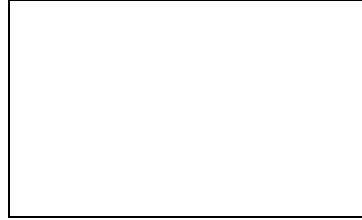


## CHAPTER IV

### YOU AND ARCHAEOLOGY



## HOME AND CLASSROOM PROJECTS

### PURPOSE

What can students do to further their interest in archaeology, and even make a direct contribution? Chapter IV presents some interesting projects, gives information on sites to visit, and shows how to report a site that a student might find. Archaeology is one of the few sciences that allows an average citizen to contribute directly in furthering knowledge. This is especially challenging when we consider that archaeological remains are a non-renewable and irreplaceable resource.

### CONCEPTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The subject matter of archaeology is all around us. It stands on the ground, and lies buried beneath it. It sits on the shelves of hundreds of collectors and hobbyists. And we find it on the tables of "flea markets" and in the windows of antique stores. In context, archaeological remains have a rich and important story to tell; out of context, they are little more than curious objects. By context we mean the original location--the site--where soil conditions, associated materials, stratigraphic position, and other information can be determined. When artifacts are removed from their context they become like pieces of a rare document that has been ripped apart (separate, the pieces have little meaning, whereas together, they make up sentences, paragraphs, and pages of an important body of information).

Only a trained, professional archaeologist should remove archaeological remains from a site. Thus, although it would be inappropriate for a student, or a class, to attempt an excavation, there are important contributions that young people can make to archaeology. For example, instructions are given in Chapter IV for reporting a site that a student might find or hear about. Once the teacher is certain the site is authentic, a form like the one illustrated on text page 102 (a blank copy is provided in this Handbook), should be filled out with as much detail as possible. Then, the form should be mailed to the nearest archaeologist, using the list provided on text page 103.

As noted in the text, there are not as many archaeologists in Georgia as some other states and their work keeps them very busy. The class may have to wait several weeks for a reply to their site report, but they should remain confident that the information will be recognized and appreciated. The site will be entered in a computer at the University of Georgia, where it can be easily retrieved in the future. In some cases, the archaeologist or an assistant may want to visit the site.

By reporting a site, the student will have contributed to the preservation of knowledge. Just think, this report might be the only record of a site, a record that would be invaluable if the site were threatened at a later date. For example, if a highway or shopping center were planned for the area

of that site, the student's report would give archaeologists information to aid in planning for proper mitigation prior to construction.

Students will find that many artifacts have been removed from sites in their area. Some of these artifacts will have been taken out of state but others may still be found in the homes of local private collectors. If your students should find such a collection have them explore the origin of the collection. Identify the items by site if possible, and fill out a site form for each site, or if that is not possible, identify the objects by stream drainage or county. The more precise the location, the better. Other important information would include the date the artifact(s) was found (again, be as exact as possible), name of the finder, how many people have owned the item(s) before the present owner, and whether the owner would be willing to donate the artifact(s) to a museum or educational institution. Record any information, no matter how trivial it may seem at the time. A tape recorder comes in very handy on this project, since it is difficult to write down or remember everything that is said in an interview.

One project in Chapter IV consists of a study of the useful wild plants in a student's home area. As part of this project, the student should attempt to determine which plants are native to the area and which ones are Old World imports. There are several good books that describe medicines that are made from wild plants, etc. Students might also interview elderly people and farmers who are usually more knowledgeable about traditional usages of wild plants. Similar studies could be made of local mineral resources or wild animals.

Other projects involve the analysis of modern material culture, such as the excavation of the trash can in the classroom or at the student's home. Although it may be a little messy, this project can provide an excellent illustration of the relationships between human behavior and the material by-products of that behavior. Most of the objects found on real archaeological sites were "garbage," i.e., they were cast aside because they were broken or had fulfilled their usefulness. In such a project as this, the student should be encouraged to make careful observations through notes and measurements. For example, the measured depth of various items in the trash can might reveal the sequence of activities in the classroom (or at home) during the day (or days) that the garbage represents.

The last project in Chapter IV (text pages 104-107), consists of the construction and excavation of a "stratigraphic box." (There is an error in Step 7, page 105, where the blue layer and the black layer are reversed. In the Picture, you will notice that the black layer is on top whereas in the instructions of Step 7, the black layer is next to the top). The teacher may wish to construct the box ahead of time, or let the students participate in the construction as well as the excavation. In a large class, the teacher should divide the students into several groups, each of which constructs and excavates its own box. Again, careful observation and detailed notes are essential to the success of this project. Follow the instructions step-by-step.

Text pages 108 and 109 give important information on the locations of archaeological sites in Georgia that are open to the public. Many of these sites have interpretive exhibits, and a few even have demonstrations on prehistoric stone-working techniques, use of the spear thrower, etc. given by their staff. Some of these sites are national parks, whereas others are state owned, but each has something unique to offer the individual student or the entire class. Visits to any one of these parks makes an excellent field trip for your class if any are within driving distance of your location (be sure to notify the superintendent of your intended visit). Russell Cave in Alabama (close to most of northwest Georgia), and Etowah, Rock Eagle, Ocmulgee, and Kolomoki in Georgia are best known for their prehistoric remains. New Echota and Fort Frederica belong to the Historic Period. Other sites, not known especially for archaeology but which are of historical

interest, and well worth a field trip, are Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield near Marietta; Fort Pulaski, Fort McAllister, Fort Morris-Sunbury, Midway Colonial Museum, and Fort Jackson, all near Savannah; Jarrett Manor near Toccoa; Fort King George near Darien; MacKay House in Augusta; Vann House near Chatsworth; Andersonville National Cemetery near Americus; and the Washington-Wilkes Historical Museum at Washington.

Chapter IV ends with a couple of very important reminders. The information archaeology has to offer is valuable to all of us. It tells us about the development of individual cultures and of mankind as a whole. If we ever hope to understand why we exist the way we do today--and especially if we want to proceed into the future with planning and direction--we must utilize the lessons of the past.

In archaeology there are many questions left unanswered. This is as true in Georgia as it is in Mexico, Egypt, or other parts of the world. Although we have learned much from our research over the past several decades, more work is needed. There is also a strong element of urgency, since archaeological resources are being lost at an ever increasing rate.

Can we save the archaeological resources, so that we may benefit from their lessons? The answer is "yes," but only if we all work together. We must urge our legislators to strengthen the laws that are designed to protect archaeological and historic sites, we must discourage digging on sites by untrained individuals, and we must assist archaeologists in recording and protecting remains in our home areas. If we all work together, we can meet this exciting challenge.