

Archaeology at Old St. Stephens

May 2010 Newsletter

by George Shorter RPA, Archaeologist

May Saturday Dig

We had a good turnout on Saturday May 8th. Even though we had a short thunderstorm in the morning the weather cleared and we made some good progress on the slaves' yard. We moved toward the north with a row of units. Although we had some interesting finds artifacts were less frequent in this area. Shane and Judean Ethredge continued to clean up a couple of units behind the slaves' house in the kitchen midden. This area continued to produce a diverse group of artifacts. Probably their most interesting find that Shane made was a pewter military button issued between 1815 and 1821. The button features an eagle with an embossed shield featuring a script "I" for the infantry. Reuben Chamberlain was a member of the regular army during this period so this may be a button from one of his uniforms.



Judean and her finds in the kitchen midden. Note the blue beads, Chinese marble, and buttons.



This is an example of the Infantry button that Shane found. His was not in such great shape, but nevertheless it is a great find that helps tell the story of Old St. Stephens.

Jackie Matte and her sister worked in the lab on May 8. They found a very interesting artifact that had not been noticed during excavation; an iron cork screw. This is the first one we have found.



Iron corkscrew with a section of the wooden handle

Our Next Saturday Workday

As you may know we will be starting a four-week field school next Monday, May 17. We will probably not have another workday until July or August. It will be hot so we will work in the lab sorting artifacts. I'm sure we will accumulate many buckets for the field school that need to be sorted. Its lots of fun and you never know what you may find.

Volunteers are welcome to come and watch or work during the field school. We will be working Monday through Friday for four weeks starting Monday, May 17 and ending on Friday, June 11. We will not work on Saturday or Sunday.

Expedition 32 – Alabama Museum of Natural History

Some of you may be familiar with this program. It is a great program offering students over 14 and adults a hands-on experience in science. They have been doing this for 32 years. They know what they are doing. The camp is lots of fun and extremely well run. I highly recommend the experience. Attached is a PDF with more information and contacts.

Alabama Archaeological Society News

Also attached is a PDF of a newsletter from the Southwest Chapter of the Alabama Archaeological Society published by Bonnie Gums. The AAS is society of amateurs and professionals with an interest in archaeology. Consider joining. Come to the next program in the archaeology museum on the USA campus scheduled for May 18. See a program by Mary Spanos, an expert in southeastern Indian textiles. Tour the progress on the museum. Bonnie also coordinates a volunteer program in the Mobile area. Email her to get on her list (bgums@jaguar1.usouthal.edu).