

Preserving History Through Archaeology



May 2023
Volume XII, Issue 5

GWINNETT ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

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From the Vault: Manganese Glass

Last month cobalt blue glass fragments were featured in the “From the Vault,” and keeping with the topic of glass this month I wanted to feature two artifacts found in the Fort Daniel Museum: the manganese glass button and drinking glass fragment (*pictured right*).

Manganese glass is one of the oldest glass additives and decolorizing agents. Many believe that it was first used as a decolorizing agent in the second century BC. However, Ancient Egyptians were using manganese dioxide to remove green color from glass in a slow process to create purple manganese glass.¹ By the 1600s manganese as decolorizing agent became a staple in the glassmaking industry. It was known as “glassmakers soap” due to its ability to neutralize the effects of sand impurities.

Just looking at these two artifacts you can see that they are not really colorless. They have a pinkish tint. “Colorless” glass is the absence of color, but it is not always colorless—as exhibited in the Fort Daniel artifacts. Colorless glass is attained by using the purest sand source and by

adding a decolorizing agent (like manganese) to the glass to offset the residual impurities.² When the glass is exposed to sunlight, it will turn a light pink or sometimes dark purple—depending on the amount of manganese in the glass mix and the amount of sunlight.



Generally, colorless glass was uncommon prior to the 1870s but became widespread when automatic bottle machines in the early 1900s became popular. However, manganese glass that was used for colorless tableware (cups or vases) or other items (fashion accessories) can date before the 1870s. Therefore, since the two Fort Daniel manganese glass artifacts are a button and glassware fragment, we can

determine that the two artifacts probably date to 1800s. These glasses pieces just tell a small part about what life was like after Fort Daniel’s abandonment. ■ DMG

1. Nassau, Kurt (2001). *The physics and chemistry of color: the fifteen causes of color*. Wiley. May 2023.
2. “Bottle/Glass Colors.” Society of Historic Archaeology. May 2023. <https://sha.org/bottle/colors.htm>.

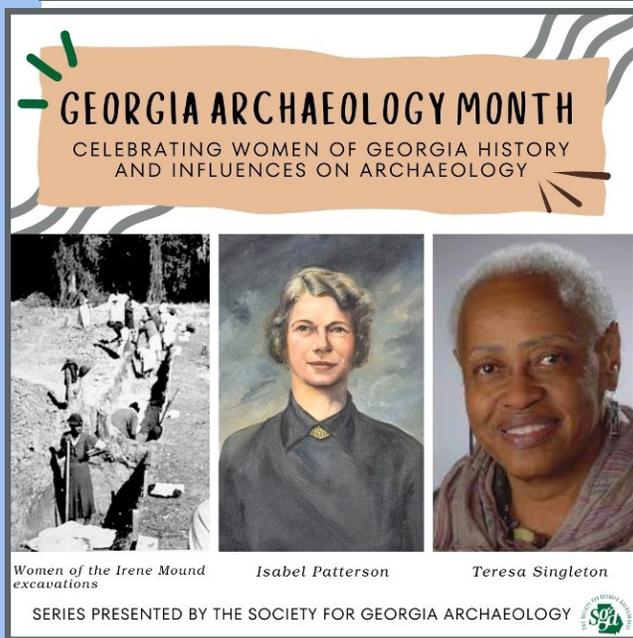
EDITOR:

Delana M. Gilmore, MA, RPA
Email: gwinnettarchaeology@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:

Jim D’Angelo, PhD, RPA
Email: 4drdee@bellsouth.net

Georgia's Archaeology Month



Every year in May the state of Georgia celebrates and promotes preservation and stewardship of its hidden archaeological heritage. This statewide archaeology awareness has grown over the years since its creation in 1994. The Society for Georgia Archaeology (SGA) serves as the primary sponsor of Georgia Archaeology Month. Cosponsors include state agencies, private firms, and non-profit and professional organizations.

This year the theme for Archaeology Month will be highlighting women that have influenced Georgia history and archaeology. Keep an eye on SGA's [Facebook](#) page for interesting snippets of how Georgian women shaped archaeology and history in the Peach State. Additionally, throughout the month of May some institutions are hosting public events. SGA would be sharing these events on their Facebook page as well. Some of those events are featured below in the "More Diggin's" section. ■ DMG

More Diggin's

- **New South Archaeology Day:** New South is hosting their 11th Annual Archaeology Day event on Saturday, May 6 from 10AM–2PM at 6150 E Ponce de Leon Avenue in Stone Mountain! For 2023 the theme is African-American culture in Georgia. The event will feature exciting new exhibits and performers aligned with this theme—including drummers, dancers, a storyteller, and a Gullah sweetgrass basket weaver! Visitors will also enjoy longstanding popular exhibits like Abby the Archaeobus, Cherokee Basket Weaving, and Excavation & Mapping. There will be tons of engaging and educational activities for kids and adults alike. You can make your own rock art, explore the archaeologist's toolkit, and even launch spears using an atlatl! In the meantime, New South invites you to explore their virtual experience at the [Portal to the Past](#) where you can dig deep into the real work that archaeologists do. You'll find content aligned with the Georgia Department of Education Standards of Excellence for all grade levels throughout the digital exhibits. (*See flyer on next page.*)
- **BRAG Meeting:** Blue Ridge Archaeology Guild (BRAG), a chapter of the Society for Georgia Archaeology, will be having their next meeting on Wednesday, May 10 at Lumpkin County Library beginning at 7PM. Guest speaker will be Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) Secretary/Treasurer, Delana Gilmore, who will be speaking about the latest archaeological finds discovered at Fort Daniel.
- **Site Cleanup Day:** Volunteers are needed to help clean up around the Fort Daniel site on Saturday, May 13 beginning at 9:30AM. If you are able to help, please email [Delana Gilmore](#).
- **Gwinnett Historical Society:** General membership meeting will on Monday, May 15 at Rhodes Jordan Community Center (100 East Crogan Street, Lawrenceville) beginning at 6:30PM. Guest speaker Wayne Sikes will be speaking about the history of Gwinnett County hospital system. For more information visit the [Gwinnett Historical Society's Web site](#).
- **Fort Daniel Open House:** The "gates" of Fort Daniel will be opened in May to celebrate Archaeology Month. (*See flyer on Page 5.*)
- **Dacula Memorial Day Parade:** This year's parade will be on Monday, May 29 beginning at 10AM. GARS and Fort Daniel Foundation (FDF) members will be marching or riding on the "float"; some will be in costume. Come out and support this wonderful community gathering.

New South Associates' 11th Annual ARCHAEOLOGY DAY!

May 6 • 10am-2pm



This Year's Theme is
African American
Cultural Heritage

- Excavation and Mapping
- Storytelling
- Basket Weaving
- Drums and Dancers
- Food
- History



Join
Us!



Archaeology Day
Performance Schedule

- 10:30 • Welcome
- 10:45 • Drummers
- 11:15 • Song and Libation
- 11:30 • Dancers
- 12:30 • Storytelling
- 1:15 • Atlatl/Spear Throwing

6150 East Ponce de Leon Avenue in Stone Mountain Village

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Digging up the Past: Archaeology at Fort Pulaski

Excerpt from an article written by Marisa Mecke featured in the [Savannah Morning News](#) on April 28, 2023

At Fort Pulaski National Monument, visitors learn American Civil War history while taking in the red brick arches and sprawling historic property, learning about how the gaping cannonball holes played a role in the coast's portion of the war. Recently, Laura Seifert, archaeologist and Cultural Resources Specialist, and Samantha Matera, another archaeologist at the site, presented at the Islands Library some of the findings their team has made digging up the past to tell new stories about the civilians who lived on-site years ago and how humans and nature have shaped the land on Cockspar and McQueens islands.



Fort Pulaski is a National Monument operated by the National Park Service located on most of Cockspar Island and all of McQueens Island between Savannah and Tybee Island. Aside from the brick fortress and cannonball-marked walls of the fort, the historical site features a workers' village where the fort's residents (everyone from blacksmiths to carpenters) slept and had their quarters, had communal kitchens, and bigger houses where the commander had his own house and separate office building. These civilian-built structures were initially constructed in 1829,

and while they were supposed to be temporary many hung around going in and out of use for the next 50 years. A lot of them were originally built with wood and gave way to the coastal humidity, forcing them to be replaced with brick. Findings from the workers' village remap what the community on the historical fort looked like, telling the mundane and human side of civilian life at the fort.

Seifert, Matera, and other archaeologists found different types of animal bone—pigs and cows (typical of the diet at the time) as well as turtle, deer, squirrel and some kind of heron—that would have been food. They also discovered parts of tobacco pipes, buttons, beads, and pieces of ceramic plates and dishes (*pictured on Page 5*); all of which tell the archaeologists a considerable amount about the people who used the items.

Matera said the team of archaeologists isn't always sure what they have found before rinsing the items off, and sometimes there's a decent pile of rocks on the side of the artifacts. However, once they're nice and clean, the archaeologists can use their background knowledge, reference books, research from fellow professionals and newspaper archives to date artifacts and contextualize what they were doing on Fort Pulaski. "The cool thing about some of the (pipes) we're finding at Fort Pulaski is that we're finding pieces that are decorated, we're finding pieces with company names on them . . . they are helping us date really tightly," Seifert said. From pipes and documents from the era, Seifert explained that in the dark nights workers were isolated on the island since there was no bridge at the time. Smoking tobacco was not only a pastime, but a way to keep mosquitos at bay.

Beads and buttons on the island indicate the presence of women during the time. Seifert said they considered alternatives, looking into whether the beads could be from rosaries or men's clothing, but ultimately they were probably for jewelry and clothes. Moreover, there is some (albeit sparse) documentation of women such as newspaper clippings of a 10-year-old girl who passed away. "It's expanding the stories," Seifert said. "It's not just men that were out there, but some of them . . . had, probably, wives and children, and some of the some of the women may have been working there as well."

The location has been the site of several historical hurricanes in 1804, 1854, and 1881, Seifert said. The storms

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and floods they brought incurred building damage, and in 1881 a hurricane even took out the laborers' quarters. Using survivors' accounts as well as US Army Corps of Engineers' analyses that take into account writings from survivors and historical tide data, archaeologists are considering how the items they find have been impacted by water.



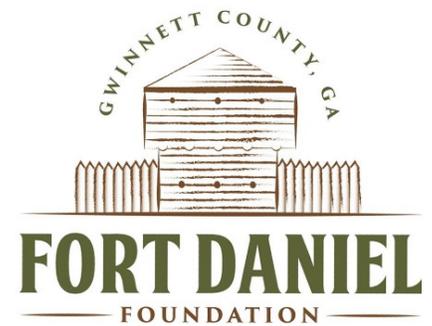
After the war, Seifert said there were large groups working on repairing and upgrading the fort, and during that time period there is much firmer documentation of many women on the island. Some of the island only has artifacts from relatively recently, Seifert said, because portions of the land were actually made using spoils from harbor dredging after the late 1800s. When the harbor was deepened in that time period, the leftover, dug-up materials were brought to expand the land mass near Fort Pulaski. That means humans not only left evidence of their historical presence through artifacts but also in the shape of the land itself.

Nowadays, storms and flooding are impacting the island, its historical property, and archaeological work more than ever. Sea-level rise is making flooding more frequent throughout the Georgia coast, and when hurricanes do arrive they tend to dump more water on the coast than they did before. According to Seifert, this year's rainy weather is manifesting in the high groundwater level. Sometimes, she and Matera said, they hit groundwater while digging and have to wait for the spot to dry out before they continue. In the future, she said flooding will continue to be a consideration while they continue archaeological work to tell more stories about the fort. ■ SMN

Defending the Frontier
Fort Daniel Open House
Saturday, May 20, 2023
10AM-2PM
Fort Daniel Archaeological Site
(2505 Braselton Highway/GA 124, Buford)

May is Archaeology Month in Georgia! Explore how archaeology reveals the ways people lived on the Georgia frontier during the War of 1812—including tours of the Fort Daniel Museum and Archaeology Lab and active archaeological dig within the Fort!

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People Saving Places: Preservation Month 2023

Though it is Archaeology Month in Georgia, nationally May is Historic Preservation Month, and this year the National Trust of Historic Preservation (NTHP) honors those who work hard in saving the history of the United States. As a nation, we have work to fill in the gaps of our cultural heritage. That's why the NTHP shines a long-overdue spotlight on trailblazers who strife to save places where people raised their voices, took their stands, and found courage to change the world.

Historic place-savers pour their time, energy, and resources into protecting places they care about, often without recognition. So, this year's Preservation Month theme of "People Saving Places" is a national high-five to everyone doing the great work of saving places—in ways big and small—and inspiring others to do the same!



NTHP is offering a wide variety of ways to help saving places that showcase the depth and diversity of our nation's history. Throughout the month of May, you can join the celebration in a few easy ways:

- Get the NTHP's weekly email newsletter to enjoy uplifting stories about people saving places across the country.
- Register to attend one (or more!) of NTHP's free virtual events featuring cool people, places, and projects.
- Spread the word about Preservation Month in your own community.

For more information about Preservation Month and other events visit the [NTHP Web site](https://www.nthp.org). ■ NTHP

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
Vice President: Tyler Holman
Secretary: Cindy Horsley
Treasurer: Betty Warbington

To stay up to date with the latest news from FDF follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).