Historical Marker of Fort Daniel

By Evan Eller

The historical marker for Fort Daniel was erected in 2002 by and the Department of Natural Resources and marks an important spot for Georgia's military and transportation history. The marker details that Fort Daniel was built in 1813 to protect Georgia settlers from Native American attacks. The marker also explains that Peachtree Road was initially built to connect Fort Daniel with another frontier fort 30 miles away called Fort Peachtree. Though the marker provides a clear and precise summary of what Fort Daniel was, the fort and the surrounding area of Georgia has a much richer history.

Fort Daniel was named after Major General Allen Daniel. Daniel knew of an old but dilapidated fort that stood on top of Hog Mountain in Georgia, in what he considered to be an excellent location, and wanted the fort to be improved to help withstand Native American attacks. He wrote a letter to Brigadier General Frederik Beall, "The fort at the hog mountain is not only formed of old, dry and insufficient timbers, but is also badly constructed, consequently easily destroy'd by fire and inadequate for defence."[1] The letter was not discovered until the Gwinnett Archaeological Research Society, formed in 2007, conducted an archaeological investigation of the site. During the archaeological investigation, many artifacts were discovered, such as Native American pottery, buttons, musket balls, and other materials used for trade. It also brought up the question of the fort's beginnings, and whether it was refurbished from an older fort, or built anew. As the marker was erected five years before the discovery was made, it does not identify this pivotal discovery.

Regardless of its origins, the fort is an important staple for Gwinnett County history. Gwinnett County established the Fort Daniel Foundation in 2009, and uses the historical site to provide young

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[1] D'Angelo, James J. "Fort Daniel" *New Georgia Encyclopedia* Accessed September 19th 2018

historians, archeologists, and residents of Gwinnett County a better understanding of their heritage. The foundation is a nonprofit with a mission to "teach the value of our cultural heritage, particularly as it is contained in archaeological sites, train and mentor archaeology students provide public archaeology opportunities, maintain a field laboratory where artifacts will be processed and conserved and create a field museum where artifacts and interpretive displays will be exhibited for the public."[2]

The historical marker for Fort Daniel also mentions old Peachtree Road, which connects the history of transportation in Georgia. Fort Peachtree was another means of defense for white settlers. Peachtree Road was built specifically to connect Fort Daniel and Fort Peachtree. The road is one of the oldest and important roads in Georgia's history. This last line of the Georgia Historical Marker provides insight into another area of history for Georgia besides a militaristic one, that residents can appreciate, as history of transportation can often be overlooked by the drama of war.

Overall, the historical marker provides the summary of what Fort Daniel was. More recent research, jump-started by the archeological digs, has added to its significance. The discovery of Native American pottery and bullets confirm Fort Daniel's presence as a defensive structure, while adding insight into its ability to serve as a trading post. Likewise, the digs have spurred historians to ask how the structure was built. There is still much to learn from Fort Daniel.

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[2] "About Us" *The Fort Daniel Foundation Inc.* Accessed September 21st 2018
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