

Old St. Stephens Field School 2011

May 16 through June 10



The third Old St. Stephens Archaeology Field School will be conducted during the last two weeks in May and the first two weeks in June, 2011. Enrollment is limited to twelve students.

Basically the program functions like any other serious college field school except for enrollment requirements. Enrollment is not limited to anthropology students and applicants do not need any experience or prerequisite courses. The program is designed for current and recently enrolled college students, but post graduate and older adult applicants are also eligible. I do ask is that you be seriously interested in learning about archaeology.

In most college field schools you are required to enroll for credit with the hosting institution, pay tuition, and possibly an added out-of-state fee. This results in very expensive credits. Our program does not require you to obtain credits through our university. In fact, I recommend that if you need credits you arrange for a directed study through your own institution. I'll be glad to work with you on specific requirements. In fact, we do not require you to obtain any credit. You can simply participate as a volunteer. Over half the students from the last two years participated without credit. Your participation does look good on your vita and demonstrates your interest in archaeology. Also, your participation helps move our research forward and you join a long list of folks that have contributed to our knowledge about the lives the residents of Old St. Stephens. In the end I trust you will understand more about the methods that archaeologists employ to assign meaning to the archaeological record and understand people's lives in the past.

Our field school in 2009 and 2010 followed this model. We had diverse crews from several institutions including Loyola, Cornell, Central Florida, West Alabama, Alabama Birmingham, and the University of South Alabama. I think this diversity adds to the success of the program.

Our work this year will continue to focus on an area adjacent to the Globe Hotel (c. 1815-1822). From 1826 to 1849 the building served as the residence of the Chamberlain family and housed their dry-goods store. In 2009 we excavated fifty units and investigated numerous trash features filled with bottles, ceramics, food remains, and other artifacts. Last year we worked along the east wall of an adjacent building uncovering a wide builder's trench filled with creamware ceramics, mostly chamber pots, pitchers, bowls, and plates. In both cases the features appear primarily to date to the hotel period (prior to 1822) rather than to the Chamberlain's occupation.

We work Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm with an hour break for lunch in our air-conditioned field lab. We even have fans on the site. The lab also serves as our dining room and kitchen. Although the course focuses on excavation methods we also spend time in the lab sorting artifacts. On one or two evenings per week we will discuss our progress, look at material culture during the early 19th c, and explore methods of assigning meaning to our discoveries. We will occasionally have a guest speaker and we plan to take at least one field trip.

Tuition is \$200 for the full four-week program (\$50 for a single week). Enrollment is limited to 12 per week. Preference will be given to full four-week applicants. After April 15 any remaining slots will be filled with weekly applicants and local volunteers.

Tuition basically covers the cost of food. We work hard so we don't skimp on meals. Breakfast, lunch, and hot dinners are provided each day during the week. You are welcome to have any leftovers and sandwiches on the weekend. Of course you are free to take side trips, say to the beaches at Gulf Shores. The park has a great lake for swimming and fishing, lots of hiking trails, and hot showers. You will camp near the lab. Electricity is available for fans etc. We have some fans, a couple of cots, and a few tents for loan.

We don't have an application form. All I need is a paragraph or two telling me a bit about yourself, your experience, your career goals, and what you expect from this experience. The work is physical so you need to be in reasonable condition. Enrollment is limited to twelve students so email your application as soon as you can. I don't have a specific deadline, but when we reach twelve per week we will be full unless someone cancels. Email questions and application letter to George Shorter (gshorter@jaguar1.usouthal.edu).

A bit about me: I am a registered professional archaeologist at the Center for Archaeological Studies at the University of South Alabama where I am also an adjunct professor. My career has focused primarily on colonial and early settlement occupations. Hey, goggle me if you wish. I do encourage you to google Old St. Stephens to learn more about this great site.