

Interior Shelves



Touching the Past: Uncovering Civil War Objects at Camp Lawton

Contributed by Rick Kanaski, FWS



Sneden's Camp Lawton map (detail).
Courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society.

In November of 1864, Union forces led by Major General Sherman paused in their March to the Sea to set an empty prison camp ablaze. Over 10,000 Union prisoners had previously called this camp—Camp Lawton—home. The prisoners were evacuated a mere six weeks after the camp was built. Nearly 150 years after its destruction, Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery, Magnolia Springs State Park, the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, and Georgia Southern University (GSU) have teamed up to discover more about the prisoners at Camp Lawton, their guards, and the lives they led.

For over a century, it was generally thought that Camp Lawton had been lost. In 2010, archaeologists from GSU found artifacts on the property of FWS's Bo Ginn and Magnolia Springs. In their rush to leave Camp Lawton, Union prisoners and Confederate soldiers left behind a treasure trove of objects. The fire that destroyed the camp and the camp's remote location made it one of the most pristine Civil War sites discovered in recent years.

Such a well-preserved site provides numerous opportunities for novel research. Guided by drawings, a diary, and a map made by prisoner Robert Knox Sneden, recent efforts have focused on locating the stockade wall that surrounded the camp, excavating prisoner huts or "shebangs," and studying other areas that reveal what life was like at Camp Lawton.

As of 2013, the excavations had unearthed nearly 900 objects that provide a window into the lives of the Civil War soldiers at the camp. Many objects are clothing-related, such as buttons and uniform insignia. Some objects, such as a tourniquet buckle with a piece of fabric still attached, tell the stories of the unlucky soldiers who would have been the victim of wounds, starvation, disease, swampy conditions, and unseasonably cold November nights. Others are touching and personal—the broken glass and frame that once held a small daguerreotype print, which a soldier cared about enough to carry through battles and prison.

Objects from FWS and Magnolia Springs lands are currently on view at the GSU Museum, where visitors can view history and the harsh realities of prison life as told through the Camp Lawton objects. Camp Lawton has received widespread media coverage. It was the subject of an episode of *Time Team America* that aired on PBS in August, 2014 and has also been the subject of pieces in *Archaeology* magazine, on CNN, and other venues.

The public can now to actually *interact* with the objects at Camp Lawton. GSU's Dr. Lance Greene led a field school in 2013 and 2014, enabling students to excavate and study the objects. Regular "public days" allow visitors to help with the excavations and witness object conservation. An animal hospital has been enlisted to help x-ray objects for identification. Camp Lawton is a truly remarkable example of the way archaeology and museum objects can make the past come alive for both researchers and the public. A GSU student sums it up: "For me, it's almost like touching the past."



Top to bottom: Folded picture frame, tourniquet buckle, eagle button. Artifacts courtesy of FWS. Photography courtesy of GSU.

Effigy Mounds NM Partners with the University of Iowa to bring "Mobile Museum" to the Monument and Northeast Iowa

Contributed by Bob Palmer, NPS



Students with Effigy Mounds rangers and Office of the State Archaeologist staff

On May 29th and 30th, the University of Iowa (UI) and the Office of the State Archaeologist, in cooperation with Effigy Mounds National Monument, partnered to bring UI's brand-new Mobile Museum to the Monument and area schools.

The interactive Mobile Museum, which looks a bit like a "Class A" motorhome, is a museum-on-wheels that features an array of exhibits that focus on different eras in Iowa's history. "We were so excited to partner with NPS in bringing the Mobile Museum to Northeast Iowa," said State Archaeologist, John Doershuk. "The sheer number and significance of the archaeological sites in this part of the state made this visit a natural choice for one of the Museum's maiden voyages," said Doershuk. "We are grateful that NPS and Effigy Mounds was such a great partner in organizing our visit to the community."

Youth Outreach Activities at the Indian Arts and Crafts Board Museums

Contributed by Conor McMahon, IACB

The Indian Arts and Crafts Board has been working on a variety of programs and exhibits to engage youth participation at its three museums.

The Sioux Indian Museum in Rapid City, South Dakota has recently completed the installation of a Discovery Room. This interactive exhibit features various objects and activities for children and families to enjoy. One of the highlights of the exhibit is a variety of traditional Lakota games made by Sicangu Lakota artist Mike Marshall. The Discovery Room also includes traditional Lakota dolls made by Oglala Lakota artist Diane Tells His Name. Museum staff host daily interpretive activities about Lakota culture in the exhibit area. As part of the presentation, visitors are invited to try their hand at games such as "catching deer bones with a needle" and "the game of bowls".



Museum Aide Kayla Schubert discusses Lakota tipis with museum visitors.

At the Southern Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko, Oklahoma, the IACB hosted its first annual Youth Art Competition and Exhibit. The contest's theme of "Where do we come from, where are we going?" was selected by the IACB Commissioners. Museum Curator Bambi Allen partnered with art teacher Arthur Tsatoke from Riverside Indian School on the project. A total of 19 students from the Riverside Indian School submitted artwork for the contest. Students created original two-dimensional artwork in a variety of media that reflected their interpretation of the theme. A panel of jurors selected the three winning entries and prizes were awarded to the winners. A temporary exhibit showcasing all of the entries to



A program for children at the Museum of the Plains Indian.

the contest was installed at the Southern Plains Indian Museum.

The Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning, Montana hosted a parfleche making workshop for children and adults in July. Parfleche is a term to describe Native American rawhide containers and there are many outstanding examples in the collection of the Museum of the Plains Indian. Museum Technician David Dragonfly, an accomplished artist himself, led the workshop. Students learned the techniques of making traditional parfleche envelopes: cutting the rawhide, stitching the rawhide, and painting them with Blackfoot designs.

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The museum features static cultural history displays and an interactive digital wall that allows visitors to learn about UI space research, the Santos Virtual Soldier program, and the UI Flood Center's sophisticated flood-prediction mapping systems, as well as additional information on Iowa archaeology.

For the visit, the Museum stopped at Effigy Mounds and picked up a supporting cast of park rangers before making its first stop at Waterville Elementary School. Late in the day, the Museum was repositioned to the Junior High / West Elementary in Waukon for a public open house and an evening program. The following day students from the junior high, west elementary and St. Pats School toured the Museum. A total of over 600 students and local residents toured the Museum during the two day visit.

"This was a great opportunity to be part of something special," said Effigy Mounds Superintendent, Jim Nepstad. "I'm not surprised that UI and the Office of the State Archaeologist decided to make their initial school visits with the Museum to this part of the state" said Nepstad. "The people of Northeast Iowa have a long and proud history of supporting the protection of special places, including the creation of Effigy Mounds National Monument," said Nepstad. "It's great to see the state of Iowa highlighting and honoring this tradition."

Plans are underway to further highlight Effigy Mounds and its museum objects. The Museum's static displays are designed to be cycled out to keep the information fresh for repeat visitors, and Monument staff hope to include Effigy Mounds exhibits in the Museum by the 2016 NPS Centennial.



Waterville Elementary students studying the mega fauna display within the Mobile Museum during a visit to Waterville Elementary.

Interior Museum Program

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