

Preserving History Through Archaeology



Spring 2025
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GWINNETT ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

Groundbreakers.....	1	More Diggin's.....	4
Snellville-Turkey Creek Site Update.....	2	National Historic Preservation Month.....	5
Redated Artifacts.....	3	Georgia's Places of Peril	6

Groundbreakers in Georgia Archaeology

At their 13th Annual Archaeology Day in May, New South Associates recognized people who have made major contributions to Georgia archaeology. These individuals influenced Georgia archaeology through their work in state and federal organizations, nonprofits, cultural resource management corporations, and higher education institutions. Of these five categories, the following features only a few of these trailblazers in Georgia archaeology:

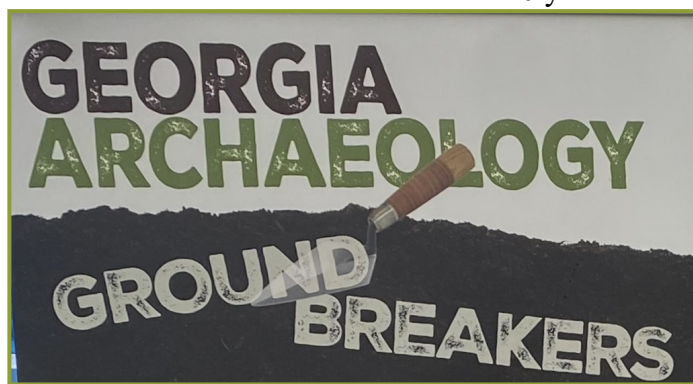
Academica: *Roy Dickens*, born in Decatur, conducted excavations at the Stone Mountain Quarry and eventually became a professor at Georgia State. He led excavations at the Soapstone Ridge Archaic Complex and Marta sites, focused on early Atlanta history. This work was groundbreaking in the realm of urban archaeology. He also wrote *Frontiers in the Soil*, an ele-

mentary school textbook about Georgia archaeology that is still used today.

Cultural Resource Management (CRM): *Chad Bralley* traversed Georgia, literally unearthing its history for almost 40 years. Chad dug a wide range of sites,

including precontact sites, American Civil War battlefields, and Depression-era country cemetery. The pinnacle of his career occurred in 2002, when his crew uncovered an 18th-century trading station on the Savannah River. Mary Musgrove, a Creek Indian

trader, used to run the location, which hosted the famed preacher John Wesley and played an important role in the establishment of the first English settlement in Georgia.



continued on Page 5

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Snellville-Turkey Creek Site Update

The Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society (GARS) has not been particularly busy this winter. However, a small number of GARS members returned to the Snellville-Turkey Creek location earlier this year to conduct a pedestrian study. During the survey, additional possible stone piles were located. In April a bigger group of GARS members and volunteers visited the site to excavate shovel test pits and record some of the native stone piles.

Between March 2024 and April 2025 four public archaeological excavations were conducted. These examinations have revealed that the Snellville-Turkey Creek site comprises between 15 and 20 piled stone features in varying degrees of preservation. Some look to be intact, while others have been severely damaged by looting and tree removal work done a few decades ago when the landowners built their house. The piled stone structures, which range in diameter from 0.5 to 2 meters, are positioned on the slope of a ridge. Over the past four investigations GARS members have conducted shovel testing and metal detecting and dug one test unit. Additional work is scheduled during the fall.

If you are interested in participating in the next Snellville-Turkey Creek dig or any future public archaeology digs, please mail GARS at gwinnettarchaeology@gmail.com. Keep an eye on GARS [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for updates to upcoming events. ■



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.



Redated Artifacts Rewrite How Indigenous People Responded to European Contact

Excerpt from a May 1, 2025 article written by Lizzie Wade on [Science.org Web site](https://www.sciencemag.org)

Ten years ago, archaeologist Jennifer Birch thought she had a good handle on when and why Ontario's largest excavated Iroquois village, known as the Jean-Baptiste Lainé Site, was abandoned. Because archaeologists had found few European artifacts there, they figured people deserted the village around 1535, shortly after the first French explorers entered Canada's interior. However, Sturt Manning, a radiocarbon dating expert at Cornell University, saw a way to test that picture. He told Birch that with its wooden architecture and overlapping construction phases, the Jean-Baptiste Lainé Site would be a good candidate for a detailed chronology based on the latest innovations in radiocarbon dating. Birch, now at the University of Georgia (UGA), was stunned by the results: The site was, in fact, occupied between 1590 and 1615, roughly 75 years later than archaeologists thought and nearly a century after European contact. Now, the same technique is rewriting the history of other Indigenous sites along the East Coast of North America, as researchers reported during a session Birch co-organized at the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) meeting in Denver in April. Many of these new histories are challenging conventional wisdom about Indigenous persistence, or the lack thereof, in the face of European contact.

Traditionally, archaeologists have subdivided the history of eastern North American sites based on shifting ceramic styles, as well as the presence or absence of European artifacts. If a site contains objects such as iron blades or glass beads, archaeologists include it in the so-called "historic" period, placing it earlier or later depending on the number of European artifacts. If a site lacks such items, researchers assume it was occupied in

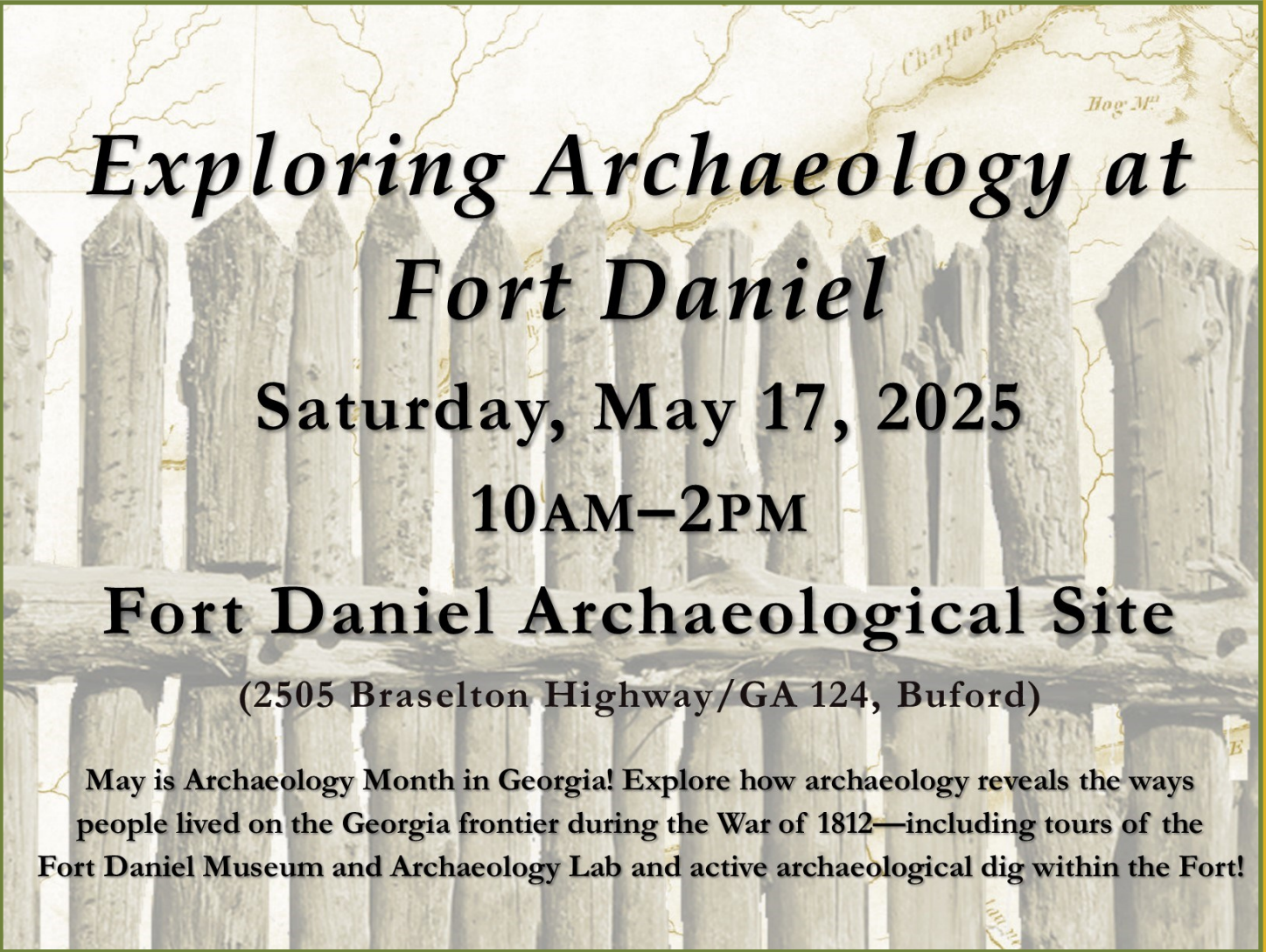


the precontact era. The method works by measuring levels of carbon-14 in organic material such as wood, charcoal, and seeds. Living things absorb the radioactive isotope from the atmosphere, and it gradually decays after death. However, turning carbon-14 levels into an age expressed in calendar years requires knowing how much radiocarbon was in the atmosphere when the wood or seed was alive. That baseline fluctuates over time—sometimes substantially, as it did during the 15th through the 17th centuries. For that period, radiocarbon dating can yield possible calendar years that are very different.

The new dates are helping answer questions tribal nations have about their own history. Victor Thompson, an archaeologist at UGA, is redating sites in Georgia's Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park at the request of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, whose citizens lived in the region until they were forcibly removed by the US government to Oklahoma in the 19th century. Thompson presented unpublished data showing the Lamar site in Ocmulgee was very likely the Indigenous town known as Ichisi that was visited by Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto in 1540. Many Indigenous communities endured long after archaeologists had assumed. Thompson's new dates show that Muscogee ancestors lived at Lamar well into the 17th century, 100 years after De Soto's visit. RaeLynn Butler, secretary of Culture and Humanities for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and a discussant at the SAA session, stated, "People paint the picture that colonization was adopted abruptly—a one-night stay [by a European], and we changed our life completely. And that's just not the case." Radiocarbon dates show Indigenous people did not wait for a European decree to reinvent their economy. ■ **Science.org**

More Diggin's

- **Cleanup Day at the Fort:** Volunteers are needed on Saturday, May 10 beginning at 9AM to help in “sprucing up” the Fort inside the Lab and Museum and outside. We will be getting ready for the Open House the following weekend. (*See flyer below.*) If you are able to help, please email [Delana Gilmore](#).
- **Dacula Memorial Day Parade:** This year’s parade will be on Monday, May 26 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. If you are interested in participating, please contact [Eli Stancel](#).
- **Fort Daniel Open Houses During the Summer:** Once again this year, Fort Daniel will be open during the summer on Sunday, June 22 and Sunday, July 20 from 2PM to 4PM.
- **SAVE THE DATE:** The 17th Annual Frontier Faire will be happening on Saturday, October 18 from 10AM to 4PM.



Exploring Archaeology at Fort Daniel

Saturday, May 17, 2025

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!

continued from Page 1

Nonprofit Groundbreakers: *Jim D'Angelo* is a founding member of both the Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society and the Fort Daniel Foundation, which was established to protect the Fort Daniel archaeological site. He was key in convincing Gwinnett County to buy the site. Jim worked as the primary archaeologist at the Fort Daniel site for many years.

Preservation Groundbreakers: *Lewis "Lew" Larson* was designated Georgia's first state archaeologist in 1972, following the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and held the position until 1998. He also excavated the Etowah Mound site in the 1950s. Larson, as state archaeologist, served as the state government's chief archaeology advisor. Only one year after Larson's appointment, Governor Jimmy Carter reformed state government and implemented Larson's recommendation to shift the Historical Commission's functions to the new Department of Natural Resources.

State and Federal Agency Groundbreakers: *Sylvia Flowers* was the Cultural Resource Specialist at Ocmulgee National Monument, where she made numerous accomplishments, including establishing the Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration and strengthening ties with the Muscogee Nation. She was the first woman appointed as a Master Ranger at Ocmulgee National Monument.

These trailblazers' accomplishments in establishing and expanding a love for archaeology through various initiatives will motivate the next generation to preserve Georgia's past through archaeology. For the complete list please visit [New South Associates' Portal to the Past Web site](#). ■

Harnessing the Power of Place

The role preservationists play in safeguarding historic sites while addressing communities' current and future needs cannot be denied. During Preservation Month in May, the National Trust of Historic Preservation (National Trust) honors the significance of location and the myriad of small and large ways that preservation contributes to the world—the **power of place**. Communities are strengthened, neighborhoods are revitalized, and a more equitable and cohesive society is created via the efforts of preservationists.

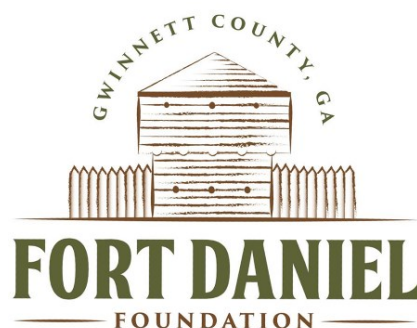
Preservation has a reputation as the movement that says “no,” the movement that keeps things the same, the movement that asks people to maintain. Its reputation is unjustified; thus, it's crucial to highlight all the positive effects of preservation rather than merely discussing the significance of location. The locations where history took place allow us to make that link to the past. The history and accomplishments of every American should be reflected in what we preserve and activate. Tools for preservation can be used in many different contexts, and we won't be able to prove their applicability if people keep hearing the word “no” every time we mention preservation. The **power of place** and possibility in preservation work and the National Trust is highlighted by this change in the public's perception to all the ways it creates—experiences of joy, awe, and curiosity, economic vitality and a sense of belonging, or a healthier, more sustainable planet.

Preservation Month is the chance to show the **power of place**. It's a chance to talk about the impact—how protected locations bring happiness, awe, and a connection to our common past that influences our present and future. People that work in the preservation industry firmly believe that places have power and that the stories they hold are significant. On May 7 the 38th annual America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places for 2025 list will be revealed. For more information visit the [National Trust Web site](#). ■ **National Trust**



THE
**POWER
OF PLACE**
PRESERVATION
MONTH

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Georgia's 2025 Places of Peril List

The Georgia Trust's *Places in Peril* program seeks to identify and preserve historic sites threatened by demolition, neglect, lack of maintenance, inappropriate development, or insensitive public policy. The list raises awareness about Georgia's significant historic, archaeological, and cultural resources—including buildings, structures, districts, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes. Resources on the 2025 list include: 148 Edgewood Avenue in Atlanta (Fulton County); Collier-Toomer House in Savannah (Chatham County); Crossroads Rosenwald School in Dixie (Brooks County); Gaissert Homeplace in Williamson (Spalding County); Miami Valley Peach Packing Barn in Fort Valley (Peach County); Historic Nicholsonboro Baptist Church in Savannah (Chatham County); Powell Opera House in Blakely (Early County); Historic Rock House in Thomson (McDuffie County); ***Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth (Gwinnett County)***; and Buckhead Town Hall



and Jail in the town of Buckhead (Morgan County).

Founded in 1970 and spanning 35 acres, the Southeastern Railway Museum boasts a remarkable collection of rolling stock that is not only significant to Georgia's history but to the broader story of American transportation. With artifacts that span the origins of rail travel, key political events, and the Civil Rights Movement, the museum offers a unique perspective on America's history through the lens of its railroads. With a vast collection of over 90 pieces of historic railroad rolling stock, the museum is limited in its capacity to stabilize and restore all of it. Many pieces remain outdoors and exposed to the elements—contributing to ongoing damage and deterioration. To learn more about the museum and how you can support them visit the [Southeastern Railway Museum Web site](https://www.southernrailway.com). ■

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www.thegars.org

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Katie Ahern	Josh Herrin
Secretary/Treasurer:	
Delana Gilmore	

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

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www.fortdaniel.com

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