

*Preserving History Through Archaeology*



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# GWINNETT ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

USACE and UGA Partnership.....2  
More Diggin's .....3

From the Vault .....4



EDITOR:

Delana M. Gilmore, MA, RPA  
Email: [gwinnettarchaeology@gmail.com](mailto:gwinnettarchaeology@gmail.com)

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:

Jim D'Angelo, PhD RPA  
Email: [4drdee@bellsouth.net](mailto:4drdee@bellsouth.net)

# Mobile District and UGA Forge Partnership with Archaeology Collection

Excerpt from an article written by Chuck Walker featured on the [United States Army Corps Web site](#) on December 13, 2023

One of the most important jobs of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is to save, store, and preserve archaeological finds on its work sites or the controlled recreational sites. The Mobile District collection is the largest number of materials in all of USACE. The University of Georgia's (UGA) archaeology department curates most of the District's collection. Dr. Victor Thompson, Director of the Laboratory of Archaeology at UGA, and his wife, Dr. Amanda D. Roberts-Thompson, Operations Director of the Laboratory of Archaeology at UGA, both stated that the collections (*portion pictured below*) stored by UGA are of national and international importance in that they speak to the indigenous Native American history of the southeastern region of the United States and have implications for broader human history.



“Many of the USACE Mobile District collections have what we call Swift Creek ceramics,” Victor said. “These indigenous ceramics have complex designs stamped on them, and they are found over a large portion of the American Southeast, especially in Georgia. By studying the designs and now using artificial intelligence matching programs, we are able to establish which commu-

nities were connected to one another over 2,500 years ago. The second example is of a specific site in the collection, the Little Egypt site. This is thought to be the capital of the polity of Coosa, which covered parts of Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. Hernando De Soto encountered this polity and its people, and it plays a large role in understanding the events of the 16th century in the region.”

“We have long developed processes for curation and collection management to care for USACE collections. Most recently, much of the focus has been on ensuring NAGPRA implementation is fulfilled on USACE collections and that ancestors and funerary objects are repatriated and reburied. This is the primary area. . .” Amanda stated.

“NAGPRA (i.e.; the *National American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*) implementation is a lot of work and requires that there be a flexible and transparent relationship, not just with USACE and Tribal Nations, but also USACE and curation repositories such as the laboratory. . .”. A large portion of the collection that UGA stores for the District comes from things collected when many major reservoirs were being built around Georgia, such as current Mobile District sites Lake Sidney Lanier, Allatoona Lake, and Carter's Lake. This means that the relationship between the Mobile District and the Laboratory at UGA has been around for a long time and both the laboratory and the District say that the relationship continues to stay strong.

“Much of the collection we curate on behalf of the Mobile District are from large archaeological surveys and excavations conducted many years ago prior to some of the major reservoirs being constructed in Georgia,” Amanda said. “Most of this archaeological work was done by UGA archaeologists and students, which means our partnership with USACE and the Mobile District has existed for well over 50 years.” ■ USACE

## MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE:

If you would like to join or renew your GARS membership, please contact [Delana Gilmore](#); and for FDF membership please contact [Cindy Horsley](#).



## More Diggin's

- **Historic Oakland Cemetery National Day of Service:** On Monday, January 15 Oakland Cemetery commemorates the Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service with a morning of service on the grounds. From 9AM to 12PM volunteers are invited to help tackle a number of tasks, including tree planting, garden beautification, and clean up. If you wish to volunteer, please RSVP by visiting the [Oakland Cemetery Web site](#).
- **MLK Day at the Atlanta History Center:** Join the Atlanta History Center as they commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday, January 15 from 10AM to 4PM. Explore the historical significance of the church as a cornerstone of the Atlanta community. Churches stood as strategic epicenters for political action, tactical sanctuaries, and a foundation for Dr. King, his family, and civil rights advocates. Guests will have the opportunity to participate in civil rights-themed trivia, crafts, kids activities, panel discussions, and more. For more information visit the [Atlanta History Center Web site](#).
- **Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society Meeting:** The next Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) meeting will be on Sunday, January 28 at Fort Daniel Archaeological Park beginning at 2PM. The guest speaker will be Josh Herrin, Project Archaeologist at Brockington and Associates. Keep an eye on the [GARS Facebook page](#) and your email for more details!

# Defending the Frontier

16th Annual Frontier Faire

Saturday, October 19

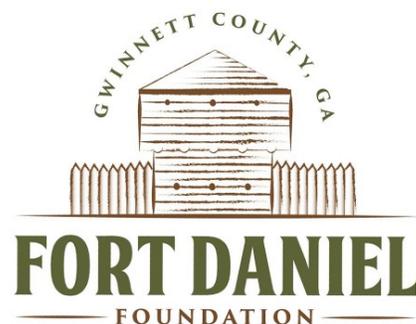
10AM-4PM

Fort Daniel Historic  
Site

(2505 Braselton Highway/GA 124, Buford)



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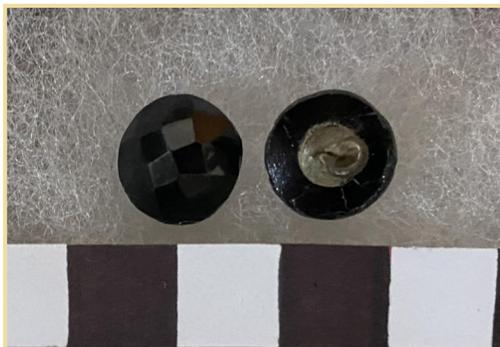
## From the Vault: Black Glass Buttons

“Button, button, who’s got the button?” How many of you played the button game when you were a child? I remember going through my grandmother’s sewing kit and finding buttons galore in it. When she had her quilting circle over, she would gather my cousins and me together to play this game—probably to stop us from interpreting her. I never thought that I would play a version of this game while digging at Fort Daniel. In our museum collection we have several types of military buttons, which you would expect at a fort. However, a set of black buttons (pictured right) stands a part from the others.

The oldest button ever found was discovered in the Mohenjo-daro region in modern-day Pakistan. It was flat face fitting into a loop and made of curved shell, but study of this button suggests that it was used mostly for decorative purposes than as a fastener.<sup>1</sup> It is hard to imagine nowadays without buttons being used as fasteners. It was not until the 13th century in Germany where buttons and buttonholes were used to keep clothing closed. Close-fitting clothes became fashionable among the European nobility, and but-

tons were used to help keep the garments snug.

In the 18th century luxury fabric buttons were replaced with metal and ivory buttons, which pewter was used to make molded or stamped-out buttons.<sup>2</sup> It was during the



18th century that glass buttons started to be manufactured. “Drop” buttons were constructed of globs of glass and polished or faceted and mounted on U-shaped metal shank (like a staple). Milk glass buttons began to replace brass and gilt buttons in men’s wear. Many black glass buttons were made during the Victorian age. These black glass buttons were made to imitate the

true jet buttons worn by Queen Victoria during her mourning time for the death of Prince Albert.

It is hard to date the black, facet man buttons that are on display in the Fort Daniel, but more research into these and the other buttons is forthcoming. ■ DMG

1. “History of Button Manufacture, Use and Classification.” Crazy Crow Trading Post. January 2024. <https://www.crazycrow.com/site/history-of-buttons>.
2. “Button.” Encyclopedia Britannica. January 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/button-clothing-accessory>.

### GARS OFFICERS

[www.thegars.org](http://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](http://www.fortdaniel.com)

President: Eli Stancel  
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