



**For  
Immediate  
Release**



**September 14, 2016**

## **ARTIFACT DAY & BYO (BRING YOUR OWN) BIKE TOUR**

Saturday, October 1

10:00am – 4:00pm

Old Cahawba Archaeological Park, Orrville (near Selma)

The Alabama Historical Commission and The University of Alabama's Office of Archaeological Research have partnered to host Artifact Day at Old Cahawba on Saturday, October 1 from 10:00am-4:00pm.

Excavations of Alabama's first State House were conducted after ground penetrating-radar (GPR) was used to explore the park. In July, with assistance from the public, these agencies were able to expose the north wall of Alabama's first State House.

During Artifact Day volunteers will have the opportunity to work side by side with archaeologists in the processing and analysis of the State House period artifacts discovered during the excavations. These artifacts include ceramics, pipes, buttons, handmade bottles, and architectural pieces. Participants will learn how these artifacts help archaeologists and historians to interpret a portion of Alabama's early history.

Working with a professional archaeologist, participants will be given instructions on how to properly care for artifacts and the importance of proper identification and curation of these non-renewable resources. There will also be a brief presentation on the progress of the investigations being conducted at Old Cahawba.

Lunch will be provided for all pre-registered participants, but you are encouraged to bring snacks. Water will be available, but you are advised to also bring your own.

To pre-register, please click [here](#) or call 334-230-2690.

**Admission:** Artifact Day is FREE for pre-registrants; General admission is \$2 for Adults and \$1 for Children 6-18 years (with parent); BYO Bike Tour is \$10.00 per person

From 10:00am – 12:00pm visitors can also participate in Old Cahawba's BYO (Bring Your Own) Bike Tour.

**Directions:** From downtown Selma, take Highway 22 (Dallas Avenue) west 8.6 miles. Cross over the Cahaba River and turn left onto County Road 9 and follow this 3.3 miles until it dead ends.

Turn left onto County Road 2 and follow this 1.5 miles until you see the Welcome Center on the right. Welcome Center Address: 9518 Cahaba Road, Orrville, AL 36767.

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## **BACKGROUND:**

The Alabama Historical Commission and The University of Alabama's Office of Archaeological Research partnered to conduct a cultural and natural resources survey of the historic town of Old Cahawba, the first capital of Alabama, which is owned and operated by the Alabama Historical Commission. Old Cahawba lies at the confluence of the Alabama and Cahaba Rivers, and from 1819 to 1826 it served as Alabama's first capital.

Archaeologists used a variety of methods. First, they used ground-penetrating radar (GPR) to locate the north wall of Alabama's State House, detect unmarked burials within the cemeteries, and investigate the prehistoric moat and mound that Alabama's first governor reused as the centerpiece of his town plan. Second, a thorough visual survey of the entire ground surface of the town, guided in part by Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data, was performed. Third, a professional botanist was consulted to assist with plant identification.

The visual ground survey involves University of Alabama archaeologists walking the overgrown city blocks, recording, mapping, and photographing all visual evidence of this once-flourishing town. Dr. Wayne Barger, botanist for the Alabama Department of Conservation, is helping to identify and map non-native plants left behind by Cahawba's 19th century occupants.

The team has already identified features that are likely to be the walls of Alabama's first State House, and have discovered over 300 unmarked graves in the town's three cemeteries including Cahawba's main cemetery, an earlier capital era cemetery, and the African-American burial ground. The team has also surveyed entire heart of the town where they have documented and photographed seven artesian wells, the remnants of a 19th century ice house, chimney falls, basement depressions, and foundational remains of scores of homes and businesses.

With the state's bicentennial on the horizon, the information gathered will be used by the Alabama Historical Commission to interpret and manage this important historic site. The remnants of the State House, the homes and stores, and the cemeteries tell an intriguing story of Alabama's early heritage.

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The Alabama Historical Commission *protects, preserves, and interprets Alabama's historic places* and is the State Historic Preservation Office.

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