

# Archaeology Laboratory Celebrates Its Tenth Anniversary



Dr. Honerkamp (center) and Myrna Crook (far right) with Field School Participants, 2015.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society's Archaeology Laboratory. The lab began as the vision of the late Ray Crook, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Antonio J. Waring Archaeological Laboratory Emeritus, University of West Georgia. Dr. Crook was inspired by the commitment of the St. Simons Land Trust to acquiring and preserving Cannon's Point, where a number of archaeological projects had yielded important findings in the 1970s.

An expert in the study of Coastal Georgia, Dr. Crook worked with the Society to develop the lab, and its mission of promoting Coastal archaeology and

preserving *local* collections in a *local* repository. Prior to his passing in 2012, he arranged for Dr. Nicholas Honerkamp, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, to hold a field school on St. Simons, which generated the first collection curated at the lab. Dr. Honerkamp is now the Society's consulting archaeologist.

Dr. Crook's equipment, research files, and extensive book collection were donated to equip the lab. Now housed in the basement and second floor of the main building of the World War II Home Front Museum, it is under the leadership of Myrna Crook. Volunteers aged 18 to 97 have been trained to assist, giving generously of time, materials, and funding. The Golden Isles Archaeological Society has also provided both financial support and volunteers.

Productive partnerships have been formed with local organizations. Since the opening of Cannon's Point Preserve by the St. Simons Land Trust, the lab has processed and preserved all artifacts found during excavation. For educational outreach, display cases have been created featuring Native American and 19th century items from the Preserve. For the Cassina Garden Club, artifacts found at the Gascoigne Bluff Slave Cabins site have been curated, and mock digs have been held for Girl Scouts. The lab also assisted Fort Frederica by using electrolysis to conserve a cannon ball discovered locally.

Currently, over 50 collections are being curated, comprised of tens of thousands of artifacts. This research has been featured in professional publications, academic papers, and master's degree theses. In addition to assisting university field schools, the lab has hosted internships and advised anthropology/archaeology graduate students. Contract work is now being done at significant sites such as the early 19th century Adam Strain Building in Darien, Georgia.

Over the past decade, the lab has assisted more than a hundred researchers and students and has participated in over 50 local excavations. Dr. Crook's vision has become an invaluable vehicle for recovering and preserving the cultural resources of our coastal area.



Excavation at Gascoigne Bluff led by Marie Meranda (standing with camera), 2015. A former Society intern, Meranda is now pursuing her Ph.D.