

Fort Hawkins Archaeology Update



LAMAR Institute Publication Series, Report Number 196

Savannah, Georgia
201

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**The LAMAR Institute, Inc.
Savannah, Georgia
2016**

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Introduction

The LAMAR Institute has been involved in research and public interpretation at Fort Hawkins since August, 2005. Excavations in 2005 were followed by additional excavations in 2006, 2007, 2011 and 2012 (Figure 1). The Institute has completed extensive archaeological excavations and historical research for the fort through a series of contracts with the City of Macon and Newtown Macon. These efforts have included research to locate primary documents concerning the fort; archaeological excavations to delineate the fort's outline and exploration of a sample of its contents; public outreach to include teachers, students, Macon area citizens, and other visitors in the excavations and guided tours of the excavations; and publication of a series of technical reports on the excavations (Elliott 2007, 2009, Elliott et al. 2013). According to the Fort Hawkins Commission's schedule for the development of Fort Hawkins, Phases 1 and 2 have been completed and we are set to begin Phase 3 (Inner Palisade Wall Documentation) (Willett 2008:16).

This report describes archaeological investigations undertaken at Fort Hawkins since the most recently reported fieldwork done in 2012 (Elliott et al. 2013). Since 2012 the senior author [Daniel Elliott] also authored a chapter that summarized the recent archaeological efforts at Fort Hawkins (2005-2012) for a book on "Ocmulgee Archaeology", which is part of an edited volume by Daniel Bigman, Ph.D., currently in press at the University of Georgia (Bigman n.d.).

The only "new" archaeology conducted at Fort Hawkins since 2012 took place on May 19, 2013, when Daniel Elliott and Rita Elliott performed a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey on a portion of the Fort Hawkins site. The area explored was flanking the western and southern exterior walls of the southeast blockhouse replica. The only recent archaeological excavations in these two specific portions of Fort Hawkins was the re-excavation of a portion of the palisade wall that had been exposed by Gordon Willey and his CCC workers in 1936.

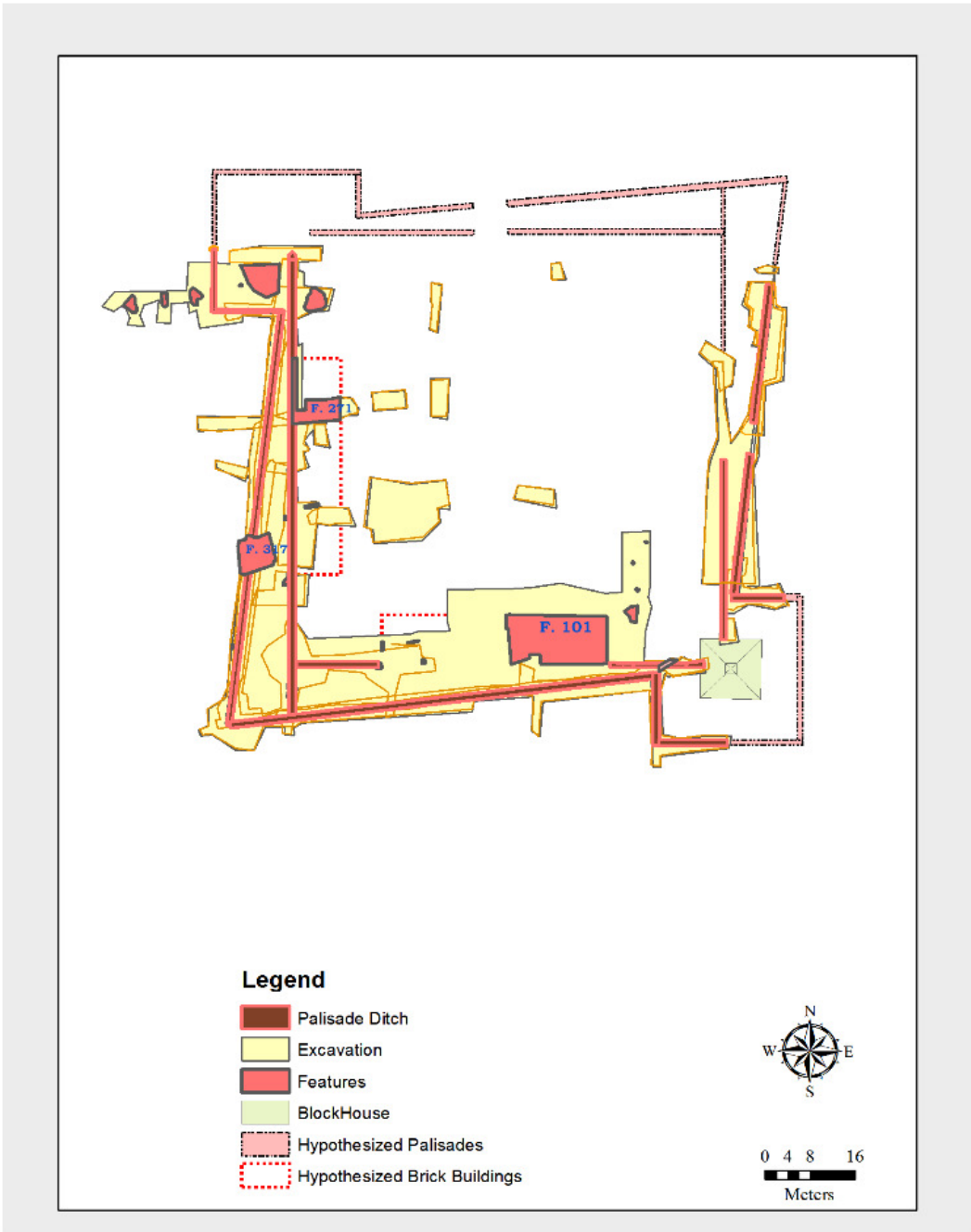


Figure 1. Fort Hawkins Site Excavation Plan, 2005-2012.

Ground Penetrating Radar Survey around the Southeastern Blockhouse

Methods

The GPR survey examined an L-shaped area surrounding approximately one-half of the Fort Hawkins replica blockhouse. Its maximum extent was 18 meters north-south by 13.5 meters east-west. The survey team recorded 28 radargrams within this area and a plan of their layout is shown in Figure 2. These radargrams covered a total of 235.25 meters of radar lines.

The GPR survey was accomplished with a RAMAC/X3M Integrated Radar Control Unit, mounted on a wheeled-cart and linked to a RAMAC XV11 Monitor (Firmware, Version 3.2.36). A 500 megahertz (MHz) shielded antenna was used for the data gathering. MALÅ GeoScience's Ground Vision software (Version 1.4.5) was used to acquire and record the radar data (MALÅ GeoScience USA 2006). The GPR data was post-processed using GPR-Slice software (Version 6). The machine settings used for the GPR survey were as follows:

- Antenna: 500 MHz (shielded)
- Sampling: 7617
- Number of samples: 584
- Stacks: 4
- Time window: 77 ns
- Trace interval: 0.019 m
- Antenna separation: 0.180 m
- Radargrams: 28
- Radargram orientation: South to North
- Radargram collection progress: West to East

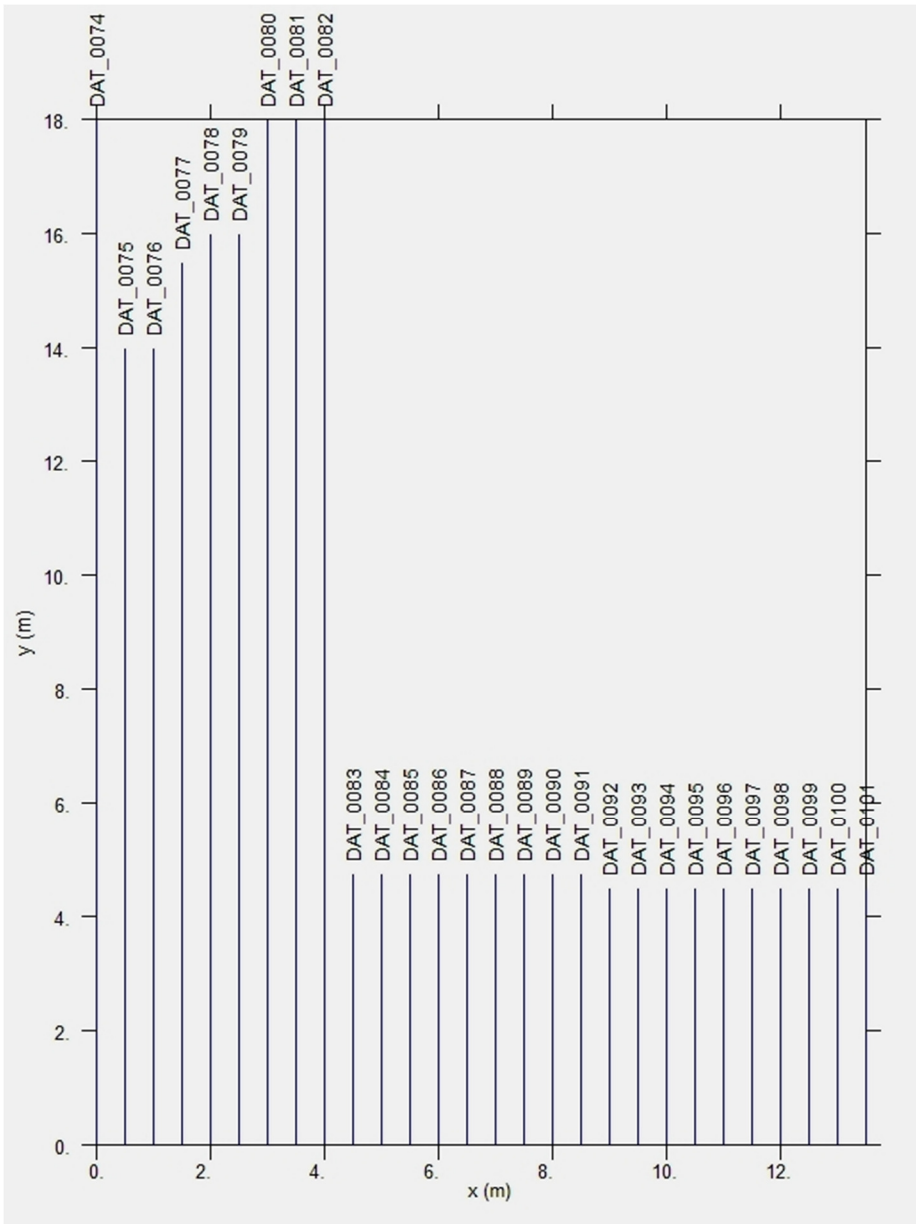


Figure 2. Radargram Plan, Southeast Blockhouse Yard.

GPR Findings

The GPR survey revealed numerous strong radar anomalies outside the western and southern margins of the southeast blockhouse. Figures 3-9 show plan and profile views of the GPR block. The eastern portion of the sample block displayed few anomalies. GPR anomalies in the northern portion of the sample may relate to the palisade walls. Anomalies in the lower one-half of the sample are intriguing and may represent independent cultural features. Determining the true character of these subsurface features requires archaeological excavation. As can best be determined from the LAMAR Institute’s background research, these areas have never been excavated.

Previous GPR surveys at Fort Hawkins met with mixed success. In some portions of the site, the buried metal debris is so dense that it obscures accurate GPR mapping of the underground. Other GPR survey areas revealed intriguing radar anomalies of interest. The 2013 GPR survey at the southeastern blockhouse reveals such intriguing radar anomalies and additional exploration of this area, through traditional archaeological excavation, is warranted.

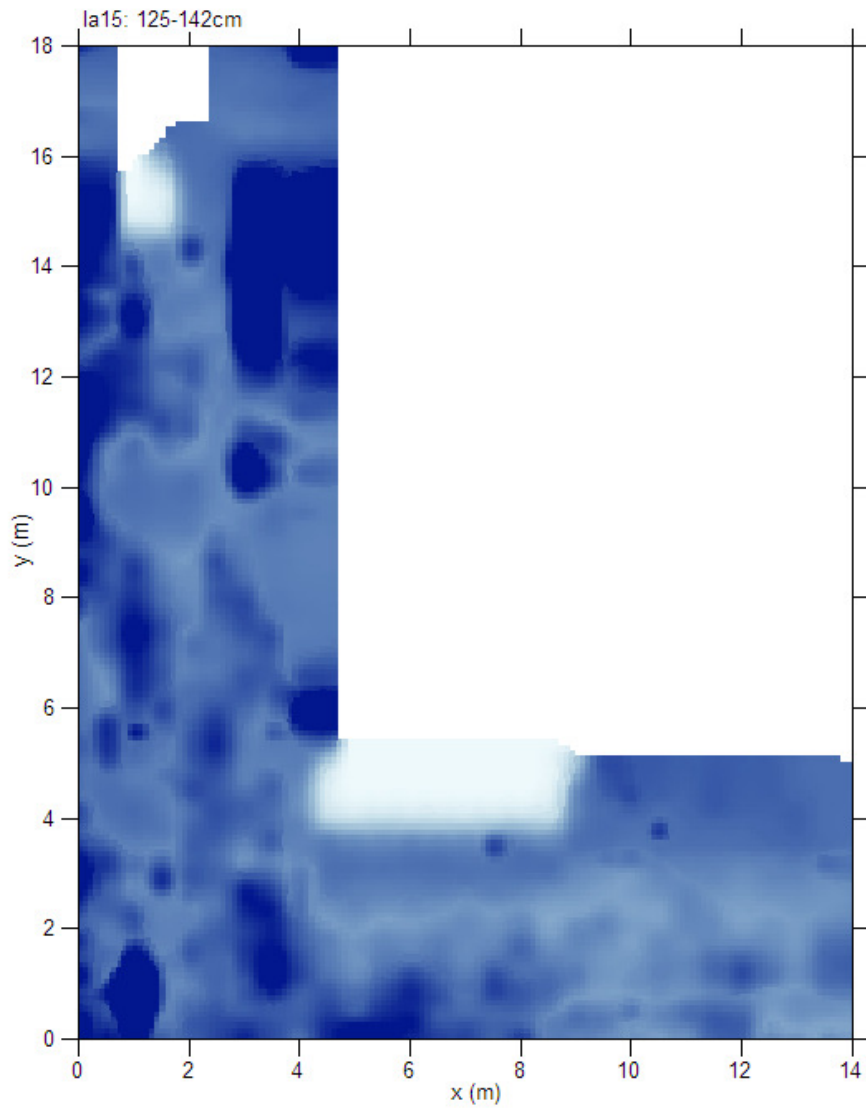


Figure 3. GPR Overlay Map, Southeast Blockhouse Yard.

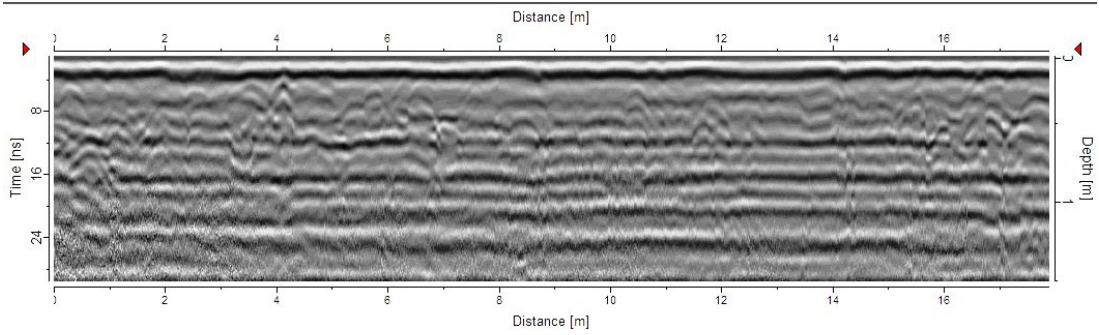


Figure 4. Radargram 74, Southeast Blockhouse Yard (Grid North is to Right).

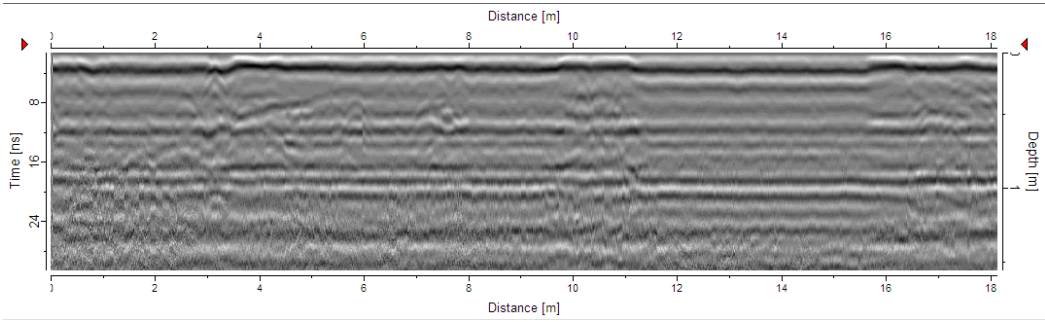


Figure 5. Radargram 80, Southeast Blockhouse Yard (Grid North is to Right).

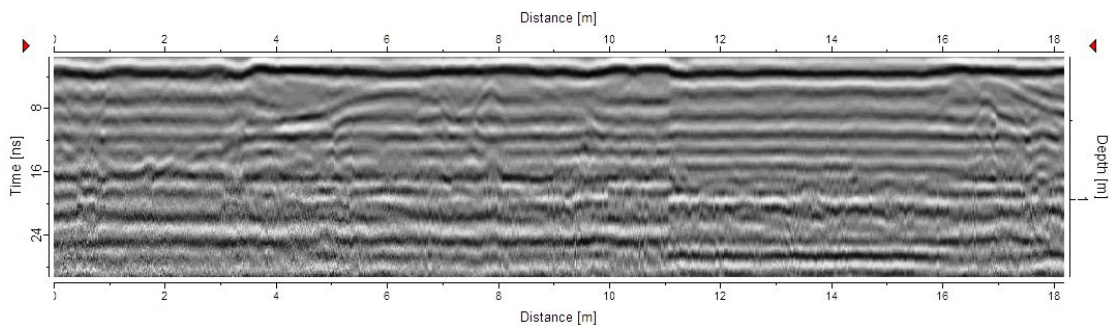


Figure 6. Radargram 82, Southeast Blockhouse Yard (Grid North is to Right).

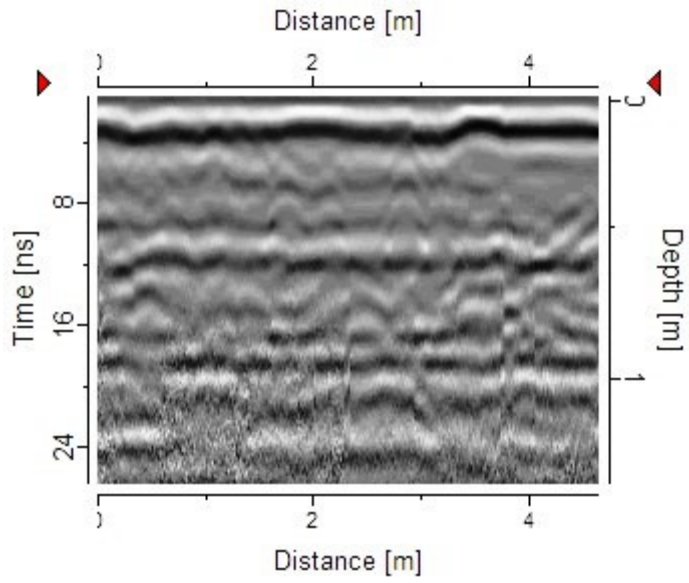


Figure 7. Radargram 90, Southeast Blockhouse Yard (Grid North is to Right).

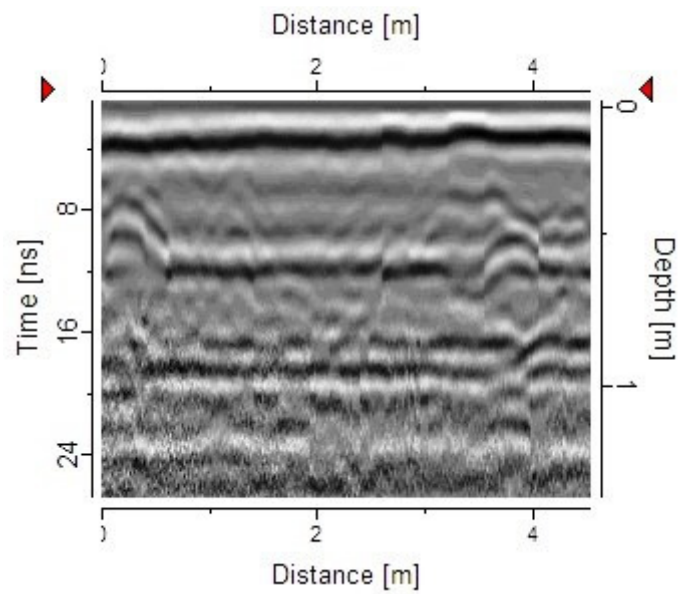


Figure 8. Radargram 98, Southeast Blockhouse Yard (Grid North is to Right).

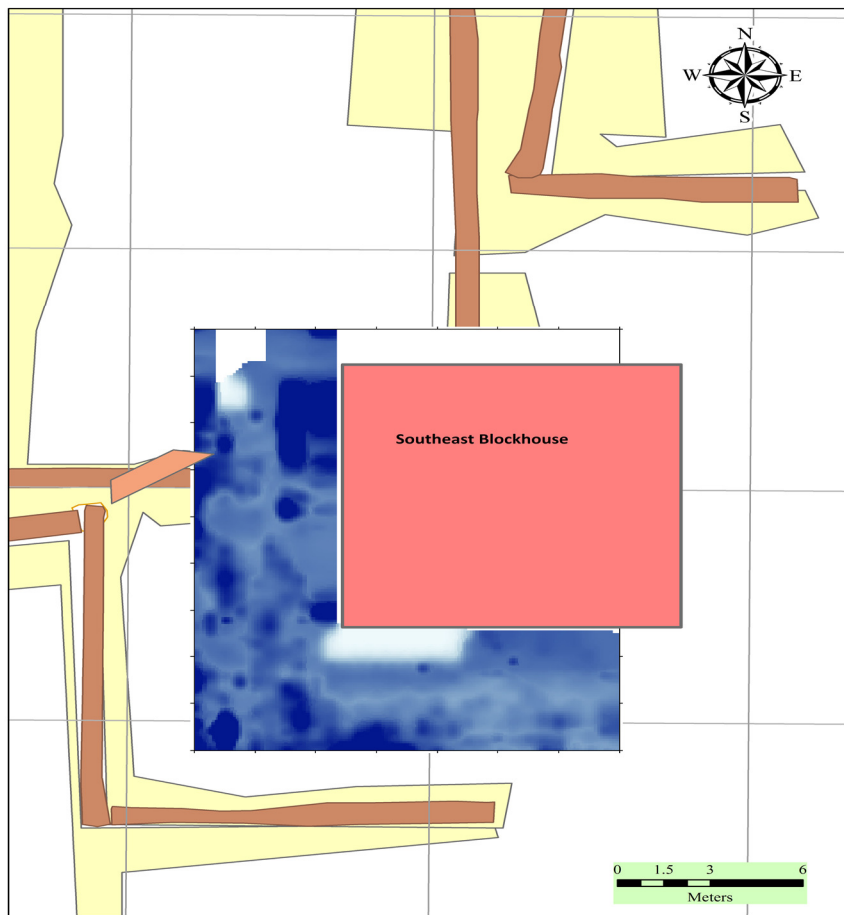


Figure 9. GPR Plan (in Blue) at Southeast Blockhouse, Fort Hawkins.

Fort Hawkins Rebuilding Demonstration Project

One of the long term goals voiced by the Mayor’s Fort Hawkins Commission is an accurate reconstruction of the original fort. Archaeological discoveries, however, pointed out that determining the actual architectural plan of the fort required considerable effort. As of 2012 the basic outlines of the various fort walls had been established by the archaeology. The next step in the process was to begin by reconstructing the southwestern corner of the fort wall. In December 2013, LAMAR Institute archaeologists Daniel Elliott and Joel Jones returned to Fort Hawkins as part of the rebuilding demonstration project on the southwestern corner of Fort Hawkins. Their mission was to carefully reexcavate portions of the fort’s palisade ditch down to an elevation suitable for placement of the reconstruction log wall. They accomplished this task with the aid of a backhoe, which was operated by archaeologist Matt Wood (Southern Research Historic Preservation Consultants, Inc.). Once the archaeologists had finished excavating their trench, then the logs were put into position by the City’s contractor. The results are an impressive

section of log wall, which gives the observer an idea of how the original fort may have looked.

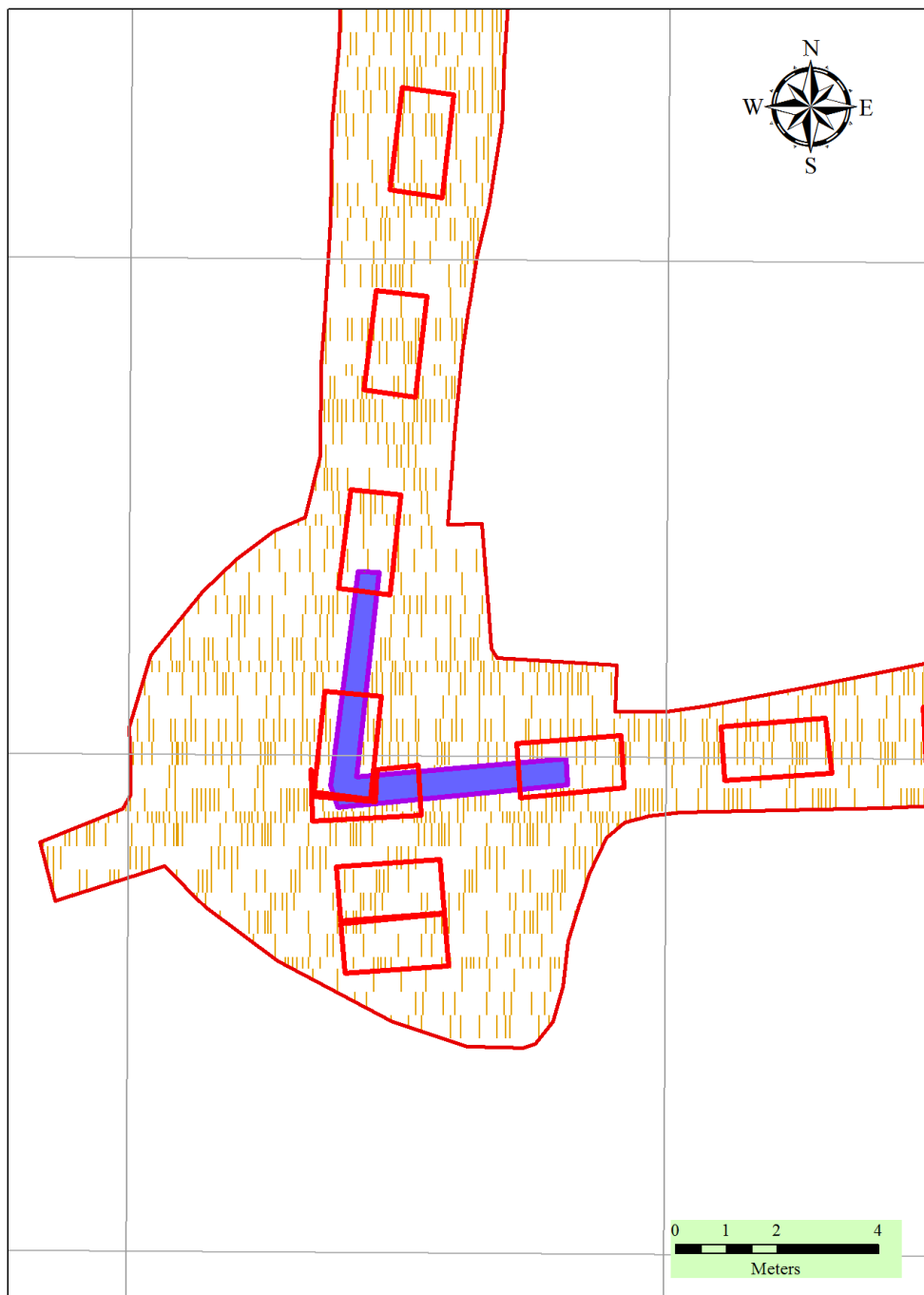


Figure 10. Schematic Diagram for the Replica Palisade Wall (actual rebuilt section was smaller than area shown in purple).



Figure 11. Logs Stockpiled for Reconstruction, December 2013.



Figure 12. Archaeologists Reexcavate Trench for Reconstruction Demonstration Wall, Southwestern Apex, Fort Hawkins, December 2013.

Recommendations for an Interpretive Plan

For many decades the City of Macon has embraced Fort Hawkins as an important part of the town's history. On August 29, 2014 the City of Macon dedicated its new Fort Hawkins Visitors Center. This was a joyous day of celebration. Local school children, Friends of Fort Hawkins, and local politicians and dignitaries joined in the event (Figures 9 & 10). Since its opening, this visitor's center has provided the primary link between Fort Hawkins and the general public. The present challenge is that Fort Hawkins needs a plan.

An Interpretive Plan is essential to Fort Hawkins. Such a guide will enable Fort Hawkins to move forward on proposed site enhancements in the most efficient and least expensive manner, while producing professional results. An Interpretive Plan is particularly crucial at this time, with growth and expansion imminent. An Interpretive Plan is not to be confused with a Master Plan, which has already been compiled for Fort Hawkins. The Interpretive Plan should be used as a flexible road map to guide future activities. It should be re-addressed every five-ten years, based on the amount of change underway.

An Interpretive Plan will produce a more cohesive visitor experience by providing for holistic themes and experiences. It also will aid in the creation of a more visually-cohesive site. This plan will help eliminate the need for costly re-builds to retrofit areas, structures, projects, or programs that were not considered at the proper time. Interpretive planning will provide a better visitor experience, resulting in increased visitorship and more successful programming. Such planning will help increase the educational role of the organization in the community and maximize the value of the labor and funding expended.

Willett (2014) authored a "Historic Site Interpretive Prospectus" that contains many of the elements of an interpretive plan. In it, he discusses:

- Focus on Interpretation
- Existing Interpretive Programs
- Existing Interpretive Resources
- Interpretive Exhibits in the Fort Hawkins Visitor Center
- Visitor Services

Interpretive Plan Components

Long-range Interpretive Plans provide a five to ten year vision addressing interpretation, education, and visitor experience. The Interpretive Plan examines these three topics to identify opportunities, goals, and issues. This information is then examined to produce efficient, effective, and practical recommendations.

The Interpretive Plan addresses: Non-Personal Services (exhibits, signage, technologies, non-guided tours & facilities) and Personal Services (programs, personal contact, guided tours).

The Interpretive Plan consolidates data on the five “M’s” of a site:

- Management - A brief overview of contracts/concessionaires; existing staff levels; planned staff additions/deletions/annual report; budget for past five years; budget sources; history of capital improvements/projects; other funding; easements/ property restrictions; history of organization; objectives; guidelines or constraints.
- Markets - Demographic profiles for the City of Macon and surrounding counties; promotional materials; complementary and competitive facilities within 100 mile radius; statistics on use of programs and services (user profiles); history and statistics of past programs/accessibility and special events.
- Message - Base maps; environmental assessments; vegetation/wildlife checklists; cultural history.
- Mechanics - existing facilities/functions, square footage; currently planned facility additions/deletions and square footage requirements for various functions.
- Media - Delivery system (current programs and services to public); list of interpretive resources (slide files, mounts, artifacts, research reports, historical documents, histories, equipment, etc.)

Interpretive Plan Emphasis

The Fort Hawkins Interpretive Plan will examine all five “M’s” above, but will focus most heavily on the “Message”, “Markets”, and “Media” employed. This would include the following:

Interpretive Overview for the Visitors Center

- Themes and Sub-themes
- Bubble Diagram
- Exhibit Recommendations
- Appropriate Technologies (low to high tech)
- Exploration of Hands-On Components

Interpretive Overview of the Site Trails

- Interpretive Topics and Themes for Trail(s)
- Potential Locations for Trail(s)
- Locations for Interpretive Signage along Trail(s)

- Recommendations for Physical Attributes of Trail(s) – hardscapes, width, slope, maintenance, accessibility, longevity

Signage (Wayfinding and Interpretive)

- Wayfinding – Specific needs, locations, physical attributes
- Interpretive – Interior and exterior, specific needs, locations, physical attributes

Interpretive Recommendations for Proposed Palisade

- Signage
- Related Items

Interpretive Recommendations for Standing Blockhouse

- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Potential Interpretive Avenues



Figure 13. Attendees at the Dedication of the Fort Hawkins Visitor's Center, August 29, 2014.



Figure 14. More Attendees at the Dedication of the Fort Hawkins Visitor's Center.

Future Archaeological Research at Fort Hawkins

What is Left of Fort Hawkins for Archaeologists to Excavate?

Fort Hawkins displays excellent archaeological potential for future research. The fort encompassed approximately 9,082 m² (2.24 acres) and most of the Fort Hawkins archaeological site remains unexplored. To date, approximate 3,194 m² (0.79 acres) has been excavated by the LAMAR Institute. The extent of these excavations is shown in Figure 1. Approximately 54 percent of Feature 101, which contains a wealth of potential archaeological information, remains unexcavated. Approximately 2,690 m² (0.67 acres) within the fort remains to be explored. Another 5,309 m² (1.31 acres) located outside the walls also has been banked for future archaeologists. These acreage figures do not include all areas explored by Willey and Carillo, or by undocumented looter excavations beneath the Fort Hawkins School ruins.

The LAMAR Institute recommends as the next phase of work a limited archaeological testing project on the perimeter of the replica southeastern blockhouse at the Fort Hawkins archaeological site (9Bi21). This undertaking should explore the potential for intact archaeological deposits beneath the brick walkway that encompasses the blockhouse. Although this vicinity was explored by two archaeological trenches in 1936 (Willey 1936) and again in 2007 (Elliott 2009), very little is known about the archaeological potential in this part of Fort Hawkins. What is known from Willey's exploration and the LAMAR Institute's re-exposure of Willey's excavation is that palisade ditches containing post remnants extend up to the rock foundation on the northern and western sides of the replica blockhouse. The GPR survey in the vicinity of the southeast blockhouse revealed numerous strong radar anomalies that may represent early historic features or artifact concentrations. The purpose of the recommended testing work would be to explore

the archaeological research potential west and south of the southeastern blockhouse. The GPR plan map can help to guide the placement of any excavation.

The excavations should consist of standard 2 meter by 1 meter test units that should be excavated by natural levels, or 10 centimeter levels within natural levels. Soil should be screened through $\frac{1}{4}$ inch hardware cloth. Brick, rock and mortar should be weighed and discarded in the field. Selected samples of mortar and whole bricks (or other unique brick fragments) should be saved. Artifact proveniences should be labeled using permanent markers on the artifact bags. A minimum of two test units are recommended. Test units should be excavated until sterile soils are encountered. Soil samples should be taken from any intact midden deposits. Representative plan and profile drawings and scaled photographs of the test units should be made throughout their excavation. All test unit locations should be mapped and integrated into the site grid. All excavations should be backfilled upon completion.

Laboratory analysis should be consistent and compatible with the LAMAR Institute's previous research effort at Fort Hawkins. Some special analyses may be required for zoo-archaeological or ethno-botanical specimens. Artifact stabilization should be undertaken on selected metal or other fragile artifacts. Some preliminary laboratory analysis (i.e., washing and sorting of artifacts) may be done while at Fort Hawkins. Reporting should be consistent with previous LAMAR Institute reports on Fort Hawkins. The members of the field and laboratory crew should be chosen from a pool of experienced archaeologists with previous field and/or laboratory experience at Fort Hawkins.

Fort Hawkins has a bright future as a showcase of Macon's and Georgia's early history. Careful management of its archaeological resources will insure that generations to come can share in the excitement of discovery through archaeology.

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