Sansavilla Bluff: Survey at the Crossroads of the Colonial Georgia Frontier

The LAMAR Institute
Sansavilla Bluff:
Survey at the Crossroads of the Colonial Georgia Frontier

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- Library of Congress
- Perkins Library, Duke University Library
- National Archives of Canada
- National Archives and Records Administration, Main Branch, Cartographic Unit, and Southeast Regional Branch
- New York Public Library
- University of Georgia Main, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript, and Map Libraries
I. Introduction

This research report captures glimpses of life in the southern backcountry of the British Empire in eighteenth century Georgia. The search focused on a colonial battleground known as Fort Mount Venture massacre located on the lower Altamaha River. Fort Mount Venture and its small garrison of Georgia Rangers was attacked and burned by Spanish-allied Yamassee Indians in late 1742. All of the occupants who were at home at the time of the attack were slaughtered or taken prisoner. The project may have located vestiges of this massacre site in addition to many other very important aspects of eighteenth century settlement in the area. Consequently, human understanding of the area’s history and archaeology is substantially enriched by the LAMAR Institute’s study.

The Sansavilla Bluff of the Altamaha River in Wayne County, Georgia was a strategic location on the frontier in the colonial to early federal eras. Here a major inland trail that connected Georgia with Florida crossed the Altamaha River. This prominent bluff location lent itself to selection for military fortifications. The most famous of these was Fort Mount Venture, also known as Mary Musgrove Matthews’ Trading Post. Mary was a central figure in colonial Georgia, serving as an interpreter, advisor, and negotiator between the British and Creek Indians. By 1737 John and Mary Musgrove had “settled a trading house on the south side of said [Altamaha] river, about 150 miles up the same river, by water, at a place called Mount Venture…” (White 1854:27). Fort Mount Venture was garrisoned by a troop of fewer than 20 Georgia Rangers in the early 1740s. By the late 1750s Georgia defensive of this region had shifted to the opposite bank of the Altamaha River in present-day McIntosh County, where Fort Barrington was established.

Historians and archaeologists have shown interest in the Fort Mount Venture episode for many decades. Historian Margaret Davis Cate began a search for the Mount Venture site in the late 1930s (Cate various dates; Leslie 1976). Her research located a colonial plat that depicted an old house on a land tract on Sansavilla Bluff, which Cate suspected to be related to the Mount Venture settlement. Cate argued her case to historian John Goff, who discounted her interpretation, preferring a location at the forks of the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers for Mount Venture (Cate 1954). Goff compiled extensive information files on early forts, trails and placenames in Georgia and was a recognized authority on the subject (Goff various dates; 1954; Hemperly and Goff 1977; Utley and Hemperly 1977). Cate was unsuccessful in enticing any archaeologists to investigate Sansavilla Bluff’s potential and the area remained unexplored by professionals for three decades.

A chance discovery of a colonial site in the 1960s by a local relic collector, Mark Smith, led to the involvement at Sansavilla Bluff of the University of Georgia’s Anthropology Department and the Georgia Historical Commission. The fort’s location was tentatively identified by archaeologists Arthur R. Kelly and Gordon M. Midgette in the late 1960s and early 1970s. No reports of their work were written by either Kelly or Midgette and the information that these men gathered was lost to posterity, as were the artifacts collected from the sites (Midgette 1973; Gailey 1971; Steed 1969). Other visits by University of Georgia archaeologists and anthropology students took place in the period...
from the 1970s to the 1990s. Several sites were recorded as a result of this reconnaissance-level survey work. No reports of these investigations were prepared.

The present project attempted to rectify these shortcomings by gathering historical documentation, surveying the suspected area of the fort and other associated military and topographic features, and carefully delineating these archaeological remains. The survey also was expected to yield information on military and nonmilitary settlements from later periods of Georgia history. Because the precise location of Fort Mount Venture was open to question, a broad study area was defined that encompassed the entire Sansavilla Bluff, Alleck Island, and adjacent areas. A moderate amount of success was achieved in each of these arenas.

The survey examined 30 archaeological sites in Wayne County and two sites in neighboring McIntosh County. A number of these sites exhibited eighteenth century components, including artifacts that possibly had a military function. Archaeologists exerted the most effort on a study of Site 9Wy4, which was extensively excavated by previous archaeologists who identified it as Fort Mount Venture. That assumption, however, proved premature. The study was broadened to test several other archaeological sites that were potential candidates as the Mount Venture fortifications. The results of the historical and archaeological research on these 32 archaeological sites are presented in the following chapters.
II. Project Background

ENVIRONMENT

Sansavilla Bluff is located on the west bank of the Altamaha River in Wayne County, Georgia (Figures 1-3). The study area lies within Georgia’s interior coastal plain. Sansavilla Bluff has two recognized physiographic parts—Upper Sansavilla and Lower Sansavilla, and the two divisions are separated by a minor unnamed drainage and ravine. The lower end of the bluff drops gradually into the river floodplain. Aleck’s Creek defines the southern boundary of the landform. A large portion of the Lower Sansavilla Bluff locale is also known as Alleck Island, although this area would be considered an island only in extreme flooding conditions since the topography of the bluff rises well above the Altamaha floodplain (U.S.G.S. 1978a, 1978b, 1993). Soils in the area are comprised of sands and sandy clay (Aydelott et al. 1965). Freshwater springs are located in at least two areas along the bluff. These springs were almost certainly flowed more vigorously in the eighteenth century than today. The forest cover of most of the high ground at Sansavilla Bluff was extensively modified by the timber industry in the twentieth century. Today, the area is dominated by planted pine forests in varying stages of re-growth. A narrow margin of hardwoods flanks the river bluff precipice and its steep side slopes. Some small stands of swamp hardwoods dot the landscape where sinks or springheads have made pine plantations impractical. The Altamaha River swamp is dominated by swamp hardwoods and bald cypress, which are secondary growth.

Figure 1. Project Location.
The study area has been known historically as Sansavilla Bluff, although the origin of this name remains a mystery (Jordan 1976; Utley and Hemperley 1977; Boyd 1951). John Goff (cited in Midgette 1973:n.p.) described the area,

The Sansavilla Bluffs…extend along the river for almost three miles—from Aleck Island to Alecks Creek. The southeast end is called “Lower Sansavilla,” while the northwest tip which breaks at Alecks Creek is called “Upper Sansavilla.” The latter is the higher of the two places, but Lower Sansavilla Bluff comes to an elevated point directly on the river at a bend, and permits a more commanding view up and down the Altamaha. In fact, the scene is one of the unique and unforgettable sights of Georgia.

Figure 2. Study Area.
PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The first documented archaeological research in the Sansavilla Bluff vicinity was by antiquarian Clarence Bloomfield (C.B.) Moore, whose exploits of aboriginal mounds are detailed in *Certain Mounds of the Altamaha River*, which was printed in 1899 (Moore 1899:175; Larson 1998:59-60, 273). Moore was a wealthy explorer who traveled up the Altamaha River with a large excavation crew aboard his steamboat *Gopher*. Moore and his team examined a small burial mound, which was possibly located on Aleck Island within the study area. He provides few details about the precise location of the mound or its contents other than noting,

Fort Barrington, in Liberty county [sic, McIntosh County], about 23 miles by water above Darien, has opposite to it a landing, about 300 yards in a westerly direction from which was a small mound greatly plowed down. It was two-thirds dug through by use yielding nothing beyond a few decayed human bones here and there (Larson 1998:175).

The precise location of Moore’s mound is unknown, although it is possibly related to Site 9Wy6. In April 1940 archaeologist Joseph R. Caldwell recorded a mound that also may have been in the vicinity of 9Wy6, which he named Lower Sansavilla Bluff. Caldwell’s field site form noted that the sand mound measured approximately 6 feet high and 25 feet in diameter and exhibited some pitting and erosion. No artifacts were reported by Caldwell, who noted it was, “probably close to Moore’s ‘Mound near Barrington”
(Caldwell 1940). Steed and Smith noted that an “ossuary mound” was located in the vicinity of 9Wy6, which was destroyed when the soil was removed as borrow dirt (William Steed personal communication July 2000; Smith 2000a). Site 9Wy6 and Caldwell’s Lower Sansavilla Bluff Mound are possibly the same. Fortunately, C. B. Moore apparently was not interested in historic sites that he encountered on his journeys.

The first historical researcher to seriously investigate the eighteenth century component of Mount Venture was Margaret Davis Cate. Cate, who was instrumental in creating the Fort Frederica National Monument, had long been interested in colonial Georgia and its tangible remains. She spent several years researching Mount Venture. Cate noted in a 1938 letter to historian John Goff,

> Today I had a nice trip to the site which I believe was Mary Musgrove’s trading post, Mount Venture. Want to take you and Mr. Irvine up there, but want most of all to have an archaeological expedition get under way so as to see if we can locate the debris which should be at the trading post which has burned. Through a plat on file in Mr. Wilson’s office I have found what I believe is the exact site (Cate 1938).

Goff did not agree with Cate’s Wayne County location for Mount Venture, as his research led him to believe the place to be further upstream on the Altamaha River in present-day Appling County.

Cate’s correspondence shows that she contacted several others about Mount Venture and Sansavilla Bluff. In a letter dated November 29, 1938, Mr. I. F. Arnow wrote to Cate regarding the Mount Venture fort: “...This distance from Frederica, 60 miles, if approximately correct, or possible in northwest corner of Glynn County would certainly fix the site of Fort Venture in Wayne county, and I believe, at, or near, the old crossing of the Altamaha, at Fort Barrington” (Arnow 1938). In his letter Arnow quoted from Royal Governor James Wright’s address to the congress of Indians held at Augusta November 21, 1763. In answer to Captain Aleck’s claim of English encroachment, Wright said, “Captain Aleck has mentioned a claim to his settlement at Sancta Seveilla, which he says has been run out; as to which the governors observe, that they know of no survey being made on any settlement of his...” (Arnow 1938; CRG 39:369-370). Arnow wrote again to Mrs. G. V. Cate on March 8, 1939 regarding the origin of the name of St. Savilla (Arnow 1939). Another letter to Cate, dated March 10, 1939 from Geo D. L____[illegible] to Mrs. M. D. Cate also discussed the origin of the name of San Sevilla, as well as, reference to a newspaper article and a reference to an unspecified old map (Anonymous 1939).

Cate wrote to E. Merton Coulter, a history professor at the University of Georgia, on March 3, 1939 regarding Mary Musgrove’s trading post at Mount Venture: “...I am so very certain about the location of Mount Venture, or Fort Venture, as it was sometimes called, that I am writing again to present the few items that I have collected on the subject...” (Cate 1939).

A colleague of Cate’s, Millard Reese wrote her on March 10, 1939 regarding Sansavilla Bluff,
Lower Sansavilla is a beautiful bluff and is easily accessible. One of these Sunday afternoons I will try to take you out and let you see it for yourself. The Upper bluff is not so accessible. I have been interested in the property nearly fourteen years and have never seen the Upper bluff. However, my information is that the lower bluff is much higher than the upper and it is considerably nearer to the point of the river where the old Fort road ran. So it seems most probable that the lower bluff is the location of Mount Venture or Fort Venture (Reese 1939).

Mrs. J. E. Hays wrote to Cate on March 30, 1938 providing her with information from the Georgia Senate Journal of 1792 regarding another settlement on Sansavilla Bluff. The town of Williamsburg was established when: “William and Farr Williams and others, praying that a Town may be laid out on Little Saint Savilla Bluff, on the Alatamaha river...”(Cate 1938; Georgia General Assembly [Senate Journal] 1791-92:138-139).

In 1943 Cate briefly described Mount Venture, “A few miles up the Altamaha River above the White Post [Carteret Point] was Mount Venture, where another group of Rangers was stationed and where Mary Musgrove had a trading post” (Cate 1943:125). If Cate was ever able to secure the services of an archaeologist to inspect the suspected Mount Venture site, she left no record of it. Her correspondence leaves a clear indication that she sought academic confirmation of her “amateur historical sleuthing”. The full extent of her personal field inspection of Sansavilla Bluff is unknown.

Pinpointing the precise location of Fort Mount Venture for the ABPP study was problematic. Cate suggested a possible location for Fort Mount Venture was in present Wayne County, at Sansavilla Bluff. Alternatively Fort Mount Venture was thought by Goff to be located on another bluff further upstream on the Altamaha. Goff’s notes revealed his careful review of the map evidence for Mount Venture’s location, which is summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Cartographer</th>
<th>Mount Venture Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>Yonge and DeBrahm</td>
<td>West Side, above Beard’s Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>East Side, Below “The Forks”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Purcell</td>
<td>South Side, Below High Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Purcell</td>
<td>South Side, Below High Bluff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>Below High Hill &amp; Buffaloe Bluff, above Mt. Venture Creek &amp; Beard’s Bluff</td>
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The earliest of these maps used by Goff in his analysis (Figure 4, Yonge and DeBrahm 1763) was drawn more than two decades after the Mount Venture fort was abandoned. Detailed land records for this area from the 1740s have not been located. Based on his extensive cartographic research, Goff maintained the opinion that Mount Venture was actually located further upstream, northwest of Wayne County. Goff concluded that the likely location of Mount Venture was between 5 Mile and 10 Mile Creeks in present-day Appling County. On this particular count, however, Goff was possibly wrong and Cate was likely right. Goff heavily relied on the post-1762 cartographic evidence for the location of Mount Venture, even though these maps were rendered long after the fort had been erased. Unfortunately, it was several more decades before archaeologists began to
pay attention to Sansavilla Bluff. Even then they did not take full advantage of Cate’s research on Mount Venture.

The 1763 map of the region by Surveyors Yonge and DeBrahm is a very important cartographic source for information about the Georgia frontier. Henry Yonge and William DeBrahm were appointed as Surveyors-General to Georgia in 1754. DeBrahm had arrived in Georgia in October 1751 (Jones 1992). Both men were well traveled in the region and may have visited the former site of Fort Mount Venture at Sansavilla Bluff, and other landmarks on the west side of the Altamaha River. DeBrahm certainly visited the Fort Barrington vicinity since he drafted plans for the fort, as well as a map of the locality surrounding the fort (DeBrahm n.d.; DeVorsey 1971).

As noted, the Yonge-DeBrahm map depicts the fortification at Mount Venture fortification at a location on the west bank of the Altamaha River, approximately 14 miles northwest of Fort Barrington and 66 miles southeast of the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee River confluence. These two measurements would place Mount Venture well to the northwest of the present study area. If the Yonge-DeBrahm map is correct, then the eighteenth century settlements in the study area represent “Indian houses”. The map depicts two “Indian path[s]” paralleling both sides of the river. The Indian path on the west side of the Altamaha River connected the following cultural features:
- Fort Barrington [ferry crossing];
- Indian houses;
- Mont Ventur;
- Matony’s house, and;
- Humphrey’s [illegible] house.

The path on the east side of the Altamaha River, from southeast to northwest, connects:

- Fort Barrington;
- Middleton’s plantn [plantation], and;
- Bosomworth’s old Trading place.

A ford is shown crossing the Altamaha River below Matony’s house. At that location the path on the east side of the river makes a significant detour to avoid some wetlands. It is interesting to note that by 1763 when the map was produced, the Bosomworth’s trading post at the forks of the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers is identified as, “old”. Bosomworth’s trading post was operated by Mary [Musgrove Matthews] and Thomas Bosomworth, who was Mary’s third husband. Mary Musgrove Matthews Bosomworth died about that time (1763) and, apparently, the Bosomworth’s business interest at “the forks” was abandoned or in significant decline. By the 1760s the Bosomworth’s had established a plantation home on St. Catherine’s Island and were apparently little involved with events on the frontier.

Another interesting observation pertains to Middleton’s plantation on the east side of the Altamaha River. Modern topographic maps identify “Middleton Lake” on Doctor Creek in southeastern Long County. This suggests some continuity in geographic placenames from 1763 to the present day. Middleton’s plantation ruins on the modern landscape would be approximately 4 kilometers northeast of Upper Sansavilla Bluff, west of Dick’s Island in McIntosh County. The fortification on at “Mont Ventur” was, according to Yonge and DeBrahm, located several kilometers upstream from Middleton’s plantation, which would place it well northwest of the study area.

Angie Jordan, a local historian, provided this information on the archaeological excavations at Mount Venture [she is referring to the area of Midgette’s investigation].

Nearby [Aleck Island on Sansavilla Bluff] is Mount Venture, where Mary Musgrove once had a trading post. Mount Venture was burned in 1742, but the remains are still evident today. The spot is marked by definite post patterns in the ground, and by much burned debris. Melted glass, beads, and ceramics can be found in the area in abundance. These remains are commonly associated with the 1720-1750 period (Jordan 1976:30).

Wayne County historian Margaret C. Jordan noted,

I have been in the area [of Mount Venture] with archaeologists. As they sifted sand and dirt, I gathered up beads and other artifacts, including gunflints. The archaeologists had already removed the two feet or so of soil and debris, which had accumulated through 200 years of time, and I saw burned posts they had uncovered from the old fort. Many historians state that Mary Musgrove’s Trading Post was at the same location as the burned fort (The archaeologists believe, from other artifacts uncovered at the same site,
that a Spanish Mission was also once located on Alleck’s Island) (Jordan and Sewell 1976:31).

Jordan’s history of Wayne County includes four photographs with a single caption, which reads, “The artifacts were found by archaeologists [sic] at Mount Venture (Author [Jordan] personally found the beads shown)” (Jordan and Sewell 1976:35-36). The artifacts include a major portion of an aboriginal pottery vessel, other aboriginal pottery sherds, wine bottle fragments, wrought nails, tobacco pipe stems, glass trade beads, historic ceramics, chipped stone projectile points [Archaic and Woodland types represented], and other unidentified items. Jordan’s history also includes photographs of chipped stone tools that were collected from “near Alleck’s Island” and from “up and down the Altamaha River”. This collection included one “Clovis Point” from the Alleck’s Island vicinity (Jordan and Sewell 1976:37). Jordan’s history also includes a photograph of three nearly-complete aboriginal pottery vessels that were, “excavated on the shores of the Altamaha [River] (Jordan and Sewell 1976:38). Jordan cited the archaeologists by noting,

Gordon Midgette and Bill Steed, archaeologists from the University of Georgia, who worked in the area for many months, had this to say, ‘The burned debris of the trading post did exist, but it was nearly 30 years before Margaret Cate’s hypothesis was proven archaeologically. The many burned and melted beads, gunflints, chinaware and other artifacts from the site are currently being analyzed by the author and other experts (Jordan and Sewell 1976:31).

Archaeology of the Sansavilla Bluff vicinity has a tragic history but this tragedy was mostly self inflicted by the archaeologists who worked there. The site began its downhill slide innocently enough, when an intriguing eighteenth century site was found by interested collectors Eugene Hodges and Mark Smith (and his son David T. Smith), shortly after a timber clear-cut operation by Brunswick Pulp and Paper around 1960. The mechanical harvest of the timber had exposed an abundance of archaeological artifacts from the early historic period. These two men reported the damaged archaeological site to Arthur Kelly at the University of Georgia, who went to the site with Hodges and excavated a single exploratory trench. Sometime after Kelly’s initial visit to the site, but prior to 1969, Gordon Midgette returned and conducting additional excavations under the auspices of the Georgia Historical Commission. Neither Kelly’s nor Midgette’s findings were ever reported.

Although Midgette made brief mention of the work at Sansavilla Bluff in his 1976 thesis, no field records or published records of this work were located. Neither were any of the artifact collections made by Midgette for Sansavilla Bluff. Midgette mentioned the preparation of a nomination packet for Fort Barrington and Sansavilla Bluff National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Fragments of Midgette’s draft NRHP nomination forms for sites at Sansavilla Bluff were reproduced in a 1973 survey manuscript report, entitled, “A Preliminary Survey of Known Archaeological Sites in the Lower Altamaha Corridor (“(Midgette 1973). In this document Midgette cites an unpublished manuscript by Midgette and William Steed, entitled, “Excavations at Mount Venture and the Sansavilla Bluffs”. This document was not located in spite of an extensive search. Midgette stated in his 1973 report,
I [Midgette] prepared national register forms for all three of these sites [Mount Venture-Aleck’s Island, Lower Sansavilla, and Upper Sansavilla] in 1972 and they were sponsored by Mrs. Margaret Jordan, the Wayne County Historian. The sites are of multiple occupations, with both stratified and horizontal distributions of early archaic, fibre tempered, Deptford, Swift Creek, Weeden Island, Savannah, Guale, Spanish Mission, early colonial trading posts, Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War occupations (Midgette 1973:n.p.).

No other records of the Sansavilla Bluff nominations or of Midgette’s research were located in a thorough search of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources files, nor were any located in the archived records of the now-defunct Georgia Historical Commission, which are held at the Georgia Department of Archives and History (GDAH). Fort Barrington, which is located in McIntosh County across the Altamaha River from Sansavilla Bluff, was listed on the NRHP in 1972 as a result of Midgette’s efforts. Fort Barrington/Fort Howe was recognized as a historic site in time for the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, but its archaeological potential was not explored (Stember 1974:29). Fort Barrington was not officially entered in the Georgia Archaeological Site File until 1995, when it was recorded by Dan Battle. Efforts to include the Wayne County sites in the NRHP were not pursued (Dean 1973; Parish and Summers 1974). Interviews were conducted by the LAMAR Institute’s researchers Dan and Rita Elliott in July and August 2000 with Martin Proudfoot, William Steed, and David T. Smith.

William Steed, a former undergraduate Anthropology student at the University of Georgia, produced significant written information on the UGA excavation at Sansavilla Bluff. This information was put into a college term paper submitted for Dr. Michael Olien’s Ethnohistory course in 1969. Mr. Steed, who is now an antique dealer on St. Simon’s Island, was interviewed for his recollections on the site and the excavations (Steed 1969, William Steed personal communication July 15, 2000). Steed made a number of important observations concerning the “Aleck Island Site” in his paper, and he noted, “Until a few years ago [prior to 1969], the area of Aleck Island and the Sansavilla Bluffs was covered with a beautiful stand of oaks. However the area is now covered with small pine trees which were planted by the Brunswick Pulp Mill in the early 1960s” (Steed 1969:1).

About 1960, Eugene Hodges learned of, “the great amount of cultural material showing in the area as a result of pulp mill operations” and he contacted the University of Georgia. Dr. Arthur R. Kelly visited the site and according to Steed, “several test trenches were dug, including one at the site in question [Alleck Island]. Steed (1969:3) further noted, “The material from these test trenches is now in the Anthropology lab of the University [of Georgia]; and this material, along with material later picked up on the surface of the site, was used for this paper.” Steed described the excavation site in more detail,

It was at once seen that this site was historic since almost all the material recovered was of European origin. It appeared that there was only one structure involved since the material was found over an area only about the size of a small lot, even after being scattered by the plow. Also, it appeared that the structure in question had burned since
almost all artifacts recovered bore traces of the fire-melted glass, cracked and chared [sic] china etc. (Steed 1969:3).

Steed reported the recovery of the following artifacts from the Aleck Island Site:

- 1 iron hatchet
- brass kettle(s) fragments
- several buckles
- 2 metal buttons (1 spun back type and 1 cast with drilled shank type)
- ceramic fragments (including Fulham stoneware [Rhenish ware?]; [molded] white [salt?] glazed stoneware plates; and green-glazed (sponge-glazed) ware)
- glass fragments
- square nails (including at least 1 wrought T-head type)
- 1 thimble
- 1 large hinge
- trade pipe stem and bowl fragments (approximately 20 stems and several bowl fragments)
- gunflints (including 50 whole and many fragments, mostly burned, 1 blade type, most spall type)
- several kinds of beads (including one round frosted clear glass bead, seed beads, and larger barrel shaped beads)
- some Indian pottery (probably Woodland).

Midgette (1973:n.p.) attributes the artifacts that are shown in Steed’s paper to be, “Artifacts from surface collection made by William E. Steed on Aleck Island”. The artifacts illustrated by Steed include, 3 Clactonian gunflints [spall type], 1 blade gunflint, 1 spun-back type button [South Type 9], solid button, 10 beads, a trade pipe [kaolin pipe bowl/stem], and a nail [T-head wrought] (South 1964). Steed’s gunflint drawings are reproduced in Figure 5.

Steed examined the ages of the various artifacts in his study collection and concluded that, “the occupation of this site dates from sometime before 1750 until around 1760 or 1765” (Steed 1969:11). Steed rejected the hypothesis that his study site was associated with Captain Aleck, instead concluding that, “this structure was an English Trading post” (Steed 1969:15).

Archaeologist John Kellar and his colleagues at the University of Georgia made brief mention of Kelly and Hodge’s exploration at Sansavilla Bluff in their report on the work at the Mandeville Site in Clay County, Georgia:

…in 1960, Kelly and H. Eugene Hodges, a graduate student at the University of Georgia reconnoitred [sic] a large site at San Savilla, outside Brunswick where a local pulp company was bulldozing a large upland tract of several miles square and uncovering considerable quantities of fiber-tempered, with a strong overlay of Deptford check and simple stamped, with Swift Creek materials appearing sporadically. San Savilla was also the site of a trading post and a mid-eighteenth century Cherokee settlement This is one of the richest and relatively less disturbed sites known for the coast, it has never been cultivated until the land was cleared for pine seedlings in 1960 (Kellar et al. 1962:99).
The Principal Investigator, Elliott, examined all collections from the University of Georgia Laboratory of Archaeology from southeastern Wayne County for this project. One unattributed collection (Catalogue 26308, labeled Trading Post Site, 9Wy4, 9-10-68) is probably the collection made by Steed. On that same date (September 10, 1968), Steed and DePratter conducted a test excavation at 9Wy5. A review of the 9Wy4 collection revealed the following artifacts:

- 1 refined white salt glazed stoneware cup rim
- 3 burned stoneware body sherds
- 1 clear tumbler glass sherd
- 1 white seed bead
- 2 small shell barrel beads
- 1 melted large white glass bead
- 2 tobacco pipe stems
- 1 large lead sprue
- 5 burned gunflints (white, crazed and potlidded, none complete)
- 11 burned gunflint fragments (ditto)
- 1 unidentified cinder
- 1 bone
- 1 fiber tempered sherd
- 2 Deptford Check Stamped sherds
- 1 undecorated sand tempered sherd.

Figure 5. Gunflints from 9Wy4, Illustrated by Steed (1969).
The author interviewed several people prior to, during, and following, the present study regarding the archaeological resources at Sansavilla Bluff. These included Daniel Battle, Chester DePratter, Lewis Larson, William Morris, David Smith, Martin Proudfoot, and William Steed.

David T. Smith, an amateur archaeologist and member of the Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society, provided extremely important information about the previous Sansavilla Bluff excavations. Smith, the son of the late Mark Smith, who originally located the archaeological site and reported it to Dr. Arthur Kelly, visited the site on several occasions with his father and with Steed. Smith provided a written description and a schematic diagram, or mental map, of the site based on his recollections. Smith’s mental map is reproduced in Figure 6. Smith’s recollections included some unique details about the archaeological site and the materials that were found. Smith noted that he and Steed had collected from the site and their collection included, “some English pot shards, nails, burned trade beads & a silver shoe buckle”, and he noted, “I saw a pot shard with ‘GR’ on it & a sewing thimble another fellow found but they were stolen. The U of G [University of Georgia] found a trade ax & 10,000 gunflints, all burned & with potlatch [potlid] fractures” (Smith 2000b). Smith’s sketch also contains the general location where a Spanish coin was found. Smith further stated,

Other people dug at the trading post [in addition to Kelly] so I don’t think much is left except the chimney’s, still there were several outbuildings (blacksmith shop, stables, barn, and two or three unidentified buildings and a well) that were never touched. Also I think they were throwing their trash off the bluff so there might be a midden there (Smith 2000b).

William Morris, another amateur archaeologist and member of the Society for Georgia Archaeology, visited Midgette’s excavations at Sansavilla. Morris also collected artifacts from the site, including glass beads and gunflints (William Morris personal communication October 2001). Examples from Morris’ collection are shown in Figure 7. Mr. Morris was able to confirm several of the general facts about the site and its excavation, as related by Proudfoot, Smith, and Steed.

Many others made their own personal relic collections from Lower Sansavilla Bluff, including Jean Hope, Margaret Jordan, Angie Jordan, and others (Martin Proudfoot personal communication August 2, 2000; Jordan 1976). The current whereabouts of these miscellaneous collections was not determined in the present study. Collectively, their removal from the site and subsequent dispersal represents a significant negative impact to the archaeological remains.
Figure 6. David T. Smith’s Mental Map of the Sansavilla Bluff Site, ca. late 1960s-early 1970s (Smith 2000b).
Elliott interviewed William Steed was interviewed in July 2000. Steed recounted the general story of the site’s discovery and excavation work by Gordon Midgette and Steed. Steed noted that the site had been discovered by Mark Smith. Steed noted that he had made many return visits to the site to sift for glass beads after the formal excavation work by the University of Georgia archaeologists was completed. Steed provided a few additional particulars regarding the site, its location, or the excavations conducted there. He noted that Kelly excavated one trench at the site, which was followed by Midgette’s excavation at the site. Steed was unable to estimate the actual extent of the area excavated by Midgette, but he noted that it was extensive (William Steed personal communication July 15, 2000). Following Kelly’s and Midgette’s exploration, local amateurs and relic hunters plundered the site for trade beads and other relics, although most of this undocumented work appears to have been superficial based on archaeological investigations for the ABPP project. Steed noted that the post-UGA relic hunting episodes included screening of the back dirt of the UGA excavations, which had not been screened by the archaeologists (William Steed personal communication July 15, 2000; Smith 2000a).

Elliott and Rita Folse Elliott interviewed Martin Proudfoot, a retired forester and former employee of Brunswick Pulp and Paper Company, formerly corporate owner of the Sansavilla Bluff property, in July 2000. Mr. Proudfoot described his visits to the
University of Georgia excavations that were conducted by Midgette and Kelly. Proudfoot had a vivid recollection of the excavation site and was able to pinpoint its location on a topographic map. Proudfoot’s location for the site did not correspond to the GASF site location for the site, but he was quite confident of the accuracy of his plotted location. Proudfoot related that the excavations had been extensive, revealing posts and other features.

A review of the collections from Sansavilla Bluff housed at the University of Georgia proved extremely disappointing. Small collections exist and were examined from sites 9Wy1, 9Wy3, 9Wy4, 9Wy5, and 9Wy16. The collections from 9Wy3, 9Wy4 and 9Wy5 are summarized in the discussion of each individual site, later in this report. The locations of some of the sites that were visited in the 1960s are suspect. An examination of the 1938 Wayne County highway map, on which sites were plotted by University of Georgia archaeologists during that period, contains no identified sites in the area. An area of pencil hatch marks is shown in the vicinity of Aleck Island, which may represent those researcher’s archaeological site areas but none are labeled as such. A later highway map (1971) has the plotted locations of 9Wy3 through 9Wy7, 9Wy13 and 9Wy14 in the general project vicinity.

The collection from 9Wy1 (Cat. 9668) was excavated from “Trench 1, T.P. 1, Sansavilla” by Eugene Hodges on December 26, 1960. This collection consisted of chert debitage and a variety of aboriginal pottery. The dimensions and location of this excavation could not be determined.

A surface collection from 9Wy16 was made by Chester DePratter and others. It included aboriginal pottery and a sample of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century materials including ceramics, glass, metal, and tobacco pipes. A cursory examination of these artifacts indicated that they are the remains of an occupation that probably ended prior to 1850.

Daniel Battle, a professional archaeologist living in Beaufort County, South Carolina, made numerous visits to Sansavilla Bluff in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Battle informally reconnoitered many archaeological sites on the bluff after the area was denuded by clear-cutting the timber. He used a metal detector to locate early historic sites. Battle had an excellent “geographical” memory and was able to plot many of the locations of his early metal finds on a topographic map in 1995. This memory map served as a guide during the present study for the relocation of early historic sites. Most of Battle’s sites were successfully relocated, or were located within a few hundred meters of his plotted location. Several other potential archaeological sites that were reported by Battle were not relocated in the present study due to lack of time.
III. Methods

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Sansavilla Bluff ABPP project was preceded by the development of a Detailed Work Plan, which was approved by the ABPP, NPS. That plan incorporated the mission and goals of the project, which were outlined in the grant’s Scope of Work, and it outlined the tasks to be accomplished.

The research was intended to be a multi-disciplinary approach that incorporated history, archaeology, and geography to provide a more comprehensive view of Sansavilla Bluff and its role in American military history. A list of defining features of the Sansavilla Bluff battlefield, which were the target of this study, is presented in Table 1.

The primary target of the research effort was Fort Mount Venture and trading post, which was attacked by Spanish-allied Indians in late 1742. The research team was aware from the onset, however, that other important military sites, from later periods of Georgia history, were likely to be present on the Sansavilla Bluff. Furthermore, the researchers were aware of problems with previous research in the area. The previous research was sorely deficient in terms of reporting, geographical information, and artifacts and records curation. One task was to rectify these deficiencies and attempt to reconstruct the activities and findings of the earlier researchers as best as possible. The research design also called for a search to discover additional sites on Sansavilla Bluff that may share a connection with Fort Mount Venture.

### Table 1. List of Defining Features, Sansavilla Bluff Battlefield.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Feature</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Relevance to Battle</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
<th>Field Comment</th>
<th>Map?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fort Mount Venture</td>
<td>Wayne County, GA</td>
<td>Attacked and burned</td>
<td>CRG, Y&amp;G</td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Musgrove's Trading Post</td>
<td>Wayne County, GA</td>
<td>At Mount Venture</td>
<td>CRG</td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sansavilla Bluff</td>
<td>Wayne County, GA</td>
<td>At Mount Venture</td>
<td>CRG, Y&amp;G</td>
<td>Large expanse</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Altamaha River</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Watercourse</td>
<td>USCOE</td>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Post Road (path to Florida)</td>
<td>Georgia-Florida</td>
<td>Route of Yamassee</td>
<td>CVIOG</td>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Captain Alleck's Field</td>
<td>Below 9Wy4</td>
<td>Geographic reference</td>
<td>GDAH</td>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Captain Alleck's Settlement</td>
<td>9Wy4</td>
<td>Geographic reference</td>
<td>GDAH</td>
<td>See 9Wy4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fort St. Savilla</td>
<td>9Wy65</td>
<td>Geographic reference</td>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>St. Savilla (village)</td>
<td>9Wy15</td>
<td>Geographic reference</td>
<td>CVIOG</td>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fort Barrington</td>
<td>McIntosh County, GA</td>
<td>Geographic reference</td>
<td>DeVorsey</td>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>Upper Sansavilla Bluff</td>
<td>Geographic reference</td>
<td>Sullivan</td>
<td>Identified</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ASP-American State Papers, LOC, American Memory 2005; CRG-Colonial Records of Georgia (Candler 1910); CVIOG-Carl Vinson Institute of Government 2005;GDAH-Georgia Department of Archives and History, Georgia Plats; Sullivan 1989; USCOE-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Yonge and DeBrahm 1763

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Project personnel conducted research in Georgia and out of state repositories mentioned below. These are located in Georgia unless otherwise stated. Local historical research
was conducted at the Georgia Department of Archives and History (GDAH) in Morrow. This repository also houses the records of the Georgia Surveyor General. Resources examined at GDAH included the *John Goff Forts Collection*, the *Colonial Records of Georgia* [cited as CRG] and many published Revolutionary War histories and memoirs. The National Archives and Records Administration, Southeastern Region in East Point, also was visited early in the project. Research was conducted at the University of Georgia libraries in Athens, and at the Columbus State University’s Schwob Library in Columbus. Research for this study also was conducted at the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. and College Park, Maryland; the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; and the National Archives, Ottawa, Canada; and several university and private libraries around the country.

The Huntington Library in San Marino, California contains many documents from the American Revolution that pertain to Georgia and Sansavilla Bluff. The Huntington’s collection of Revolutionary War documents is the largest west of Chicago. These include primary manuscript documents related to General Prevost’s Georgia campaign. The Huntington Library also houses documents relevant to earlier events in coastal Georgia, which may pertain to the Fort Mount Venture massacre. The P.K. Yonge Library in Gainesville, Florida contains many documents pertaining to British East Florida and the military campaigns that were launched from Georgia, as well as campaigns launched by the British from East Florida. These documents include correspondence by Governor Tony and others. The Perkins Library at Duke University contains a variety of manuscript collections pertinent to the American Revolution in Georgia and Sansavilla Bluff, particularly the Robert Howe papers. General Howe participated in the East Florida campaigns and was a frequent visitor to Sansavilla Bluff. General Howe established his headquarters at Fort Howe, which was located across the Altamaha River from Sansavilla Bluff.

In addition to the research at these archival facilities, the author examined many published sources and secondary histories. Study of the backcountry in British America entered into vogue since the 1980s and the present study contributes significantly to this current research theme (Crass et al. 1998; Hinderaker and Mancall 2003). Studies of pre-Revolutionary War military life in Georgia provided important background material for this study (Johnson 1992; Ivers 1974; Elliott 1991, 1997; Davis 2000). Studies relating to the eighteenth century Indian trade in the South also enhanced the project’s historical context (McDowell 1992a-c; Hicks 1998; Cashin 1992; Wright 2001).

Records that were examined included early maps, aerial photographs, other photographs, land records, journals, government records, and military accounts. Early U.S.D.A. aerial imagery provided a better understanding of the relatively recent land modifications resulting from silviculture (U.S.D.A. 1938). A series of early maps of the region, which were provided by the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library (UGA Libraries) and another by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) proved particularly useful in this study.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The archaeological fieldwork began on January 12, 2004 and was completed February 8, 2004. Fieldwork was conducted by a four-person crew over this period. The total station transit maps that were generated by this fieldwork included the establishment of several datum rods for future mapping reference. Figure 8 shows the topographic mapping in progress.

![Figure 8. Topographic Mapping at Sansavilla Bluff.](image)

The Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey consisted of two weeks of fieldwork, followed by an appropriate amount of processing and write-up time. Fieldwork for the GPR survey commenced on January 12, 2004. This work was conducted by Daniel T. Elliott and a field assistant. The survey employed the latest RAMAC system that will be leased from MALA GeoScience USA, Charleston. Elliott has used this system on four previous GPR projects in coastal Georgia with great success (Figure 9). The GPR survey coverage included portions of the suspected Fort Mount Venture site. Other areas were surveyed as landscape conditions and the project budget permitted.
TARGET AREAS

The ABPP survey targeted areas having a high probability for containing archaeological remains. These included potential sites identified by Elliott and Mr. Dan Battle during previous visits to the area. The primary focus was on the suspected Fort Mount Venture site, which was tentatively located during a March 2003 reconnaissance by the LAMAR Institute. Secondary attention was given to the post-revolutionary war forts at Williamsburg and several other unidentified colonial military sites reconnoitered by Battle. None of the submerged underwater resources at Sansavilla Bluff were studied.

STRATEGY FOR RECORDING BATTLEFIELD BOUNDARY AND INTRA-SITE PATTERNING

The documented battle at Sansavilla Bluff occurred in 1742 when Fort Mount Venture was attacked, burned and its garrison massacred by Spanish-allied Yamassee Indians. The Sansavilla Bluff Battlefield survey followed established ABPP procedure for defining battlefield boundaries, which begins with the encampments of the attacking force on the eve of battle and ends at the close of day after the battle is completed. Areas
of the suspected Fort Mount Venture site were systematically examined with shovel tests and small test units for this purpose. Metal detectors were employed to hone the areas selected for study. GPR survey was used at the suspected Fort Mount Venture site to investigate subsurface evidence of that fort.

Some of the military archaeological resources at Sansavilla Bluff may be associated with other military campaigns, such as the three failed American attempts to conquer British East Florida (from 1776 to 1778). Sansavilla Bluff also may have been used as a staging area for the British attack on Fort Howe, which resulted in its destruction. Still other military resources at Sansavilla Bluff may be associated with the Indian uprisings of the Early Federal period. Historical records note the construction of blockhouses at Williamsburg in the 1790s for this purpose (Sullivan 1989). The study area also may contain traces of military activity from the Civil War. Mr. Battle, an authority on the Civil War events in coastal Georgia, suggests that a Confederate post was located in the general area. All military sites, earthworks, or military-related artifacts, regardless of their age, were documented in the field and geographically plotted.

Resources in the study area were mapped using GPS handheld devices and a TOPCON total station with a TDS data collector. Datum rods were established using GPS devices at several locations along the bluff and sites were mapped relative to these reference points.

ESTIMATE OF REMAINING SITE RESOURCES

The archaeological survey of the Sansavilla Bluff battlefield resulted in the destruction of a very small fraction of the entire site. The site is quite large, encompassing several miles of Altamaha River bluff. The core area of study is estimated to be about 100 acres. In reality, the area containing important military sites at Sansavilla Bluff is probably considerably larger than that, particularly if other previously undocumented sites are included. The project produced a more intelligent estimate of the battlefield’s extent. An estimated 0.00001 percent of the Sansavilla Bluff site was sampled by shovel tests or small test units. The percentage of the archaeological resources remaining in the project area is well over 99 percent.

ARPA PROCEDURES AND OTHER FEDERAL PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

The survey area included no Federal Property or Native American (Indian) property. Consequently, no ARPA permits were required for the present study. No cultural properties currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, were previously located within the study area.

Both ARPA procedures and Georgia laws pertaining to the discovery of human remains and Native American burial goods were carefully followed throughout the project. The possibility that human remains are located within the study area was considered highly likely. The massacre at Fort Mount Venture resulted in numerous deaths. Those killed
included Georgia Rangers, their families, servants, and possibly others. To date, no records have been identified attesting to the corporal disposition of the dead. Quite possibly their bodies were consumed by fire when the fort was torched by the Yamassee. Battle noted that the study tract contained at least one historic cemetery. The present survey sought not to disturb these remains and archaeological examination in these areas of suspected graves was confined to non-destructive remote sensing techniques. No shovel tests were placed on any known grave sites.

At present no Native American burial remains are known to exist in the study area. Native American groups that have the potential for interest in the archaeological resources in the study area include the Choctaw and Muscogee Creek tribes. Representatives of these two tribal entities were contacted by letter as a courtesy prior to the onset of field investigations for their comments regarding the project.

LABORATORY ANALYSIS

Laboratory analysis for the project was conducted at Rocquemore Plantation in Box Springs, Georgia. Artifacts were inventoried, cleaned, stabilized, and entered into a Microsoft Access relational database. Selected artifact images were scanned or digitally photographed.

The GPS locational data and field sketch maps were merged into a GIS database that was manipulated by several software programs, including ArcGIS, DesignCAD, and Surfer. GPR field survey data was post-processed and numerous plan and profile views were compiled and studied. The GPR data was managed with MALA GeoScience’s GroundVision and Easy3D software programs.


REPORTING

The final report was compiled from February 2004 through June 2005. Copies of the report were submitted to the National Park Service and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The report is supplemented by a series of three appendices, which are contained on a DVD disc. Appendix 1 contains an inventory of artifacts from the study. Summary tables of artifacts by site and other proveniences are included in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 consists of a series of digital artifact images of selected artifacts located in this study. Because of the sensitive and fragile nature of the archaeological resources in the remote Sansavilla Bluff vicinity, geographic locations for these resources
have been purposefully left out of the report. These data were included in the GASF site forms, which are on file in Athens, Georgia. An edited version of this report, in which sensitive site location data is redacted, will be posted for free public download on the LAMAR Institute webpage, http://shapiro.anthro.uga.edu/Lamar/reports.htm.

**CURATION STATEMENT**

The artifacts, notes and other records amassed by the Sansavilla Bluff Battlefield ABPP research grant project are to be permanently curated at the Georgia Museum of Natural History, Athens, Georgia. Those archaeological collections are currently maintained by Drs. J. Mark Williams and David J. Hally.
IV. History of Sansavilla Bluff

Sansavilla Bluff was the scene of several important historical settlements in colonial Georgia history, including: Mary Musgrove Matthews’ Mount Venture trading post (later established as Fort Mount Venture); Captain Aleck’s settlement; St. Savilla town; Fort St. Savilla (a Glynn County Dragoon fort); and Williamsburg settlement. Cartographers distinguish between the Upper Sansavilla Bluff and the Lower Sansavilla Bluff, as shown in a nineteenth century navigational map (Figure 10).

The earliest documented settlements at Sansavilla Bluff were involved in the deerskin trade between Great Britain and the Southeastern Indian tribes. Soon after its establishment in 1670, South Carolinians asserted themselves into this lucrative trade. Early documents of the South Carolina Indian trade make no specific mention of Sansavilla Bluff. When Georgia was established in 1733, General James Oglethorpe wasted no time in encouraging Georgians to participate in this trade and a competition emerged between the South Carolina and Georgia traders. These traders were licensed by their respective governments and large trading companies emerged by the eighteenth century. Important early trading posts were established at Augusta, Silver Bluff (South Carolina), Mount Pleasant, Yamacraw Bluff, Ogeechee Old Town, Sansavilla Bluff, and the Forks. Several of these sites have been located archaeologically and tentatively
described (Crass et al. 1998; Forehand and Groover 1999; Elliott 1991; Braley 2003; Toner 2002; Sue Moore personal communication 1999; Midgette 1973, [this volume]; Frankie Snow personal communication 2000). Deerskins and other hides were transported overland by the traders and their assistants to markets at Charleston and Savannah. In return, merchants in those towns supplied the traders with European trade goods, including cloth, metal hardware, glass beads, and other trinkets. The trails between these trading posts and the urban markets were well worn by the 1730s.

Fort Mount Venture was located along a major trading path, immediately west of the Altamaha River in Georgia’s interior coastal plain. General James Oglethorpe recognized the military significance of this place when he established a Georgia Ranger garrison there in 1739. The massacre at Fort Mount Venture in 1742 served to check the advancement of colonial Georgians to the areas west of the Altamaha River. It represented the single-worst military disaster for the Georgians in King George’s War, which was known locally as the War of Jenkins Ear. The fort was garrisoned by a troop of Georgia Rangers, who were away at the time of the attack, and then reassigned to other ranger posts. The massacre of their families and servants at Mount Venture had a chilling effect on the rangers and potential settlers in the region.

During the period of 1733 to 1742 there appears to be absolute continuity between Mary and John Musgrove, Jacob Matthews, Fort Mount Venture, and the Musgrove/Matthews trading post and Sansavilla Bluff. John Musgrove was an Englishman from South Carolina. His wife Mary was an Upper Creek from Tuckabatchee on the Tallapoosa River. Mary was a related to Emperor Brim, a prominent Upper Creek Mico, and was thus afforded high status and respect among her fellow Creeks. Mary’s father was a Scottish trader, which allowed her access to English culture and education. The Musgrove’s first trading post was located at Yamacraw Bluff on the Savannah River, which was also known as Musgrove’s Cowpen (Braley 2003).

The story at Sansavilla Bluff begins prior to 1737, when John and Mary Musgrove planned to establish a trading post on the lower Altamaha River, which they named Mount Venture. About the same time that the Musgroves shifted part of their trading operation to the Altamaha River, John Musgrove died. Mary Musgrove soon married Jacob Matthews, who had been John Musgrove’s indentured servant, and they operated the trading post at Mount Venture.

In 1739 James Oglethorpe made a tour of the Georgia frontier while enroute to treat with the Creek Nation at Kasita on the Chattahoochee River. Oglethorpe’s first stop was at Mount Pleasant on the Savannah River, where he observed a thriving trading post and was apparently sufficiently impressed by the English trader’s situation that he designated Mount Pleasant as a military post, declared the traders to be its Ranger garrison and appointed the head Indian trader as Captain of the ranger troop. A similar arrangement was authorized by Oglethorpe the following year (1740) for the traders at Mount Venture on the Altamaha River.
MARY MUSGROVE

Mary Musgrove Matthews Bosomworth is one of the most interesting characters in Colonial Georgia history. Her biography has been attempted by numerous scholars, yet she remains a mysterious woman whose influence on Georgia’s affairs and politics has not been fully established (Coulter 1927; Fisher 1990; Gillespie 1997; Harris 1973; Irby 2003; Morris 1999; Todd 1981; Fisher 1990). Mary was born Coosaponakesee, the daughter of a white trader and a Yamacraw mother. Mary’s mother was the sister of Emperor Brim and Mary was also kin to Malatche—both notable and politically powerful Creek chiefs. She was born about 1700 at Coweta, which at that time, was located in the Macon, Georgia vicinity. Mary was educated at Pon-Pon, South Carolina. Mary’s first husband was John Musgrove, Jr., who also was of mixed ethnicity as the son of a white trader and a Creek woman. Mary and John were married about 1725. The couple established trading posts on the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers.

Mary and her first of three husbands, John Musgrove, established a trading post at Yamacraw Bluff possibly prior to 1730. Soon after Georgia was settled in 1733, John and Mary established their trading post at Mount Venture (Jordan and Sewell 1976:31-32). In 1733 Mary was introduced to James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia. Oglethorpe immediately employed Mary as an interpreter in treaty talks with the Yamacraw and Creek Indians.

Richard Irby (2003) provides this biographical summary of Mary’s life, “Mary put the traders and Indian couriers in her employ at the disposal of Oglethorpe. Mary also established a trading post called Mount Venture on the south side of the Altamaha River one hundred and fifty miles above its mouth in order to keep an eye on the Indians and the Spanish”.

Following the death of her husband John, Mary Musgrove married John’s indentured servant Jacob Matthews in 1736. Their marriage was relatively short-lived and in the mid 1740s, Mary married her third husband Reverend Thomas Bosomworth. Mary lived to the age of 63 or 65 (scholars disagree on her date of death, 1763 or 1765) and was buried at her plantation on St. Catherines Island (Peck 2003; Irby 2003; Thomas et al. 1978).

JOHN MUSGROVE

Although Mary is given most of the credit for serving as Oglethorpe’s translator with the Indians, John Musgrove, Jr. actually served first in this capacity in treaty talks in Savannah in May 1733. The resulting treaty, known as the Treaty of Savannah, set the town for Georgian-Lower Creek Relations for the next decade. These talks were attended by representatives of the Coweeta, Cussetas, Owseecheys, Cheehaws, Echetas, Pallachucolas, Oconas, and Eufaule (The Pennsylvania Gazette July 5, 1733). Ed Jackson and Charly Pou provide this concise biography of Mary’s first husband, John Musgrove, Jr.:
Indian trader John Musgrove died near Savannah, Georgia. Born in South Carolina around 1695, Musgrove followed in his father's footsteps as an Indian trader. In 1716, he married Coosaponekeesa (daughter of a white trader and the niece of Brims, the principal chief of the Lower Creeks in the early 1700s), who took the name of Mary Musgrove and became an important figure in Georgia colonial history. By 1732, the Musgroves had established a successful trading post among the Yamacraw Indians on the southern banks of the Savannah River. In early 1733, John and Mary met James Oglethorpe, who had come looking for a place to settle the first Georgia colonists. On this occasion and the arrival of the colonists (Feb. 1 O.S., Feb. 12 N.S), John acted as principal interpreter for talks between Oglethorpe and Yamacraw chief Tomochichi. In 1734, Musgrove accompanied Oglethorpe and a Yamacraw delegation on a trip to England to serve as their interpreter. For his services, the Trustees granted Musgrove a 500-acre grant of land just north of Savannah. On May 15, 1735, the Trustees awarded Musgrove an exclusive license to trade with the Yamacraw and Yuchi Indians. However, in less than a month, Musgrove died near Savannah (Jackson and Pou 2003).

JACOB MATTHEWS

William Stephens, the Secretary for the Georgia Trustees, held a poor opinion of Jacob Matthews. Stephens noted in 1740 that it was useless “to foul more Paper in tracing Jacob Matthews through his notorious Debauches; and after his spending whole Nights in that Way, reeling home by the Light of the Morning, with his Banditti about him”. Stephens provided this assessment of Jacob Matthews,

On his Master’s Death he found Means to get into the Saddle in his Stead, fitly qualified to verify the old Proverb of a Beggar on Horseback; soon learning to dress in gay Cloaths, which intitled him to be a Companion with other fine Folks of those Days, . . . . He was flattered to believe himself a Man of great Significance, and told, that he would be to blame not to exert himself, and let the World know what his Power was with the Indians; wherefore he might expect the Trust would have a singular Regard to that, and be careful to oblige him in all he should expect. Thus prepared, what may we not expect from him?-- To pass over many of his late Exploits a few of which I have touch’d on in some of my preceding Notes; he seems now to be grown ripe for exemplifying to what Uses he means to employ that Influence he thinks he has over those neighboring Indians, who by half Dozens or more at a Time, have daily of late been flocking about his House in Town, where they continually get drunk with Rum, and go roaring and yelling about the Streets, as well at Nights as Days, to the Terror of some, but the Disturbance and common Annoyance of everybody (Coulter 1958-1959).

Jacob Matthews’ neighbor Robert Williams held the man in higher esteem:

I was an Inhabitant in this Province and lived at the next Plantation to Mr. Jacob Mathews on the River Savannah . . . he had cleared and planted a large Tract of Land with English Wheat, Indian Corn, Pease, and Potatoes; and veriy believe he had a larger Crop than any Planter raised by the Labour of White Hands within the said County And I further declare that I have often heard the said Mathews say, that he never received from the Trustees, or Persons in Power at Savannah on their Behalf, Any Bounty or Reward for the said produce. . . . (Irby 2003).
FORT MOUNT VENTURE

In 1739 General Oglethorpe commissioned Jacob Matthews the rank of Captain, in command of a Ranger Troop posted at the Mount Venture trading post that John and Mary Musgrove had established several years earlier. That garrison was known as Fort Mount Venture. On December 7, 1741, General Oglethorpe wrote to Harman Verlest, in which he noted,

Besides the regular troops, it was absolutely necessary to keep up the two troops of Rangers raised for the siege of Saint Augustine, also the Highland Company and the company of boatmen as well as garrisons at Fort Augusta, at Mount Pleasant, at Mount Venture and fortify different places (Oglethorpe 2003).

Oglethorpe’s timing on the creation of the Fort Mount Venture ranger troop, as well as other similar troops on the Georgia frontier, was excellent. Only months after concluding treaty talks with the Creek Nation, Georgia was at war with Spain. The Georgia Rangers were heavily involved in Oglethorpe’s campaign against the Spanish in St. Augustine, as well as other more mundane and localized tasks.

Although Thomas Jones, a Georgia colonist who was very familiar with the Georgia frontier, places Mount Venture 150 miles from Savannah, Oglethorpe’s letter to William Stephens, dated Feb 1, 1740, stated that, “Mathews’s new settlement [is] but two days journey from Savannah”, which indicates that the fort could not have been 150 miles away (CRG 22(2):313). Records stated that Mount Pleasant (on the Savannah River) and Mount Venture were located, “100 miles from the sea”. The South Carolina Commons Journal, for January 30, 1740, recounted a letter from General Oglethorpe, which placed Fort Mount Venture 60 miles up the Altamaha River.

On March 12, 1741, Stephens made this journal entry,

Mathews boat was designed to carry his wife to the South with divers goods proper for carrying on the Indian trade on the River Altamaha, as the General had formerly approved of; though his infirm state would not allow him to accompany his wife, the late illness he sustained having rendered the use of his arms and other parts in a doubtful way of recovery (CRG v:4(Suppl:103).

William Stephens made this entry in his journal on April 29, 1741, “Mr. Matthews having Orders from the General, immediately to repair to his Duty, with his Company of Rangers, at Mount Venture in the South, upon the Alatamaha…” (CRG 4(Supplement):133).

Thomas Jones, Storekeeper for the Trustees, noted in a letter to the Trustees Accountant, dated May 6, 1742, that Notway [Nottaway] was an Indian slave belonging to Captain Jacob Matthews (CRG 23:329). Nottaway and another Indian came to Jones’ house demanding to see him, on behalf of Jacob Matthews. Jones and Matthews apparently had a serious disagreement about Georgia’s affairs. Nottaway later provides important details as a survivor of the Fort Mount Venture massacre.
In 1740 General Oglethorpe appointed Jacob Matthews as a Georgia Ranger Captain and authorized him to raise 20 men and command a garrison at Mount Venture (CRG 36:274). By 1742, however, the Mount Venture garrison consisted of only 15 men and officers (CRG 35:556). Expenses of the Fort Mount Venture garrison for the years 1741 and 1742 were recorded in the Colonial Records (CRG 35:556; 36:187).

Although no muster lists or pay lists have been located for Fort Mount Venture, the composition of the Georgia Ranger troop at Mount Venture can be partially reconstructed from direct historical records and by inference from surviving records from other Georgia Ranger troops of the period (Egmont 1739:14204(5) 38c (141). They probably included:

- Captain Jacob Matthews
- Lieutenant William Francis (later promoted to Captain)
- Cornet or Ensign, unknown
- Quartermaster, unknown
- Musician(s) (drummers or french horns), unknown
- Privates, unknown (approximately 9 to 13 men)
- Creek Indians (servants or slaves), Nottaway and possibly others unknown

Few maps from the period of the fort’s existence have survived that show its location in any detail. A 1763 map drawn by surveyor’s Yonge and Debrabhm depict Mount Venture on the west side of the Altamaha River above Beard’s Creek (see Figure 4). Bowen’s 1764 map shows Mount Venture on the east side of the Altamaha River below “the Forks”. The 1776 Purecell map shows Mount Venture on the south side of the Altamaha below High Hill and the 1780 Purecell map shows Mount Venture on the south side of the Altamaha River below High Bluff. Wilson’s 1785 map shows Mount Venture above Beard’s Bluff and Mount Venture Creek and below High Hill and Buffaloe Bluff. Based on these later cartographic sources, Historian John Goff concluded that Mount Venture was far upstream from Sansavilla Bluff. Goff surmised that Fort Mount Venture was located on the west side of the Altamaha River, above 5 Mile Lake Creek and Fort James and below Ten Mile Creek. His placement would locate the fort somewhere in Appling County, Georgia, considerably upstream from Sansavilla Bluff.

On June 4, 1742 James Oglethorpe wrote to Captain Matthews at Mount Venture advising him of the impending Spanish threat at St. Augustine (CRG 27:2; 36:62-63). At the time of his letter, however, Matthews was already dead. In early 1742 Captain Jacob Matthews was in ill health when he and Mary left Mount Venture for treatment in Savannah. The Earl of Egmont noted in his journal on April 18, 1742, “That Mrs. Mathews was gone to keep a store on the Allatahama for the Indian nations; and her husband who had the Comand of 20 Rangers was to follow when recovered of his illness, having lost the use of his limbs” (CRG 5:485). Captain Matthews had placed Lieutenant William Francis in charge of the fort in his absence. Matthews never recovered from his illness and died on May 8, 1742 (CRG 5:654).

On the morning of November 7, 1742, a group of Spanish-allied Yamasssee Indians attacked and burned the fort, killing several inside, including Lieutenant Francis’ wife.
and young daughter. All those who survived the attack were taken prisoner. Apparently Lieutenant Francis and a few of his Rangers were at Frederica at the time of the attack.

The exact date of the attack on Fort Mount Venture is debatable. By William Stephens’ account, it occurred several days prior to November 27, 1742, when Stephens wrote to Lord Perceival, Earl of Egmont, informing his lordship that, “the Spanish Indians had burnt and destroyed Mount Venture settlement” (CRG 5:686). Egmont wrote in his journal on November 24, “The Spaniards surprise the Garison of Rangers at Mount Venture and kill them all except L[ieutenant] Will. Francis who escaped by being at Frederica, but on his going back thither they kill’d as he found his wife and child” (CRG 5:657). An eyewitness account by the Indian Nottaway places the event on November 7, 1742 (South Carolina Gazette 1742).

John Dobell, Secretary to the Trustees for the Indian Trade, wrote to the Georgia Trustees on November 30, 1742, informing them of the massacre at Fort Mount Venture. He related the events as follows,

Last Thursday the 26th [November 1742] Mr. Stephens received from Genl Oglethorpe the Melancholy Acct. of a Fort called Fort Venture about 60 Miles distant from Frederica being destroyed by the Spanish Indians. That they murdered the Wife & Child of Wm. Francis the Commander & Two of the Men and took the rest prisoners (tis said Wm Francis was at Frederica, and that Six Men, his Wife & child were in the Fort) one of which was an Indian Slave. This Indian as soon as he was taken began to leap and rejoice for Joy that he was fallen into the hands of the Spanish Indians, telling them that the English had dealt Cruelly with him, by this he gained much Liberty and they permitted, or sent him to Hunt for them: by this means he gate clear, and came safe to Frederica, being the only person that Escaped. He says the No of Spanish Indians which he saw were but 15. That their Design according to their Instructions from the Govr of St. Augustine was against the Darian [Darien], but that they made this in their way. We have great reason to fear that 2 Men more if not the Four were afterwards destroyed (CRG 23:437-438).

Contemporary accounts of the attack on Mount Venture were recorded by several Indians who were present. One survivor was the Creek named Nottoway or Nottaway, a slave owned by Captain Jacob Matthews (mentioned earlier). Nottaway was a Florida Indian who was taken prisoner by the British some years earlier. After the attack on Fort Mount Venture, Nottaway was taken back to Florida as a prisoner where he escaped and returned to Georgia to recite his version of the story (CRG 36:54-55). Nottoway’s deposition was taken on November 22, in which he noted that the Yamassee Indians had killed all except 2, 1 woman & child”. Nottaway placed the date of the attack on November 7, 1742, although other accounts indicate that it may have taken place in late October. Other accounts of the massacre were recorded by Creek Indians identified as Talgier and Wyawney on April 7, 1743 (CRG 37:123; 35:544).

On December 13, 1742, the South Carolina Gazette published this account of the attack at Mount Venture, which took place early in the morning. The Yamassee attackers,
with 5 prisoners, viz Mark McNeal, George Bigwall [Bignall?], Solomon Shad [Shad?], Joseph Upjber, and Nottaway, they set out for Augustine, but soon after they had begun this journey, four of the Indians return’d and knock’d Mrs. Francis and her child’s brains out, while the others also murdered Mc Neal and Bignall: after they had Travell’d 5 days, Nottaway (when they made very much off) on pretense of hunting, made his Escape from them, and gave this account (South Carolina Gazette 1742).

General Oglethorpe informed the Duke of Newcastle of the event in a letter on November 24, 1742. Oglethorpe noted that Mount Venture was burnt and “most [of the] rangers [were] killed”, which, “thereby opened up a passage to upper settlements in Georgia over North branch of the Altamaha” (CRG 37:544). Evidently, artillery had been present at Mount Venture, because following its destruction, orders were issued for the, “Mt. Venture, burned artillery to be sent to Charleston” (CRG 36:6).

Another brief account of the Mount Venture attack was penned by the Lutheran minister Johann Martin Bolzius at New Ebenezer, who wrote this moralistic account in his diary on November 27, 1742,

This afternoon the quartermaster at Fort Argyle, Mr. Milledye [John Milledge], sent to me by way of two of his soldiers a letter wherein he reported that he had received news from General Oglethorpe that the Spanish Indians had taken Fort Venture on the Alathamaha River by surprise and had compelled the soldiers to surrender the same. He said they had surrendered upon the agreement of free withdrawal, to which the Indians consented at first, but nonetheless as soon as they had taken possession of the fort and the weapons they killed the wife of Captain Francis and her child, and three men, and dragged off three alive. A man escaped from them and delivered the report. Our rangers were warned to be on their guard, for there is some worry that the Spanish Indians wish to press further inland to Fort Argyle and some of the plantations of Savannah. It is an especial judgment of God on the above-mentioned woman. She is a German whose parents were His people, and had already died a few years ago. Mr. Jones accepted the children (and therefore this femal); she served and acquainted with an unmarried Englishman named Francis, she was faithfully warned by me and Mr. Jones against seduction. But she paid no heed to it but rather became a whore, and had herself married, after a time, to this Francis, by the preacher in Purysburg” (Jones 1988:238).

A somewhat different perspective of the attack was given by East Florida’s Governor Manuel de Montiano on December 7, 1742,

That Indians friendly to the Spaniards had assaulted the blockhouse on the Altamaha (he said the English name was Tamaja). Inside they found five English cavalrymen, one Indian, a woman, and her infant daughter. Three of the soldiers died during the initial fighting, leaving as prisoners two horsemen, the Indian, the wife of the commandant, and her child. After imbibing a vast quantity of wine, the Indians then burned the blockhouse and threw all the goods that they could not carry with them into the Altamaha River. With two English soldiers and the Indian as prisoners, they left Mount Venture for St. Augustine. The Indian, it appeared, was happy to be captured by the Spaniards and to leave English tutelage, but this was only a cover. After four days he escaped into the woods. The Yamasee had no idea where he had gone (Tepaske 1976:xxxii).

Approximately 17 to 21 people were living at Mount Venture in 1742. As previously noted, Captain Matthews died of natural causes early in the year. His wife, Mary Musgrove Matthews and Lt. Francis were away from Mount Venture when the attack took place. Several other soldiers in Captain Matthews’ Ranger troop were apparently
absent from the fort when it was attacked. Probable occupants of Fort Mount Venture at the time of the massacre included:

- Mrs. William Francis [maiden name undetermined], a Palatine indentured servant from Ebenezer—killed at Mount Venture
- Infant daughter of William and Mrs. Francis—killed at Mount Venture
- George Bignall, a Ranger taken prisoner and killed after leaving from Mount Venture
- Mark McNeal—a Ranger taken prisoner and killed after leaving Mount Venture
- Two or three unnamed Rangers, killed at Mount Venture
- Joseph/Josef Upjber/Upshaw, a Ranger taken prisoner
- Solomon Shad—a Ranger taken prisoner
- Nottaway, an Indian slave—taken prisoner, escaped in route to St. Augustine

Of those present, only three survived the attack. This included the Germans, Josef Upjber/Upshaw and Solomon Shad, or Salomo Schad, and the Creek slave, Nottaway. Upshaw and Schad were taken to St. Augustine where they were paraded as trophies of war. Nottaway made his escape and returned to the British in Georgia where he recounted his ordeal. Schad also survived the ordeal and went on to a productive life in Georgia. Thus, at least two of those where were in Fort Mount Venture during the 1742 attack survived the ordeal.

**FORT MOUNT VENTURE RESIDENTS**

The residents of Fort Mount Venture were an interesting ethnic mix. They included English, German, Creek Indians, and possibly others. They were mostly men, although historical records indicated that at least two women (Mary Musgrove Matthews and Mrs. William Francis) and one child (Mrs. Francis’ daughter) also lived there. Most of them remain unidentified but a few details were located by some. These glimpses provide some insight into the lives of the common soldiers and servants who lived at Mount Venture. One interpretation of the appearance of these Georgia Rangers is shown in Figure 11.

In addition to Mrs. Francis, at least two other Germans were garrisoned at Mount Venture. One of them was Josef Upshaw, who was born in the Palatinate region of Germany in 1722. He arrived in Georgia as an indentured servant and was sent to Frederica in 1739. The term of indenture was three years, so Josef was a free man by 1742. He enlisted as a Georgia Ranger in Captain Matthews’ troop, although his enlistment is undocumented. What became of Josef Upshaw following his imprisonment in St. Augustine was not traced for this study.
Another soldier of German heritage at Mount Venture was Salomo Schad, who was born in 1723, the son of Hans Joachim Schad. He arrived in Georgia from Switzerland, possibly serving a three year term as an indentured servant. He apparently enlisted as a Georgia Ranger in Captain Matthews’ troop, possibly after completing his indenture. He apparently won his release from Spanish imprisonment in St. Augustine and returned to Georgia. Salomo was married to Catharina in 1742 and they settled on land granted to Schad, which was southeast of the village of Hampstead. In 1747 he served as a rower in the colony and went on to a prosperous life in colonial Georgia. In about 1760 Schad acquired Elba Island near Savannah. His Last Will and Testament, dated 1768, suggests that he was relatively wealthy. Schad left numerous descendants in Savannah and the northeastern U.S. (Jones 1992:59, 154, 163, 193, 256, 262-263; Jones 1986:97, 118).

Nottaway was one Creek Indian who lived at Fort Mount Venture but there were probably others. Nottaway’s fate after 1742 is undocumented. He returned to Georgia.
following his escape from the Yamassee war party that attacked Fort Mount Venture. Being the enslaved property of Jacob Matthews, who was deceased, he may have returned to be under the control of Mary Musgrove Matthews. His status as a “trusted” slave was probably elevated after he showed allegiance by returning to Georgia once he had escaped captivity. His ability to win the trust of his captors was also the mechanism by which Nottaway had escaped from the Yamassees.

Mrs. William Francis arrived in Georgia from the Palatinate region of Germany as an indentured servant. She was described by William Stephens as a, “Dutch serving girl living with the widow Vanderplank who was made pregnant by Lieut. Wm. Francis”, and, “Francis married the girl & took her to his fort at Mount Venture, where she & her child were later murdered by Spanish Indians” (Jones 1992:253).

Mary Musgrove Matthews’ association with Sansavilla Bluff and Mount Venture appears to have ended abruptly in November 1742. She later submitted a financial account for her losses incurred in the November 1742 attack at Mount Venture (CRG 28(1a):409-410). By 1744 Mary had married for a third time to the Reverend Thomas Bosomworth, and by 1746 the Bosomworths had moved their trading interests to a post many miles upstream at “The Forks” of the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers (White 1854:27). That settlement was described as, “...about 300 miles by water up the same river [Altamaha], built a very good dwelling house, outhouses, a large store, and fortified the the whole round against any attempts of enemy Indians...” (White 1854:27). Mary Bosomworth may have already established a trading post at the Forks prior to 1746 but by that date it became her primary trading establishment. Mary and Thomas Bosomworth spent their final years at their plantation on St. Catherines Island. Mary died in 1763 and was buried on the island. By 1763 the Bosomworth’s trading post at the Forks was probably abandoned (Yonge and DeBrahm 1763).

Lieutenant William Francis had a successful life in colonial Georgia following the 1742 massacre. Immediately after the attack, he assumed command of the remnants of the Fort Mount Venture Ranger troop. While Francis may have held the temporary title of Captain, as Boltzius wrote, he did not received an official commission for that rank for several years. William Francis had a long history in the Georgia military. He arrived in Georgia in 1738 (Coulter and Saye 1949:74). He soon enlisted in Captain Cuthbert’s Ranger troop, based on the Savannah River. Cuthbert’s troop was later commanded by Captain Scroggs, under whom Francis continued to serve. Francis served as caretaker at Fort Argyle on the Ogeechee River in early 1741 (Elliott 1997:73). William Francis also had formerly served as a messenger between Frederica and Savannah before his appointment as a Lieutenant in Captain Matthews’ Ranger troop.

Boltzius’ version of the attack at Fort Mount Venture is noteworthy for its additional details about the battle, the British casualties, and personal information about “Captain” Francis and his German wife and infant daughter, who were killed in the attack. Lieutenant Francis sparked local interest when he, “gets a maid with child” (CRG 5:485-486). Francis married the German woman from New Ebenezer in 1741 to the chagrin of Reverend Boltzius, Thomas Jones and other influential Georgians. In March, 1757
Francis finally received his captain’s commission and was placed in command of a Georgia Ranger troop. His command was brief, however, and he was soon replaced by Captain James Edward Powell. That troop, known as the Second Troop of Rangers, was not fully formed until 1760 and it existed until March 31, 1767 (Clark 1983; Duncan n.d.:410; Commission Book B-1:52-53, 120). Captain Francis was placed in command of the 3rd Company of Foot, Colonel Noble Jones’ Regiment in April 1757 (Elliott 1997:73). Captain William Francis also had a career as a planter in Chatham County. Ironically, Francis’ rice plantation was located at Mary Musgrove’s former Cowpen settlement (later known as Grange plantation) on the Savannah River (Braley 2003). William Francis’ will was proven in 1763, which indicates that he died in that year or shortly earlier (Colonial Will Book A:94-102).

Immediately following Lieutenant Francis’ brief command, the Fort Mount Venture rangers were commanded by Captain Richard Scroggs (or Scruggs). Scroggs formerly served on the Savannah River in the 1730s as 1st Lieutenant in Captain Cuthbert’s Georgia Ranger troop and, after Cuthbert’s death, as a Lieutenant in Captain Wiggin’s Ranger troop. In early 1742 Lieutenant Scroggs served in a ranger troop during the Spanish attack on St. Simons Island. Scroggs’ appointment as Captain of the Mount Venture garrison took place soon after the massacre in late November 1742 (Elliott 1997:83; CRG 4:454; Duncan n.d.:49).

Captain Thomas Jones, called “a half Indian”, may have served in command of the Fort Mount Venture Ranger troop following Scroggs’ command (Elliott 1997:69). Jones was paid by General Oglethorpe for his command of a troop of 12 Rangers from June 1, 1742 to September 1, 1743 (Great Britain, BPRO, A01/162/441, Box 1). This period of service also may have included time spent at Fort Argyle. Ivers (1973:189-190) noted that Captain Jones had a drinking problem. This interfered with his performance as a ranger commander and Jones’ quartermaster, John Milledge, may have actually served in command of the troop during much of this period. In 1743 the total number of Georgia Rangers (from all posts) was 140 men, who were arranged in two troops (Clark 1983:xii, xxi, 973; CRG 2:235).

Duncan (n.d.:410) identified several captains in command at Mount Venture after 1743 in his history of the Georgia Hussars, which also examined their forerunners—the Georgia Rangers. He noted that Captain Thomas Jones commanded the fort in 1744; Captain John Rae commanded the post prior to early 1759, and was followed by Captain Grey Elliott. Corroborating documentary evidence for a Ranger garrison at Mount Venture during those years, however, was not identified. By 1760 the Fort Barrington Ranger fort was established across the river from Mount Venture.

Financial support for Georgia’s rangers was erratic and often delayed for periods of years. Money for their wages was fronted by General Oglethorpe and others and Ranger claims were often paid many years overdue (see for example, BPRO A01/162/441, Box 1). Among the payments made by Oglethorpe were payments in 1742 to Captain Jacob Matthews, Lieutenant William Francis, and the Rangers at Mount Venture. Financial support for the period from 1743 to 1747 and from 1753 to 1757 for Georgia’s Rangers
was borne by merchants of Georgia and South Carolina and other government officials in Georgia (Great Britain, BPRO TI/434/01, Box 2, 1-3-01, 1-3-12, 1-3-26). The date of final abandonment of Fort Mount Venture has not been determined. The rangers, under command of Captain Thomas Jones and John Milledge, were most closely associated with Fort Argyle after 1742, although a continued minimal military presence at Mount Venture may have been maintained into the late 1750s.

CAPTAIN ALLECK

When Fort Barrington was established on the east bank of the Altamaha River as a Ranger fort in 1760, the west bank of the Altamaha River remained Indian land. That area was settled by the Cusseta chief Captain Aleck and his association with the area is addressed in detail later in this chapter.

William Bell provides this biographical sketch of Captain Aleck,

ALECK, CAPTAIN, or Captain Elcik, Creek Chief.--The few general facts of the early life of the Lower Creek chief, as given by himself, are that he had lived so long among the white people that he looked upon himself as much a white man as a red man; that the white people had given him the name he bore, Captain Aleck, and that he had always lived in friendship with the English.

Apart from these statements, an evidence of Captain Aleck's association with white people is the letter A, the first letter of Aleck, which he adopted as his mark in signing his name. That Captain Aleck had always been a true friend of the English is borne out by all the recorded facts extant of his history. He showed his loyalty by his actions. The first notice of him is in 1754, when all things pointed to rupture between England and France and between England and Spain. On November 11, accompanied by a few followers, he called on Governor John Reynolds in council in Savannah and informed him that the French had persuaded some of the Upper Creeks to come to Mobile and receive presents, and the Spaniards had done likewise in persuading some of the Lower Creeks to come to Pensacola for the same purpose. That he had not yet learned the objects of the French and Spaniards in these matters, but if he succeeded in doing so, he would inform the Governor. Captain Aleck's talk agreed with the reports that had already come to the ears of the Governor that the French and Spaniards were very busy in endeavoring to win the Creeks over to their respective interests. Some presents were the next day presented to Captain Aleck and his followers, with which they were well pleased.

On May 11, 1757, Captain Aleck and his brother Will, accompanied by twelve men and women, had a talk with Governor Ellis in the council chamber in Savannah. After a conversation on several topics, the Governor told Captain Aleck that the Creeks should join no party to the prejudice of the English, to which Captain Aleck gave his full assent. The Governor then expatiated largely upon the cruelties of the French in all their proceedings, and instanced a recent attempt by them to induce the Choctaws and Cherokees to exterminate the Chickasaws, which attempt proceeded solely from this desire to get possession of the lands of the Chickasaws. That the Great King expected the Creeks to join the English and assist them in driving back the French, who were daily encroaching on the Indians' lands, and who, if they should grow stranger, would treat the Creeks as they had lately tried to treat the Chickasaws. On the contrary, the English had honestly paid for the lands which they got from the Indians. But the policy of the French was to become masters of the Indians' lands, after murdering the Indian inhabitants; and their present designs were either to cut the Indians off entirely or to reduce them, their
wives and children, to a state of slavers. The English, on the other hand, were a people fond of trade and sent their ships laden with merchandise to all parts of the world; that wherever they went, their study was to make people free and happy; and when they talked, their tongues and hearts went fast together; that the Great King showed the love he bore his red children by presents and by frequent and friendly talks.

The French too gave presents, but these presents, like the rum drank by the Indians, however sweet it might be at first, always made them sick in the end. After other remarks, by no means complimentary to the French, the Governor closed his talk by saying that every Indian who went to war against the French, should receive for every French scalp a reward equal in value to eight pounds of deer skins; and for a French prisoner a reward equal in value to sixteen pounds of deer skins, which he would much rather pay for than the scalps. For, although the English were known to be warriors, it was likewise known that they took no pleasure in shedding human blood. Captain Aleck in reply said that the Governor's talk was very true and just, that he had come down to hear a good talk and not for presents, and so was not disappointed; that his brother would set off to the nation in a few days, and there was a beloved day approaching and his brother there would declare this talk before all the people, and no one could say that he had never heard it. Captain Aleck then applied for a grant of a piece of land or small island on which he was settled, but as he could not satisfactorily give its location, the consideration of his request was postponed, but he was told that if the land was vacant, or if the proprietor of it would accept other land in its place, he should have a grant for it. This matter settled, the Governor invited Captain Aleck and his brother to dine with him.

Nothing further is on record about Captain Aleck until January, 1763, when he sought the good offices of Governor James Wright to recover his wife, who had been stolen from him by some Yuchee Indians and carried into the province of South Carolina. Governor Wright wrote to Governor Boone of South Carolina desiring him to use every effort to secure the return of Captain Aleck's wife.

Captain Aleck was present as Speaker of the Upper and the Lower Creeks at the Great Congress in Augusta in November, 1763. On one occasion during the six days in which the Congress was in session he spoke of the frequent stealing of horses by white people and Indians and proposed that some means should be adopted to prevent it for the future. These words speak high for Captain Aleck's desire for peace and order on the frontier, the crime of horse stealing being promotive of frequent murders and killings by both white people and Indians, often culminating in wars. Captain Aleck also attended the Pensacola Congress in May, 1765. During its six days sessions he made several appropriate talks and was one of the signers of the treaty. A part of Captain Stuart's talk on May 30 to one of Captain Aleck's is here given as it bears witness to the moral worth of the Muscogee chief: 'I am glad to find you in the same good disposition in which I left you at Augusta, of which you have given so many proofs, during the course of your life; the white people must always put a value on your friendship, as the Governor and I ever will. We are very sensible of the effect and influence your talks have had on your nation and we desire you may continue them.' All the facts preserved in historic records, relative to Captain Aleck are favorable to his character as a man and a leader of his people.

The last-historical notice of Captain Aleck occurs January 10, 1768. There having been a disagreement between the Georgians and the Creeks with regard to the boundary line which separated the two, on that day, Governor Wright and Captain Aleck, representing the Creek Confederacy, came to an agreement that the dividing line should "commence at the Ogeechee river where the lower trading path leading from Mount Pleasant on Savannah river to the Lower Creek Nation crosses the said river Ogeechee, and thence in a straight line cross the country to that part of the river Alatamaha opposite to the entrance or mouth of a certain Creek on the south side of the said river Alatamaha commonly called Fen-hollow or Turkey Creek, and that the line should be thence continued from the mouth of the said Creek across the Country and in a southwest course to the St. Mary's river, so as to reach it as far up as the tide flows or swells. (Bell 2003).
Anthropologist John Swanton (1984) provided these biographical notes about Captain Aleck,

In 1729 a Kasihta chief named Captain Ellick married three Yuchi women and persuaded some of the Yuchi Indians to move over among the Lower Creeks, but Governor Oglethorpe of Georgia guaranteed them their rights to their old land until after 1740, and the final removal did not, in fact, take place until 1751 [Captain Ellick, or Aleck, lived on the Altamaha River prior to moving to the Chattahoochee River].

The headmen of Kasita did not allow Alleck to settle in Kasita, because of his marriage to the Yuchi women, so he chose to settle on the river terrace opposite Yuchi Town. Archaeological evidence of his settlement is possibly preserved at the Oswichee Bend site (9Ce66) or possibly the Broken Arrow site (Huscher n.d.; Schnell 1982; Elliott 2004; Elliott et al. 2000; Foster 2004; Hahn 2004).

Captain Aleck was recognized by the Georgia government as an important chief as early as 1749, when William Stephens delivered presents to “Ellick & Landlord Two Headmen of the Cussetaws” (Bevan 1749). In 1760 Captain Aleck “of Cusshita, Speaker of the Lower Creek Towns” met with the British representatives at Fort Moore to discuss the relations with the French and Cherokee. In that talk, Aleck admitted, “I am one half a Creek, and one half an Englishman” (Aleck 1760). Captain Alleck, again representing the Lower Creeks, attended treaty talks with Great Britain in Augusta in 1763 (Cashin 1992:227). Royal Governor Wright addressed a congress of Indians held at Augusta on Nov 21, 1763, in answer to Captain Alleck’s claim of English encroachment saying, “Captain Aleck has mentioned a claim to his settlement at Sancta Seveilla, which he says has been run out; as to which the governors observe, that they know of no survey being made on any settlement of his...” (Cate 1938; CRG 39:369-370). Two Creek spokesmen referred to, “Santa Sevilla on the Alatamaha River” as part of the Creek boundary in the 1763 congress (National Archives of Canada 1763:527, 548).

In 1765 Captain Alleck attended a congress of Lower Creeks at the former Fort Picolata, Florida where the 1763 boundary line was reaffirmed (Cashin 1992:229). The Creek Nation relinquished ownership of the Sansavilla Bluff vicinity in the Treaty of 1766 (CRG 9:666-667). Royal Governor James Wright wrote in a letter in January 1766,

Goff suspected that Captain Alleck’s house, at the time of the 1766 agreement, was located near the mouth of Alecks Creek, above Upper Sansavilla Bluff. Support for this interpretation is found in Miss Winwood Mackintosh’s request for, “five hundred acres on the south side of the Altamaha at Captain Alleck’s old place about three or four miles above Santa Sevilla Bluff.” (CRG 16:520). A 1766 plat of 500 acres land on the Altamaha River in St. David Parish, warranted to Winwood McIntosh, spinster, depicts
an “Old House” on the adjacent bluff and “Capt Alex’s Field” in the river swamp (Colonial Grant Book F:28; Colonial Plat Book C:224; McIntosh 1766; R. J. Taylor Foundation 1989:101; reproduced in Jordan and Sewell 1976, 35). The property depicted on this plat, however, is located well south of Upper Sansavilla Bluff (Figure 12).

![Figure 12. Colonial Plat (1766) Showing Features in 9Wy4 Vicinity.](image)

A survey map was prepared in 1769 as supporting documentation for the 1768 Treaty of Augusta, shows a Creek settlement, identified as, “Doctor’s Town-An Indian Settlement” on the west side of the Altamaha River, north of the Sansavilla Bluff (Stuart 1768:186-194; Stuart 1769; Romans 1769). The Creek chiefs at the 1768 treaty talks referred to a 1735 agreement between the Creeks and the British, which made provisions for the land cession boundary as follows,

…by a straight line from that part of Great Ogeechee River, where it is intersected by a Trading path Leading from Mount Pleasant to Savannah River, to the Lower Creek Nation, to the Alatamaha River opposite to the mouth of Phenholoway or Turkey Creek and from the Mouth of Phenholoway or Turkey Creek in a South West Course to the River Saint Mary (Stuart 1768:190).

A portion of the 1769 survey map highlighting the study area is reproduced in Figure 13. While the quality of this image is poor, several features in the study vicinity are worthy of note. A cluster of four buildings is shown just west of the Altamaha River and immediately north of the treaty boundary line. This building cluster is identified as, “Doctors Town an Indian Settlement”, and a path leading to the town from the opposite bank of the river is identified as, “Doctor’s Path” (Stuart 1769). Doctors Town is probably Captain Aleck’s settlement, as Aleck translates to Doctor in the Muscogee Creek tongue (Martin and Mauldin 2000:228). The present-day community of Doctortown continues to thrive in this same general vicinity. A stream identified as, “Phanenoloau Swamp & Creek” is located south of this settlement and boundary line. This stream is certainly the same as the present-day Phenholoway Creek, which is located several kilometers upstream from Sansavilla Bluff. The implications of the Doctors Town settlement that is shown on the 1769 map are that, by 1769 the Sansavilla Bluff was no longer Creek Indian land and Captain Aleck and his party had relocated several kilometers upstream. All Native American settlements at Sansavilla Bluff probably had been vacated by that time.
An affidavit by Jacob Moniac provides some information on the status of Sansavilla Bluff lands in 1774. Moniac’s statement also establishes a link between Sansavilla (Santas Savella) and Mary [Musgrove Matthews] Bosomworth’s former trading house [probably referring to Mount Venture]:

The deposition of Jacob Moniac, sworn interpreter to the Upper Creek Nation, and Samuel Thomas, sworn interpreter to the Lower Creek Nation, taken on oath 31 October 1774 before Anthony Stokes, Esq., Chief Justice of the Province,...in regard to running the Indian Line...that Mr. Bryan applied to him and the other Indians to give him a small spot of ground at a place called Santas Savella, where Mrs. Bosomworth formerly had a trading house... (Georgia Gazette, November 2, 1774:2).

By 1763, the Post Road was established through the south side of study area. This road, which followed an ancient Indian trail along an interior route parallel to the coast, was heavily traveled in the colonial period. This road was used by British, Spanish, and American troops and was used by Patriot troops in the American Revolution on the 3rd East Florida campaign (CVIOG 2005). Its importance as a route for the delivery of mail dates to the colonial period. Although portions of this road were abandoned by the early twentieth century, other sections remain in use. Figure 14 depicts a photographic view of this road near Barrington Ferry in Wayne County from the early twentieth century.
The Georgia colonists wasted no time in demanding grants for land in the newly ceded region of the lower Altamaha River. A 500 acre tract, which included a good portion of the lower Sansavilla Bluff was platted (as a warranty deed) to Winwood Mcintosh in 1766 (before the 1768 treaty was ratified) and she received a formal grant for the property soon afterwards (Bryant 1973:89). The majority of this land in the study vicinity was granted as large tracts to wealthy planters, most of these grantees did not reside on the property.
FORT BARRINGTON

The Altamaha River crossing at Sansavilla Bluff continued to be of military significance into the early nineteenth century. Subsequently, the east side of the crossing at Sansavilla Bluff became the site of the next Ranger fort, known as Fort Barrington (Figure 15). Fort Barrington achieved significance in the American Revolution when it was renamed Fort Howe by the Americans and used as a primary headquarters for the East Florida campaigns in 1776, 1777, and 1778. Fort Howe was captured and burned by the East Florida Rangers [loyalists] in 1778 (Cashin 1989).

Fort Barrington was established opposite from Sansavilla Bluff by 1760 during the Seven Years War (French and Indian War). Funds of £50 were allocated for Fort Barrington in September 1760 (CRG 8:374). In March 1761 the Georgia government ordered its surveyors to, “reserve for the use of Ft Barrington all that space of ground beginning at and to extend along the river half a mile above the Ft., & back from the river one-half mile” (CRG 8:511). Royal Governor James Wright provided this brief description of the defenses at Fort Barrington in 1762: “Fort Barrington on the River Alatamaha is a square Fort about 75 Feet each way with a Coponiere [Caponiere] in it and Barracks. The works are not yet finished, the money given by the province not being sufficient. What is done is in good condition. This Fort is Garrisoned by 25 of the Rangers” (Wright 1762:17).

Fort Barrington was garrisoned by a considerably larger troop of rangers than had been posted at Fort Mount Venture. The enemy this time was not the Spanish, however, but the French and their Indian allies. The commander of Fort Barrington, for the period from November 1761 to November 1765, was Lieutenant Baillie (CRG 8:594; 9:437). Lieutenant Baillie was under the command of Captain John Milledge, who commanded the Fort Argyle garrison on the Ogeechee River (Elliott 1997). Baillie received his commission as 1st Lieutenant in 1761 and most of his military career was spent at Fort Barrington (Elliott 1997:71). The number of rangers in the fort rose from its initial 25 men in 1760 to a maximum of about 36 in 1761 (Wright 1760, cited in Stephens 1859:54-55; CRG 18:472-479; 28(2):188; 34:373; Johnson 1992:38; Clark 1983). By 1766, three years after the hostilities with France had subsided, the garrison at Fort Barrington remained at more than 25 Rangers (CRG 37:141-142). The Fort Barrington Ranger garrison existed from 1760 until March 31, 1767, when it was disbanded (Clark 1983). The fort lay abandoned as a military post until mid-1776.

History records no hostile attacks on Fort Barrington during the French and Indian War. Although no outposts are specifically mentioned in the historical literature, it seems likely that the commander of the Rangers at Fort Barrington would have established small outposts or sentry pickets at strategic approach points on Sansavilla Bluff. The rationale for this is apparent when one considers that the main overland route to points west continued along the road that passed along the south end of Sansavilla Bluff.
Documents relating to the military use of the Sansavilla Bluff vicinity during the American Revolution are spotty and subject to differing interpretations. The place name Sansavilla, and its many variant spellings, are not usually found in the documents from the war years. This is not to say, however, that Sansavilla Bluff was on the periphery of military activity during this period. Clearly, the road that crossed the Altamaha River, which flanked the south side of Sansavilla Bluff, continued in use during this period.

Fort Barrington, and its later manifestation of Fort Howe, was an extremely important place during the American Revolution. Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh described recent military events at Fort Barrington in a letter written on October 29, 1776,

This moment I recd. An Express from –Lieut. Coll. Wm. McIntosh that a great [number] of Indians and white’s crossed the [Alta]maha River, attacked Barrington, [de]stroyed some Plantations around it, & ---the whole neighborhood are in the [utmost] Consternation moving their Families---therefore you are to make haste down there with
what Horse you can collect in a hurry, without [wai]ting to fix any forts but what you [ha]ve already to the Westward (Hawes 1957:159).

The Americans established Fort Howe as their primary headquarters on two of the East Florida campaigns. By December, 1776, General McIntosh reported that, “the import[ant] post at Barrington (now call’d Fort Howe)” was well fortified and preparations for establishing other posts on the Altamaha, Satilla, and St. Mary’s rivers were underway (Hawes 1957:253). The Americans probably established lookouts and pickets on the west side of the Altamaha River, opposite Fort Howe but these stations are not documented in the ABPP survey. These outposts would have been in the Sansavilla Bluff vicinity. Among the American troops stationed at Fort Howe in 1777 and 1778 was the 2nd Georgia Battalion (Elbert 1776-1788).

On February 7, 1778, Major General Robert Howe wrote to the Georgia Governor with his intentions for fortifying the lower Altamaha River,

…I have ever thought, that a strong Fort should be built to the Southward, where at least a Battalion should be constantly kept, the properst place for which I conceive to be St. Savilla bluff, on the other side of the Alatamaha; that the Guards to defend Beard’s bluff, and the other passes upon the Alatamaha, should be extended from, and be dependent upon this Post; that a pretty strong Post, also dependent upon it, should be established upon St. Illa, with Boats to facilitate the advance and retreat of our Troops, when we have occasion to do either; that constant and strong Scouting Parties, should be kept out, between St. Marys & St. Johns, and who might take proper opportunities of penetrating farther into East Florida, by which means the terror and alarm, the Enemy delight to spread, would be retorled [?] upon them, their maurading incursions prevented, or they be chastised for attempting them. The Fort at St. Savilla Bluff, should be strong, and well built, be furnished with Cannon, upon traveling carriage, with a proper quantity of Provisions and Military Stores, and, in every way, made so respectable a Post, as to be capable of obstinate resistance, until support could be sent up. This, Sir, I am persuaded, will very effectually secure your State from the inconveniences it has suffered; and if a greater number of men, than a Battalion, should e found necessary they can be ordered. I take the Liberty to add, that it is my opinion, no other Expedition, into and against East Florida should be undertaken, than what is already set forth, ‘till we are in a condition to undertake a very effectual one indeed…” [Editors note, (earlier in letter Howe tells gov. that it is general consensus of his Council of War-consisting of the Commodore and all the Field Officers of the Army available, that no further extensive army invasion into East Florida should be made as it would leave Georgia without protection; recommend only small scouting and attack parties to terrify area)] (Howe 1778).

Alexander Chesney, a reluctant Patriot (and later confirmed Loyalist), kept a journal of his experiences in the American Revolution,

On returning towards Charles Town, we were encamped at Tachaw near Nielson's ferry on the Santee; from thence we marched to Puriesburg [Purysburg, S.C.] on the Savannah River; then by water to Savannah Town at which time we killed a number of Alligators with rifle guns; then marched to Sunbury; thence to Fort Barrington on the Altamaha near East Florida, where we arrived the 25th March 1777 (trees then beginning to bud) …While at Fort Barrington we had several skirmishes with the Creek Indians, in which I was always a volunteer. The Altamaha rose gradually (like the Nile) whilst we re-mained there (Chesney 2004).
Reid’s Bluff, also spelled Read’s Bluff or Reed’s Bluff, was one such location on the west bank of the Altamaha that was lightly fortified by the Americans. Brigadier General Samuel Elbert, 2nd Georgia Continentals, established a temporary headquarters at Reid’s Bluff during the East Florida campaigns (Harden 1902). In 1782, Major General Anthony Wayne referred to events at Read’s Bluff, which is probably the same place (Wayne 1782). Establishing the exact location of Reid/Read’s Bluff on the modern landscape proved an elusive task. It is not shown on any modern maps using that place name and a review of the USGS gazetteer for Georgia yielded no listings for Reid’s Bluff. An examination of early historical maps of the Altamaha River region produced only one instance where Reed’s Bluff was identified. This was on an 1823 map, which place it immediately below St. Saville and upstream from Clark’s Bluff. Reed’s Bluff is shown to be downstream from Fort Barrington (Figure 16). The location shown on this map is quite near the Glynn-Wayne county line, in the approximate vicinity of the Post Road.

![Figure 16. Wayne County, 1823 (CVIOG 2004).](image)

**OTHER NEARBY BLUFFS**

An inspection of the modern topographic maps of the western side of the Altamaha River from Upper Sansavilla Bluff to Clark’s Bluff shows few landforms that are substantial enough to qualify as a “bluff”, other than Lower Sansavilla Bluff and the unnamed bluffs that continue southward for less than 2 km. Furthermore, the south end of this bluff is the most likely place where a convenient crossing can be made from Fort Barrington (Fort
A late nineteenth century navigational map identifies the location of Read’s Bluff several kilometers below Aleck Island. A portion of this map is shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17. Portion of Navigational Map of the Altamaha River, Showing Read’s Bluff (Carter 1891).

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown and his East Florida Rangers marched by Sansavilla Bluff in March 1778. Brown wrote from his camp on the Altamaha River to Governor Tonyn on March 13, “Sir, Last night I passed the River Altamaha with one hundred Rangers, and ten Indians undiscovered by the Rebels three miles below Fort Barrington…At the break of day we entered the Fort [Barrington] with the los of only one man killed; and four wounded, amongst the latter are Lieutenant D__ine, Scott, and Williams…The pieces of artillery with two Swivels fell into our hands. The loss of the Rebels is two killed, and four wounded with twenty three prisoners” (Brown 1778).

Governor Tonyn wrote from St. Augustine to General William Howe on March 31, 1778 regarding Brown’s victory at Barrington, “He [Brown] with a party of Rangers & a few Indians…has taken by assault Fort Barrington, with twenty three Prisoners & destroyed the cannon & burn’d the Fort” (Tonyn 1778a). British Major General Augustine Prevost wrote from St. Augustine to Sir Henry Clinton on March 21, 1778 recounting Brown’s victory at Barrington, in which Prevost noted, “I never considered the destruction of that Post [Barrington] as an object of any consequence” (Prevost 1778).

On June 3, 1778, Governor Tonyn wrote to William Howe noting that the recent American troop build-up in Georgia included, “a camp of two thousand men South Carolinians and Georgians is formed near the place where fort Barrington stood, under the command of Generals Howe and Elbert….Six gallies are at Darien in the Altamaha” (Tonyn 1778b).

Other information about the study area during the American Revolution is found in the Revolutionary War pension applications that were submitted by American veterans. The
application of Private James Hall included this reference to his stay at Reid’s Bluff in 1778 as a soldier in the Georgia militia,

At Reid's Bluff we come in sight of the American Army under General Howe. Howe marched one day ahead of us until we came to St. Mary's River at a place called Burntfoot Brown's Breastwork [probably Fort Tonyn]-he was a Tory, but fled upon our approach. We joined General Howe, and a difference here occurred between our officers and General Howe (Hall 2003).

A later military engagement in the American Revolution took place at Read’s Bluff. American Major General Anthony Wayne wrote to Georgia Governor John Martin on April 17, 1782 describing the action there on the Altamaha River,

Major Francis Moore being on his return to repass the Alatamaha, on Wednesday the 10th instant, with Captain Lyons and sixteen men, left half of them in his rear, whilst he with the other eight went up to a house where a Mr. Jones lived, at Read’s bluff, on the bank of the river, to procure a boat, but upon his arrival at the door he found the house full of Indians and Tories, which circumstance rendering a retreat impracticable and being out-numbered, he attempted to pass upon them for the Enemy, until the remainder of his little party under Lyons came up. He hoped to succeed from being dressed in British uniform, but seeing them preparing for action, he ordered his party to fire into the house, which was done with such effect, as to enable him to maintain his post until Captain Lyons arrived, altho’ the enemy made several efforts to sally out, in which two of them fell by the Major’s own hand, who about the same time received a mortal wound. Our people continued the attack for near an half hour longer, but seeing their gallant Commander and the brave Mr. Smith dead, with two others wounded, and a party of Indians appearing in their rear, Captain Lyons thought it expedient to retreat, which he effected without sustaining any further injury. Our loss would have been trifling, had it not been rendered grievous by the death of that judicious, brave and worthy officer, whom I esteemed as a Gentleman and respected as a soldier. However, his friends have this consolation, that he greatly fell, in the defence of his country, and exciting his men with his last breath to push for victory.

Captain Lyons being joined the next day by Captain Carr, they and their people unanimously determined to repass the river, and avenge the blood of their gallant leader, and as they both write me that their party is in high spirits and respectable in numbers. I am in hopes of having it in my power to announce their success in the course of a few days… (Wayne 1782:1).

SANSAVILLA BLUFF AFTER THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Sansavilla Bluff remained on the Georgia frontier for several decades following the American Revolution. Georgia militia troops were stationed at Sansavilla Bluff in the 1790s, as evidenced by correspondence. By March 20, 1794 two military posts had been established on the lower Altamaha River by Georgia militia—a post at Beard’s Bluff and a post at, “Saint Savilla on the south side of the river Altamaha…” (Hays [Creek Indian Letters] 1940: Part 2, 370).

Military correspondence written at Sansavilla from Jonathan F. Randolph to Governor George Mathews was dated March 30, 1795. In addition, an affidavit of Jesse Thomas,
dated March 29, 1799, stated that, “he was a sergeant under the command of Capt. Armstrong at San Savilla” (Hays 1940, v.2(2):262, 431). General James Jackson’s letters include references to the Blockhouses at St. Savilla, or Williamsburg (Jackson 1953:233; Hawes 1955). Payroll records for the Glynn County Dragoons indicate that they were stationed at St. Savilla from May 15, 1793 to February 28, 1794, and records from April 26, 1794 indicate that a blockhouse at St. Savilla was commanded by Lieutenant Palmer (Adjutant General’s Journal 1792-1794:292, 329).

Lieutenant Palmer received a commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the Troop of Horse, Glynn County Militia on May 1, 1793. That troop was commanded by Captain William Williams, followed in command by 1st Lieutenants John Burnett, Palmer, and Cornet [Cornet—an obsolete military rank] William Harris. The Troop was composed of three companies and the commanding officers of each in 1793 are listed below:

1st Company
Moses Burnett, Captain
Richard Pritchard, Lieutenant
William Swain, Ensign

2nd Company
Farr Williams, Captain
Roswell King, Lieutenant
Robert Statham, Ensign

3rd Company
James McLeod, Captain
John Miller, Lieutenant
Joshua Miller, Cornet
William Harris, Ensign (Cate 1793).

On December 12, 1793, John Braddock was commissioned Captain to replace Captain William Williams, deceased, and Martin Palmer was promoted to 1st lieutenant to fill the position left by 1st Lieutenant Burnett who was promoted. Joshua Miller was promoted to 2nd lieutenant to replace Palmer and Abraham Sutton was promoted to cornet to replace Miller. On April 23, 1794, George Valley was commissioned Captain to replace Captain Braddock, deceased (Cate 1793, 1794).

A 1794 document provides a description of the Glynn County Dragoons’ blockhouse that was built at Sansavilla Bluff:

Appraisement of a Blockhouse at St. Savilla Glynn County

Agreeable to General Orders issued by the Commander in Chief a Blockhouse was Built at St. Savilla in Glynn County for the protection of the Inhabitants of the said County, of the following Dementions, two Storie High the Lower Storie Ten feet high & the Second Storie Eight feet high over Jutted twelve Inches Built of Hewed logs & being called upon by the Adjutant General to appraise said Block House we are of opinion that the above Block House is worth Seven pounds Sterling (£7]- and having Examined the Situation of the Garrison we found it Necessary that an old House be taken down for the safety & protection of the Garrison and Store and Accordingly the same was taken down- The property of Captain Farr Williams which we are of Opinion the above Mentioned House was worth Three pounds Stlg(£3)
March 8th 1794
Martin Palmer Leut G.C., D./
Joshua Miller Lieut. G.C.D.
Attest John Burnett
Lt. Col. Comdt.” (Cate 1794).

A letter report by Adjutant General Augustus C. George Elholm to Georgia Governor Mathews, dated April 4, 1794 included these references to the garrison at St. Savilla Bluff:

Inclosed I have the honor to transmit the arrangements made in Camden County, on my Tour in the first Brigade, first Division where agreeable to your Verbal information I indulged full expectation to see you: but not been honored with your presence in those parts of the State I adopted such regulation as I conceived in my judgement best calculated to render harmony and safety to the People, and which I now have the honor to report; to your consideration and Patronage

….I have given Charge to the Commandant of Glynn County to give all possible attention to the Garison at St Savilla, and from the readiness of that Gentlemen am Confident that the abuses of the Contractor Department will be no more.

A Board of Officers held at Brunswick the 10th February 1794 recommends a Station at Carnes old place to be garrisoned by part of the Dragoons stationed at St Sevilla and the Commandant of the County informed me that a Genl Order directs a Blockhouse to be erected at said place in consequence whereof he (Lt Colo Burnett) has ordered the same and called on the contractor for supplies to be furnished at the Head of Turtle River Glynn County for the same…(Elholm 2004:1-2).

Adjutant General Elholm’s report to Governor Mathews included a muster roll for the Glynn County Dragoons, who were posted at St. Savilla. This document is transcribed below in its entirety.

State of Georgia
A Recapitulation

Taken from a Muster Roll of a Troop of Militia Dragoon of State of Georgia in the service of the United States Commanded by Leiut. Martin Palmer Stationed at St Savilla in Glynn County March the 12th 1794.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lieut:</th>
<th>Cornt. [Cornet]</th>
<th>Sergts</th>
<th>Gentlemen of Arms</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Arms</th>
<th>Rifles</th>
<th>[illegible]</th>
<th>Swords</th>
<th>Pistols</th>
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<tr>
<td>Present fit for Duty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.</td>
<td>35.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copy of the certificate of the Muster Roll from whence the above recapitulation is extracted

We certify the above Muster Roll to be a true Statement as Mustered by the requisition of the Adjutant Genl But in Justice to the Public good we must acknowledge that Eleven of the horses for want of Forage at this time are unfit to perform the necessary Duty.
Two soldiers of undermined rank, who served in Captain Armstrong’s garrison at St. Savilla in September and October, 1794 were Peter Coleman and John Cole. Another individual, who was probably a soldier at the post in November of 1794 was Jacob Wolf. Wolf was in charge of the forage for the horses at the post. Captain Armstrong’s Company, Glynn County Dragoons, was a militia unit that formed part of Georgia’s frontier defense. Dragoons of that period included both mounted cavalry and infantry. Coleman’s and Cole’s affidavits highlight the difficulty in maintaining a cavalry unit in the frontier of Georgia in the 1790s. Peter Coleman’s November 10, 1794 affidavit is transcribed below:

Peter Coleman of the County of McIntosh being duly sworn saith that he hath for some time past been concerned in receiving and delivering Forrage for the use of Captain Armstrongs Company or Troop, or such part of them as have been stationed at the post of St. Savilla, and that he well knows that on the third of September last the said Station was within a day or two of being out of Forrage when there was the quantity of fifty one Bushels and an half of rough Rice and no more sent up to the said Station -- That the deponant understood that Quantity served the Station 'till the eighth of the same month of September -- and no longer and the deponent further saith that he well knows of his own knowledge so far as he was concerned, and was, yesterday was two weeks, expressly informed by Jacob Wolf who issues the Forrage at the said station out of Forrage from the said eighth of September until the twenty eighth of October following, when a Schooner belonging to Mr. Stephen Files or under his direction, arrived in the Alatamaha River with five hundred and eighty odd Bushels of rough Rice for the use of the said Station, which said Rice the deponant says he saw and examined and that the same was not sound Forrage, but damaged Rice. and the deponent further says that Lieutenant [Eraudeau?] of the said Troops, informed this deponant that when lately in pursuit of a party of Indians who had carried off some Negroes from Liberty County he certainly would have come up with them had the Horses been in fit Condition or had he had Forrage to take out with him on the said Expedition (Coleman and Cole 2004:1-2).

John Cole’s affidavit, which was also sworn on November 10, 1794, is transcribed below:

John Cole of the County of McIntosh being duly sworn saith that he was frequently at the Station of St. Savilla on the Alatamaha between the eighth of September and the twenty eighth of October last and heard both Officers and Men say they were entirely out of Forrage for the Horses and make great complaints of the comissary-- that the deponent saw and observed the Horses belonging to the said Station -- that they were chiefly very poor and unfit for service. that the Men said several of their Horses had died for want of Forrage. The deponent further saith, he saw and examined a quantity of rough Rice (five hundred & odd Bushels as the deponent was informed) which arrived in Alatamaha River about the twenty eighth of last month in a Schooner belonging to Mr. Stephen Files, or under his orders, which Rice was for the Use of the said Station of St. Savilla -- and the Deponent further saith that the said rough Rice was not sound but damaged and unfit for feeding Horses. And the deponent further saith that he saw on board the said Schooner some wheat Flour intended for the Use of the Men in the said Station and that the
Captain Armstrong served as the Commander of a Company (or Troop) of Glynn County Dragoons, posted at St. Savilla in November 1794. His subordinates included Lieutenants Martin Palmer, John Miller, and another lieutenant, whose name was only partly deciphered as, “Eraudeau [possibly John Girardeau]”. Captain Armstrong was not present when the St. Savilla troop was mustered for Adjutant General Elholm in April 1794, under Lieutenant Palmer’s command. At that time the troop had only two lieutenants, although one other commissioned officer, possibly a cornet, was enumerated. That cornet may have been the same officer who is later identified as Lieutenant Eraudeau, or the multiplicity of lieutenants may reflect the short duration of service in the dragoon company. In April 1794 the troop was composed of 35 soldiers, including: 2 lieutenants, 1 cornet, 4 sergeants, and 28 rank and file. The St. Savilla garrison of Glynn County Dragoons was manned from shortly after the Treaty of New York in 1790 and possibly was abandoned shortly after the Treaty of Colerain in 1796. The abandonment of the garrison at St. Savilla was followed by the creation of Fort James, further up the Altamaha River. It was not until 1804, however, that the Creek boundary line from Fort James was run (Freeman 1804). Thus the Georgia militia post at St. Savilla was probably occupied less than seven years. If the fort continued to be garrisoned, however, the post would have been no longer on the frontier and its importance for defense against hostile Creeks would have been considerably lessened.

After 1804, Sansavilla Bluff shed most of its military significance. The area experienced some military movement in the War of 1812, when General David Blackshear’s Georgia troops passed through the region, but no battles or skirmishes are reported in the study area for that war. Some Civil War activity may have occurred at Sansavilla Bluff, although that aspect of the region’s past was not fully explored in the ABPP study.

**ST. SAVILLA SETTLEMENT**

On June 28, 1799 the Sheriff of Glynn County advertised the sale of “200 acres on the Altamaha River near old St. Savielle Bluff, attached as property of Henry Maynor in favor of Roswell [King?] and Fair [Farr] Williams. The sale took place that August (Georgia Genealogical Magazine (1962) 5:248). On November 16, 1799, Roswell King, Administrator of William Williams and Farr Williams, deceased, deeded to William Collins for $1,100.00, “365 acres, known as St. Sevilia and granted to said Collins Aug. 20, 1788, bounded north by Altamaha River” (Georgia Genealogical Magazine (1963) 7:412).

Further documentary support of the existence of an early settlement, known as St. Savilla, is found in published gazetteers. St. Savilla was listed as, “a small town of Georgia, 64 miles S. of Savannah, and 65 N. of St. Mary’s” in Morse’s (1798) *American Gazetteer*, although by 1821 neither St. Savilla or Williamsburg are listed in Morse and Morse’s *Universal Gazetteer* (Morse 1798; Morse and Morse 1821). The village also appears on numerous early nineteenth century maps of the region.
V. Results

Archaeological reconnaissance of the Sansavilla Bluff on the Altamaha River in Wayne County, Georgia by the LAMAR Institute research team resulted in the location of 32 archaeological sites. Test excavations were conducted at three sites, 9Wy4, 9Wy61 and 9Wy65. The historic sites recorded by the project included two possible fortifications, numerous early home sites, and two small villages. Descriptions of the findings at each site are presented below. Additional information about the survey findings are presented in Appendices 1 through 3. Appendix 1 contains an artifact inventory. Appendix 2 contains summary tables of artifacts presented by individual site. Appendix 3 contains selected artifact images from the project.

SITE 9WY3

Site 9Wy3 (Field Site SV-6) was first officially recorded by archaeologist Charles Pearson in 1973, who named it the Aleck Island site. Pearson described the site as middens and he noted that it, “seems to be a scattered village site” that contained Swift Creek and Savannah pottery. The excavation and collection history from this site extends back to at least 1960. Artifact collections from this period were located at the University of Georgia Laboratory of Archaeology.

Between December 26 and 30, 1960, Eugene Hodges (and others who are unidentified but may include A. R. Kelly) excavated a test trench, which was identified as 9Wy3, Sansavilla, Test Unit 1. The dimensions and precise location of this trench could not be determined from the available information. The University of Georgia Laboratory of Archaeology maintains collections from this test (Cats. 9669 and 9670). It also possesses several other collections made in 1960 and 1962 from the site. The 1962 material may represent surface collections.

Catalog 9163, identified as 9Wy3, Sansavilla Site, Surface, was made by Kelly and Hodges at an unknown date. It may represent their initial collection from the site. Artifacts in this collection included:

- Fiber tempered pottery
- Other unidentified aboriginal pottery
- Chert and quartz stemmed projectile points
- Chert debitage
- Daub (including several large fragments)
- Polychrome hand painted creamware
- Undecorated creamware
- Underglaze blue hand painted pearlware
- Undecorated pearlware
- Undecorated whiteware
- Unglazed coarse earthenware
- Combed/trailed yellow slipware
- Rhenish stoneware
Catalog 9667, identified as “9Wy3, Sansavilla”, was collected on October 31, 1960 by Eugene Hodges. It included a variety of aboriginal pottery, including several large examples of Swift Creek, Deptford Check Stamped, incised and simple stamped wares, one corner notched projectile point, chert debitage, and one kaolin pipe stem.

Catalog 9670 is labeled 9Wy3, Sansavilla, Unit 1, Level 1 and it included a variety of aboriginal pottery, including Deptford Check Stamped, simple stamped, and undecorated wares, one stemmed projectile point, and an unidentified bone. Catalog 9669 is labeled “Level 2, 9Wy3, Sansavilla, Test Unit 1, 8 to 12 inches B.S., Undisturbed area”. It contained a variety of aboriginal pottery, one chert projectile point, chert debitage, and one Kasita Red Filmed pottery sherd.

Archaeologist Clemens DeBaillou visited 9Wy3 on January 7, 1962 and he made three small collections (Cats. 9675, 9676, and 9677). These collections are presumably surface collections. The largest of DeBaillou’s collections (Cat. 9676) is labeled “9Wy3, Sansavilla Trading Post (lower end of site)”, and it contained chert debitage and a variety of aboriginal pottery, including fiber tempered, curvilinear complicated stamped and unidentified plain sand tempered wares. European artifacts included:

1 British brown salt glazed stoneware
1 yellow slipware
1 undecorated creamware
1 blue hand painted porcelain (with brown rim, Imari ware)
1 olive green bottle glass
9 burned glass beads (small white barrel type)
1 milk glass button (4 hole variety)
3 kaolin tobacco pipe stems
4 kaolin tobacco pipe bowls
2 burned spall type gunflint fragments
1 burned European flint fragment
1 sheet brass scrap
4 melted glass
1 lead sprue

Catalog 9675 was identified as “9Wy3, Sansavilla, Surface, Lower end of site”, and it contained stemmed projectile points, chert and quartz debitage and a variety of aboriginal pottery, including incised/punctated wares. European artifacts included:

1 light green glazed coarse earthenware (or possibly Spanish olive jar) sherd
1 burned spall type gunflint
1 cast iron fire dog fragment
Slate
Oyster shell.
Catalog 9677 was identified as “9Wy3, lower end of site, collection from bluff, Sansavilla” and it contained stamped and undecorated aboriginal pottery sherds and one quartz debitage. While the collector is not identified, it was presumably DeBaillou or one of his team.

Reconnaissance of the site during the ABPP study noted that it consisted of a scatter of aboriginal and historic artifacts. Ceramic types that were recovered from shovel tests included Deptford Check Stamped, cordmarked, undecorated, and weathered residual sherds. The site was briefly reconnoitered for any potential historic component. Artifacts were recovered from a maximum depth of 40 cm below ground in very limited shovel testing. The site measures approximately 450 meters northwest-southeast by 100 meters northeast-southwest.

Artifacts were located in five positive shovel tests and by metal detector reconnaissance (1 metal find). This study extended the site several hundred meters to the northwest of its previously plotted location. A total of 45 artifacts was identified by the survey. These included the aboriginal pottery (identified above), daub, one chert flake, one impacted lead musket ball (approximately 0.63 caliber), and one unidentified iron object. The aboriginal pottery included Deptford Check stamped, cordmarked, indeterminate stamped, and undecorated (fiber tempered and sand tempered) wares. These sherds indicate a Terminal Archaic, Early Woodland, and possibly later aboriginal components are present.

Most artifacts were recovered from the upper 36 cm of soil in a topsoil zone, although two aboriginal sherds were recovered from 65 to 82 cm below ground surface in one test. The presence of cultural features was not determined by the survey. The presence of daub may indicate that structural remains are present, but building traces were not located during this survey-level work. The ground conditions on this site were less than optimal because of dense undergrowth and extensive logging disturbances that made for treacherous survey conditions. More work is recommended for this site to assess its research potential.

SITE 9WY4

The suspected location of the Fort Mount Venture/Musgrove’s Trading post site (Site 9Wy4, or Field Site SV-5) was the primary target for examination in the present study. Site 9Wy4 was officially recorded in the Georgia site files in 1973 by archaeologists Charles Pearson and Chester DePratter. Involvement by the University of Georgia, Department of Anthropology with this archaeological site, however, extends back to the 1960s and early 1970s with field excursions to the site by A. R. Kelly, Eugene Hodges, and Gordon M. Midgette.

The ABPP study began under the assumption that Kelly and Midgette had indeed located the site of the Fort Mount Venture and Mount Venture Trading Post and that extensive portions of that site were already excavated. Background research prior to the onset of fieldwork in this study determined that no notes, field records, or maps from Kelly’s or
Midgette’s fieldwork was on file in the GASF, GDAH, or Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, (GDNR, HPD) facilities, nor was any final report (or draft report) of this research submitted. The GASF contained a recorded site that was presumed to be the site in question, although the plotted location of this site was determined to be greatly in error upon field examination. Details of this site are presented in greater detail in the following discussion.

Supplemental information that aided in the relocation of the site was provided by Martin Proudfoot, David Smith, and William Steed, all of whom were very familiar with the previous excavations at the site. Mr. Proudfoot provided the key to relocating the site. Both Proudfoot and Steed provided an oral account of the past archaeological activity at the site and a student term paper written by Steed formed the closest approximation to a site report. Some information about the area was contained in a general survey report of the area by Midgette (1973) but this information provided very limited information about the actual excavations at the site. A published Wayne County history contained some additional information on Midgette’s excavations, including a general reference to features uncovered in their excavations (Jordan 1976:30-37).

The full extent of the previous “archaeological” research at 9Wy4 remains vague at best. The surface collections and excavations spanned the period from 1960 to the early 1970s. Catalog records reveal only one “trench” excavated by Kelly and Hodges, although an eyewitness noted that an area approximately 8 meters by 10 meters was excavated (Martin Proudfoot personal communication August 2, 2000). Midgette, Steed, and DePratter returned to the site in 1968 (and later dates) to excavate additional areas. The extent of their excavations is unknown due to lack of surviving or existing documentation. The various excavations at 9Wy4 were extensive enough to allow the exposure of building evidence in the form of post molds and building wall outlines. The extent of the resources that were destroyed by these undocumented and poorly documented excavations remains unknown.

Site Delineation

Armed with this background information, the LAMAR Institute crew set out in February 2003 to relocate Site 9Wy4 and assess its current condition. The crew began by reconnoitering the site of 9Wy4 as shown on the GASF site map in 2003. While that location did indeed contain a large archaeological site, the site did not appear to contain an eighteenth century component. Acting on the geographic information provided by Proudfoot, which conflicted with the GASF information, the crew shifted the search to an area further south on the bluff. The site was quickly located in the vicinity indicated by Proudfoot, which was vegetated in young pines. The reconnaissance of the site in 2003 included the establishment of a site datum and a line of six positive shovel tests and two 50 cm by 50 cm test excavations. The fieldwork at 9Wy4 in January 2004 consisted of topographic mapping, GPR survey, systematic shovel testing, test excavation, and controlled surface collection and metal detecting.
Site 9Wy4 measures approximately 140 meters north-south by 70 meters east-west. Topographic maps of 9Wy4 are shown in Figures 18 and 19. A plan of the site showing the location of shovel tests and test units is presented in Figure 20. Site 9Wy4 contains a scatter of eighteenth century artifacts and Terminal Archaic and Early Woodland period artifacts. The site has been heavily impacted by silviculture in the twentieth century and by the previous (poorly documented) archaeological excavations. Despite these negative impacts, the site retains intact subsurface features from the eighteenth century occupation and a shallow sheet midden deposit. While the sheet midden has been extensively disturbed, it appears to retain some horizontal integrity.

The historic occupation at 9Wy4 began sometime in the early to mid eighteenth century and continued until at least the early 1760s. The correlation of this archaeological site with historical plats points to an association with the Cusseta chief Captain Alleck. The site also may be the site of the Mount Venture trading post, but the connection is not straightforward and this interpretation will require additional study to assess its validity. The site may contain remains of the trading post, fort and Captain Alleck’s settlement.

Figure 18. Site 9Wy4, Topography.
Eight GPR sample blocks were surveyed at 9Wy4 and each was identified by a letter designation—A through H. The width of each sample was dictated by the wooded environment consisting of rows of planted pines. By necessity, the sample was restricted in width by these trees. The length of the samples varied. GPR Blocks C, A, B, and D formed a continuous 70 m length through the center of the site on its grid north-south axis. GPR Blocks E and F also were contiguous and sampled a north-south area 40 m in length, east of Blocks A through D. GPR Block H, which was 15 m in length, was located on the southwest side of the site and it also was oriented along grid north. GPR Block G, which was 10 m in length, was surveyed perpendicular to the other samples and it overlapped with the coverage on the northern part of Block C.
Figure 20. Site 9Wy4, Excavation Plan.
GPR Block A measured 20 m north-south by 2 m east-west. The northeast corner of Block A was located at 1000N 1000.8E. It was bounded on the north by Block C and on the south by Block B. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 20 cm intervals. Block A exhibited many radar anomalies at relatively shallow depths. A plan view of Block A at approximately 44 cm below ground is shown in Figure 21.

At approximately 60 cm below ground a strong horizontal radar signature was observed in GPR Block A, which probably indicates a significant change in soil stratigraphy. This deeper zone was observed in all of the GPR blocks and it probably represents the natural soil transition from a unconsolidated sandy loam to a more compact sandy clay loam. The soils at 9Wy4 consist of Kleg sand. A typical profile for Kleg sand consists of:

- 0-3 inches, dark grayish-brown sand;
- 3-10 inches, grayish brown sand;
- 10-27 inches, pale yellow sand with a few medium, faint mottles of white sand;
- 27-32 inches, pale yellow loamy sand with many, coarse, faint mottles of gray, yellowish and yellowish brown sand;
- 32-36 inches, light yellowish brown sand with many, medium, distinct mottles of yellowish brown sand; and,
- 36-54 inches, yellowish brown sandy clay loam with many, coarse, prominent mottles of red, light gray and brownish yellow clay loam (Aydelott et al. 1965:67).

GPR Block B measured 20 m north-south by 2 m east-west. The northeast corner of Block B was located at 980N 1000.8E. It was bounded on the north by GPR Block A and on the south by GPR Block D. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 20 cm intervals. Block B exhibited numerous linear anomalies, which may relate to the recent pine tree planting.

GPR Block C measured 20 m north-south by 2 m east-west. The northeast corner of Block C was located at 1040N 1000.8E. It was bounded on the south by GPR Block A. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 40 cm intervals. Block C exhibited only a few radar anomalies with no apparent patterning.

GPR Block D measured 10 m north-south by 3.8 m east-west. The northeast corner of Block D was located at 960N 1003E. It was bounded on the north by GPR Block B. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 40 cm intervals. A plan view of Block D at approximately 48 cm below ground is shown in Figure 22. Block D exhibited only a few minor radar anomalies with no apparent patterning.

GPR Block E measured 20 m north-south by 3.2 m east-west. It was bounded on the south by GPR Block F. The northeast corner of Block E was located at 1020N 991.2E. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 20 cm intervals. A plan view of GPR Blocks E and F at approximately 40 cm below ground is shown in Figure 23. Block E exhibited only a few scattered anomalies with no apparent patterning.
Figure 21. Aerial View of GPR Blocks C, A and B at Approximately 44 cm Depth, 9Wy4, Showing More and Clearer Anomalies in Blocks A and B Compared with Block C.
GPR Block F measured 20 m north-south by 3.2 m east-west. It was bounded on the north by GPR Block E. The northeast corner of Block E was located at 1000N 991.2E. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 20 cm intervals. Block F contained a concentration of small radar anomalies in its central portion of the block. These may represent a structure or greater area of discarded debris.

GPR Block G measured 10 m east-west by 2.8 m north-south. It overlapped GPR Block C and the two blocks shared a common northeast corner. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 20 cm intervals. A plan view of Block G at approximately 45 cm below ground is shown in Figure 24. Block G exhibits several small to medium sized anomalies, which cluster near its center and western end. These may represent clusters of small pits or debris concentrations.

GPR Block H measured 15 m north-south by 3.2 m east-west. The northeast corner of Block H was located at 985N 969.2E. Archaeologists surveyed the block with GPR transects spaced at 20 cm intervals. A plan view of Block H at approximately 48 cm below ground is shown in Figure 25. Block H exhibited a few larger anomalies, which may represent refuse pits or other features containing concentrations of artifacts.
Figure 23. Aerial View of GPR Blocks E and F at Approximately 40 cm Depth, 9Wy4.

Figure 24. Aerial View of GPR Block G at Approximately 45 cm Depth, 9Wy4.
The GPR survey of portions of 9Wy4 revealed many subsurface anomalies at relatively shallow depths. Given the extent of soil disturbance caused by at least two episodes of mechanical tree cultivation, only those anomalies that lie beneath the disturbed zone warrant more consideration in the GPR discussion. For this reason, the anomalies that were visible at depths of less than 40 cm were ignored. The land surface at 40 cm and below is relatively undisturbed by modern silviculture, as demonstrated by the subsequent test unit excavations.

Archaeologists observed the most intriguing radar anomalies in GPR Blocks A and B, which sampled the core of the archaeological site. These consisted of a series of linear anomalies that were oriented generally perpendicular to the river bluff. At first glance these anomalies could be interpreted as silviculture disturbance, which may indeed be the case. These patterns are noticeably absent, however, from the other sample blocks, which share the same tree planting environment. What then, do these linear anomalies represent? The possibly represent narrow trenches that are associated with several post in ground structures. The GPR Block samples are insufficiently wide, however, for a full visualization of any building pattern.
Archaeological Testing

Seven test units were excavated at 9Wy4. Test Units 1, 2, and 4 were located on the northern portion of the site. Test Unit 3, 5, 6 and 7 formed a contiguous block on the southern portion of the site. A total of 8.75 m² was exposed by these excavations.

The vicinity of Test Units 3-7 was suspected to be one on the areas that was previously excavated by Midgette and others with UGA, based on the slightly depressed appearance of the landform in this area. The presence of intact colonial period features in Test Units 5 and 6 indicate that, if this area did form part of the UGA excavations, then those archaeologists had either failed to excavate all of the features in this area, or Test Units 5 and 6 were slightly beyond their excavation area.

Test Unit 1 was a 50 cm by 50 cm test that was excavated during the site reconnaissance in February 2003 and it was encapsulated by the Test Unit 2 excavation (Figure 26). No cultural features were identified in Test Unit. This test encountered a shallow midden deposit containing eighteenth century artifacts, including many badly burned items.

Test Unit 2 was a 2 m east-west by 1 m north-south excavation located at 999-1000N 994-996E. It was excavated in two levels to a maximum depth of 30 cm below ground (Figures 27 and 28). No cultural features were identified in Test Unit 2. This excavation yielded 180 artifacts, excluding daub.

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![Test Unit 1, South Profile](image-url)

**Figure 26.** Test Unit 1, South Profile, 9Wy4.
Figure 27. Plan of Test Unit 2, 9Wy4.

Figure 28. South Profile of Test Unit 2, 9Wy4.
Test Unit 3 was a 2 m north-south by 1 m east-west excavation located at 984-986N 992-993E. Many iron readings were indicated by the metal detector in this portion of 9Wy4. Test Unit 3 was placed in the trough between two rows of planted pines and was excavated in two levels to a maximum depth of 37 cm below ground (Figure 29). Four shallow features (Features 1-4) were recorded at the base of Level 2 in this excavation (Figure 30). These features may represent the last remnants of posts, or more likely, were associated with modern pine seedling planting. Test Unit 3 contained a total of 123 artifacts. These included a variety of eighteenth century artifacts such as daub, wrought nails, various early ceramics, bottle glass, a metal table knife, tobacco pipes, burned gunflints, lead balls, lead sprue, metal, and bone. Other artifacts that are unrelated to the eighteenth century component included aboriginal pottery and chipped stone and two spent percussion caps.

![Test Unit 3, North Profile](image)

A. Very Dark Grayish Brown Sandy Loam

B. Mottled Very Dark Grayish Brown Sand and Light Yellowish Brown Sand

C. Mottled Light Yellowish Brown Sand and Pale Yellow Sand

Figure 29. North Profile of Test Unit 3, 9Wy4.
Test Unit 3, Plan

A. Matrix. Light Yellowish Brown Sandy Loam Mottled with Very Dark Gray Brown Sandy Loam

B. Light Olive Brown Sandy Loam

Figure 30. Plan of Test Unit 3.

Test Unit 4 was a 2 m north-south by 1 m east-west excavation located at 996-998N 989-990E. It was excavated in two levels to a maximum depth of 32 cm below ground (Figure 31). Artifacts from Test Unit 4 included daub, wrought nails, early ceramics, bottle glass, one tack, tobacco pipes, 13 lead balls, metal, burned flint, and glass beads. Aboriginal artifacts included Deptford Check Stamped, net impressed, undecorated, and incised aboriginal pottery, fiber tempered pottery, and chipped stonedebitage.
Table 2

Test Unit 4, South Profile

A. Olive Brown Sandy Loam
B. Mottled Light Olive Brown and Light Yellowish Brown Sand
C. Pale Yellow Sand

Figure 21. South Profile, Test Unit 4, 9Wy4.

Test Unit 5 was a 2 m east-west by 1 m north-south excavation located at 986-987N 992-994E. It was excavated in one level to a maximum depth of 22 cm below ground (Figures 32 and 33). Test Unit 5 yielded 195 artifacts and included wrought nails, early ceramics, bottle glass, lead balls, tobacco pipes, gunflints, lead sprue, metal and bone. Aboriginal artifacts included Deptford Check Stamped, complicated stamped and incised wares.

Figure 32. Plan of Test Units 5 and 6, 9Wy4.
Test Unit 6 measured 1 m by 1 m and it was attached to the northeast corner of Test Unit 5, forming an L-shaped excavation. Its location was at 986-987N 991.5-992.5E. It was excavated in one level to a maximum depth of 18 cm below ground (Figure 34). Test Unit 6 contained only a few artifacts, which were one bottle glass, one iron strap, one English spall-type gunflint, two wrought nails, and two bone fragments.

Test Unit 7 was a 50 cm by 50 cm test that was excavated during the site reconnaissance in February 2003 and it was encapsulated by the Test Unit 5 excavation. No features were defined in this test unit. The excavation revealed a shallow deposit of eighteenth century artifacts, including many burned items.

Six features were defined in the excavations at 9Wy4. These were all located in the Test Unit 3-7 cluster. Features 1-4 were located at the base of the topsoil zone in Test Unit 3. Features 1-4 were determined to be modern disturbances associated with silviculture activity (Figure 35). Feature 1 (985.8N 992.4E) was a sub-rectangular stain that measured 45 cm northeast-southwest by 22 cm northwest-southeast and was 20 cm in thickness. It contained daub, one unidentifiable ceramic, bottle glass, one wrought nail, and bone.
Figure 34. North Profile of Test Unit 6, 9Wy4.

Feature 2 (985.4N 992.5E) was a sub-rectangular stain that measured 40 cm northeast-southwest by 27 cm northwest-southeast and was 10 cm in thickness. It contained daub, one wrought nail, bottle glass, and two European flint fragments. Feature 3 (984.95N 992.45E) was a sub-rectangular stain that measured 32 cm north northeast by 21 cm south southwest and was 8 cm in thickness. It contained daub and one wrought nail. Feature 4 (984.4N 992.4E) was a sub-rectangular stain that measured 32 cm northwest-southeast by 28 cm northeast-southwest and was 7 cm in thickness. It contained daub and two aboriginal sherds.

Feature 5 was a shallow basin in Test Units 5 and 6 (Figure 36). The feature was centered at 987.1N 992E. It measured 52 cm northwest-southeast by 33 cm northeast-southwest and was 19 cm thick. Feature 5 was irregular in plan and may have consisted of two overlapping refuse pits. Only the very bottom of the feature escaped damage from silviculture activities, but that portion was intact. Feature 5 contained 60 artifacts, excluding 266 g of daub. These artifacts included daub, two wrought nails, aboriginal ceramics (Deptford Check Stamped, Deptford Simple Stamped, and plain ware), historic ceramics (creamware, porcelain, yellow slipware, refined white salt glazed stoneware), bottle glass, a pewter serving spoon, tobacco pipes, an iron shoe buckle, a burned gunflint, other European chert shatter, a brass and iron decorative bridle part, metal sprue, and bone. With the exception of the aboriginal pottery, which dates to the Woodland period, the artifacts in Feature 5 date to the eighteenth century. The TPQ for the feature is 1762, based on the presence of several creamware sherds. This feature was interpreted as a refuse pit whose upper portion was severely truncated by modern land use. Many of the artifacts in this feature exhibited evidence of burning. This trait was evidenced over the entire site, and was cited by previous researchers as proof that this was the 1742 massacre site. Creamware pottery in Feature 5, which was not manufactured until two decades later, sheds doubt on this interpretation.
Figure 35. Features 1 through 4 during Excavation, Test Unit 3, 9Wy4.

Figure 36. Features 5 and 6, 9Wy4.
Feature 6 was a shallow basin in Test Unit 5. It was irregular in plan and was centered at 986.8N 993.05E. It measured 55 cm north-south by 33 cm east-west and was 22 cm thick. This feature was severely truncated, similar to Feature 5, but its basal portions were intact. Feature 6 contained a total of 17 artifacts and 336 g of daub. These included one wrought nail, one yellow slipware, two bottle glass, two tobacco pipe fragments, French flint shatter, scrap pewter, lead sprue, and bone. Aboriginal ceramics included Deptford Check Stamped and unidentified ceramics. With the exception of the Deptford sherd, which dates to the Early Woodland period, the artifacts in Feature 6 indicate an eighteenth century age for the deposit.

Artifacts

Architecture Group

Each of the test units and many of the shovel tests contained artifacts indicative of buildings, which suggests that Site 9Wy4 contained several wooden buildings. The construction materials for these buildings included brick, daub, and wrought nails.

Brick and daub fragments were the most common artifacts in shovel tests. A surface density map of these artifacts is shown in Figure 37. At least four concentrations of these building materials are evident from this map. These probably represent at least three, and possibly four separate chimneys. These data suggest the presence of at least two, and possibly three separate buildings. The greatest concentration of brick and daub was located on the southeast side of the site.

![Figure 37. Brick and Daub Concentrations in Shovel Tests, 9Wy4.](image)

The shovel tests at 9Wy4 yielded 49 colonial period artifacts, exclusive of brick and daub fragments. These artifacts were distributed in 21 shovel tests across the site. A density map of these artifacts is shown in Figure 38. Two major concentrations and one minor concentration are evident from this map. The two primary concentrations are centered approximately 20 m apart. The most pronounced of these was sampled by the Test Unit 3
cluster. The western concentration of artifacts was sampled only by shovel tests. The minor concentration was sampled by Test Unit 4. The vicinity of Test Units 1 and 2 are in areas that produced low to moderate amounts of artifacts in shovel tests.

![Figure 38. Colonial Period Artifacts (excluding brick and daub) Concentrations in Shovel Tests, 9Wy4.](image)

Evidence for glass windows was absent, except for the recovery of one possible window glass sherd. A total of 68 wrought nails or wrought nail fragments were identified. Of these, only nine were recovered from shovel tests and the rest came from test excavations. The greatest concentration of nails was seen in Test Units 3 and 5 on the southern part of the site. Many other iron readings were noted during the metal detector reconnaissance of the site but these were left unexcavated. One nail fragment was identified as a cut nail (dating after 1790), although this nail was almost certainly unrelated to the primary site occupation. Nine other unidentifiable square nail fragments (probably wrought) were noted.

### Kitchen Group

Most of the historic ceramics that were recovered from 9Wy4 were very small sherds. A sample of 163 dateable ceramics from 9Wy4 was used in calculating a mean ceramic date of 1738 for the site. At face value a date of 1738 seems to mesh with the historically documented occupation of ca. 1736-1742. Several ceramic types were located, however, that were not manufactured until years after 1742. The pottery types that post-date the massacre included scratch blue salt-glazed stoneware (first produced about 1744) and creamware (first produced in 1762). Consequently, those artifacts could not have been left at the site until after the Fort Mount Venture massacre. Several creamware sherds were recovered from one feature context (Feature 5) that suggest that they were deposited on the site prior to its destruction by a catastrophic fire. The evidence of this fire was cited by Steed and Midgette as support for the linkage between this site and the 1742 massacre.
Clothing Group

Amazing stories about the finds at Sansavilla Bluff circulated informally among Georgia’s archaeologists in the late 1970s to 1990s, which included, “barrels of melted glass trade beads”. The ABPP study by the Lamar Institute’s research team failed to locate any such barrels, although numerous small melted or burned glass trade beads were recovered from the excavations. One example of a cluster of melted glass beads is shown in Figure 39. The William Morris collection included a string of melted or burned glass beads. The small collection from 9Wy4 housed at the University of Georgia also included a melted glass bead. Glass beads were distributed across the site in the present study. Thirty beads were recovered. Most (N=22) came from Test Unit 4. Eight beads were recovered from other areas of the site, including Test Units 1, 2 and 5. No beads were located in shovel tests. All of the beads examined in the present study were small to medium sized, wire wound specimens. Determining their original color was problematic, since burning had altered their appearance to various shades of gray. The notable absence of other bead types and colors may indicate that many of the burned beads originated from a common source (such as a barrel containing a limited variety of bead types).

Three metal buttons were recovered from 9Wy4. These included one South Type 7 and one South Type 13 buttons, typical eighteenth century types. None of the buttons were military in character.

Arms Group

Artifacts from the Arms Group should represent the best evidence for a military function of 9Wy4. Indeed, many spall type gunflints were recovered from the present excavations and these were widely distributed across the site. Two gunflints were recovered from the surface, despite the very limited surface visibility, which indicates the prevalence of this artifact type at 9Wy4. Nearly all of the gunflints that were recovered from 9Wy4 were severely burned, spalled, and fractured. Examples of these are shown in Figure 40. Similar examples were observed in the William Morris collection. Several gunflints were
also illustrated by Steed (1969: see Figure 4) but the magnitude of burning was not noted. As with the glass beads, intense heat substantially altered the appearance of the gunflints from 9Wy4, rendering them a crazed, light gray color. Most of the gunflints probably represent English spall types. The prevalence of fractured gunflints in the assemblage hindered the recordation of their metric attributes. Many of the fractures followed the shape of the gunflint, which resulted in approximate recording of their dimensions. Numerous gunflint fragments and small flakes from gunflints were present in the assemblage. Many of these small fragments were directly related to burning.

Other arms-related artifacts from 9Wy4 included lead balls and lead sprue. The diameter of two larger lead balls was measured to be .56 and .32 caliber. These lead shot and gunflint data suggest that small to medium bore flintlock weapons predominated at 9Wy4. No gun hardware was recovered from the site.

Two percussion caps were recovered from the site, but these artifacts were not associated with the primary site occupation. Percussion cap technology was introduced in the early nineteenth century and percussion firearms became popular in Georgia by the 1840s. The archaeologists noted no other evidence for nineteenth century site use at 9Wy4.

![Figure 40. Examples of Burned Gunflints, 9Wy4.](image)

*Tobacco Group*

Clay tobacco pipe fragments were relatively common at 9Wy4; 46 were recovered. Most of these were small fragments of little diagnostic value. The majority of the pipe bowls were undecorated, although one molded example was recovered. A small sample of tobacco pipe stems was measured for their bore diameters. These data were obtained from 19 specimens and pipe-stem dates were calculated using both Binford’s and Hanson’s formulas. The Binford method yielded a date estimate of 1760.69 and the Hanson method yielded a date of 1762.31. While this sample is admittedly statistically invalid, these dates do suggest that the site occupation continued well after the massacre of 1742.
Pipe Stem Date Estimates, 9Wy4, 9Wy61 and 9Wy65.

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Activities Group

Artifacts from 9Wy4 in the Activities Group include iron barrel hoops, a decorative brass and iron harness part (Figure 41), an iron horseshoe, and many small scraps of pewter, lead, brass, and iron.
Figure 41. Excavation of a Decorative Brass Bridle Part, 9Wy4.

SITE 9WY5

Site 9Wy5 (Field Site SV-20) was first officially recorded in 1973 by Charles Pearson, who named it the Power Line Site. Pearson described it as containing “Fiber Tempered through Irene” components. The power line that spans the Altamaha River at Lower Sansavilla Bluff was constructed in the late 1950s (Martin Proudfoot personal communication August 2, 2000). University of Georgia anthropologists were aware of this site since at least December 1960, when A.R. Kelly and Eugene Hodges excavated a test pit at 9Wy5. No documentation for this work was located, although one large bag of aboriginal pottery sherds was identified at the UGA Laboratory of Archaeology, labeled “Sansavilla Site 9Wy5, Test Pit 1” (Cat. 9165). DePratter, Midgette, and Steed also conducted archaeological work at 9Wy5 (Midgette 1973). No report of these excavations was located, although some information can be gleaned from the catalog list.

An unknown excavation from 9Wy5 is represented by Catalog 10001 at the Laboratory of Archaeology. This catalog accession was identified as Sansavilla material collected from a small test pit beneath the power line. The numerical sequence of the catalog numbers for this test excavation can be relatively dated after 1960 and before 1968. This test measured 3 by 20 feet and was excavated in five levels to a maximum depth of 2.0 feet below the surface. The horizontal location of this test was not determined, other than a general location at 9Wy5, beneath the power line. This test excavation yielded a variety
of aboriginal and historic artifacts. It included aboriginal pottery (including incised/punctated and undecorated fiber tempered, and other wares), stemmed Late/Terminal Archaic projectile points, chert and quartz debitage, and one machine cut nail.

Catalog 20951, which was labeled “9Wy5, Sansavilla beneath powerline 3 by 20 foot test, Level 1, Surface to 0.4 feet BS, Plowzone”, contained a variety of artifacts. Aboriginal pottery sherds included: three Lamar Incised (one folded pinched rim, two incised/punctated sherds) and other unidentified aboriginal ware. Chert debitage, one chert flake tool, and one rock were recovered from Level 1. Historic artifacts included two olive green bottle glass, tw iron fragments (including one barrel strap), and seven pieces of slag. Catalog 20952, which was labeled “Level 2, 0.4-0.8 ft BS plowzone”, contained a variety of aboriginal pottery (including incised ware), chert and quartz debitage, and one oyster shell. Historic artifacts from Level 2 included: two olive green glass, one crude whetstone, one small iron strip, brick, and slag. Catalog 20953, which was collected from a mottled black and yellow sand between Levels 2 and 3, contained several (cross stamped) simple stamped sherds from the same pottery vessel. Catalog 20954, which was Level 3 contained a variety of aboriginal pottery including fiber tempered, Deptford Check Stamped and one incised/punctated sherd, in addition to quartz debitage, one quartz pebble and one piece of slag. Soils were described as yellow mottled to gray sand. Catalog 20955, which was Level 4, contained a small quantity of aboriginal pottery. Level 4 extended from 1.2 to 1.6 feet below the surface. Catalog 20957, which was Level 5, contained a small quantity of undecorated fiber tempered and sand tempered pottery sherds. Level 5 extended from 1.6 to 2.0 feet below surface. This test unit apparently yielded one aboriginal feature, which was designated Feature 1. Catalog 20956, which was labeled “Feature 1” within Level 4 of the same test, contained three fiber tempered sherds. Catalog 20958, which was the same feature extending into Level 5, contained a small number of undecorated fiber tempered and sand tempered pottery sherds and a quartz rock.

Three other collections from 9Wy5 were apparently made about the same time as this test excavation. These probably represent surface collections. Catalog 20959 was a small collection of aboriginal pottery that represented several prehistoric components. It was collected from the water’s edge, just west of the power line. Catalog 20960 was a small collection from a fire break that was located east of the power line. It contained a small quantity of aboriginal pottery sherds, two chert and one quartz debitage. Catalog 20961 was an unidentified provenience from 9Wy5 and included two olive green glass, one blue decorated whiteware sherd, oyster shell, chert debitage, and a variety of aboriginal pottery sherds.

A second test unit at 9Wy5 is represented by Test Pit A. On September 10, 1968, Chester DePratter and William Steed excavated Test Pit A at 9Wy5. The size and location of this test was not determined. It was apparently excavated in two levels to a depth of one foot below surface. Catalog 21079, labeled Test Pit A, Surface to 6 inches BS, plowzone, contained a variety of historic artifacts, including:
1 wrought nail
1 machine cut nail
1 undecorated whiteware sherd
1 olive green bottle glass neck
2 small unidentified iron fragments
1 lead sprue
14 slag.

Aboriginal artifacts from this provenience included various types of pottery, including fiber tempered, Deptford Check Stamped and simple stamped, rectilinear stamped, incised, incised/punctated, and one red filmed sherd.

Catalog 21080, labeled Test Pit A, 6 inches to 12 inches BS, contained a variety of aboriginal pottery, including fiber tempered, simple stamped, curvilinear complicated stamped, and incised ware. This level also contained one chert flake tool, chert debitage, one oyster shell and one slag fragment. The dimensions and location of Test Unit A remain undetermined.

Catalog 21078 was a small surface collection from 9Wy5 (possibly made by DePratter and Steed in 1968), which included a variety of aboriginal pottery sherds, chert debitage, and daub. It also contained nineteenth century historic artifacts, including:

1 black transfer printed ware
1 sponged whiteware
1 undecorated whiteware teacup handle
Undecorated whiteware (several sherds)
1 olive green bottle glass
2 oyster shells
1 tobacco pipe stem

Site 9Wy5, as observed in the ABPP study, consisted of a deposit of aboriginal and historic artifacts. The site was investigated by 16 positive shovel tests and 16 metal detector finds. Artifacts were present to a maximum depth of 77 cm in one test but most artifacts were contained in the upper 50 cm of soil. Aboriginal artifacts recovered from the shovel tests included a wide variety of ceramics, chipped stone, fire cracked rock, and daub. Ceramic types included Lamar Incised (fine incised), Deptford Check Stamped, undecorated fiber tempered (Terminal Archaic) and sand tempered wares, unidentified complicated stamped, unidentified cordmarked, and other residual wares. The ceramics indicate occupation in the Terminal Archaic, Woodland, and Late Mississippian to Protohistoric period. The chipped stone artifacts were non-diagnostic and included chert and petrified wood debitage and one chert biface fragment. Historic artifacts from shovel tests included handmade brick, machine cut nails, wire nails, olive green bottle glass, unidentified iron objects, one altered (cut) minie ball, one sponged whiteware bowl sherd, one cream colored (C.C.) ware sherd, two tobacco pipe fragments, and oyster shell. The historic artifacts indicate a nineteenth century occupation. The cut minie ball may represent activity associated with a Civil War encampment. This specimen was the only minie ball discovered by the ABPP project.
SITE 9WY6

Site 9Wy6 (Field Sites SV-22 and SV-23) was originally recorded in 1973 by Charles Pearson, who named it the Smith Branch Site and described it as a “large series of middens”, which contained, “Fiber Tempered through Proto Historic” components. The site was briefly reconnoitered in the present study and the site’s conditions were quite degraded from that indicated by Pearson two decades earlier. The reconnaissance located two aboriginal pottery sherds found on the ground surface at one location. One of the sherds was a rim from a sand tempered bowl. The other sherd was fiber tempered. The sherds indicate at least one aboriginal component is present. The area was not intensively surveyed and its research potential was not fully established.

Field Site SV-23 consisted of a low frequency scatter of late nineteenth or early twentieth century artifacts, including one clear bottle glass, one ironstone sherd, and one brick on the edge of a large borrow pit within Site 9Wy6, as previously defined in the GASF. According to William Steed, a human burial mound/ossuary was located in the vicinity of the borrow pit but has since been destroyed. Steed noted that the mound contained an area of cremated human bone, and small triangular projectile points were found in association (William Steed personal communication July 15, 2000). The perimeter of the borrow pit was reconnoitered for surface artifacts and this historic ceramic sherd was the only object found.

SITE 9WY7

Site 9Wy7 (Field Site SV-26) consisted of a scatter of aboriginal and historic artifacts. The site was first recorded in 1973 by Charles Pearson who named it the Buzzard’s Roost Site and described it as a scattered midden containing mainly fiber tempered pottery. Seventy-four artifacts were recovered in the present study from the surface, shovel tests, and metal detector reconnaissance. Six positive shovel tests and seven metal detector finds were recorded. A shallow oval depression, approximately 4 meters in diameter, was sampled by one shovel tests, which yielded no artifacts. Two shovel tests yielded artifacts at depths of 50 cm or greater. The aboriginal artifacts included chert flakes, one Lamar Incised (incised and punctated), one cordmarked, two simple stamped, and several undecorated (sand tempered and fiber tempered) pottery sherds. The historic artifacts included one iron shoe buckle, three wrought nails, one iron scrap, one green edged pearlware sherd, and one undecorated creamware sherd. Although most shovel tests indicated a shallow deposit, at least two tests yielded artifacts at depths of 50 cm or greater. This site contains at least two suspicious depressions on the crest of the northeast bluff that may represent previous archaeological excavations or looter holes. A slight concentration of historic artifacts was located a short distance southwest of these depressions.
SITE 9WY15

Site 9Wy15 (Field Site SV-18) consisted of an extensive deposit of late eighteenth to early nineteenth century artifacts and aboriginal artifacts in pine woods at Lower Sansavilla Bluff. This site is tentatively identified as the early town of St. Savilla. St. Savilla is shown on a series of early nineteenth century maps of the study area, although the locations indicated on these maps are too gross a scale for precise mapping of the town site on modern maps. The site was delineated by six shovel tests, which was supplemented by 20 metal detector finds.

Daniel Battle originally located and recorded this site in the 1990s. Battle noted that the site had been extensively disturbed by a logging operation at the time of his visit and artifacts had been abundant in the area. Battle reported finding a number of large “coin” buttons with his metal detector on this site. One of these is shown in Figure 42.

![Figure 42. Button from 9Wy15 (Courtesy of Dan Battle).](image)

The LAMAR Institute team revisited portions of the areas previously examined by Battle. Artifacts from the site include historic ceramics (late eighteenth and early nineteenth century types), glass, metal, brick, and daub and fiber tempered ware, sand tempered complicated stamped ware, and chert debitage. The reconnaissance coverage on this site was very limited, since the town did not date to the period of interest. It does, however, represent an important historical resource that should be intensively surveyed and assessed for its research potential.

SITE 9WY48

The ABPP survey team identified a large prehistoric site (9Wy48), possibly a Woodland and Mississippian period village on the lower Sansavilla Bluff. This site was in the location that had been erroneously attributed to the Mount Venture fort and trading post site whose actual location was found to be several hundred meters to the southeast of Site 9Wy48 (See the 9Wy4 discussion above). The site measured approximately 320 meters northwest-southeast by 150 meters northeast-southwest. It contains a broad scatter of aboriginal pottery and chipped stone artifacts with several concentrations noted. Two
locations exhibited signs of looting (or possibly undocumented archaeological excavations). The largest of these was approximately 5 meters in diameter and 1 meter in depth. A small pit feature was visible in the profile of this excavation.

Site 9Wy48 (Field Site SV-4) was the location of a previously recorded site. When the locale was revisited by the LAMAR Institute research team, however problems with the existing official state site data were recognized. Site 9Wy4 had been incorrectly plotted in the GASF at the location of Site 9Wy48. This mapping error was remedied as part of the present study. Shovel tests placed within 9Wy48 revealed a heavily eroded area (less than 5 cm of topsoil) with very limited potential for intact remains. The exposed ground surface was carefully examined for artifacts. No artifacts were recovered from the site in the present study. The site contains a moderately dense deposit of aboriginal pottery and chipped stone debitage. Intact aboriginal features were noted and the site probably has the potential to yield important information on the prehistoric occupation of the lower Altamaha River region, even though it is heavily eroded. The potential for a historic component within this site, however, appears remote.

SITE 9WY51

The first field site investigated at Sansavilla Bluff by the LAMAR Institute’s research team was the site of Williamsburg, which was designated 9Wy51 (Field Site SV-1). The site was only partially explored in the present study. It covers an area of at least 350 meters northeast-southwest by 320 meters northwest-southeast.

Historical documents attest to a settlement in the 1790s at the Upper Sansavilla Bluff known as Williamsburg (Sullivan 1989). The settlement was so named because of several families of Williams who had settled in the vicinity by the 1780s. The town was authorized by the Georgia legislature and a plan map of the town, depicting the individual town lots was surveyed and recorded.

The notice of incorporation for Williamsburg stated,

Town of Williamsburg.

Situated on the South Side of the Altamaha River about forty miles from its mouth, in the County of Glynn, --Containing 115 acres, 2 Roads 26 Rods and 113 feet of land; Which is divided into 123 Lots that are 99 feet front & 330 feet back, except the water lots, which are different lengths; and 15 Streets which are 48 feet wide, except Front and King, which are 50 feet wide.

The above is a true Plan and accurate Survey of the Town of Williamsburg, Laid out according to an Act of Assembly, passed the 17th day of December 1792, as Witness our hands this 20th day of August 1793, and in the 18th year of American Independence.

[signed] Farr Williams
John William Lambert
Roswell King, Commissioners
Recorded November 8, 1793 (Sullivan 1989:7-8).
An original plan map of the town, in the possession of Williams family descendants, was reproduced in Sullivan (1989:12-13) and a copy of that reproduction is shown in Figure 43. The plan map, which lacks a scale and north arrow (although a north arrow was later added) depicts the front-center part of town (at the intersection of King and Front Streets) at the confluence of Alex Creek and the Alatamaha River, just below Mud Island. These landmarks would place Williamsburg at the Upper Sansavilla Bluff. The town extends back from Front Street in four blocks. It extends east and west of King Street four blocks in each direction.

At the time of the reconnaissance survey in 2003, the Williamsburg vicinity was in an overgrown timber clearcut. The clearcut covers a large portion of the suspected town site, as does a pine forest along the Altamaha River bluff margin. The portion of the town located southeast of the road leading to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ boat landing and southwest of the aforementioned pine forest was systematically traversed for surface remains. Although this area was beginning to become overgrown,
the conditions for artifact discovery remained good. This area was sampled by 20 surface reconnaissance transects. The area of pine woods, downstream from the boat landing was sampled by a single line of shovel tests. Most of the area that was examined was devoid of any cultural material, which suggests that the town never achieved its full potential as suggested by the ca.1792 plan map. Most of the town lots that were intended for settlement in Williamsburg were apparently never occupied, assuming the town was constructed on the site indicated.

One complete stoneware elbow pipe was located on the ground surface. Other artifacts observed at the site included creamware and pearlware sherds, unidentified square nails, and brick. The brief investigation of Williamsburg yielded five dateable ceramic sherds, which yielded a tentative MCD of 1795.4. While this date calculation is far too small for statistical validity, it does suggest an occupation in the area from the 1790s, which is corroborated by the historical documentation.

SITE 9WY52

Site 9Wy52 (Field Site SV-2) consisted of a scatter of aboriginal pottery on the ground surface. The site was briefly reconnoitered in March 2002. The site measures at least 70 meters northwest-southeast by 30 meters northeast-southwest. No shovel tests were attempted. Artifacts that were observed included Lamar Incised (fine incised) and undecorated aboriginal wares, which were indicative of a (Late Lamar) Mississippian or Protohistoric occupation. The research potential of this site was not fully assessed.

SITE 9WY53

Site 9Wy53 (Field Site SV-3) consisted of a surface scatter of aboriginal pottery. The site measures at least 80 meters by 30 meters, based on the surface distribution of sherds. The site was briefly inspected in March 2002 and surface visibility was limited. No shovel tests were attempted. Plain and unidentified sand tempered stamped pottery was observed at 9Wy53.

SITE 9WY54

Site 9Wy54 (Field Site SV-7) consisted of a low frequency scatter of aboriginal and historic artifacts. Artifacts were located by three shovel tests and metal detector reconnaissance. The site measures 45 meters northeast-southwest by 30 meters northwest-southeast. Eight artifacts were identified by the survey. These included four plain sand tempered pottery sherds, one chert flake, daub, and three unidentified metal objects. The plain pottery was non-diagnostic but it suggests a post-Archaic period occupation. One of the metal items was a large iron rod with a loop on one end. It measured 7/16 inches in thickness and 4.5 inches in length. Other ferrous metal detector readings were noted in one area but were not investigated further. Artifacts were recovered from the upper 22 cm of soil in a shallow topsoil zone. This site probably represents an early historic house location, although the date of the occupation was not
determined. The examination of the site was very brief and the potential for intact subsurface features was not determined. More work is needed to assess this site’s research potential.

SITE 9WY55

Site 9Wy55 (Field Site SV-8) consisted of a single brass button fragment located by metal detector reconnaissance. Only the back of the button was recovered and it measured .75 inches in diameter. This artifact was contained within the upper 8 cm of topsoil on this site. The button was from a composite 2-piece button type that was produced in the eighteenth century. The vicinity of the button find was investigated by two shovel tests but both yielded no artifacts. The examination of this location was quite brief and more study is needed to determine if it harbors an important historical component.

SITE 9WY56

Site 9Wy56 (Field Site SV-10) is an early historic house site that consisted of a scatter of eighteenth century and/or early nineteenth century artifacts and daub. The site, which measures 30 meters in diameter, was delineated by six positive shovel tests. Artifacts in these tests were recovered from the upper 25 cm of soil. Artifacts included olive green bottle glass, creamware pottery, one wrought nail, one brass button (South Type 9), unidentified-burned white bodied ceramics, brick, and daub. The presence of creamware sherds indicates that the site occupation after 1762. Type 9 buttons are common in early to mid-eighteenth century contexts in Georgia (South 1964). The presence of nails, brick and daub suggests that the site contained a historic dwelling. The site’s research potential was not fully determined by the present study.

SITE 9WY57

Site 9Wy57 (Field Site SV-11) consisted of portions of the old Post Road. The Post Road was an important early transportation route that connected Georgia and Florida. As such, it crosses many counties in the two states. The Post Road, which followed an ancient Indian trail along an interior route parallel to the coast, was established by 1763 along a heavily traveled path. This road was used by British, Spanish, and American troops and was used by Patriot troops in the American Revolution on the 3rd East Florida campaign (CVIOG 2005). The road is shown on several eighteenth and nineteenth century regional maps. Archaeologists reconnoitered portions of the road in Wayne County by automobile and by pedestrian reconnaissance. The Post Road is marked by a historical marker near the Wayne-Brantley County line (CVIOG 2005). A relatively pristine section of the road, which has been cut-off from use as a road in the early twentieth century, was traced in the Sansavilla Bluff vicinity. Other portions of the route continue in use.
In 1768 a ferry was established at Fort Barrington and a five year lease granted to Benjamin Lewis to carry "five horses at a time and to operate 24 hours a day." The Barrington Ferry operated into the early twentieth century. In 1808 William McIntosh and William O'Neal were authorized to "keep a ferry across the river Altamaha at the place commonly known by the name of Fort Barrington and to hold and occupy the profits and advantages for and during the term of ten years" (cited in Jordan 1976:14-17).

State legislation pertaining to maintenance of the Post Road was passed in an 1806 Act, which provided that,

…Job Tyson, John Thomas and Edward Pitcher, Esquires, be, and are hereby declared commissioners of the road beginning at Fort Barrington, and taking the direct route, so as to intersect the road leading to St. Mary's aforesaid -- -- And that the labor necessary to be done on the aforesaid road, shall be apportioned between the counties of Glynn and Wayne, in the following manner, to wit -- The inhabitants of Wayne, as well whites as slaves, residing within twelve miles of the said road, or any part thereof, shall be liable to, and subject to perform road duty -- beginning from the south side of the river Alatamaha, immediately opposite Fort Barrington, and extending along the road already laid out, to the plantation of John Fort -- and all the inhabitants of Glynn, residing within ten miles of the said road, shall be liable to, and subject to perform road duty -- beginning from the plantation of the said John Fort, and extending along the said road to the head of the Little Satilla, so as to intersect the Camden road….And be it further enacted, That William O'Neal, Stephen Pitcher and William Clemment, be, and they are hereby appointed commissioners of the road aforesaid, leading through and bordering on the county of Wayne (Georgia General Assembly 1806:94).

The Post Road is an important historical and archaeological resource and cultural landscape feature. Pristine sections of this road, or segments that were abandoned by the early twentieth century may have interpretive value. Important stream crossings, such as Barrington Ferry, may possess submerged archaeological resources but these were not explored in the ABPP study. The archaeological potential of the road bed should be considered. The road probably served as an attraction for settlement and early historic residential and commercial sites are expected to occur along its course. Three examples of early historic sites situated along the Post Road were located in the present study.

SITE 9WY58

Site 9Wy58 (Field Site SV-12) consisted of daub recovered from one shovel test. The age of this site was not determined by the present study. This area was only briefly reconnoitered and systematic archaeological survey of the area is recommended.

SITE 9WY59

Site 9Wy59 (Field Site SV-13) consisted of one plain sand tempered aboriginal pottery sherd located on the ground surface. This area was briefly reconnoitered and systematic archaeological survey of the area is recommended.
SITE 9WY60

Site 9Wy60 (Field Site SV-14) consisted of a small scatter of late eighteenth to possibly mid-nineteenth century artifacts in three shovel tests, three metal detector finds, and on the surface. It probably represents a single residential site dating after 1790 and prior to the 1870s. Artifacts were found at maximum depth of 21 cm below ground in very limited shovel test reconnaissance. The site measured approximately 30 m in diameter. Artifacts included machine cut nails, olive green bottle glass, one brass eyelet, brick and daub. The site may have potential for intact subsurface features but more work is needed.

SITE 9WY61

Site 9Wy61 (Field Site SV-15) is an early settlement that dates to the early eighteenth century with continued occupation into the 1760 and possibly later. The previously unknown site consisted of a small, dense deposit of historic and aboriginal artifacts. The historic artifacts indicate an early to mid-eighteenth century occupation. In addition to the regular survey delineation, this site was examined by GPR survey and test excavation.

Site Delineation

Site 9Wy61 was investigated by 13 shovel tests, two test units, and 16 metal detector finds. Artifacts in shovel tests were located at a maximum depth of 50 cm below ground, although most were contained in the upper 35 cm soil zone. It measures approximately 40 meters north-south by 30 meters east-west (Figure 44. An artifact density map, projected from shovel test findings, is presented in Figure 45.

One GPR block (Block B) was surveyed at this site. This block was placed within an area of artifact concentration and immediately adjacent to the area examined by test units. It measured 9 m north-south by 6 m east-west. The southeast corner of the block was located at 995N 996E. Figure 46 shows views of GPR Block B at 28 cm, 36 cm, 50 cm and 60 cm depth. The two upper views (28 and 36 cm) of the GPR block exhibit two strong linear north-south trending anomalies. These anomalies coincide with the current pine plantation planting rows and the radar signature is probably showing this activity.

The view at a depth of 50 cm displays a strong cluster of radar anomalies in the southwest corner of the block. This may indicate the presence of one or more closely-spaced, large subsurface features. This concentration measures approximately 3 m north-south by 3 m east-west and it continues to the south and west beyond the sample block. At 60 cm depth this concentration of radar anomalies is still observable, although it is masked by a widespread radar anomaly that covers a large portion of the block. The larger anomaly probably represents the changes in the natural soil strata on the site.
Figure 44. Site Plan, 9Wy61.

Figure 45. Artifact Density Map from Shovel Tests, 9Wy61.
Archaeological Testing

Test Unit 1 was a 50 cm by 50 cm sample that was excavated in four levels to a maximum depth of 50 cm below ground. Historic artifacts were distributed throughout the excavation levels. This area of investigation was expanded by the excavation of Test Unit 2, which surrounded Test Unit 1. Test Unit 2 was a 2 meter by 1 meter sample that was excavated in four levels to a maximum depth of 70 cm below ground (Figures 47 and 48). One large historic feature was identified in this test unit and was designated Feature 1.
Feature 1 was a large, rectangular refuse pit, or possible cellar, that was filled with a variety of early to mid-eighteenth century artifacts (Figure 49). Four strata were discerned within the feature, although it was excavated in two levels because these strata were not apparent until after the excavation. Levels 3 and 4 comprise the undisturbed fill of Feature 1. Level 3 extended from 30 to 40 cm below ground and Level 4 extended from 40 cm to 70 cm depth. The feature measured at least 1.28 meters north-south by 1 meter east-west and was approximately 40 cm thick.

Test Unit 2, Plan

A. Tan to White Sand

B. Light Brown Sand with Dark Brown Mottles, Charcoal Flecks, and Brick Fragments

C. Dark Grayish Brown Sandy Loam with Charcoal Flecks

D. Dark Brown Sand with Charcoal Flecks

E. Grayish Brown Sandy Loam with Charcoal Flecks

Figure 47. Plan of Test Unit 2, 9Wy61.
Figure 48. North and East Profiles, Test Unit 2, 9Wy61.

Figure 49. Feature 1 Excavated, 9Wy61.
Artifacts

Historic artifacts at 9Wy61 included a variety of early to mid eighteenth century ceramics, bottle glass, wrought and machine cut square nails, window glass, tobacco pipes, a shoe buckle, buttons, glass beads, brass finger rings, two coins (one 1758 British halfpenny and one undated Spanish cob silver coin), flintlock gun parts, English spall gunflints, lead balls, French gunflint flakes, a snaffle bit, a iron table knife, and iron and brass items (Figures 50-52). Oyster shell found at the site is probably associated with the historic occupation. For specific artifact counts and proveniences, see Appendix 2.

Several artifact types from 9Wy61, including ceramics, coins, and tobacco pipes provided information on the age of the occupation. A sample of 202 ceramic sherds was used in calculating a MCD of 1726.7 for this site. Most of the ceramic wares represented in the assemblage date to the early to mid-eighteenth century. Examples of sherds from the site are shown in Figure 53. The artifact with the latest manufacture date was undecorated pearlware, which was produced by 1774. The dearth of creamware in the assemblage, however, may indicate that this pearlware sherd represents a later, minor component on this site. The presence of a British coin, dated 1758, in the Feature 1 (Level 4) fill establishes the filling of this cellar sometime after that date.

The aboriginal artifacts comprise a low frequency scatter of aboriginal ceramics and non-diagnostic chipped stone debitage. At least two prehistoric components are represented—a Terminal Archaic occupation containing undecorated fiber tempered ware and an unidentified Woodland or Mississippian occupation contain cordmarked and undecorated sand tempered ware.

Figure 50. Glass Beads, 9Wy61.
This site shares many physical and archaeological similarities with Site 9Wy4, Kelly and Midgette’s Fort Mount Venture and Mary Musgrove Trading Post Site. Like 9Wy4, however, Site 9Wy61 also contains artifacts that were not manufactured until well after 1742. The historic ceramics at 9Wy61 span the early to mid-eighteenth century and suggest a peak in site use around mid century. The approximate date of site abandonment is in the 1760s, based on the presence of Whieldon ware, decorated creamware, and scratch blue salt glazed stoneware sherds.

A small sample of 26 tobacco pipe stems from 9Wy61 was used to calculate pipestem dates, using the Binford and Hanson formulas. Binford’s method yielded a date of 1772.92 and Hanson’s method yielded a date of 1781.17. Both of these dates are considerably more recent than the ceramic data suggests.

The earliest occupation at 9Wy61 may coincide with the Fort Mount Venture era and may be associated with events that took place in the 1742 massacre. The site continued to be occupied for several decades thereafter. Clearly, Site 9Wy61 is an important eighteenth century site that deserves additional study.
SITE 9WY62

Site 9Wy62 (Field Site SV-16) consisted of metal artifacts and one undecorated creamware sherd observed on the ground surface. The scatter, which is located on a ridge covered in young-growth pines, covers an area approximately 50 m north-south by 20 m east-west. The metal items include a lead ball, knife blade, cut or wrought nail, and other unidentified iron items. The presence of creamware indicates occupation sometime between 1762 and about 1820. More work is needed to determine if this site contains important historic components.
SITE 9WY63

Site 9Wy63 (Field Site SV-17) consisted of an isolated eighteenth century cannonball found by Daniel Battle in the 1990s with the aid of a metal detector (Figure 54). The approximate location of the find was estimated by Battle in January 2004 and the area was investigated by reconnaissance level shovel testing. The hollow iron ball measured 4.25 inches in diameter, weighed approximately 7 lbs., and had a 1 inch diameter fuse hole.

![Cannonball, 9Wy63 (Courtesy of Dan Battle).](image)

SITE 9WY64

Site 9Wy64 (Field Site SV-19) consisted of a scatter of historic artifacts over a wooded ridge. The site was examined by a brief reconnaissance. This site is known mostly by its metal detected objects. A series of shovel tests were excavated in one area of metal readings with only limited success. One undecorated pearlware sherd was found in one shovel test at 2 cm below ground.

A molded pewter button bearing the letters “RP” was recovered from 9Wy64 (Figure 55). Unfortunately, this poorly preserved specimen disintegrated after documentation and during the laboratory stabilization. It measured 7/8 inch in diameter and was a South Type 11 button. This button type was made between 1776 and 1783 for use by northern
Loyalist regiments (South 1964; Troiani 2001). RP is an abbreviation for Royal
Provincials. Its presence on this site suggests that a loyalist camp was located here.
Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown and his King’s Rangers was one of the loyalist units
known to be active in this area. Other loyalists were garrisoned in St. Augustine and may
have ventured into the area. Following the capture of coastal Georgia in January 1779
additional loyalists from New York and New Jersey were active in the lower Altamaha
River region. This button was probably lost on the site sometime after January 1779 and
prior to July 1782, when loyalist activity in the study vicinity was most rampant.

Site 9Wy64 may represent a loyalist camp dating to the American Revolution. Additional
study of the site is needed to fully ascertain the site’s components and research potential.

![Royal Provincial’s Button, 9Wy64 (200% Enlargement)](image)

**Figure 55. Royal Provincial’s Button, 9Wy64 (200% Enlargement).**

**SITE 9WY65**

Site 9Wy65 (Field Site SV-21) is the probable location of a 1790s Glynn County
Dragoon fortification. The site consisted of a small, dense deposit of historic artifacts
and a low frequency scatter of aboriginal artifacts. In addition to the regular survey
delineation, Site 9Wy65 was studied by GPR survey and test excavation.

Historical documents identify a fortification at St. Savilla at the end of the eighteenth
century. It was garrisoned by Captain Armstrong’s Troop of Glynn County Dragoons in
the Creek War between Georgia and the Creeks, which lasted from 1793 to 1796. Site
9Wy65 is almost certainly related to these troops. The site also may contain earlier
occupation evidence.

As noted earlier, a March 8, 1794 description of the Glynn County Dragoons’ blockhouse
at Sansavilla Bluff provided a partial description of a building, “two storie High the
Lower Storie Ten feet high & the Second Storie Eight feet high over Jutted twelve Inches Built of Hewed logs…” (Cate 1794). Unfortunately this description does not include information on the horizontal dimensions of the fort. This same document noted that, “an old House…The property of Captain Farr Williams” was demolished, “for the safety and protection of the Garrison and Store…” (Cate 1794). The estimated value of Captain Williams’ loss was £3 Sterling. These latter details are important because they show that an older dwelling was located in close proximity to the Dragoon’s fort.

Site Delineation

Site 9Wy65 was investigated by surface examination, 12 shovel tests, 14 metal detector finds, GPR survey, and one small test unit. The site measures approximately 30 m northeast-southwest by 20 m northwest-southeast (Figure 56). The surface examination revealed very few artifacts despite the excellent ground visibility. The area immediately south of the site was a large area that was in the process of being replanted at the time of this study. The ground surface conditions in that area were conducive for the location of artifacts, but none were observed. The area immediately north of the site is in mixed pine forest with no ground surface visibility. This site has been damaged by the dirt road that passes over it and by logging operations. Despite these disturbance factors, the site retains deeply buried, intact cultural material and subsurface features that demonstrate excellent research potential for this site. Several small piles of bulldozed soil are located along the road edge. One of these piles, which was located just west of the test unit, yielded numerous metal detector finds. Artifacts were located in five shovel tests. The examination of the site yielded a total of 172 artifacts.

GPR Block A was placed coinciding with the dirt road that was oriented perpendicular to the Sansavilla Bluff. Grid North for this block was oriented approximately 40 degrees east of Magnetic North. The southeast corner of Block A was located at UTM Zone 17 E438868 N3483192. Block A measured 25 m north-south by 7.2 m east-west. This sample block incorporated Test Unit 1. Figure 57 shows three plan views of GPR Block A at 36 cm, 50 cm and 60 cm below ground. In the two higher elevation maps many scattered radar anomalies and some minor concentrations are evident. No major structural features are evident in these data. The greatest concentration of radar anomalies is in the northern part of the sample and that area coincides with the greatest concentration of artifacts in shovel tests. The view at 60 cm depth shows some strong linear anomalies, as discussed earlier for the GPR findings at 9Wy4, which were furrows for planted pines.

Archaeological Testing

Site 9Wy65 was investigated by one small test unit. Test Unit 1 was a 1 meter by 1 meter excavation that was placed adjacent to a shovel test, which contained aboriginal and historic artifacts to a depth of 60 cm below surface (Figures 58-60). This test unit was excavated to a maximum depth of 93 cm below ground. It was excavated in five levels. The test unit yielded a total of 129 artifacts. These artifacts included a minority of aboriginal pottery and chert debitage. The aboriginal pottery included one Deptford
Check Stamped and two weathered sand tempered sherds. A wide variety of historic artifacts (n=162) were recovered from Test Unit 1.

Figure 56. Site Plan, 9Wy65.
This test unit and the original shovel test were fortuitously placed to coincide (almost precisely) with the corner of an earthen cellar. The artifacts in the cellar fill date from the early to late eighteenth century. The most diagnostic item in the test unit was a U.S. Army military button (a type produced after 1792) in Level 4. A similar button was recovered as a metal detector find approximately 3 meters from the test unit. An undecorated creamware bowl sherd, which was recovered from the road surface, cross-mended with another creamware sherd in the test unit. The two sherds were approximately 4 meters apart. Nearly all of the artifacts in the test unit came from the interior of the filled cellar. This feature measured at least 1 meter by 1 meter. A total of 129 artifacts was recovered from the test unit. The lowest strata of this deposit was designated Feature 1, which contained a complete jaw harp, a knife blade, one wrought nail, two creamware bowl sherds, and one Deptford Check Stamped sherd.

Artifacts

Site 9Wy65 yielded an interesting assemblage of eighteenth century artifacts, although the collection from the site was quite small. A total of 162 artifacts was recovered from the site. Most of the artifacts were recovered from the test unit. The horizontal extent of artifacts, as indicated by surface evidence and shovel tests, was scant. The metal detector proved more useful in locating the concentration of artifacts at this site.
The best evidence for the association of Site 9Wy65 and Fort St. Savilla is two pewter buttons that were recovered (Figure 61). Both specimens were a spread eagle pewter button (Albert Type GI24) (Albert 1976:16-17, Figure 24). This button type was U.S. Army issue and was produced ca. 1792. The first example was located by metal detecting. The second eagle button was found within the presumed cellar in Test Unit 1. Although these buttons were originally manufactured for regular U.S. troops, it was not uncommon for the buttons, or copies of the buttons, to be worn by state troops, such as the Glynn County Dragoons. This early military button type was quickly replaced by a more elaborate eagle motif. The presence of these buttons on this site indicate the probable presence of soldiers on the site in 1792, or shortly thereafter. This occupation date corresponds nicely with the historical information on the Glynn County Dragoons.
A. Light Grayish Brown Sandy Loam
B. Dark Grayish Brown to Brown Sandy Loam
C. Dark Brown Sandy Loam
D. White Sand with Orange Clay Mottles and Charcoal Flecks
E. Tan to White Sand with Small Yellowish Brown Mottles

Figure 59. East and North Profiles, Test Unit 1, 9Wy65.

Figure 60. Feature 1, Test Unit 1, 9Wy65.
The jaw harp, which is made from iron, is shown in Figure 62. Jaw harps were an inexpensive personal musical instrument and are often found on eighteenth and nineteenth century sites in Georgia. They have been found in both Native American and Euro-American contexts.

European ceramics provided important information used in dating the occupation of 9Wy65. A sample of 91 ceramic sherds from 9Wy65 was used to calculate a MCD of 1782.9. This date suggests an occupation prior to the 1790s Creek Indian War. The recovery of two post-1792 U.S. Army military pewter buttons and several artifacts from the Arms Group, including several lead shot (.32, .44, and .50 calibers), an English gunflint, and an iron knife blade, indicate a military function for this site.

The presence of several older historic artifacts suggests an even earlier historic component but that component was not clearly defined by the present investigation. These included early ceramic sherds (including Astbury ware, combed yellow slipware, and undecorated delftware sherds) and a British halfpenny that was minted late in King George II’s reign, (ca. 1740-1754). The date is partially visible on this specimen and was possibly minted in 1753 (Seaby and Purvey 1980:225). Dateable buttons that were recovered from the site include five South Type 7, and two South Type 9 buttons (South 1964). These types are commonly found in early to mid-eighteenth century contexts in the Southeastern U.S. A turquoise paste glass and brass cuff-link was recovered from the cellar at 9Wy65 (Figure 63). Figure 64 shows two fragments of a brass letter seal.
A very small sample of tobacco pipe fragments was recovered from 9Wy65. Ten pipe stems were used to calculate a date estimate, using the Binford and Hanson formulae. Binford’s method yielded a date of 1767.33 and Hanson’s method yielded a date of 1772.55. Both of these dates are earlier than the ceramics suggest. These data may reflect an occupation on this site that is several decades earlier than the 1790s Dragoon fort, although the early date from the small pipe stem sample may reflect sampling error.

SITE 9WY66

Site 9Wy66 (Field Site SV-24) consisted of a dense deposit of aboriginal and historic period artifacts. This site was located several hundred meters south of Sansavilla Bluff. Most of the artifacts are associated with an early nineteenth century occupation. A total of 59 artifacts was located. These were from the surface, six shovel tests and eight metal detector finds. Artifacts in one shovel test were deposited to a depth of 1.02 meters below ground. Artifacts in the other shovel tests were contained in the upper 36 cm of topsoil. The aboriginal artifacts consisted of nondiagnostic chert flakes and daub. The historic artifacts included a wide variety of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century artifacts,
which are indicative of a substantial domestic occupation. These included handmade bricks, one brass upholstery tack, one brass furniture finial, three brass buttons, one brass shoe heel tap (Figure 65), one lead fishing weight, one lead seal, unidentified iron scrap, one cast iron pot fragment, olive green, cobalt blue, and aqua bottle glass, creamware, pearlware sherds, and two domestic stoneware sherds. Small fragments of unidentified
bone and oyster shell also were noted. The presence of brick, coupled with the wide diversity of historic items, indicates that this was a house site in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The absence of any artifacts in the Arms Group in this small assemblage may indicate that the site did not have a military function.

SITE 9WY67

Site 9WY67 (Field Site SV-25) consisted of scattered ceramic and glass artifacts from an early twentieth century farmstead. The site was visited by a brief surface reconnaissance and no excavations were conducted. No architectural ruins were observed.

SITE 9WY68

Site 9WY68 (Field Site SV-27) consisted of a single undecorated sand tempered pottery bowl sherd from the surface of a dirt road. Examination of adjacent portions of the dirt road yielded no other artifacts, although the area was heavily wooded and no subsurface tests were attempted. This isolated find is probably indicative of a larger aboriginal occupation that was not visible in the current vegetative conditions.

SITE 9WY69

Site 9WY69 (Field Site SV-28) contains a dense deposit of historic and aboriginal artifacts. This site was located several hundred meters south of Sansavilla Bluff. The site was examined by two positive shovel tests where artifacts were found at a maximum depth of 34 cm below ground. A total of 17 metal detector finds was investigated. A surface depression, possibly a well or cellar, approximately 3 meters in diameter, was observed within the site.

The site contains abundant eighteenth century artifacts and a wide variety of artifact types were represented. The historic artifacts included: one wrought iron hinge or door latch, one cut or wrought nail, one possible padlock fragment, two lead scrap, one sprue, one brass clothing buckle, one brass thimble, one cast iron kettle fragment, one brass button (South’s Type 9), one brass tinkling cone (Figure 66), a copper coin, one lead shot (.32 caliber), three impacted lead shot (.44, .56, and .75 calibers), olive green bottle glass, and creamware and pearlware sherds. The coin is probably a British halfpenny bearing the bust of King George III, which were minted between 1770 and 1775 (Seaby and Purvey 1980:231). It was 1 1/8 inch in diameter. South’s Type 9 buttons are common in early to mid-eighteenth century contexts in Georgia. The aboriginal component was non-diagnostic (10 chert flakes, 5 undecorated sand tempered sherds, and daub) but indicates a post-Archaic period Native American presence.

The historic artifacts indicate a substantial occupation beginning in the mid-to-late eighteenth century and possibly continuing into the very early nineteenth century. Examination of the site was very brief, however, and consisted mostly of metal detector reconnaissance. The two shovel tests that were excavated within the site yielded
numerous historic and aboriginal artifacts. This site exhibited a wide range of early
historic artifacts, including many artifacts in the Arms Group.

![Figure 66. Tinkling Cone, 9Wy69.](image)

This occupation represents a frontier settlement with a possible military component. The
site, which is located south of Sansavilla Bluff, may pertain to Revolutionary War events
at Reid’s/Read’s Bluff. The ceramic artifacts indicate that site occupation at 9Wy69
continued after the Revolutionary War period.

**SITE 9WY70**

Site 9Wy70 (Field Site SV-29) consisted of a scatter of aboriginal ceramics and chert
flakes. The pottery assemblage included plain sand tempered and fiber tempered sherds,
which indicate that at least two aboriginal components are present—Terminal Archaic
and unidentified post-Archaic ceramic occupation. Artifacts were recovered from five
shovel tests. Most of the artifacts were contained in the upper 35 cm of topsoil, although
one shovel test yielded a chert flake from 40 to 50 cm depth. The potential for intact
subsurface features was not determined by the reconnaissance survey investigation. This
site does not appear to contain any components related to the military history of
Sansavilla Bluff.

**SITE 9WY71**

Site 9Wy71 (Field Site SV-30) consisted of a scatter of eighteenth or early nineteenth
century metal items in the pine woods, northwest of the Post Road. The site was reported
by team member Daniel Battle, who, as a hobbyist during his pre-archaeology years, had
located metal artifacts in this vicinity in the 1980s. In the interim, the timber in this area
had been harvested and the landscape was heavily wind-rowed and bedded. The
reconnaissance study of this site was extremely brief but sufficient for the location of a
site that corresponded to Battle’s recollection. Ground surface conditions were very
limited and no surface artifacts were observed. No shovel tests were attempted. Artifacts
were located and recorded through metal detecting and included one brass button (South
Type 9), wrought nails, one lead shot, and cast iron fragments (South 1964). The site
extent is very approximate and the site should be subjected to a complete archaeological
survey in the future.
SITE 9WY72

Site 9Wy72 (Field Site SV-32) measures approximately 30 m in diameter and contains the remains of a probable blacksmith shop from the early nineteenth century. Scrap iron and slag were located by the brief reconnaissance examination. Archaeologists recorded pearlware ceramics that provide an approximate age for the site. A fragment of a white metal button, in poor condition, also was recovered. Artifacts were found at a maximum depth of 20 cm below surface in shovel tests. A metal detector was used to trace the extent of the blacksmithing debris. Additional study of this site is clearly warranted.

SITE 9WY73

Site 9Wy73 (Field Site SV-33), which is situated on a wooded terrace overlooking a small branch that feeds into the Altamaha River swamp, was located through three positive shovel tests. Artifacts from the site included one fiber tempered sherd, one plain sand tempered sherd, and one residual sherd. The area was examined by a brief reconnaissance visit and the full extent and research potential of these aboriginal components was not established.

SITE 9MC384, FORT BARRINGTON

Site 9MC384 (Field Site SV-31) is better known as Fort Barrington and Fort Howe. This site was first recorded in the Georgia archaeological site file by Daniel Battle in 1995, although the site was long known to the archaeological world. Clarence B. Moore investigated an aboriginal mound in this vicinity, although he apparently did not investigate the eighteenth century military aspects of the site. Despite the site’s historical importance, it has not received any meaningful archaeological study. The site is presently owned by the Barrington Hunt Club, which is governed by a board of directors. Daniel Elliott addressed this board at their Fall 2000 board meeting, where the prospects or the study, public interpretation and protection of the archaeological site were discussed.

Fort Barrington was visited briefly by the LAMAR Institute in July 2000. Visible ditches, which were assessed as probable military ditchwork, were observed and their approximate locations were recorded with the aid of a GPS receiver. A brief reconnaissance of the presumed fort site revealed one eighteenth century ceramic on the surface but no other visible artifacts. An unimproved boat ramp provides access to the Altamaha River and this ramp has adversely impacted the archaeological site to an unknown extent. A hunting lodge and grounds are located a short distance upstream from this boat ramp. No excavation was conducted in the 2000 reconnaissance and the site has not been revisited by the LAMAR Institute personnel since. Negotiations for an archaeological study of the Fort Barrington site were instigated in late 2000 and early 2001 but have not been advanced. Since then the Barrington Hunt Club opted not to pursue any archaeological study of their property. Fort Barrington is presently listed in the NRHP, although its archaeological vestiges and site boundaries have not been well established.
SUMMARY

The Sansavilla Bluff ABPP survey examined 32 sites in Wayne and McIntosh County. A total of 2,441 artifacts, excluding brick and daub, was identified by the study. A total of 886 artifacts was recovered from shovel tests. Fifty-one artifacts were located by metal detector survey. Of the artifacts recovered from the surface, shovel tests and metal detector investigation, 270 were identified in the field and returned to the soil. Small test excavations were conducted at three sites, 9Wy4, 9Wy61, and 9Wy65. Each of these sites yielded important subsurface remains, including cultural features from the eighteenth century. A total of 1,302 artifacts, excluding brick and daub, was recovered from test unit excavations. The balance of the artifacts was recovered from surface contexts. A total of 102 negative shovel tests was excavated over the study area.
VI. Interpreting the Survey Findings

The original intent of this study was to locate and explore the Mount Venture trading post and Georgia Ranger fort that was located at Sansavilla Bluff and destroyed by Spanish-allied Yamasees in the fall of 1742. This search was grounded in the now-discounted premise that the massacre site had been definitively located by archaeologists in the late 1960s and the present task was to simply relocate that site. The poor documentation of that earlier work created many obstacles for unraveling this riddle. The search began with an attempt to relocate the burned “trading post” mentioned by Midgette (1973) and Steed (1969). A search of the Georgia Archaeological Site File (GASF) revealed a plotted location for the site (9Wy4). That location, however, proved to be several hundred meters off from the actual location of Midgette’s suspected massacre site. A more accurate location for the site was provided by a retired forester and land manager (Proudfoot), who was intimately familiar with the Sansavilla Bluff and had been a frequent visitor to Kelly and Midgette’s excavations. Based on Proudfoot’s guidance, the LAMAR Institute team was able to relocate 9Wy4.

The 2004 exploration of the presumed “trading post” by the LAMAR Institute research team quickly shed doubt on Midgette’s interpretation as the site of Fort Mount Venture and Mary Musgrove Matthews’ trading post. Several English ceramic artifacts, which were not manufactured until the early 1760s, or about two decades after the fort was attacked, were recovered from secure feature contexts at 9Wy4. Although the LAMAR Institute’s work at 9Wy4 did indicate that one or more buildings at this site were destroyed by fire, the date of that fire was likely years after the 1742 attack. While the possibility remains that the abandoned Fort Mount Venture was reoccupied after the 1742 attack and that occupation continued into the 1760s, an absolute confirmation of 9Wy4 as Fort Mount Venture was placed in serious doubt. While Midgette’s site may indeed be the correct one, the present study yielded sufficient alternatives to require a stronger case to be presented for Midgette’s interpretation to be acceptable.

With that said, however, Site 9Wy4 does contain very important eighteenth century occupational debris, including artifacts typically expected at a frontier settlement, such as lead balls, gunflints, tobacco pipes, and trade beads. Midgette (1973:n.p.) noted that the site yielded, “many burned and melted beads, gunflints, china ware and other artifacts”, and, “The site consists of definable post patterns and a highly condensed and compacted mass of fired debris…Burned glass, ceramics, and beads in large quantities all correlate with known trade goods dating to the 1720-1750 period”. The MCD of 1738, which derived from a sample of 163 ceramic sherds that were recorded in the present study, does suggest that this settlement was present in the 1730s, and it remains a potential candidate for the site of Mount Venture. On one item the various lines of archaeological evidence agree, the dwelling(s) at 9Wy4 were likely consumed by a raging fire, sometime in the eighteenth century.

Sensing that site 9Wy4 was possibly not the site of the battlefield, ranger fort, and trading post, the LAMAR Institute’s search was broadened to include other eighteenth century
sites along the Sansavilla Bluff. Findings from this reconnaissance-level survey yielded several other sites that share nearly equally the potential to be the Mount Venture site.

The period from 1742-1766 holds few historical clues as to the occupants of Sansavilla Bluff. History records that when Mary Musgrove Matthews married for a third time in 1745, it was to Reverend Thomas Bosomworth. Mary’s trading empire shifted upstream to the forks of the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers. She received title to several of Georgia’s coastal islands and she established a plantation on St. Catherine’s Island, which is where she died and was buried around 1763-1765. If the Bosomworth’s held any claim on the Sansavilla Bluff locale after 1742, no record of it has been located.

A July 25, 1766 plat depicts an “Old House” in the general vicinity of 9Wy4, which suggests that the area was abandoned by that date. This area was ceded by the Creeks to Georgia by treaty in 1766 (CRG 9:666-667; Colonial Plat Book C:224). This plat indicates that a dwelling was standing in this vicinity as late as 1766 and it is possible that the conflagration at 9Wy4 took place shortly afterwards. This property (500 acres in St. David Parish) was granted to Winwood McIntosh on January 6, 1767 (Colonial Grant Book F:28; Bryant 1973:89).

Midgette (1973:n.p.) mistakenly states, referring to the pre-1766 dwelling, that, “This was well before anyone but Mary [Musgrove] Matthews was active in the area”. The historical record clearly indicates, however, that Captain Alleck had settlements in the vicinity after Mary Matthews removed from the area and Alleck’s settlements lasted until the land was ceded to the British. A more plausible interpretation for Site 9Wy4 is that it is associated with Captain Alleck or someone associated with his settlement. The dearth of any artifacts at site 9Wy4 whose initial manufacture dates after the 1760s further attests to the likelihood that this site was associated with Captain Alleck.

The landforms known as Aleck Island, as well as Aleck Creek (located on the north end of upper Sansavilla Bluff, were named for this important Lower Creek headman. Captain Aleck was an influential Cusseta headman of the Lower Creek whose importance is only beginning to be realized by historians (Hahn 2004; Piker 2004). The residential choices made by Captain Aleck and those Cussetas and Yuchis who were closely associated with him were strategically determined. When he was encouraged to relocate with some Yuchis to the Savannah River in 1729, that move served to strengthen ties between the Cussetas and the British Georgians, while simultaneously removing the Yuchis from the Chattahoochee River area, which was the homeland of the Cussetas. By the 1750s, and possibly earlier, Captain Aleck had relocated to the lower Altamaha River at Sansavilla Bluff. Those traveling with him probably included his Yuchi wives, brother Will and Will’s Yuchi wife, as well as other Cussetas (or other Lower Creeks) and Yuchis. There they resided until the early 1760s when that land was ceded to England. When the Georgia boundary was run by William McGillivray in 1768, Captain Aleck had already reestablished his settlement several miles north of Sansavilla Bluff. Later in his life, Captain Aleck relocated to the Chattahoochee River area. Captain Aleck’s move to Sansavilla Bluff may have transpired shortly after the 1742 attack on Fort Mount Venture, and the date of his removal from the Sansavilla Bluff area was probably prior to
1763. During the 20 year period from 1743-1763, any settlements on Sansavilla Bluff were likely associated with this Cusseta headman or his cohorts. Any settlement dating after 1766, however, is most likely associated with the Georgians.

LOWER SANSAVILLA BLUFF

Midgette (1973:n.p.) provides this summary of his findings at the Lower Sansavilla Bluff,

Today the bluff is part of a recreation area and has not been planted in pine as most of the area has. Consequently with the exception of clearing activity and plowing beneath a high tension power line that crosses the site, the area is relatively undisturbed. Preliminary testing at this site revealed a multiple occupation with some stratification and horizontal distribution of cultural materials covering the fiber tempered, Deptford, and later protohistoric wares. One horizontally distinct area of the site produced sherds that are all related to the Spanish Mission period of the Coastal Guale Culture. In addition to numerous olive jar fragments, and one sherd of ichucknee blue on white Majolica, a red filmed ware closely resembling Leon-Jefferson check and mission red filmed plate sherds are in evidence. The suggested provenience is 1650-1720. Mixed with this material was an abundance of Altamaha line block and Lamar pottery. This represents the first established Spanish contact site on the interior of coastal Georgia and is in reasonably good shape.

In his Research Design Plan for the Historic Indians of the Coastal Plain, Braley (1995:40-41) discusses Midgette’s finds at Lower Sansavilla Bluff as they pertained to the possible Spanish mission. Braley identified Lamar Square Ground complicated stamped and incised sherds in the University of Georgia collections from 9Wy3. That collection, as described elsewhere in this report, was collected by Clemens DeBaillou in 1962. Braley cites these sherds, as well as Spanish olive jar and majoilica sherds, as proof of a Spanish mission period site at Lower Sansavilla Bluff. Braley considers Sansavilla to be a corruption of San Ysavela (Santa Isabel), which was a 17th century mission (ca. 1615-1650) that served the province of Utinahica. Worth (1995) considered the heartland of the province of Utinahica to be near the forks of the Altamaha (Oconee and Ocmulgee River confluence). The subject of a possible 17th century Spanish mission at Sansavilla Bluff is beyond the scope of the current undertaking, however, and its resolution will require more detailed study.

UPPER SANSAVILLA BLUFF

Buddy Sullivan, a noted local historian, published a booklet on the early federal-era settlement of Williamsburg, which was located on the upper Sansavilla Bluff (Sullivan 1989). In that work, Sullivan notes that descendants of the Williams family constructed forts in the area in the decade following the American Revolution. A plan of the town also was included in Sullivan’s treatise. Additional documentation pertaining to Williamsburg was assembled by Margaret Davis Cate (Cate 1792, 1793). The Georgia Senate Journal for 1792 included an act to layout the town of Williamsburg in Glynn County, which later became part of Wayne County. On November 8, 1793, the Georgia
General Assembly produced a layout of the town of Williamsburg, according to the December 17, 1792 legislation (Cate 1792; Georgia Plat Book D:166).

Preliminary archaeological reconnaissance conducted by the LAMAR Institute in March 2003 at Williamsburg revealed no obvious surface evidence of a military fortification. The land surface in this vicinity has been extensively altered by silviculture and the construction of the Williamsburg boat ramp, picnic, and parking facility so that, if any fort remains existed in the twentieth century, their surface evidence was probably erased. Domestic evidence of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century occupation in this area was extremely sparse. Since the Upper Sansavilla Bluff was considered to be a low probability candidate for the Fort Mount Venture massacre site, it was not investigated in the 2004 survey.

DETERMINING THE SANSAVILLA BATTLEFIELD BOUNDARY

The ABPP, NPS requested for its surveyors to delineate three distinct battlefield areas on the USGS topographical maps. Figure 67 shows the Study Area and PotNR boundaries. These include: the Study Area, the Core Area (if possible), and the PotNR (Potential National Register) boundary. The LAMAR Institute offers tentative delineations for two of these requests—the Study Area and the PotNR. Based on the current data, the Core Area of the Sansavilla Bluff battlefield cannot be determined. Definition of the Core Area will require an absolute identification of the Fort Mount Venture site and, at present, several possible candidates for this site have been identified and others may remain to be identified. The Study Area was determined by history and includes the land where the battle was fought and over which the combatants maneuvered after initial contact was made and the fighting began. A tentative PotNR boundary is offered which identifies portions of the study area that retain enough integrity to meet standards of eligibility for the NRHP. The PotNR currently contains no properties listed in the NRHP. Readers are cautioned that this PotNR is a preliminary boundary and not an official NRHP boundary.
Figure 67. Potential National Register (PotNR) Boundary, Sansavilla Bluff Battlefield.
VII. Stewardship of Sansavilla Bluff’s Heritage

William Steed wrote in 1969 concerning the preservation status of the Aleck Island Site [9Wy4], “The site is now planted in pines and is in no danger of being destroyed.” Steed’s faith in the preserved state of the site proved to be overly optimistic, as did that of Gordon Midgette. Midgette (1973:n.p.) noted that, “the area is now covered with small pine trees which were planted by the Brunswick Pulp Mill in the early 1960s. Again as everywhere on Sansavilla Bluffs this early pine planting was done with very shallow cuts of the plow. Consequently areas between the pine rows and on the edge of the bluff are practically undisturbed”. Over the next 34 years the woodlands at Fort Mount Venture were harvested once or twice. This activity included additional degrading of the cultural resources by bulldozing the timbering debris into windrows and by deep planting of pine trees in prepared rows. Thinning of the timber stand that now exists on the site was conducted in the past few years. Consequently, the archaeological deposits in this locale are substantially degraded from their condition in the late 1960s.

As of late 2004, Site 9Wy4 lies beneath a stand of young planted pines, approximately 14 years old. Most of Sansavilla Bluff lies open as a timber clear-cut or newly regenerated pine forest. Nearly the entire bluff has been wind rowed and bedded, perhaps multiple times, which has, no doubt, had a devastating effect on the archaeological remains. Despite this modern damage, archaeological remains are preserved, as indicated by the present reconnaissance survey. The Plum Creek Timber Company is the current owner of the Sansavilla Bluff timberlands. Plum Creek wishes to be good stewards but they need to know where the resources that they want to protect are located. If these resources can be defined, then the threat of impact from future silviculture activity can be eliminated. Neglect has proven to be a poor method for managing the looter problem and, hopefully, increased public awareness of the value of these historical resources will foster their stewardship by locals and Plum Creek land managers.

Two key factors threaten the historical resources of the Sansavilla Bluff vicinity: (1) silviculture activity and (2) looting. Georgia’s historical and archaeological community was made aware of the resources at Sansavilla Bluff in the 1960s but these advocate groups were negligent in documenting and preserving the bluff’s resources. Since that time the ground surface has been disturbed by at least two timber harvesting episodes and by sporadic looting activity of undetermined extent. Since the 1960s the timberlands at Sansavilla Bluff have had three corporate owners (Brunswick Pulp and Paper, Georgia Pacific, and Plum Creek Timber).

The archaeological resources in the Sansavilla Bluff locale were damaged by past silviculture activity, looting, casual relic collecting, and poorly controlled and unreported archaeological excavations. If the current land use is allowed to continue, the historic resources at Sansavilla Bluff will continue to degrade and shrink in size.

The collecting habits of early historians, such as Margaret Davis Cate, may have removed important archaeological clues at these sites. Cate provided this insight in regard to her search for Captain Mark Carr’s fortified house on Blythe Island, which was burned by
Indians, “we went there 150 years later (1938) and got enough bricks to build the base for our bronze tablet!” (Cate 1938). Other actions by archaeologists who excavated at Sansavilla Bluff have inexcusably damaged the archaeological record. Dr. Arthur Randolph Kelly, an archaeologist with the University of Georgia, had nearly two decades prior to his death to document his exploits, those of his students and the archaeological technicians in the University’s employ, at Sansavilla Bluff. With the exception of a brief term paper by one undergraduate student however, no record of the University of Georgia’s research was made. The lack of professionalism exhibited by the University of Georgia’s scholars at Sansavilla Bluff served to retard subsequent research for decades.

Additional historical research may shed light on the people, places and events at Sansavilla Bluff. The British side of the story was explored in the present research. The lack of access to primary records in Great Britain was partially remedied by an examination of published colonial records and by examination of collections at the National Archives of Canada. The story would undoubtedly benefit from additional research in England, which should include examination of primary sources. The National Park Service travel policy preempted any such research visit as part of the present grant. Other grant sources should be sought for this purpose.

The Spanish (and Spanish-allied Indian) side of the story is poorly represented in the present account. Although no Spaniards took part in the 1742 attack on Mount Venture, their Yamasee allies returned to St. Augustine following the attack, whereupon the Yamasee were debriefed. The paucity of Spanish and Indian perspective should be remedied by consultation with Spanish historians and by research visits to relevant Spanish archives. At the University of Florida, Special Collections Library in Gainesville, Florida, one particular manuscript collection (Box Number:45, Montiano, Manuel de, Gov. of East Fla., 1737-1749. - Letters, 1737-1739) may contain an account by Montiano of the Fort Mount Venture raid, which was summarized by Tepaske (1976:xxxii). Tepaske identified this manuscript as “Carta del gobernador de la Florida a Don Jose’ del Campillo, St. Augustine, December 7, 1742, AGI, 87-3-12, no. 55. Stetson Collection”. Governor Montiano’s original manuscript should be examined, translated and incorporated into this continuing story. Other Spanish accounts of the 1742 Mount Venture attack may exist and a search should be mounted.

The LAMAR Institute sought to locate and document Fort Mount Venture at Sansavilla Bluff on the Altamaha River in present-day Wayne County, Georgia. The primary focus was the delineation of the 1742 battlefield, or massacre site. This battle is one of the few that took place on Georgia soil during King George’s War and its outcome and repercussions helped to shape the current boundaries of the U.S.A. A battery of historical and archaeological research techniques were applied to this problem. The historical research served to create a good context for the history of Fort Mount Venture and its importance in American history, while providing detailed information to allow for the identification of various sites along Sansavilla Bluff once located. The archaeological survey and testing work yielded an abundance of other eighteenth and nineteenth century sites, including many previously unknown sites, and several of these contained a strong military character. New findings by the present study cast doubt on the previous
identification of the Fort Mount Venture site. The LAMAR Institute’s study identified several other archaeological sites that may contain the Fort Mount Venture remains. The previous confidence level evidenced by DeBaillou, Kelly, and Midgette for the location of Fort Mount Venture was shown, in all likelihood, to be faulty, however, and this new archaeological information provides several directions for future research that may help to locate the true location of the Fort Mount Venture massacre site.

One nagging question remains because of the cartographic evidence left by Surveyors Henry Yonge and William DeBrahm in their 1763 map (Yonge and DeBrahm 1763). Their map places “Mont Ventur” some distance upstream from the present study area. Unfortunately none of the maps of interior Georgia from the 1730s-1750s depict Mount Venture or Sansavilla Bluff. Consequently, the Yonge-DeBrahm map is the earliest authoritative map location for Mount Venture. If their placement is accurate for the circa 1742 Fort Mount Venture, then the massacre site may remain undiscovered. Their map was prepared two decades after the massacre, however, and during that interim, history records that Fort Mount Venture was rebuilt and regarrisoned by Georgia Rangers. Quite possibly the fort was relocated upstream from the first site. This explanation would render both Goff’s and Cate’s predicted location for the fort sites to be correct. Cate may be correct for the first location (in Wayne County, or the present study area) and Goff for the second (in Appling County). Early records clearly equate Fort Mount Venture with Sansavilla Bluff.

Continuity in geographic place names exists for Sansavilla Bluff from the eighteenth century to the present and that location is the present ABPP study area. The “Mont Ventur” location on the Yonge-DeBrahm map may be in the approximate vicinity of Fort James, which was an early Federal fort that was established soon after Fort Sansavilla was abandoned (after 1796). This problem of the geographic relationship between Fort Mount Venture, Fort St. Savilla, and Fort James cannot be resolved based on the current archaeological or historical data. It is, however, a problem that may be solvable through additional study.

The present study establishes a base line of information for additional archaeological survey and testing of high probability areas along the Sansavilla Bluffs. Furthermore, the present study located several sites that may pertain to important military and residential settlements that post-date the 1742 massacre, including the Cusseta Chief Alleck’s settlement, Fort St. Savilla (ca. 1790s), Williamsburg (ca. 1792), St. Savilla town (ca. early nineteenth century), and other unidentified early historic sites.

Continued archaeological fieldwork is needed to fully understand the Sansavilla Bluff battlefield and its surviving resources. This work should include additional survey and test excavations. This search should be broadened to include the area of Appling County, as suggested by Goff and as shown as “Mont Ventur” on the Yonge-DeBrahm map (Yonge and DeBrahm 1763). Previous excavations by The LAMAR Institute at the contemporary Fort Argyle demonstrated that eighteenth century forts in coastal Georgia may contain deep palisade ditch work that are filled with an assortment of eighteenth century material culture. Although these deep features are resistant to destruction by
normal land use, deep plowing and targeted looter excavations can erase their evidence. Continued curiosity with the site by illegal relic collectors threatens the survival of these important archaeological deposits and the unique information they contain. The features and midden deposits at Fort Mount Venture are most of what remains to tell the story of colonial life at this remote Georgia Ranger fort and thriving Indian trading post associated with one of Georgia’s most famous women.

Sansavilla Bluff clearly was an important place in eighteenth and nineteenth century Georgia and its archaeological remains attest to this importance. With the help of the current landowner and public awareness, wise stewardship of the remaining archaeological resources by the Plum Creek Timber Company will hopefully result.
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