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GEORGIA ARCHIVES PRESENTS AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE SYMPOSIUM 2025

The Georgia Archives is pleased to announce the 2025 American Indian Heritage Symposium, scheduled for November 14–15, 2025. Sponsored by the Georgia Archives, Friends of Georgia Archives and History (FOGAH), and the Clayton County Tourism Authority, this year’s symposium will feature speakers exploring Muscogee reconnection to ancestral homelands, Native presence at Ocmulgee in the twentieth century, the archaeology of Georgia’s Indigenous communities, and the life and legacy of Yamacraw leader Tomochichi. Keynote speaker Tracie Revis, Director of Advocacy for the Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative, will open the program on Friday, November 14, at noon as part of the Archives’ monthly Lunch & Learn series.

The symposium is free and open to the public and will be held in person at the Georgia Archives, located at 5800 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, GA 30252. Advance registration will be available online for each day’s sessions.

Advance registration is encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/AIHS2025>

Day 1 – Friday, November 14, 2025

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm (November Lunch & Learn) – Session 1

“Reflection and Reconciliation: Muscogee Reconnection to the Ancestral Homelands”
Tracie Revis, Director of Advocacy, Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative

This presentation explores the powerful journey of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s return to its ancestral homelands in Georgia. Through personal reflection, historical insight, and collective storytelling, it examines what reconnection means for a people whose presence was forcibly removed yet never forgotten. The session invites audiences to consider how truth, healing, and reconciliation can guide relationships between Native nations, local communities, and the lands that continue to hold memory and meaning.

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm - Session 2

“Reclaiming and Reframing Native Georgia: The View from Ocmulgee in the Twentieth Century”

Matt Jennings, Professor, Middle Georgia State University

It is commonly and mistakenly assumed that Georgia’s Native American history ended with the forced deportation of Indigenous communities from their homelands in the early nineteenth century. It is true that this was a dark chapter in the region’s Native history, but it was not even close to the final chapter. Starting in the 1950s, and continuing through the 1970s (and beyond), the descendants of these exiled communities returned to the Southeast. In doing so, they not only reminded non-Native Georgians of their continued existence, but they also revitalized their nations and inaugurated a long process of reclaiming and reframing their history. This presentation uses the Native presence at Ocmulgee since the 1950s to drive home that point.

Day 2 – Saturday, November 15, 2025

10:00 am – 11:00 am – Session 1

“The Archaeology and History of Native Americans in Georgia: Mississippian and Contact Periods”

Maureen Meyers, Director of Archaeology, New South Associates, Inc.

Between AD 1000 and 1830, Georgia was home to thriving Native American communities whose towns, mound centers, and traditions shaped the region’s history. This presentation explores the Mississippian era (AD 1000–1550) and the centuries after European contact, tracing settlement patterns, the construction of major mound sites, and the profound changes brought by Spanish expeditions and later colonization.

11:15 am – 12:15 pm – Session 2

“Tomochichi’s Grave: Burial, Identity, and Alliances in Colonial America”

Hendry Miller, Collections Manager, Georgia Archives

Yamacraw leader Tomochichi played an integral part in early Georgia. Through his contact with the colony’s founder, James Oglethorpe, Tomochichi secured a place for his town in colonial Georgia, as well as among other Native groups. On his death, the Georgia colonial government buried Tomochichi in a prominent location in Savannah. Through the lens of Tomochichi’s life and burial, this presentation examines his identity and connection to Oglethorpe, Georgia, and the Southeast.

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The Georgia Archives is a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and identifies, collects, manages, preserves, provides access to, and publicizes records and information of Georgia and its people and assists state and local government agencies with their records management. This work is done within the framework of the USG’s mission to create a more highly educated Georgia.

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