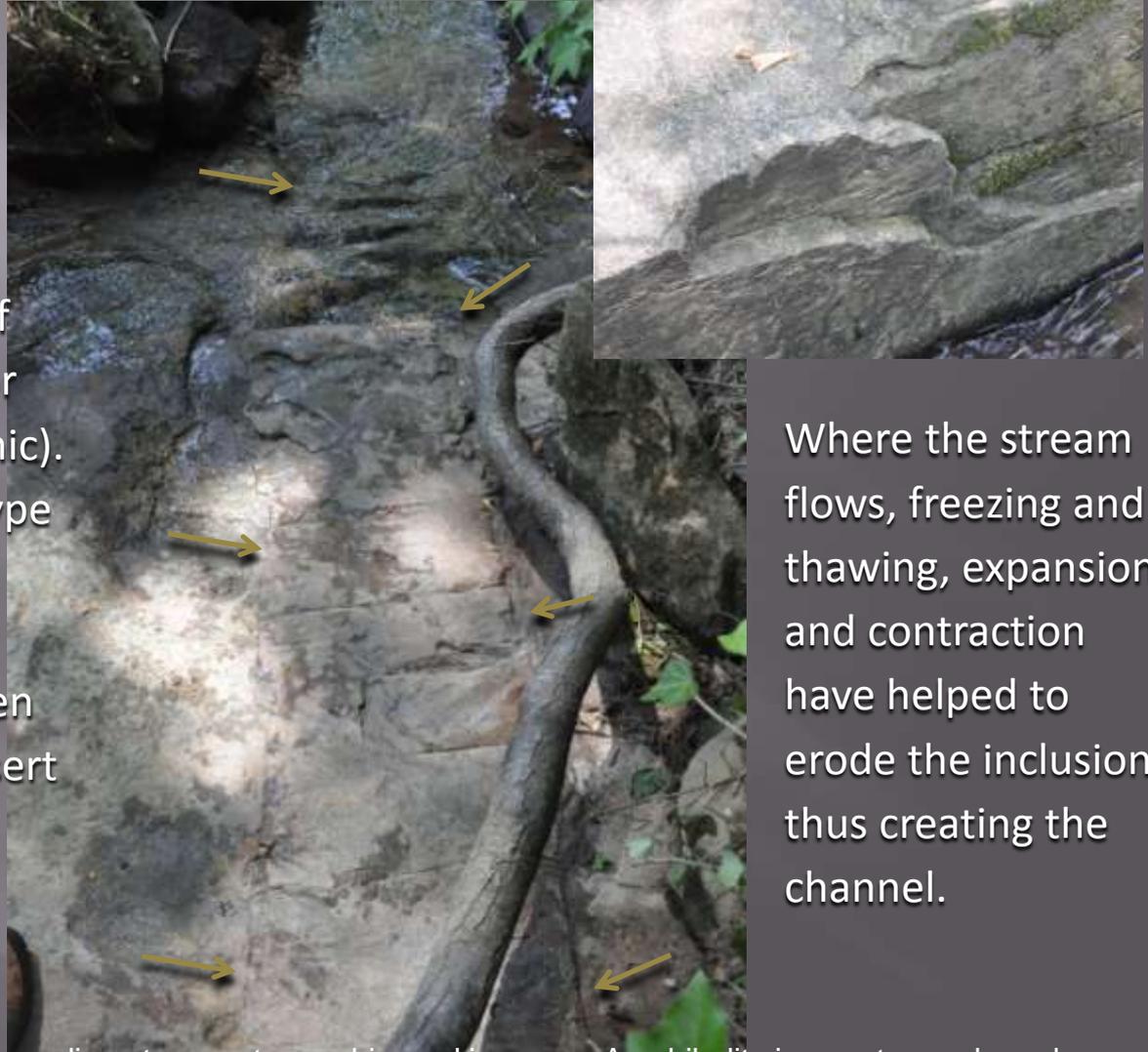
Not Cut... Natural



Not Cut... Natural

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).

Conclusion



The channel is natural. If it was ever made use of by Aboriginal or Euro-American peoples, no evidence for that has been found.

Now, to the Tool...

THE STONE IS AMPHIBOLITE,
A METAMORPHIC STONE, ORIGINALLY
SANDSTONE. THIS IS A "FORMAL" TOOL
MEANING THAT IT IS FORMED RATHER
THAN NATURAL



Weight = ~ 7 lbs.

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



Scale = 10 cm or 4 in



What We Know

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
 - 13th – Public Lecture at the Fort Daniel Elementary School: History, Archaeology, Plans for the Future.
 - 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.