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LA TAMA DE LA TIERRA ADENTRO
(The Tama of the Interior)

Samuel J. Lawson III
Middle Georgia Chapter
Society for Georgia Archaeology

INTRODUCTION

The intention of this paper is to postulate a location for the late sixteenth-century Indian settlement of Tama. In order to construct such a hypothesis, historical documentation and interpretation have been utilized. The evidence presented here leads to the conclusion that the town and province of Tama were located in the vicinity of the forks of the Altamaha River in south-central Georgia in the late sixteenth century. However, the actual proof of the proposed location will be eventually determined via the archaeological field data collected within the area postulated to be Tama.

THE VISITORS

The first European visitors to Tama consisted of the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto and his expeditionary force, who arrived in the spring of 1540. The annals of this journey were recorded for posterity by four chroniclers: Rodrigo Ranjel, De Soto's secretary; Luis Hernandez de Biedma, the Spanish Crown's factor accompanying the expedition; the Fidalgo of Elvas, expedition member and gentleman adventurer; and Garcilaso de la Vega, a historian who interviewed expedition members in the years following the trek (Swanton 1939:4-11).

Tama seems to be called "Altamaha" in these accounts. Ranjel used "Altamaha", while Garcilaso and Biedma refer to "Altapaha", and Elvas spoke of "Altamaca." All these names are variations of today's Altamaha, of which Tama is thought to be a synonym (Swanton 1946:208).

Fifty-seven years after the De Soto entrada Tama was host to its first fully documented visitors: a Spanish soldier named Gaspar de Salas, and two Franciscan monks, Pedro Fernandez de Chozas and Francisco de Verascola. De Salas had served on the southeastern frontier in Santa Elena and San Agustin for over twenty years and was an interpreter of both the Gualean and Timucuan languages. De Salas
and company was sent to Tama (and Ocute) by order of Florida Governor Gonzalo Mendez de Canzo to determine the feasibility of establishing a base there for Spanish operations in the interior. The governor wished to use Tama as a station from which the lands and resources of the interior from the Guale coast to Zacatecas and Panuco in New Spain, (Mexico) could be explored and exploited (Serrano y Sanz 1912:138, 143).

When reporting to the Spanish Crown about his plans for interior development, Governor Canzo estimated that Tama was located about forty leagues (167.6 km) from St. Augustine. After visiting the town, however, Gaspar de Salas declared it to be "about fifty leagues more or less" (ca. 209.5 km) from the presidio (Serrano y Sanz 1912: 142-143). De Salas' trek to Tama is recorded in two separate sources. The first account is De Salas' own testimony as related in Governor Canzo's report to the Spanish Crown (Serrano y Sanz 1912:143-145). This statement primarily depicts the agricultural and metallurgical aspects of the expedition. The second relation is that of Fray Chozas, who gave account of his experiences to his religious superior, Fray Francisco Marron in St. Augustine. Chozas' report was recorded by Fray Alonso de Escobedo and related the ethnic and religious phases of the journey (Covington 1963:xi; Ore 1936a:26).

The soldier and the monks set out from Guale, St. Catherine's Island, and headed inland toward Tama (Reding 1924:215). They were led by Don Juan, the cacique and heir of Tolomato, and were accompanied by a group of thirty Indians--some Christian and some pagan (Geiger 1937:78, 82). Fray Chozas deposited at Tolomato a set of vestments, a silver chalice, and some corporals that belonged to his doctrina of Puturiba on Cumberland Island. He intended to regain them when he returned to the Guale coast. Chozas' caravan departed from Tolomato, probably the Sutherland Bluff Site on the Sapelo River, and reached their destination in eight days (Geiger 1937:102).

The reconnaissance team reported that Tama was a bountiful area filled with an abundance of food resources (Reding 1924:224). De Salas and the monks moved on to Ocute and found it very "civilized." The residents remembered De Soto passing through the town years earlier. The expedition reported the Tama/Ocute territory "to be very rich, or at least sufficiently so to produce any kind of grain, even if it be wheat, and has many meadows and pastures for cattle, and its rivers have sweet water in places..." (Serrano y Sanz 1912:145). The company returned to Tama from Ocute and stayed overnight before departing Tama to return to the Guale coast (Geiger 1937:85). Advised of another route, different from the one taken into the interior, they set out for the coast. The travellers followed a pathway that was better and more populated. The small group reached the Timucuan
settlements of Yufera and Cascangue in present day Camden County, Georgia, and thus returned to the presidio and mission of San Pedro on Cumberland Island (Serrano y Sanz 1912:145; Deagan 1978:101).

By a few years later, the English had begun to compete with the Spanish and French in the colonization of North America. The English began to deposit colonists on the coast of what they called Virginia. The Spanish knew this area as El Jacan. Rumors of strangers in the interior southeast reached Governor Canzo, who was aware of the English efforts to colonize. Fearing that his enemies and competitors had penetrated the territory of Tama from the north, Canzo sent a military detachment under the command of Juan de Lara to investigate the situation (Bolton 1952:18; Canzo 1602). De Lara's hasty visit to Tama in the autumn of 1602 was the only another recorded Spanish visit to the residents of Tama. In Spain's view, Tama was as important to their claims to the interior of present day Georgia as Juan Pardo's inroads at Cofitachique were to Spanish claims in the South Carolina area.

In September 1602, while De Lara was exploring the interior for the location of the alleged foreigners, Fray Francisco Pareja of the coastal Timucuan province wrote to the Spanish Crown concerning the efforts of the friars to evangelize the interior peoples. Pareja conveyed the message to the king that "The territories of the interior are unfaithful villages accustomed to going one or two years without going to Mass. At present there are some (converts), though not many in the interior." In the latter portion of his letter, Pareja noted, "...two entries into the interior, one by Fray Pedro de Chozas, and another this year of 1602. They have found the land to be better and more fertile and with a greater population" (Pareja 1602).

A few years later, Fray Martin Prieto, of the Apalachee district, reported to his superior: "Others have entered through the other part of La Tama which forms another large group of people. Others entered into Santa Elena..." (Ore 1936:118-119). By 1612, the Atlantic coastline was incorporated into a new missionary province called "Santa Elena" and this included the Guale area. New friars were sent to the district, with twenty-four worker arriving that year. For the next decade, the friars continued to make occasional visits to Tama in the interior (Bolton and Ross 1968:20-21).

Tama's last recorded visitors were Yamassee Indians. In 1685, under the leadership of King Altamaha of the lower Yamassee, a raiding party of approximately fifty Indians departed the Port Royal, South Carolina area for the Apalachee missions in Florida. Armed with English firearms, these Indians attacked the Timucuan village and mission of Santa Catalina de Afuyca on February seventh. Afuyca was located in present day Columbia County, Florida. The mission was
sacked and the church furnishings carried away along with twenty-five captives. These captives were taken back to the Carolinians waiting on the banks of the Savannah River and were to be sold into slavery. The Yamasssee raiders paused on the return trip at Tama to stage a dance of triumph (Lanning 1935:220-221; Boyd et. al. 1951:11).

THE NEIGHBORS
When locating the early headright and bounty land grants in Georgia it is frequently helpful to use the known locations of properties bordering the parcel in question. In this manner, a general sense of the location of the property can be gained. Thus, in like manner, we will examine Tama's known "neighbors"-- Tulufina and Salchiches, Ocony, and Santa Ysabel de Utinahica.

Tulafina and Salchiches
In several instances early Spanish records mention that Tulufina and Salchiches were "provinces of Tama." The precise meaning of this terminology is unclear, but it appears to imply that both Tulufina and Salchiches were, in some manner, a part of, belonged to, or helped constitute the region of Tama. The evidence also indicates that the Salchiches were a separate tribal group. They claimed a relationship with Guale and had a connection to Tulufina. The warlike Salchiches played a major role in the massacre of the friars during the Juanillo Revolt of 1597 (Lanning 1935:241).

The settlement of Tulufina is reported in the testimonies collected during the investigations that followed the 1597 revolt. The chieftains of the Salchiches are referred to as "in" or "of" Tulufina in these Spanish accounts. The conclusion is that Tulufina was an inland town situated between the village of Tolomato on the Sapelo River and the interior region of Tama. It is said to have been "intimately connected with the Indians of the interior" and that Fray Avila was held prisoner there after he was taken captive in the 1597 revolution (Lanning 1935:12, 98, 156, 241).

One recent scholar surmised that Tulufina could have been located in present day Wayne County, Georgia, on the Sansavilla Bluffs extending for some miles along the Altamaha River. The name Sansavilla has been connected to this particular area since colonial times and might have been derived from Avila's captivity in 1597-1598. This conclusion was reached in part because of the Spanish era artifacts that were recovered on the bluffs in the mid-1970s by Bill Steed and Gordon Midgette (Jordan 1976:30-31). Placing Tulufina in this position would seem to indicate that Tama's location would be near the upper Altamaha River.

This particular location for Tulufina would also agree with other
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historical data. The Florida Path of colonial times crossed the Altamaha River at the lower end of Sansavilla Bluffs. A large trail intersection would have existed since trails that parallel the river would have also crossed the Florida Path on both the north and south banks of the Altamaha River. Georgia’s early leaders recognized the importance of the area and established Fort Barrington on the north bank to guard this strategic crossing (Bryant 1972:79; Candler 1907:780; Hodges 1965:41; Chalker 1970:49-52; Goff 1975:298, 303). Recent research by Grant Jones in connection with the excavation of Santa Catalina de Guale has led him to also place Tulufina in the area of Fort Barrington and Sansavilla Bluffs (Jones 1978:195).

In summary, the Salchiches were a hinterland tribe that resided toward the interior from Guale along the middle course of the Altamaha River. In Spanish records of 1633 and 1639 the Salchiches are described as "amacanos", a term also used in reference to the Yamassees (Swanton 1946:208-211; Lanning 1935:281). Noted Southern historian Verner W. Crane also saw a Yamassee connection. Crane’s hypothesis was that the Spanish "Salchiches" were known to the English as the "Sadkeche" Town of the upper Yamassee settlements in South Carolina between 1685 and 1715 (Crane 1928:164).

Oconee

The second group adjacent to the Tama were the Oconee. Fray Francisco Pareja was the first to mention these people in a letter to the Spanish Crown, dated September 14, 1602. Pareja wrote: "...in another territory called Ocony, three days by road from the village of San Juan and two from San Pedro, the casique has asked to be a Christian, he plus his village and all the neighboring villages" (Pareja 1602). With San Juan located in the present day Mayport, Florida area, and San Pedro on modern Cumberland Island, Georgia, the "Ocony" territory could not have been located too far into the interior (Deagan 1978:105). Two days’ travel from Cumberland Island would probably cover a distance of forty to sixty km. Avoiding the Okefenokee Swamp, the tribe was most likely located north of the swamp along the middle course of the Satilla River in the Pierce County, Georgia area.

The spatial relationship of the Oconee territory to Tama is found in a letter from Florida Governor Pedro de Ibarra to the Spanish Crown in 1608. Ibarra made reference to the "chief of Ocone which borders on the province of Tama" (Lanning 1935:170, 265). If the Oconee people were located along the Satilla drainage, then the Oconee-Tama border would have been located further toward the interior of Georgia, probably in the area of present day Appling, Bacon, and Coffee Counties.
Santa Ysabel de Utinahica

Finally, the relationship of the Tama area to Santa Ysabel de Utinahica will be examined. Perhaps Santa Ysabel is the most intriguing of Tama's neighbors. Santa Ysabel was a convent mentioned in the records of Fray Luis Jeronimo de Ore, the visitor-general of the Franciscan Order. Ore came to the Florida provinces in 1612 (Bolton and Ross 1968:20-21) and by 1616 was on an inspection tour of the province's missions. November 1616 found Ore at the mission of Santa Cruz de Tarihica near today's O'Brien, Florida. From Tarihica the visitor-general decided to take a short-cut to Santa Ysabel. He records having travelled through an uninhabited district for a distance of fifty leagues (210 km) (Ore 1936:129-130; Milanich 1978:71-72). To the east of Tarihica lay the Saturiwa and Agua Dulce Indian settlements along the St. John's River; to the south lay the settlements of the Potano peoples; and to the west lay the Yustega and Apalachee settlements. The only vacant quarter lay to the north, thus, Ore must have trekked northward into Georgia. Ore's group probably skirted the western edge of the Okefenokee Swamp and headed northward to cross "several large rivers", which were too deep to be forded (Ore 1936:129-130; Milanich 1978:61). These streams were most probably the Suwannee River, Suwanooche Creek, the Satilla River, Hurricane Creek, Alapaha River, and the Little Satilla River.

According to Ore's relation, after reaching Santa Ysabel he went via canoe down a river "larger than the Tagus" to the land of Guale. There he visited the towns and the six priests in the mission of San Jose de Zapata (Sapelo Island). Thus, by December 1616 he had arrived at Gualdiunicorn (Jekyl Island), the place appointed for a meeting of the religious chapter, where he found the fathers already gathered (Geiger 1937:259-260; Ore 1936b:129-130).

Reconstructing Ore's route, we find an early Indian trail, that later became a wagon road, leading from the Suwannee River at White Sulphur Springs and Suwannee Shoals northward along the western edge of the Okefenokee Swamp and thence north to an area called Big Pond in Appling County, Georgia (Walker 1934:64-65). Early maps show several connecting trails reaching from the high ground on the northwest corner of Big Pond to several points on the Altamaha River (Goff n.d.; Frobel 1869). The Altamaha River does accurately fit Ore's description of it being "larger than the Tagus", one of the largest rivers in the area of Spain and Portugal. It is also the Altamaha River that "descends" to the land of Guale and Sapelo Island on the Georgia coast. Therefore it is highly probable that Fray Ore visited Santa Ysabel somewhere along the upper reaches of the Altamaha River.

There are several interesting aspects of the Santa Ysabel issue that need to be mentioned at this juncture. The name Santa Ysabel
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de Utinahica is fascinating, since the portion Utinahica is a Timucuan name and it is unusual to find such names in the interior of Georgia. However, the Oconi tongue is listed as one of the nine dialects of the Timucuan language according to the writings of Fray Pareja (Milanich 1978:61, 71, 72). This fact is especially interesting when one realizes that on a map drawn for the end papers of the Apalachee mission history *Here They Once Stood*, the Oconee River of central Georgia is labelled "Rio Santa Ysabel." The map depicts the area during the period of the Queen Anne's War, 1701-1714 (Boyd et. al. 1951).

When all of Tama's "neighbors" are considered; the resulting locational data seems to place Tama in the area of the forks of the Altamaha River around the confluence of the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers.

THE LOCATION

Scholars have had many conflicting ideas about the location of Tama. Historian John Tate Lanning referred to Tama as a "nebulus region", but he also spoke of the "interior or central Georgia towns of Tama and Ocute" (Lanning 1935:78). Lanning was not alone in his placement of Tama. Lewis Larson located his Tama province in the deep interior along the fall-line, proposing a capital town at either Macon or Milledgeville (Larson 1978:120;).

Historian Herbert Bolton placed Tama and Ocute "near the Upper Altamaha" (Bolton 1968:16). However, perhaps the most precise location was proposed by historian Margaret Davis Cate in 1930, when she placed Tama "...in the forks of the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers" (Cate 1930:208). This author agrees with Cate's opinion concerning the location of the Tama province.

In order to further demonstrate this conclusion, the De Salas route to Tama should be reconstructed. This procedure utilizes the network of Indian trails leading from the Georgia coast into the interior. This method is particularly important when one considers that the De Salas party was guided by a local Indian chieftain. However, in order to use this trail system, the trails must first be defined and mapped.

The trail system was charted and a map was created via data recovered from colonial land records, original land surveys, and various other contemporary and relevant sources (Starrett 1956: Exhibit D; Goff n.d.; Ivers 1974:135). When the completed map was examined a clear pattern had developed (Figure 1). A very reasonable route for the 1597 expedition could be deduced from the known trail network.

The De Salas entrada began at the known location of Santa Catalina de Guale, thence to the Indian settlement of Tolomato where the Spaniards met their native guide to begin the trek to Tama. The
1. Santa Catalina de Guale
2. Tolomato
3. San Savilla Bluffs
4. San José de Zapala
5. San Pedro
6. Palachicola Town
7. Gualdiquini

Figure 1. Indian Trail Network in the Coastal Plain of Georgia
La Tama trail data showed that the most probable route into the interior would have been along the trail that paralleled the north bank of the Altamaha River. This particular aboriginal road led to the confluence of the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers, the Forks where the Altamaha River is formed. From this terminus, major trails followed both river banks upstream along the Oconee as well as the Ocmulgee. After calculating the Spaniards' rate of foot travel at approximately twenty-four km per day (Swanton 1939:104-106), and allowing for the documented journey of eight days from the coast, this would place the expedition well within the projected area—the margins of the rivers in the area of the Forks and its unique hub of both land and water transportation routes.

The Tama area also seems to be archaeologically identifiable. A particular variant of the late Lamar (ca. A.D. 1540-1600) ceramic design, Square Ground, which was first described by Snow (Snow 1977:41-42), seems to be confined to the Ocmulgee River margins between Jacksonville, Georgia and the Forks. This Square-Ground stamp motif is also found in river margin Lamar sites along portions of the lower Oconee River and sections of the upper Altamaha River. Spatial distribution of this Square-Ground Lamar pottery also extends southward to the headwaters of the Satilla River and adjacent streams in the Douglas, Georgia area (Blanton 1979:60). This specific archaeological manifestation could indeed be the physical remains of the Tama province and its people.

THE DE SALAS EVIDENCE

The final data to be considered in the search for Tama's location is the evidence inherent in the report of Gaspar De Salas to the Spanish Crown (Serrano y Sanz 1912:143-145). This information has a direct bearing on Tama's locale when it is considered from the viewpoint of the projected area's geography, topography, and environment. I shall treat each piece of evidence individually in the order in which it is mentioned in the De Salas report.

The first item mentioned is the "great abundance of fish" that the Spaniards found at Tama. Such a description seems to be applicable to the thesis of this paper because Tama was located in this projection within the river margins around the forks of the Altamaha River. More precisely, the report spoke of "sturgeons that are called reales in Spain." At present, it is not clear if De Salas' term "royal sturgeon" refers to a actual fish species or to the large size of the fish. The Altamaha River drainage is the home of at least two sturgeon species, the Atlantic sturgeon (Ancipenser oxyrhnchus) and the theshortnosesturgeon (Ancipenser brevirostrum) (Wharton 1977:221). Although the shortnose sturgeon is rare today (Odum et. al. 1977:42-
In times past, it is thought that both of these sturgeon species ranged much further inland along the Altamaha River system and were known to be considered a desirable food source by the aborigines.

Secondly, De Salas stated "that all around the said town of Tama and neighboring territory there is very good dun-colored soil, which when it rains, clings to one's feet like marl." The projected location for Tama places the province well within an area known geologically as the "Altamaha Upland." The characteristic soil of this region is generally sandy and there is nearly everywhere a mantle of loose, gray or brownish sand. The Altamaha Formation is an extensive deposit of irregularly bedded sands, clays, and gravels. The clays of the formation are fairly uniform in texture and composition throughout the area. They are "drab", very fine-grained, and always more or less sandy. The weathering of these materials produced surface loams that differ from those of any other Coastal Plain formation (Veatch and Stephenson 1911:402-404).

De Salas' description of the "very good, dun-colored soil" can be easily applied to the drab, gray-brown Altamaha loams. In fact, it is this coloration that marks these particular soils as unique. The Spanish term used by De Salas to describe Tama's soil, parda, indicates that he indeed was referring to the Altamaha soils (Serrano y Sanz 1912:144). The term parda is defined as "gray, drab, brown: a mixture of black and white containing some yellow or red" (Velazquez et al. 1967:497). This matches the geological description of the Altamaha Upland loams, which are "mottled and splotched in red, yellow, purple, and gray tints" or are referred to as "surficial grayish or brownish" soils (Veatch and Stephenson 1911:447) (Figure 2).

De Salas' statements are in opposition to those of Juan Pardo's expedition members that bespoke the "red" soils of the Carolina Piedmont (Ketcham 1954:79). De Salas' "dun-colored" soil appears to be a reference to the Coastal Plain rather than the Piedmont hills. His statement that "when it rains, clings to one's feet like marl", is a reference to the clay content of the Altamaha soils. These clays have a low specific gravity, can absorb a high percentage of water, and are sometimes called "plastic" (Veatch and Stephenson 1911:404).

In addition to Tama's soil type, De Salas also reported that "There are in certain regions, many barren hills, where he saw many kinds of minerals." These areas he described as pelado (Serrano y Sanz 1912:144). This term can easily be translated into English as "bald" (Velazquez et al. 1967(II):64). Areas such as these are also found in the projected area of Tama. A geological description of the Altamaha Upland reveals that in the inter-stream areas there are occasional small tracts, a few acres in extent, in which jutting beds of sandstone, three to five m thick, form barren, rocky flats (Veatch and Stephenson
These outcrops occur as bluffs near the edges of streams and ravines or as flat outcrops in the uplands and in a belt extending from Johnson County through Coffee County (Wharton 1977:203). The author visited several of these sandstone outcrops in the Rocky Creek vicinity of the Ocmulgee Big Bend Region. One of these was a flat outcrop located on the crest of a hill. There, as on other sites, trees were noticeably absent. The scene presented to view was very reminiscent of De Salas' "bald hills." The obviously weathered surfaces of these outcrops are littered with the decomposed remains of arkosic sandstone—quartz, feldspar, mica, and other minerals of igneous rocks (Veatch and Stephenson 1911:403). This would explain De Salas' remark about the many minerals.

Figure 2. Physiographic division of the Coastal Plain of Georgia

While collecting minerals near one of these outcrops, the soldier and the monks "gathered of stones which seemed to them to contain metals and which were on the surface, because they did not have anything with which they could dig...." This statement also refers to another characteristic of the Altamaha Upland. The "metal stones" of the De Salas account were, in all probability, limonite—brown iron
Lawson

oxide pebbles or nodules that are so abundant in many places. Throughout the region they occur in such quantity that the lands are locally termed "pebble" or "pimple" lands in contrast to lands covered by gray sand. These nodules are a surface phenomenon produced by weathering. The pebbles range in size from buckshot to as much as 25 cm in diameter, but the buckshot size is most common. They are composed of limonite or some closely allied iron mineral with clay and sand impurities. These pebbles are round or tubercular in shape and have a slick or water-worn appearance (Veatch and Stephenson 1911:405). The author noted the pebbles as being especially profuse in various areas of the Ocmulgee Big Bend Region.

Also near these sandstone outcrops, according to De Salas "grew a herb which is highly esteemed by the Indians as a medicinal plant and to heal wounds, and they call it guitamo Real" (Serrano y Sanz 1912:144). The identity of this plant is unknown at present and no scholars have ventured an identification. However, using the De Salas data concerning the plant's environment and its value to the natives, it is possible to postulate the identity of the plant.

This herb grew in areas adjacent to, or on the sandstone outcrops. Among the flora that are characteristic of these South Georgia outcrops is the herb commonly called "button snakeroot" (Eryngium vucafolium) (Wharton 1977:203). Eryngium vucafolium is locally known throughout South Georgia as "rattlesnake master." From the name, it appears that the plant was used as a curative for snakebites. If used for that purpose alone it would be esteemed by the natives but there is more to this herb.

It was called button snakeroot by the whites and was known to the Creeks as Pasa. The plant was also known to and used by the Natchez and the Koasati. It was the second of the two most important busk medicines to the Creeks. Button snakeroot as a curative was used in cases of neuralgia, kidney troubles, snakebite, rheumatism, diseases of the spleen, and as a purgative to cleanse the system and purify the blood. It was also considered a great remedy for nosebleed, as good for "flux", and it is said to have been used instead of salt. Early writers referred to the plant's use as "the war physic." The Alabama and Koasati swallowed small sprouts of the plant in the spring of the year in order to remain strong and healthy during the remainder of the year (Swanton 1928:655-6, 668).

Button snakeroot grows in the environment described by De Salas and was highly esteemed by the natives as both a curative and an important medicine. Thus, it seems that the guitamo real of the De Salas account could have been button snakeroot.

"On those same hills [the "bald" hills/sandstone outcrops] and by the rivers with copious discharges, they gathered crystallisations...." The
rivers mentioned are probably the Ocmulgee and Oconee. The crystallisations were most likely quartz. This fact points to another unique characteristic of the Altamaha Upland area. The sands of this formation are made up almost entirely of crystalline quartz and in places they contain large layers of quartz and feldspar pebbles. A characteristic of these pebbles is their angularity, hence the use of the term "crystallisations." In some localities the pebbles are rather large. The quartz pebbles may be as much as eight cm in diameter, while fragments of feldspar about four cm in diameter have been reported. Throughout the Altamaha sands there are pebbles scattered promiscuously and sometimes they are arranged in strata several cm thick. The coarse, angular quartz pebbles can be found along the ancient Pleistocene terrace plains as well as the terraces, floodplains, and banks of the rivers of the Altamaha system within the region (Veatch and Stephenson 1911:404-5, 447).

Finally, the Spanish account mentioned that Tama's "rivers have sweet water (agua dulce) in places...." In contemporary Spanish usage, this term denoted "fresh water", as with the Agua Dulce or Freshwater Timucuan Indians of Florida (Milanich 1978:61). As for the use of the term in reference to Tama, perhaps it described the coastal plain springs or spring-fed streams, both of which are numerous in the Ocmulgee Big Bend area as well as the lower Oconee River and the region of the Forks. A number of large and beautiful springs occur in the coastal plain of Georgia. In the proposed Tama region one can encounter spring "boils" erupting in stream beds or runs from adjacent springs that join the main stream of the rivers. Some spring-streams and springs at the edge of the floodplains are inundated by the river during high-water periods. However, these waters typically are crystal clear and are quite different from the turbid, acidic waters of most coastal plain streams (Wharton 1977:17-18, 24-25). Perhaps this quality, more than anything else, prompted De Salas to call them agua dulce, "sweet water."

**SUMMARY**

I believe, based on the data presented in this paper concerning Tama's visitors, its neighbors, its general location, and the crucial data inherent in the report of Gaspar de Salas, that Tama's early seventeenth century location lay in the river margins around the forks of the Altamaha River. The location of Tama in A.D. 1540 remains uncertain. However, before any further conclusive identification can be made, more research is needed. This research will necessarily include both historical documentation and updated archaeological data from the projected areal location of Tama.
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A PRELIMINARY SERIATION OF COFFIN HARDWARE FORMS IN NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY GEORGIA

Patrick H. Garrow
Garrow & Associates, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on archaeological investigations conducted on two historic cemeteries in Georgia. The earliest investigation was conducted in 1985 and centered on part of the Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church cemetery in Chamblee, a suburb of Atlanta. A total of 56 graves was investigated to different levels of analysis during that project (Garrow, Symes, and Case 1985). The second project took place in 1986 and centered on a portion of a small family cemetery located in Talbot County, Georgia, which is located between Macon and the Alabama state line. Six graves were studied in the Talbot County cemetery (Garrow and Symes 1987). The Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church cemetery was studied in the field and laboratory by an interdisciplinary team of archaeologists and physical anthropologists during all phases of the investigation.

THE NANCY CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH CEMETERY

The Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery was investigated by Garrow & Associates, Inc., under contract to the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). The purpose of the investigation was to study a series of graves that were to be moved in advance of construction of a segment of the MARTA North Line. The Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1824 and is the third oldest church in DeKalb County (Roth 1984:9). The age of the cemetery and its association with individuals important to the history of DeKalb County led to its being determined to be potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The investigations discussed here were designed to mitigate the adverse impacts of construction to the graves that fell within the MARTA corridor, and were conducted under a research design (Symes...
The portions of the Nancy Creek cemetery under study had been previously divided into two sections (Figures 1-3) between 1869 and 1871 by construction of a railroad line (Roth 1984:15-16). The planned MARTA construction incorporated small portions of each section, with 39 graves to the north and 17 to the south falling within the direct impact zone. Sixteen (all within the north section) of the 56 graves in the impact zone were either marked by headstones or otherwise identifiable as to individual. Those graves were not included in the formal study sample under the court order that permitted the project, but it was possible to produce scaled drawings of some of the coffin hardware, with descriptions and/or sketches of all observed hardware entered in the project field notes during the relocation of those burials. None of the physical remains from the identifiable graves were photographed as per an agreement with MARTA, but the project physical anthropologists were allowed to inspect the remains and make copious notes. All of the graves that contained identifiable individuals were exposed and removed by a professional burial removal company and the remains were then either placed or shoveled into wooden boxes and reburied elsewhere within the cemetery.

Investigation of the unidentifiable graves was conducted through the cooperative efforts of the burial removal firm and staff of Garrow & Associates. Staff members of the burial removal firm (all Lumbee Indians) shoveled out the shaft fill to the point that coffin wood first appeared, and then turned each grave over to Garrow & Associates' staff for evaluation. The evaluation consisted of excavation of a section of the grave to the skeleton to determine the state of preservation of the bone. If the bone was poorly preserved the grave was subjected to a two hour study period during which the bones, coffin hardware, and clothing items present were exposed and mapped, with the contents of the grave removed and recorded. The remains recovered from those graves were reburied at the end of each work day. If the bone in a grave was well preserved, a ten hour excavation and recordation period was employed, and the remains were removed to an on-site laboratory for analysis. The Garrow & Associates staff devoted to the field project included the author as Principal Investigator, two physical anthropologists, and from one to four field technicians.

Nine of the 40 graves in the originally defined sample were afforded full archaeological treatment, while the remainder were investigated under the two hour limit. All physical remains, coffin fragments, coffin hardware, and clothing items were reburied in the cemetery within three weeks after the investigation began. No chemical analyses were conducted on the recovered bone, as the court order that
Figure 1. Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church location map
Figure 2. The north section of the Nancy Creek Cemetery
Figure 3. The south section of the Nancy Creek Cemetery
sanctioned the removal, study, and reburial required that all materials recovered from the graves be kept on-site, and that none of the bones could be subjected to destructive testing. The total study, which began with the field work in March, 1985, concluded with submittal of the project report (Garrow, Symes, and Case 1985) in May, 1985. Eight work days within that schedule were devoted to the field phase, while seven additional work days were spent in the on-site laboratory completing the analysis.

The investigated graves ranged in date from the 1850s to 1979. Bone preservation within the graves was generally poor. Seven graves were deleted from the study sample for the following reasons. One of the marked graves contained a sealed concrete crypt which was removed and reburied as a unit, rendering study impossible. A second grave yielded a single human bone, but lacked even the outline of a coffin and coffin hardware. A third grave was largely destroyed in backhoe trenching conducted at the end of field work and was unsuitable for inclusion in the sample. Four additional burials consisted of no more than subtle soil stains and could not be positively identified or ruled out as burials. The remaining 49 burials were confirmed as human graves and were studied by either graveside observation or archaeological study.

The Nancy Creek cemetery was known from historical records to contain both black and white interments. It was anticipated that the graves of both blacks and whites would be encountered and a major goal of the project was to describe and compare the burial practices and physical characteristics of each. In application, all of the individuals who could be assigned to race from the excavated graves proved to be white.

The research design prepared for this project centered around physical anthropology studies of the remains in the study graves. As the project proceeded, it became evident that the graves also contained significant amounts of coffin hardware that could and should be thoroughly analyzed. The study of coffin hardware and how it changed through time was thus added to the project research priorities and emphasis was placed on recording the coffin hardware through photography, scaled drawings, and detailed field and laboratory notes. The emphasis placed on the description of the hardware was believed to be a valid topic for research given the small amount of published data available on that subject (Trinkley and Hacker-Norton 1984; Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984).

THE TALBOT COUNTY CEMETERY

The Talbot County cemetery was found during construction within the Big Lazer Creek Wildlife Management Area in eastern Talbot
County. The Fisheries Management Section of the Game and Fish Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources contracted with Garrow & Associates to identify and study all the graves within the construction area. Six graves (Figure 4) were found in a graded area in preparation for construction of a parking lot. Historical research indicated that those graves were associated with a larger section of a marked family cemetery located on the top of an adjacent hill. The six graves were excavated, recorded, and removed by a crew of three archaeologists and one physical anthropologist over a three day period (Garrow and Symes 1987).

The skeletal materials and associated artifacts were returned to the laboratory for analysis and the skeletal material was eventually reburied in the intact portion of the family cemetery. The severe time frame that so greatly inhibited the investigation on the Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church cemetery was not a factor in the Talbot County study.

Analysis of the contents of the Talbot County graves indicated that the oldest of the six burials had been interred no later than the 1850s, while the latest burials dated to ca. 1900 or a little later. It was not possible to identify any of the six individuals by name, although all appeared to have been white and were probably members of the Smith family, who owned the land at the time of the burials. The remainder of the family cemetery, which was located outside of the construction zone, contained a single headstone. That headstone was dated 1881 and marked the grave of a child that belonged to the landowner’s family (Garrow and Symes 1987).

The research design that guided the Talbot County cemetery excavations dealt with explaining the placement of the burials in an area detached from the rest of the family cemetery. The study of any and all coffin hardware present was given a high priority during the research due to the potential chronological value of those items.

THE NATURE OF THE BURIAL SAMPLE

As previously noted, 56 graves were investigated within the Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church cemetery, while six were studied in Talbot County. The total study sample thus stands at 62, of which 54 were suitable for analysis for this paper. Seven graves at the Nancy Creek cemetery and one at Talbot County provided too little data to be useful for analysis. At least some of the seven burials deleted from the Nancy Creek cemetery sample may not have actually even been graves, but were recorded and excavated as such by the burial removal firm. The single example deleted from the Talbot County sample had been so severely disturbed by heavy equipment that no cultural or physical data remained to be gathered.
Figure 4. Plan of the Talbot County Cemetery
Table 1 summarizes the data from the 54 graves included in this study. It is worthy of note that clothing items and other materials that were incidentally included with the graves are not reflected on this table, although those items were used to help narrow the potential date range of each interment. The dating of individual graves within Nancy Creek was assisted in many cases by the presence of associated dated headstones, or by the results of oral history and documents research that identified specific individuals in specific graves and thus provided data on sex, date of birth, and date of death for some burials.

It should be noted that coffin hardware, with the exception of two occurrences of simple hinges, was not found on hexagonal coffins (also called "pinch toe" coffins). Further, the burials in the South Nancy Creek area that have been assigned date ranges of 1850-1900 probably dated to the 1840s-1870s.

VARIABLES EFFECTING THE PRESENCE/ABSENCE OF COFFIN HARDWARE

One of the most obvious variables effecting the presence/absence of coffin hardware that is evident from Table 1 is the date of interment. As stated above, coffin hardware beyond simple hinges did not occur on hexagonal coffins, although tacks with white metal heads that were probably used as decorative items were noted on several of the early coffins. Straight-sided, rectangular coffins were apparently introduced around 1850 (Blakely and Beck 1982:188), although one grave with a hexagonal coffin from the north section of the cemetery contained a marker with an 1855 death date. The earliest tightly dated burial that contained substantial coffin hardware in either sample dated between the 1870s and 1884, while the oldest grave with coffin hardware beyond hinges had a firmly established death date of 1879.

A second variable effecting the distribution of coffin hardware appears to have been age at death. Table 2 reflects the numbers of individuals buried in rectangular coffins within the total sample by age group, and the presence and absence of coffin hardware among those age groups for both before and after 1900. Fifteen infants and children were identified, of which only four (one-fourth) were accompanied by coffin hardware. In contrast, 26 adolescents and adults were identified, of which 17 (two-thirds) were accompanied by coffin hardware. The results gained from this sample appear similar to those gained by Rose (1984:130-135) from a black cemetery in Arkansas, where only three of 41 infants and children (less than 10 percent) were accompanied by coffin hardware. Coffin hardware was common in adolescent and adult graves in the Arkansas sample. The results gained by studying the distribution of coffin hardware by age groups at Nancy Creek and Talbot County should be tempered by the small sample size and the
### Table 1. Burial Data From Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church and the Talbot County Cemetery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Bu#</th>
<th>Cemetery</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Coffin Shape</th>
<th>Nails</th>
<th>Hardware</th>
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<td>203</td>
<td>NNC M</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rect</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>SBH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**
- **Cemetery:** NNC=North Nancy Creek; SNC=South Nancy Creek; TC=Talbot County
- **Sex:** M=Male; F=Female; I=Indeterminable
- **Age:** In=Infant; C=Child; Ad=Adolescent; A=Adult; I=Indeterminable; Numerical Value=Documented or Estimated Age
- **Coffin Shape:** Hex=Hexagonal; Rect=Rectangular; I=Indeterminable
- **Nails:** C=Cut; W=Wire; P=Present, But Type Indeterminable; WM=Waln With White Metal Head; S=Screw
- **Hardware:** H=Hinge; BH=Bail Handle; SBH=Short Bar Handle; EBH=Extended Bar Handle; CP=Coffin Plate; T=Thumbscrew; E=Escutcheon; VP=Viewing Port (Glass); CB=Coffin Closure; CF=Coffin Fastener; OM=Ornamental Metal; MS=Masonic Symbol; ST=Study
likelihood that at least some of the graves post-date the shift to rectangular coffins, but predate the introduction of substantial coffin hardware. At the same time, at least some factors appear to have been operative under which infants and children were accorded different treatment at death than adolescents and adults.

Table 2. Coffin Hardware on Rectangular Coffins by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>With Coffin Hardware</th>
<th>Without Coffin Hardware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before 1900</td>
<td>After 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant/Child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE COFFIN HARDWARE

Coffin Handles

Coffin handles were recovered from 21 graves within the two cemeteries. The estimated date range of the graves that contained coffin handles was 1850 to 1979 (Table 1), but a much more likely date range is the 1870s to 1979. Three distinct handle forms were present. Bail type handles (Figures 5-7) are composed of two lugs connected by bail swing arms and a bar (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984:9). Most of the bail handles recovered during this project were similar to Trinkley and Hacker-Norton’s (1984:7, 1-12) Type II handle, which they date to 1860-1900. Bail handles were present in sets of six (three to a side) on all but one adult burial. The exception was an adult buried in 1879 whose coffin had four handles (two to a side). The two children and one infant burials in the sample with bail coffin handles included one child’s coffin with six handles and a child’s and an infant's coffin with four each. Silver plated and white metal handles occurred in equal proportions within the tightly dateable sample (four each). The maker’s mark "TM Co" and the number "67" were found on bail handles from a burial that dated to 1879, but that mark could not be identified during the project research. No other marks except numbers were identified on bail handles.

Short bar handles (Figure 8) are the second type present within the sample. These consist of two lugs, each with a swing or fixed arm, connected by a bar that contains metal tips added at each end (Hacker-
Figure 5. Bail type coffin handles
Figure 6. A coffin handle and thumbscrews from burial 5 (Talbot County)
Figure 7. A coffin handle and thumbscrews from burial 6 (Talbot County)
Figure 8. Bar type coffin handles
Norton and Trinkley 1984:9). The handles in the study collection were placed in sets of three on each side of the coffins in all but one instance. The single exception was the coffin of an infant buried between 1907 and 1915. The bars in the study sample included examples made of wood and covered with either a nickel compound or cloth, as well as examples made entirely of metal. A range of metals was used on the bar handles. Three examples had white metal lugs and arms with nickel plated bars. One example was made of nickel plated iron, while one was made of white metal. Two examples were silver plated, while one grave yielded aluminum handles. There was no obvious temporal pattern based on the composition of the handles, but the single grave with aluminum handles was the youngest investigated grave and dated to 1979. Two maker's marks and one patent date were present on the bar handles. The maker's mark "Elgin 40", which was present on silver plated handles in a grave that dated to 1915, could not be traced during the project research. The mark "ISCo 648" presumably related to pattern number 648 of the International Silver Company. The International Silver Company name was changed from the Meridian Britannia Company in 1898 (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984:33), and the burial that contained the handles with that mark was placed between 1907 and 1915. The single patent date was found on handles accompanying grave #207, and was carried as "Sept. 3, 1895."

The third type of handle encountered was an extended bar type (Figure 8). This type is similar to the short bar handle, but in the extended bar type the bar can be long enough to extend the full length of the coffin (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984:8). A single grave, dated to 1943, contained extended bar handles of iron.

Table 3 includes handle data from both cemeteries. Dates for those graves were derived from headstones, genealogical research (Wells and Cornell 1984; Nancy Cornell, personal communication 1985), and artifact dates gained from burial accompaniments. The most likely date range for bail type handles appear to have been from the 1870s to shortly after 1900. That date range appears to partially verify the 1860-1900 date range for at least certain bail handle types suggested by Trinkley and Hacker-Norton (1984:7, 11012). Short bar handles appear to begin replacing bail types within the Nancy Creek cemetery around 1900. It may be significant that the two recovered bail handle sets similar in shape to later bar handles were from graves that dated 1893 and 1882-1903. At least one of the short bar types in the sample was apparently available prior to 1900. That example, from grave #207, bore a patent date of September 3, 1895.

Three tightly dated burials did not contain coffin handles. One (#225) was buried between 1879 and 1893 and was an infant or a child. The second (#208) dated to ca. 1900 and was an infant. The third was
an adult female (#205) and dated after 1900. The two graves containing infants included bits of brass wire that may have been safety pin fragments. The adult burial included porcelain buttons and a comb.

Table 3. Chronological Distribution of Coffin Handles by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burial Date</th>
<th>Burial #</th>
<th>Bail</th>
<th>Short Bar</th>
<th>Extended Bar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850-1900</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1900</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-1884</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870s-1884</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-1903</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1900</td>
<td>TC5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1900-ca. 1906</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1910</td>
<td>TC6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1918</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-1920</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-1915</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1921</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bail types, but similar in shape to the short bar variety.
Note: Table 1 in this paper corrects three errors in Table 1 of the project report (Garrow et al. 1985:109). Burial #226 was mistakenly shown as a bail type in that report, and burials #223 and #203 were reversed. Extended bar types were apparently late introductions to the Nancy Creek cemetery since the one identified set was noted from a grave with a headstone date of 1943.

Thumbscrews and Escutcheons

Thumbscrews (Figure 6-7, 9) apparently served the same function as the earlier coffin tacks with white metal heads, and were used to secure the lid of the coffin. Escutcheons (Figure 9) were simply the back plates for the thumbscrews and rested directly on the coffin lid (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984:11). Thumbscrews and escutcheon
Figure 9. Thumbscrews and escutcheons
plates tended to have the same general distribution as coffin handles, but there were exceptions. Thumbscrews were found in 12 graves, while escutcheons were only present in six. The age distribution was similar to that cited for handles, with a most probable date range of the 1870s to ca. 1921. No graves contained both thumbscrews or escutcheons and coffin tacks with white metal heads. The recovered thumbscrews and escutcheons included examples made of white metal, brass, and silver plate. The ages and distribution of the recovered thumbscrews and escutcheons are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of Thumbscrews and Escutcheons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burial Date</th>
<th>Burial #</th>
<th>Thumbscrews</th>
<th>Escutcheons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850-1900</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1900</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1900</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-1903</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1900</td>
<td>TC5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.1900-ca.1906</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1910</td>
<td>TC6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1918</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-1920</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1921</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glass Viewing Ports

Glass viewing ports were encountered in 11 burials. Every grave that contained a glass viewing port also contained coffin handles. Glass viewing ports were apparently first used around 1860 (Blakely and Beck 1982:188) and the earliest tightly dateable grave encountered with a view port at Nancy Creek dated to 1875-1884 (#202). The latest occurrence at Nancy Creek cemetery was within a burial that dated between 1900 and 1918, while the single example from Talbot County was observed in a grave placed between 1900 and 1910. The glass viewing ports in the earlier coffins at Nancy Creek cemetery were oval and covered the face and parts of the upper torso. As time passed, the viewing ports appeared to get larger to the point that the later examples covered the upper half of the body. Glass viewing ports were found on the coffins of eight adults, one adolescent, and one child. The adults included four females and four males, while the adolescent was female.
Blakely and Beck (1982:188) have indicated that coffins made with viewing ports were more expensive than coffins without them, but no indication was given of exactly what type of price differential applied.

Glass viewing ports were probably used so that the body, or at least the face, could be viewed while the coffin was kept sealed. If that was the case, the use dates of those items range from around 1860 up to the point at which either reliable embalming became available or embalming became mandatory under law (ca. 1920). The time range for this coffin hardware within the total sample was ca. 1870s to ca. 1918. It may be worthy of note that the single occurrence of embalming fluid bottles within a grave in the sampled cemeteries dated to ca. 1921.

**Coffin Plates**

Seven coffin plates (Figure 10) were identified during the investigations. Coffin plates only occurred on coffins with handles, but only slightly more than a third of the coffins with handles also had coffin plates. The age distribution of these items was from 1879 to ca. 1921. Five were associated with adults, one with an adolescent, and one with a child. The adults included three males and two females, while the adolescent was a female. The inscription "At Rest" was the most common inscription on the coffin plates, with five occurrences. One plate--from the grave of an infant--read "Our Baby", while the seventh example was too deteriorated to make out the inscription.

**Other Coffin Hardware**

Additional coffin hardware included caplifters (four graves) (Figure 10), a Masonic emblem (Figure 10), upholstery items (two graves), decorative brass studs (two graves), pieces of ornamental metal (three graves), and iron coffin closures or fasteners (five graves) (Figure 11). All of the identified caplifters, which were used to raise the lid of the coffin (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984:11), occurred in graves that dated after 1900, with a range of 1902-1920. One of the caplifters (grave #226) was molded in the shape of a well executed lily (Figure 10), and may have been more ornamental than functional. The Masonic emblem was made of white metal and was recovered from the grave of an adult male who died between 1900 and 1918. The ornamental brass studs were associated with fairly early graves (ca. 1850-ca. 1900 and 1879). Two pieces of ornamental metal may have been fragments of escutcheons made of white metal and were found in graves dating 1892-1903 and 1900-1918. The third piece of ornamental metal was recovered from grave #6 at Talbot County and consisted of a stamped brass urn and flower arrangement. The iron closures and fasteners varied from two instances of simple iron bands pierced by nails to three
Figure 10. Coffin plates, caplifters, and a Masonic emblem
Figure 11. Iron coffin closures
instances of compound closures. The simple iron bands were recovered from the graves of a husband and wife who died in 1915 and 1918 respectively. The date range of the compound closures ranged from 1879 to 1943.

Other Artifacts

Glass bottles (Figure 12) were recovered from the coffins of two graves and the shaft fill of a third. Clear glass fragments were noted in two coffins, but were probably not intentionally buried with the individuals. There were two instances in which the association of the glass bottles and the individuals was unmistakable. Burial #109, a child's burial of between 1892 and 1903, had two medicine bottles and a perfume bottle (Figure 12) included within the coffin. The other example, the grave of an adult female buried in ca. 1921, contained two empty embalming fluid bottles (Figure 12) that had been placed within the coffin, but beneath the body. The single bottle found in the shaft fill of a grave was a clear condiment jar in a grave that dated between 1903 and 1920. There is no ready explanation for why that bottle was included in the shaft fill.

SUMMARY

This paper has presented the results of the analysis of artifacts from a series of graves investigated within the Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Talbot County cemeteries. A total of 62 graves was investigated, of which 54 proved suitable for inclusion in the artifact analysis. The techniques employed to investigate the graves included graveside observations, two hour field studies, and full archaeological investigations.

Coffin hardware from the 1840s to approximately the 1870s appeared to include square nails, occasional coffin tacks with white metal heads, and two instances of simple coffin hinges. Coffin handles, as well as other items such as thumbscrews and escutcheons, were present in graves that dated from the 1870s to the present. The earliest coffin handles were bail types, and those were largely replaced by short bar types around 1900. The only extended bar handle type that was noted was in a grave dated to 1943 and may represent the prevalent coffin handle form for the second third of the twentieth century. It appears that elaborate coffin hardware was normal for burials placed during the 1870s and later, although there appears to have been a tendency to include coffin hardware in adult graves more frequently than in the graves of infants or children.

The Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Talbot County cemetery studies represent rare project types within the contemporary historical archaeology. The results achieved from the analysis of coffin hardware
Figure 12. Bottles
hardware from these two cemeteries must be viewed with caution until more cemeteries can be studied and the size of the study sample is greatly increased. At the same time, it is evident from the results of these studies that it is possible to assign at least general interment dates for otherwise unmarked graves based on the presence/absence of specific coffin hardware forms.

Further, it will probably be possible to study changing perceptions of death in our own society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as more coffin hardware data become available. As an example, the differential rate of the use of coffin hardware observed for graves that contain infants or children versus adults may reflect the somewhat higher infant and child mortality rate of that earlier time and a correspondingly less amount of care and cost that was devoted to the burial of infants and children.

It has long been assumed in Georgia archaeology that prehistoric graves are important sources of both cultural and physical data. If that assumption is correct, as it appears to be, it is important that we realize that the graves of our ancestors can also be studied to gain information that is critical to better understanding our own culture and how it has changed through time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is based partially on research conducted under contract EX3-2 on the MARTA N760 Cemetery project for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). Ms. Gloria Gaines served as the MARTA representative for this project and Mr. Willie Vasser served as field coordinator. Mr. Albert B. Childrey of Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade, and Douglas/Tudor Engineering Company served as the project contracting officer. Ms. Gaines, Mr. Vasser, and Mr. Childrey all exhibited a high degree of cooperation on this project and their efforts insured that the investigators were allowed to collect the maximum amount of data possible within the agreed upon project constraints.

The physical anthropologists on the Nancy Creek project were Steve A. Symes and Henry W. Case. Their high level of professional expertise and consistent good humor in the face of adversity were major factors in the ultimate success of the project.

The Talbot County cemetery project was conducted under contract with the Game and Fish Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Tim Hess and Mike Gennings of that agency provided continuous support through that project, and facilitated the project research.
Steve A. Symes served as the project physical anthropologist for the Talbot County project, while Dan Elliott and Beth Gantt assisted the author as the project archaeologists. Marian Roberts conducted the project historical research. All four of those individuals made important contributions to the project.

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SWIFT CREEK OCCUPATION
IN THE ALTAMAHA DELTA

Lucy B. Wayne
Environmental Services and
Permitting, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a summary and correlation of data obtained from two studies of Swift Creek sites in the Altamaha delta (Figure 1). The Evelyn site was partially excavated by Preston Holder in 1936. The Cathead Creek site was excavated by Water and Air Research, Inc. in 1985 under a contract with McCrory Engineering utilizing a grant from the Georgia Environmental Protection Department and the City of Darien.

The Swift Creek culture was first identified near Macon, Georgia in the late 1930s. It was later recognized at Gulf coastal sites in West Florida. Both inland and coastal sites are characterized by horse shoe or annular middens with associated burial mounds. Coastal sites may also consist of linear middens and mounds. The burial mounds commonly contain caches of the distinctive Swift Creek complicated stamped ceramics. Sites characteristically feature bell-shaped storage pits, an abundance of bone and shell tools, sherd hones, and lithics such as the stemmed knife or point and the bifacial knife (Milanich and Fairbanks 1980).

Gulf coastal Swift Creek subsistence was based on exploitation of the salt marsh and tidal stream resources as well as deer. Occupation was probably based on permanent villages located on the ecotones between marsh and hammock or river valley and forest. The villages were supplemented by temporary campsites on the marshes or in the forests (Milanich and Fairbanks 1980).

Prior to the late 1970s, it was thought that Swift Creek occupation on the Georgia coast was limited to seasonal campsites, with the exception of the Evelyn site. However, at that time Kelly (1975) and Cook (1977) suggested that Late Swift Creek peoples migrated to the coast via the Altamaha River and established permanent occupations between A.D. 500-600 (Saunders 1985). Recent work at Kings Bay, Georgia has substantiated this belief (Figure 1). The Swift
Figure 1. Map of south Atlantic coast showing sites mentioned in text.
Wayne Creek sites at Kings Bay appear to date to the Middle to Late periods and contain the characteristics of inland sites: arc-shaped middens, bell-shaped storage pits, Swift Creek ceramics, shed hones, lithics, and prolific bone and shell tools. Faunal analysis indicates year round occupation based on intensive marsh-lagoon subsistence strategies (DesJean et al 1985). This paper will attempt to synthesize the data from the two sites excavated at the mouth of the Altamaha River and compare this information to that from Kings Bay.

**EVELYN SITE**

In 1936, Preston Holder conducted an archaeological survey in Glynn County, Georgia. One of the sites he investigated was a group of mounds located on Evelyn Plantation on the south side of the Altamaha River delta. Holder identified Evelyn as the most important site for future investigations in the area. Unfortunately, no further study has been conducted and the site is now largely destroyed (Chance 1974). Holder's excavations provided the first stratigraphic evidence for the relationship of the Deptford and Swift Creek complexes (Williams 1968). His studies also provided the first indication of significant Swift Creek occupation in the coastal area.

The Evelyn site is located adjacent to Six Mile Creek on the south side of the Altamaha River delta 16 km (10 miles) from the Atlantic Ocean. The site consists of a low rectangular platform mound and four small conical burial mounds. There are also a number of borrow pits and a midden area. The entire site encompasses approximately 200 acres (Williams 1968). During construction of the Brunswick-Altamaha Canal in the early 19th century, the south portion of the site was disturbed by channelization of Six Mile Creek. The site was also under agricultural use during the nineteenth century which resulted in alterations of the contours through plowing and erosion.

Holder placed excavation units in four of the mounds and in the midden area. Mound C yielded the most significant information (Figure 2). This small, conical burial mound, approximately 50 feet in diameter and 20 feet high, was constructed of basket-loaded sand in a single stage and contained a central burial complex. There were three borrow pits surrounding the mound, apparently associated with it. Deptford ceramics were scattered throughout the mound fill. However, three Swift Creek pottery caches were located at the eastern toe of the mound. Waring identified these as "dedicatory dumps", similar to those at Kolomoki. The burials in the mound were also associated with Swift Creek ceramics. The borrow pits were filled with Late Swift Creek midden (Chance 1974).

The other mounds at Evelyn were either not investigated or do not appear to date to the Swift Creek occupation. Holder and Waring
Figure 2. Holder's excavation in Mound C, Evelyn Plantation (9GN92).
Source: Chance, 1974. Area of excavation is shaded.
concluded that the site represented reoccupation of an earlier Deptford site by a Swift Creek population. They did not speculate on the source of this population.

CATHEAD CREEK

In 1978, the city of Darien, Georgia, on the north side of the Altamaha River delta, began upgrading their public utilities. This led to a series of archaeological projects which identified a group of Deptford/Wilmington sites along the bluff above Cathead Creek (Seabury and Garrow 1978). Additional survey in 1984 indicated that the sites consisted of an extensive shell midden adjacent to a spring with other occupation sites on the fringes of this midden—all dating to the Deptford through Wilmington periods (Dickinson and Wayne 1984). During the 1985 mitigation phase of the utility project, a significant Swift Creek component was located (Dickinson et al. 1985).

As identified today, the Cathead Creek site is located on a bluff approximately seven meters in elevation above the junction of Cathead Creek and the Darien River, tributaries of the Altamaha River (Figure 3). A small spring also enters Cathead Creek at this point. Historically, the first documented occupation of the site was prior to 1838 by Dr. James Troup. The foundations of his tabby dwelling are located beneath an existing house on the bluff. During the late 19th century a timber landing was located where the spring enters Cathead Creek. These occupations resulted in filling and, perhaps, recontouring of the area, as well as the deposition of a distinct midden layer throughout the site. For the purposes of the mitigation project, the Cathead Creek site was divided into three subareas: (1) the C-1 line on Fourth Street; (2) the C-2, C-3, C-4, and FM-B lines on Houston Street; and (3) the D-1 line on West Street.

The mitigation project was primarily confined to the utility corridors. Removal of the overburden by machine was selected due to the disturbed nature of the upper levels in and adjacent to modern roads. Once features or artifact concentrations were identified, hand excavation was utilized. The extensive shell midden on West Street (D-1) necessitated a modification of this methodology (Figure 4). A trench was excavated down the center of the corridor to provide an extended profile of the midden. Excavation units were placed in selected areas of this profile. For faunal analysis a one by one by two meter column sample was taken by natural levels from the deepest point of the oyster midden. Finally, with the permission of local residents, hand units were placed in their yards at the outer limits of the right-of-way to examine relatively undisturbed areas. In addition, a grid of posthole tests was placed throughout the bluff area to determine the extent and nature of the shell midden deposit.
Figure 3. Map of Darien locality in 1869, showing location of project lines. Source: USCS, 1869
Figure 4. Map of project line D-1, showing location of surface scrape, 1 meter wide trench, and excavation units.
The Fourth Street or C-1 portion of the Cathead Creek site was confined to an area at the east end of the street (Figure 5). The intervening blocks of the corridor consist of a relatively low, poorly drained section and areas which have been extensively disturbed by modern construction and erosion. Over 72 percent of the ceramics recovered from this area were complicated stamped. Examination of the sherds indicates that the majority of this stamping is typical Swift Creek designs.

One feature was located on the C-1 line, a circular pit approximately 50 cm in diameter and approximately 70 cm deep. The U-shaped pit contained sherds and charcoal. A radiocarbon date of 200 B.C. + 50 was obtained from a charcoal sample. This places the pit within the Deptford period. However, 85 percent of the sherds were clearly Swift Creek types. The pit also contained a sherd hone, an artifact common on Swift Creek sites (DesJean et al 1985). Based on the artifacts, the radiocarbon date should be regarded with suspicion and may result from material present in the fill at the time of pit deposition. Faunal material in the feature consisted of a small amount of unidentified bone and shell, as well as oyster and mussel. Charred hickory nut was also recovered.

The Houston Street portion of the site, Lines C-2, C-3, and FM-B, appears to have been dominated by the later Wilmington/Savannah occupation. A limited number of Swift Creek sherds were identified, but the majority of the complicated stamped and incised sherds correspond to later Savannah or Lamar types. Fragmentary human remains were recovered from this line in association with small deposits of oyster shell. The adjacent topographic contours of the area led to in-field speculation of a possible mound prior to agricultural use and modern development of the area. At this time, there is no further evidence to support this speculation other than the fact that Moore documented mounds in the Cathead Creek vicinity in 1897 (Moore 1897). However, his map is not sufficiently detailed to locate these mounds.

The extensive shell midden on the D-1 line along West Street proved to be the most rewarding portion of the site. Examination of the ceramics from the midden indicates that the upper levels are primarily a Savannah period or slightly earlier occupation. This is confirmed by a radiocarbon date of A.D. 1000 ± 90 from charcoal in Zone B and A.D. 1110 ± 100 from charcoal in Feature 2, which is a hearth intrusive into Zone C (1984 correspondence from Beta Analytic, Miami, Florida) (Figure 6). The lower levels are clearly dominated by Swift Creek ceramics with minority representation of Deptford types. These lower levels contained such small amounts of shell that they were identified on the field maps as non-shell midden.
Figure 5. Map of project Line C-1, showing location of surface scrape and excavation units.
Figure 6. Profiles of Units D-1, NO.1 and NO.2.
features were identified at D-1 that dated to the Swift Creek period. Unit D-1, NO.3 had a circular, round-bottomed pit containing unusually large oyster shells and Swift Creek ceramics (Figure 11). The pit was approximately 80 cm in diameter and 70 cm deep and appears to have been a storage pit.

Three features were located in Unit D-1, NO.5. The first consisted of a large pit approximately the same size as that in Unit D-1, NO.3. Like the previous pit, this one also contained large whole oyster shells and Swift Creek ceramics. Charcoal from the feature was radiocarbon dated to A.D. 500 ± 100, clearly in the Late Swift Creek period. The second Swift Creek feature in this unit appears to have been a small pit only partially intersected by the unit. Like the other pits, this feature contained oyster shells and Swift Creek ceramics, as well as a bone awl. The third feature in the unit was a non-diagnostic lens which was probably related to filling of the large depression visible in the trench profile.

The final feature located on the D-1 line was a human burial located in Unit D-1, NO.1 and NO.2 (Figure 7). The fully extended burial was located approximately 150 cm below the present ground surface, oriented roughly north-south, and buried faced down. The body appeared to have been tightly wrapped, based on the position of the hands and knees. It was identified as that of a female between 25 and 30 years old. No apparent grave goods were present, although a single Deptford sherd was recovered from the burial. No burial pit was discernible. The matrix surrounding the burial contained Swift Creek sherds.

After the unit was completely excavated, it was noted that the overlying strata sloped upward to the west over the burial (Figure 8). Although there is presently no evidence of a mound in the existing contours of the site, these sloping strata do suggest that possibility. If a mound had existed, the location of the burial would correspond to those placed in the edges of the platform mound of an unidentified period at the Evelyn site. The placement of burials directly on the ground surface is also known in this area from the Eulonia mounds near Darien, which date to the later Savannah period (Williams 1968). It is also possible that the large depression visible in the trench profile may represent a borrow pit for mound construction. The Swift Creek sherds in the lower levels of the depression would be consistent with the borrow pit fill at the Evelyn site. If a low mound and borrow pit are assumed, it is apparent that they were later covered with a shell midden dating to the Savannah occupation of the site.

Unfortunately, the date obtained from the burial was not consistent with the sherds or the stratigraphy. The date of A.D. 900 ± 80 is too late for the Swift Creek period and may be unreliable due
Figure 7. Burial 1, Unit D-1 NO.1 and NO.2.
Figure 8. West profile of Unit D-1, NO.5; D-1, NO. 5b; and midden column sample.
to the very small sample of bone utilized. Dating was obtained through the accelerator (AMS) method.

The final task at the Cathead Creek site was excavation of a 10 meter posthole grid. The postholes revealed three concentrations of shell midden on the point of land west of the street and the D-1 line (Figure 9). Each concentration had a correspondingly high artifact count. A high artifact count was also obtained for a non-shell midden area at the east side of the grid. The primary diagnostic ceramics dated to the Swift Creek and Deptford periods. Examination of these concentrations reveals similarities to the arc-shaped site pattern noted for the Swift Creek period site at Kings Bay, Georgia (DesJean et al. 1985). However, the window afforded by the small postholes provides only limited support for this interpretation.

Faunal analysis of the column sample showed similar proportions of the summary categories (mammals, birds, reptiles, fishes, etc.) throughout the occupation of the site (Figures 10-14). The later occupation zones contained the only identified deer and birds, as well as the largest percentage of oysters. In the lower of the Swift Creek period zones, ray was almost as abundant as fish. Shrimp remains were present in all zones. As is typical of coastal sites, terrestrial resources were not exploited as extensively as water resources, particularly fish and oysters. The taxa identified suggest exploitation of shallow near-shore estuaries, swamps, and low-lying marsh lands. This is comparable to the Kings Bay site (DesJean et al. 1985). There was good evidence of year-round occupation in the Darien data. Killifish, rays, and sea catfish suggested warm weather, while drum, mullet, menhaden, and oysters suggest late fall to early spring occupation. The high incidence of small fish and rays indicates the use of nets or scoops. The turtles and small mammals may have been trapped. Again, this is similar to the subsistence strategies identified for the Swift Creek site at Kings Bay (DesJean et al. 1985).

During the Swift Creek occupation of the lower Altamaha River, the sites at Cathead Creek and Evelyn would have had access to an extensive marsh, a cypress swamp, both fresh and saltwater resources, and both coastal hammock and pine forests. The high bluff and sandy soils of the Cathead Creek area provided a well drained habitation site with a freshwater stream and access to the varied ecosystems. The Altamaha River and its tributaries provided a major transportation route which connects to the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers in the area of the Swift Creek type site.

In summary, the two sites in the Altamaha River delta evidence all of the characteristics identified for the Swift Creek culture: location on ecotones, reliance on intensive marsh-estuarine subsistence patterns, the presence of burial mounds associated with middens, the presence
Figure 9. Artifact density and distribution at the Cathead Creek site, Line D-1.
Figure 10. Column sample, Zone 1, faunal summary.

Figure 11. Column sample, Zone 2, faunal summary.
Figure 12. Column sample, Zone 3, faunal summary.

Figure 13. Column sample, Zone 4, faunal summary.
of storage pits, a proliferation of Swift Creek ceramics, bone and shell tools, sherd hones, and lithics. There is a tantalizing hint of the arc-shaped site plan at the Cathead Creek site. The location of the sites on bluffs above streams corresponds to the Kings Bay sites, as does the subsistence pattern. Dating of one Swift Creek feature at the Cathead Creek site also matches closely with the dates from Kings Bay. The evidence seems clear that there must have been a migration down the rivers during the Middle to Late Swift Creek period which resulted in establishment of permanent occupations within the Altamaha River delta and in similar locations along the coast south of the mouth of that huge river.

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