



North Carolina Archaeological Society

Newsletter

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2009 North Carolina Archaeology Day

Chilly weather didn't discourage the almost 400 visitors and volunteers who attended North Carolina Archaeology Day on October 17, 2009. The event held on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill was funded in part by a Southeastern Archaeological Conference Public Outreach Grant. The North Carolina Archaeological Society, the Research Laboratories of Archaeology (UNC-Chapel Hill), and the Society of Anthropology Students (UNC-Chapel Hill) were co-sponsors.

With presentations, tours, demonstrations, informational displays, and more than a dozen hands-on children's activities, everyone found something to enjoy. Visitors of all ages were fascinated by Fuz Sanderson's fire making, Doug Meyer's dart throwing, and Steve Watts' tool making. Pottery making demonstrations by Chris Espenshade and Joe Herbert were also a big draw. Children followed colorful footprints to "excavate" chocolate-chip cookies, build their own pots, create rock art, and design pirate flags. Family-friendly presentations by Dr. David Moore, Dr. Randy Daniel, Dr. Tony Boudreaux, Dr. Mark Wilde-Ramsing, and Ms. Shelia Wilson were especially popular among visitors ages 10 and up.

Participation by members of North Carolina's archaeological community was nothing short of spectacular! Exhibitors included the American Indian Center and the Carolina Indian Circle (UNC-Chapel Hill); Elon University; Exploring Joara Foundation; Fort Bragg's Cultural Resources Management Program; Friends of Town Creek; Friends of QAR; Latta House Foundation; Moche, Inc.; New South Associates; North Carolina Museum of History; North Carolina Archaeological Council; Office of State Archaeology; Phelps Archaeology Lab (ECU); Schiele Museum; Tommy Stine; Student Anthropological Society and University Archaeological Association (UNC-Greensboro);

Trading Path Association; TRC Garrow, Inc.; UNC-Charlotte; USDA National Forests in North Carolina; Wake Forest University; and Western Carolina University.

Thanks to the efforts of these exhibitors, demonstrators, presenters, and a group of very dedicated volunteers, North Carolina Archaeology Day exceeded expectations for a new event. Feedback from visitors and participants has been very positive, and we hope Archaeology Day will become a regularly occurring event. Ideas for improvement include securing additional parking, forming partnerships with local schools and/or scout groups, and scheduling the event a few weeks earlier when it might be warmer! Additional suggestions for improvement are welcomed and appreciated.



A young visitor helps Fuz Sanderson make fire.

Additional photographs are posted on the NCAS website www.rla.unc.edu/ncas.

Theresa McReynolds

Fifty Years of Investigating Civil War Features at Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson State Historic Site (31BW376**): Documenting the Archaeology of Conflict Beyond Restoration and Interpretation

Thomas E. Beaman, Jr., RPA (Wake Technical Community College)

Fort Anderson is a Civil War era fortification comprised of a complex of defensive earthen mounds with gun emplacements. Located on the west bank of the Cape Fear River approximately 12 miles from its mouth, and built on the ruins of the once-thriving colonial era port of Brunswick Town, its original purpose was to protect the water and western land approaches to the city of Wilmington, as well as its active blockade runner trade, from Union forces. As detailed by Fonvielle (1998), construction of Fort Anderson began in March 1862 under the command of Confederate Brigadier General Samuel Gibbs French, Cape Fear District Commander. In early 1865, after the fall of Fort Fisher, the fort was garrisoned by 2,300 Confederate soldiers. As the war progressed, Fort Anderson was eventually captured in February 1865 by 6,500 Union soldiers and a flotilla of Union warships. Two months later saw the end of the Civil War and the subsequent abandonment of the fort. It stood undisturbed as a silent sentinel for almost a century as a quiet, physical reminder of a divided past.

features, and oversaw intermittent excavation of 23 Colonial-period structures (Beaman et al. 1998). Despite this primary excavation focus on the Colonial era features, Stanley South did record the location of the earthworks and above-ground features related to Fort Anderson that he observed. However, advanced archaeological exploration of such features was extremely limited. In 1959, South (1959) excavated a Civil War era barracks chimney base and related features located in an area designated for public access between the Visitor Center/Museum and the parking lot. Two years later, he dug through a part of the Battery B earthwork to reach the buried Colonial-period foundation of the Newman-Taylor House (South 1961). As part of this excavation, despite a number of Colonial era artifacts recovered in secondary context, South confirmed that the earthwork was constructed in a single episode. While other potential features of Fort Anderson were considered for exploration during the centennial commemoration, South chose to focus his excavation efforts on the development of Fort Fisher, the other contemporary antebellum fort along the Cape Fear River, into a State Historic Site.

While the two projects discussed above represented the only Civil War era investigations into Fort Anderson during South's decade of exploration, he did document a number of brick and ballast stone barracks chimney bases in an undeveloped portion of the modern historic site property. South (2005:163-164) remembers these chimney bases in his recently published autobiography:

In the woods back of the earthworks, we cut paths through the jungle and found another treasure from the Civil War period. There were chimney mounds there, composed of bricks salvaged from the colonial ruins and mortared together with clay dug from the marsh. We discovered rows of these chimney bases from the barracks buildings housing the Confederate soldiers manning Fort Anderson. I used my transit to map each of these important surviving remains of the fort. From that map, I found that several rows of these barracks chimneys had survived the hundred years since the fort was bombarded by artillery from the Federal forces. I mapped over 50 of these historic ruins and on the top of one, as he was pulling the tape from the transit to the pile of chimney bricks, Charlie [Smith]



Figure 1. In April 2009, volunteers, students, and site staff participated in the excavation of Gun Emplacement #3 on Battery B. Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Gabriel.

The original archaeological research on Fort Anderson and Brunswick Town was conducted as part of a plan by Superintendent of Historic Sites, William S. Tarlton, to develop the site into an historical park. Beginning in August of 1958, as site manager and archaeologist, Stanley South identified over 60 Colonial-period architectural

found a 32-pound artillery shell. These chimney bases, some still standing two feet high, were a rich archaeological treasure I was not able to excavate more fully before I left Brunswick Town and Fort Anderson. As far as I know, these chimney ruins are still in the woods waiting to be examined archaeologically.

Since South's departure from the site in 1968, until recently only limited excavations had been conducted and were primarily associated with improvements to the site, such as the development of a nature trail, the construction of a picnic shelter, and the expansion of the Visitor Center/Museum. In 1992, additional earthworks related to Fort Anderson outside the State Historic Site property were mapped as part of the survey of the neighboring Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point, but no subsurface investigations were conducted on these features (Louis Berger and Associates 1992).

However, in 2009 active research-based archaeological investigations resumed at Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson State Historic Site. With the approaching sesquicentennial commemoration of the American Civil War, two separate investigations represent the first time that archaeology has been used to research specific information at the site related specifically to Fort Anderson.

First, from April 6-9, 2009, Assistant State Archaeologist John J. Mintz supervised over 80 volunteers, including members of the site staff and the Friends of Brunswick Town support group, in the excavation of Gun Emplacement #3 on Battery B of Fort Anderson. The objective of the investigation was to identify any structural evidence of the original gun platform that would have supported a 32-pounder seacoast cannon. Charred wooden planks and support beams, as well as metal bolts, nails, and chunks of brick were recovered. These elements of the original platform, along with the platform drawing by Confederate engineers, will be used to reconstruct an accurate interpretation of the original gun emplacement.

In addition to remnants of the gun emplacement, this investigation into Battery B also led to the confirmation that the mound was constructed from the interior of Fort Anderson, specifically the area of the parade ground. As a result of transferring the dirt from the ground into a mound, Native American pottery was found near the top of the mound, followed by colonial and Civil War artifacts. Also noted was that the Battery B, and presumably the other earthworks of Fort Anderson, were constructed in a single episode, not gradually or in stages over a period of months or years.

No sooner than the excavation of Gun Emplacement #3 on Battery B had concluded, Fort Anderson again became the subject of excavators' trowels. From May 18 through June 12, college students from North Carolina and across the country took part in an archaeological field school that explored an undeveloped area of the 120-acre

site suspected to contain Civil War era barracks. The field school was run through Peace College, a four-year women's college in Raleigh, with Dr. Vincent H. Melomo (Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Peace College) serving as Principal Investigator and Thomas E. Beaman, Jr., RPA, (Anthropology Instructor at Wake Technical Community College) as Field Director. A total of twenty-one students and twenty-five volunteers took part in this educational exercise that combined instruction in American historical archaeology and southeastern archaeological excavation techniques. The field school students came from Peace College, Wake Technical Community College, UNC Wilmington, and even as far as University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Arizona State University, University of California at Berkeley, Loyola University of Chicago, and Adelphi University of New York.

The research design for the Peace College Field School was crafted by Beaman to archaeologically document the extent of the barracks area, and to provide interpretive information about the barracks themselves as well as the lives of the soldiers and others who built and occupied Fort Anderson. The initial step was to map the above-ground evidence of the barracks chimneys, which were comprised of piles of ballast stones and colonial era bricks likely taken from the town ruins during the construction of the fort. Twenty-eight of these chimney falls, lineally arranged in four east-west rows behind Battery A, were identified, mapped, and photographed.



Figure 2. Piles of handmade brick and ballast stones of varied sizes, likely taken from colonial household ruins during the construction of Fort Anderson, were above-ground signatures of Civil War era barracks chimney falls. Photo by the author.

Over the four weeks of the field school, students excavated 20 test units in the just over one acre of space cleared from the dense overgrowth. The architectural details of the barracks were of particular interest. The test units were placed around the chimney piles in order to locate hearth pads and fire boxes. Evidence of six such features were identified, but none remained in fully articulated condition. The fire boxes were likely disturbed

by the three-day bombardment of Fort Anderson in February 1865, as well as by root activity from the past 140-plus years of tree growth. While evidence of fire boxes and hearths were identified, no additional features were discovered that would reveal the types of barracks structures at Fort Anderson (e.g., wooden buildings, Sibley “bell” tents, or pup tents). Pieces of dried clay daub, which appeared to have been used as chinking material between boards, recovered in excavated context lends support to the idea of wooden buildings, perhaps the sills of which rested on the surface without inner post support.

Additional excavations in and around what would have been individual barracks yielded material information on the lives of the soldiers, and will help to address the final research goal of who specifically lived in the barracks area. Was it the Confederate soldiers who constructed and garrisoned the fort from 1862-1865, the Union soldiers who captured Fort Anderson and occupied it from February-June 1865, or formerly enslaved African-American refugees who had followed the Union army through Georgia and South Carolina? While artifact analysis is presently ongoing, the fieldwork suggests both Confederate and Union soldiers occupied the barracks area at different times. No definitive evidence of an African-American refugee presence has yet been identified.

As suspected by the chimney falls visible on the ground surface, the stratigraphy of the barracks area revealed an intact Civil War layer immediately beneath the root mat. Beneath the Civil War era layer, and particularly throughout the western end of the barracks area, was a layer that contained vast quantities of high status colonial-period artifacts from the northwestern corner of the former town. These artifacts may be related to Prospect Hall, a high status household identified by Stanley South

Hanover style pottery, which at other regional sites has been dated to the Middle Woodland era, from approximately 300 BC to 800 AD.

The Peace College Field School received tremendous support and encouragement from Brenda Bryant, Jim McKee, and the entire site staff of Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson State Historic Site, as well as a number of professional colleagues and many volunteers. Linda F. Carnes-McNaughton, RPA, (Fort Bragg Cultural Resources) held historic ceramics identification workshops for the students, site staff, and volunteers. Kenneth W. Robinson, RPA, (Wake Forest University) discussed his recent work at the Confederate arsenal in Fayetteville, defining the boundaries of the Confederate prison in Salisbury, locating lost burials of Confederate soldiers at Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site, and the archaeology of other Civil War era sites in North Carolina. Paul J. Mohler (NCDOT) offered a presentation on job opportunities in archaeology, and discussed some of his experiences working as a professional archeologist. UNC-Wilmington history professor Chris Fonvielle not only gave an instructional lesson on the importance of Fort Anderson, but also spent a little time with students excavating part of one barracks ruin. Peace College Anthropology Professor Laura Vick, UNC-Wilmington archaeologists Nora Reber and Scott Simmons, RPA, as well as former Army Corps of Engineer archaeologist Richard Kimmel, RPA, also lent their hands and perspectives to the excavations. Members of the Coe Foundation for Archaeological Research (CFAR), local volunteers such as Larry Croom and Perry Grosch, and staff members from Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson and Fort Fisher state historic sites volunteered their time to assist in these excavations as well. A particularly exciting event for all was a visit by Stanley South, the original archaeologist of Brunswick Town, who enthusiastically praised the effort to continue the exploration of Fort Anderson and unexplored areas of Brunswick Town he began 51 years ago.

Following the Peace College Field School, additional excavations were conducted in barracks area from June 25 to July 1 as part of an Archaeology Class from the Summer Ventures in Science and Math Program. Twelve high school students, under the tutelage Scott Simmons, Ph.D., RPA, of UNC-Wilmington, assisted Beaman in the continued exploration of this tract. With the able assistance of former Peace College field school students Jennifer Gabriel, Marisol Martinez, and Steven Rose, two new test units were excavated and three that remained from the field school were completed. While the Summer Venture explorations did not yield additional architectural information about the barracks as hoped, the discovery of a Palmer style projectile point from the Late Paleo-Indian to Early Archaic period (ca. 10,000 B.C.–8,000 B.C.) in context certainly generated a great deal of excitement among the staff and students.



Figure 3. CFAR volunteers Sharon Bradley and Nancy Webb document the hearth pad of a barrack chimney base at Fort Anderson. Though the fire box had outwardly collapsed, the articulated brick and quarried stone chimney support remained in situ. Photo by the author.

as ruin N25, also located behind Battery A. In this same area, a final soil layer contained large pieces of prehistoric

To date, the vast majority of investigations into Civil War era sites in North Carolina have focused on defining structural features or restoration of specific elements. This has been especially true of the previous archaeology at Fort Anderson and Fort Fisher state historic sites. While these investigations have been an important first step towards restoration and public interpretation of these sites, the current investigations at Fort Anderson are beginning to glimpse through the veil of time and humanize the men and boys of the fort beyond the few written historical accounts. As the artifacts from the Gun Emplacement #3 and barracks area are processed at the Office of State Archaeology Research Centers by CFAR volunteers as well as students from Peace College and Wake Technical Community College, a clearer picture of the material life of those who constructed and occupied Fort Anderson before February 1865, as well as those who were stationed there afterwards, is beginning to emerge. This portrait of fort life will be fully reported when the processing and analyses of the many thousands of artifacts is complete. This information will be eventually integrated into the interpretation of antebellum life at the site itself, and many of the recovered artifacts are planned for exhibit as part of sesquicentennial commemoration activities at Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson State Historic Site.

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Review of “Identification of Projectile Points of Western North Carolina” by V. Gary Henry

This manual is a follow-up of the author’s previous publication (*Southern Indian Studies*, 1991, Volume 40: 31-46) concerning the identification of stone points from the mountains of North Carolina. Thirty-eight point types from the region are listed in the guidebook. Using “key” point characteristics such as base and blade shape, as well as point dimensions, the manual can be used in a flow chart-like fashion to identify an unknown point type. Color photographs of each point type are provided along with the written descriptions. No background in artifact identification is needed to use this guide, and it is those individuals who would likely find this manual most useful. Both a CD (that includes a PowerPoint version of

the manual) and DVD (that includes audio descriptions of the point types) accompany the manual. For those individuals interested in the sources of the original type descriptions, those references are listed in Henry’s 1991 article. Individuals interested in obtaining copies of the manual should contact Gary Henry at 206 Arrowhead Lane, Asheville, NC 28806 (phone: 828-683-9094) (email: GaryHenry09@aol.com).

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Upcoming Conference

The Waterlogged Organic Archaeological Materials Conference will be held at East Carolina University from May 24-29, 2010. Call for papers and conference information are available at <http://www.woam2010.com/index.htm>

NCAS Newsletter Publication Schedule

All NCAS members are encouraged to submit articles and news items to Dee Nelms, Associate Editor, for inclusion in the *Newsletter*. Please use the following cut-off dates as guides for your submissions:

Spring Issue - February 28	Fall Issue - August 31
Summer Issue - May 31	Winter Issue - November 30

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