



# Frederica

## To Burn or Not to Burn? – That is the Question

*“When the sloop came first up, the ground was covered with long grass. Mr. Tanner fired it, and it destroyed all vermin, and made the country round clear, so as [to] not be only pleasant to the eye, but convenient for walking.”*

*Francis Moore  
18 February 1736*

Fire has long played an important role in the story of Frederica. Francis Moore recorded the fire that settlers used to clear the grassy fields that would become home to this important settlement. Since that time much has been done to prevent raging fires that could destroy homes and dreams. Ironically, years of fire prevention have left the grounds around Frederica cluttered with woody debris that could add fuel to an uncontrolled wild fire.

Last year the staff of Fort Frederica National Monument wrote a fire management plan. As part of this plan the preferred alternative is to reduce the accumulated dead and downed trees, brush and leaves via mechanical thinning and prescribed fire.



Park maintenance staff have recently cleared the park boundaries in preparation for a prescribed burn. The clear boundaries will help prevent the spread of the fire and allow access for the prescribed fire crews.  
*Photo by Tree Gottshall*

The park is in the second year of the five-year plan. In 2005, 76 acres of the monument were scheduled to be burned in either March or April. In order for a prescribed fire to occur all the conditions including wind, humidity and temperature must fall within the prescription. Due to wet weather conditions the burn did not occur in March. If you are reading this edition of the *Almanack* and you have noticed a

black tinge in some wooded areas of the park the burn has obviously taken place. After April 13, if the conditions are not met, the burn will not occur until 2006.

Beyond the added safety that a prescribed fire will bring, it also holds hope for better biological diversity in the plants and animals of the park. After the prescribed fire you will begin to notice flowers that you may never have seen before and a beautiful carpet of

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## A Message from the Fort Frederica Superintendent

### *The Christ Church Land Swap*

On November 30, 2004, President Bush signed Public Law 108-417, Fort Frederica National Monument Land Exchange Act, which authorizes the National Park Service (NPS) to exchange six acres of park land behind our maintenance area for 8.7 acres to the northeast of the park belonging to Christ Church. That 8.7 acres contains a Frederica period house site that may be the site of the only house that James Oglethorpe owned in the colonies.

A preliminary investigation several years ago by archaeologist Nick Honerkamp confirmed that the site was from the Frederica period and fits the description in the historic record, but he could not confirm it as Oglethorpe's house. Much detailed archaeology needs to be performed before that can be confirmed. However, the National Park Service's position on the bill was that the Frederica period site was significant enough on its own to justify the exchange.

The exchange has its pluses and minuses. Obviously, the opportunity to protect the Oglethorpe house site is extremely attractive. The tradeoff – development on the park boundary – has to be balanced against the benefits. These issues will be explored in an environmental assessment, the next step in the process. The legislation only authorizes the exchange. It must still meet National Environmental Policy Act and NPS management requirements.

Mike Tennent  
Superintendent

## Interpretation: Education, Not Translation

Contributed by Kim Coons, Chief of Interpretation



Photo by Eddie Coons

Fort  
Monument attend  
program or talk with an

What is an interpreter? The dictionary defines an interpreter as one who serves as oral translator between people speaking different languages. Yes, this is the usual definition, but an  
National Park  
more.

The interpreter is the link to the past, different cultures, times and even the natural  
Interpreters help provide park visitors with opportunities explore and experience the of Frederica. The  
the gap between the  
and future. While you visit  
Frederica National  
an interpretive  
interpreter

## Help the Park – Recycle Your Brochure

While visiting the park you may have noticed a couple of wooden boxes for recycled brochures at the Visitor Center and near the Cemetery. Due to rising costs to print these beautiful color pamphlets, we are trying to

conserve the park's resources by recycling the brochures for future visitors. If you do not want to keep your brochure as a souvenir please do your part by using the recycling boxes. Thank you!



Members of the *Clan an Cu* Scottish living history group demonstrate musket drill during the 2005 Frederica Festival. For information about other upcoming living history events, contact the park staff at the Visitor Center.  
Photo by Eddie Coons

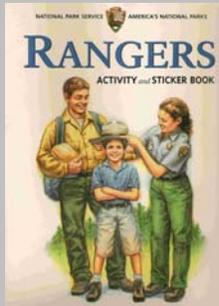
## The Book Nook

Contributed by Ellen Strojan, Park

The Fort Frederica Association operates the park bookstore. The nonprofit Association has been a park partner for over 60 years and is dedicated to raising funds for education and preservation programs at the park. The proceeds from the sale of books and other items assist the park in providing quality education and interpretive programs for area school children and the visiting public.

From time to time, the bookstore receives new titles and merchandise. This issue of *Frederica Almanack* features reviews of three new selections.

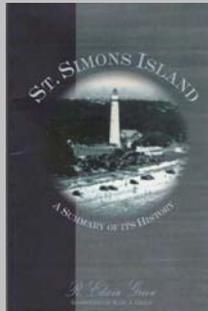
### **Rangers Activity and Sticker Book**



If you ever wanted to know what a park ranger does, this is a fun book for you.

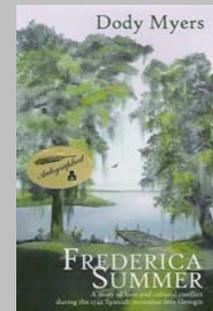
It is published by Eastern National and written by Greer Cheser with illustrations by Guy Porfino. The book portrays the many different jobs of a ranger through vivid and full-color sketches and prints. The activity book explores each job of a park ranger like biologist, historian, search and rescue etc. Each job has corresponding activities. This book is geared for children in second to fifth grades.

### **St. Simons Island, a Summary of its History**



This book is a historical account written by local author R. Edwin Green and illustrated by his wife, Mary Green. The book highlights the major historical periods of the island from the Native American inhabitants to modern real estate development. It includes a new chapter about the relationship between the Reverend John Wesley and Sophia Hopkey. This book provides both local residents and visitors to St. Simons a look into the historical past of the island and its residents.

### **Frederica Summer**



This book is a tale of love and cultural conflict between characters Tabitha Plummer, Ian MacDonald, and Broken Arrow, a Cherokee Indian. This historical fiction novel is set in 18<sup>th</sup> century Frederica. Local author Dody Myers has written several books, but this is her first about Frederica and St. Simons Island. Read the book to find out how Tabitha resolves her dilemma. Does she wait for her true love, the dashing Ian MacDonald, who is promised to another or go with the man who truly loves her?

## Period Garden Returns to Frederica

Contributed by Ellen Strojan, Park Ranger

The spring season is upon us and Frederica's garden is returning to life. Volunteers, ranger and maintenance staff are working to restore the kitchen vegetable garden located near the palmetto hut. Volunteers Diane and Tom Hayes tirelessly

cleaned out the garden and removed old plants. In a few months look for lettuce, peas, beans, squash and a variety of herbs to sprout up.

The vegetables are heirloom varieties similar to what may

have been planted here during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the houses in Frederica had kitchen gardens located behind them. Larger crops of grains were grown outside the town gates. Tending the kitchen gardens was largely the duty of the wife and children. Herbs were used

## Maintenance Matters

Contributed by Tree Gottshall, Chief of Maintenance



Photo by Tree Gottshall

The maintenance staff at Fort Frederica National Monument recently teamed up with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) in a project to improve water quality and boating safety along the Frederica River within the park.

After months of detailed planning, an agreement was reached for the USCG to provide the *Hammer*, a buoy tender out of Mayport, Florida, to remove approximately fifty obsolete creosoted piles that once were the foundation of a 250-foot offshore dock at the Frederica Yacht Club. In the early 1990s the National Park Service (NPS), with the help of the Trust for Public Land, purchased the property.

The venture served dual purposes. It provided the USCG with a work detail to train recruits for similar projects in their future and helped the NPS remove an unneeded, unsafe asset that would have put a huge strain on our maintenance operating budget if we had to remove it ourselves. At approximately \$890 per pile, a savings of up to \$44,500 was attained for the park.

The piles, up to 35 feet long when pulled from the river bottom, were saturated with creosote, a common

wood preservative that had been used extensively in marine environments like ours for decades. Throughout their useful life, the piles' chemical leached into surrounding water and affected water quality within the national monument. The creosote was so concentrated that, even after 30 years, petroleum sheens could still be seen at times on the water. Also, due to their age, several had broken off below the low-tide line and were hazardous to passing vessels.

With their removal, steps have been taken to mitigate the creosote intrusion and improve boater safety, while providing a clearer view of the monument grounds for boaters traveling the river.

*Hammer* and her crew set sail from Mayport and reached the Frederica River three days later. She arrived a day ahead of schedule on a Sunday, pushing a barge attached to her bow. On the barge, a 45-foot boom crane and three hydraulic anchoring devices were ready for action. The ship began its maneuvers from pile to pile where each pile was aligned with the onboard crane. At precise moments, the hydraulic anchoring rams thrust into the riverbed to secure the ship in position.

The crane operator did his work, delicately lifting the piles out of the water by pulling on a strap that was wrapped snugly around their exposed (above water) surface. Some did not lift as easily as you may think. We discovered, only after removal, that most of the piles were embedded 20 feet into the

river bottom. Some of the piles weighed close to 2,000 pounds each. The depth of anchoring and the wood mass served its purpose, for the piles stood unwavering in the tides and winds for over 30 years.

The USCG craned the piles to land near the park's small dinghy dock. Park maintenance staff transported them to a storage area. It is now our responsibility, pending funding from an NPS environmental management program account, to properly dispose of the piles. They will be transferred to and recycled at an approved hazardous waste disposal center which is licensed by the state of Georgia and located nearby on the mainland.

So with this edition of the *Almanack*, and on behalf of Park Superintendent Mike Tennent and our entire staff, we would like to publicly thank the United States Coast Guard Group Mayport, and the crew and leadership of the cutter *Hammer* for working so hard on this project. The accomplishments had an immediate effect on our ability to interpret to visitors of all ages what Fredericatown looked like during its short period of settlement.

With the completion of the project with the USCG, we now look forward to other improvements in the old yacht club land that will benefit visitor enjoyment for years to come, funding permitted. First, and possibly coming up soon in a volunteerism event, local residents will help clear the old Riverfront Trail which runs along the river boundary of the park. (In fact, if

# Mystery of Frederica's Bomb Magazine

Several years ago a large amount of shrapnel was uncovered at the Archaeology Education Dig Site. This was odd because the site was filled with reburied artifacts from downtown Frederica.

Some time later a visitor inquired about the "powder magazine that blew up." Research showed that Frederica had three different magazines: the King's Magazine, the Town Magazine and the Bomb Magazine.

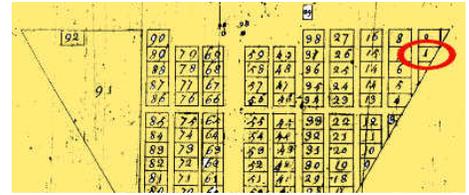
The Bomb Magazine blew up on March 22, 1744, spreading bomb fragments throughout Frederica. This explained the shrapnel at the dig site. Yet the question remained as to the exact location of this magazine.

The 1796 Map of Frederica shows it

in the northwestern corner of the town. Period accounts, however, indicate a location closer to the barracks. In 1959, an archaeologist concluded that the magazine was the small brick foundation near the barracks. It seems too small, however, to have held "3,000 bombs."



The 1796 Map of Frederica indicates the location of the Bomb Magazine in the extreme northwest corner of the town.



The newly rediscovered 1743 Map of Frederica shows the Magazine to the east of the 1796 position.

map was found. A third location is listed in this map. Since this map was made one year before the explosion, and it corroborates period accounts, this is likely the location.

The Southeast Archeological Center will conduct a ground penetrating radar (GPR) scan this spring that will cover all three locations. GPR involves dragging a machine that sends out pulses to map buried objects and other changes underground. It allows archaeologists to locate sites

While organizing old research notes, a copy of a 1743 Frederica



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Frederica National Monument is a premier historical and archaeological site that shares and preserves the history associated with the British settlement of the Colony of Georgia and the struggle with Spain for control of the region. The National Park Service values working with partners and the public to bring this special history to life.

**Fort Frederica National Monument**  
6515 Frederica Road  
St. Simons Island, GA 31522

**Phone**  
912-638-3639

**Web Site Address**  
[www.nps.gov/fofr/](http://www.nps.gov/fofr/)

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## Upcoming Events Patriots Day

April 19, 2005

2:00 PM

Virginia Steele Wood, Naval Specialist at the Library of Congress, will describe the Frederica

Naval Action on April 19, 1778, when three galleys of Georgia's Navy,

*Lee, Washington & Bulloch*, out-gunned, out-manuevered and captured three armed British ships in the Frederica River. This remarkable victory boosted patriot morale and delayed the British invasion of Georgia by more than eight months.

**Ranger Programs available throughout the day.**

Sponsored by Georgia Historical Society, Coastal Georgia Historical Society, Georgia Society Sons of the American Revolution and the National Park Service



For additional information about these and other programs offered at Fort Frederica National Monument please visit our website at [www.nps.gov/fofr/](http://www.nps.gov/fofr/) or call the Visitor Center at 912-638-3639.

The *Frederica Almanack* is published quarterly by Fort Frederica National Monument. The purpose of the *Almanack* is to provide information about Fort Frederica NM to interested visitors, partners, and volunteers. The *Volunteer Dispatch* is named after military dispatches that were sent to posts and troops throughout Coastal Georgia. The *Almanack* is also available online at [www.nps.gov/fofr](http://www.nps.gov/fofr).

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you're in the area and available, we'd be glad to have your help!) It is overgrown with vegetation and needs clearing in order for the next phase of improvement to commence, which is the complete repair and rehabilitation of the seawall in front of the trail. This seawall, again an old remnant of the yacht club days, protects land erosion when river tides are unusually high. It, like the old pilings, is made of wood dipped in creosote and has, after 50 years, or so, deteriorated into a state of disrepair. It must be removed and replaced with a building product that is compatible with the environment.

While most of these improvements will not be completed during the printing of this issue of the *Frederica Almanack*, we hope you and your family will use the other to discover and the Fort of young a fascinating, if often complete glimpse into one of our early residents to earn a Fort Frederica Junior Ranger Badge. A the of this dates NPS Junior Ranger Fort Frederica National Monument has a strong commitment to maintain the national monument so you have a safe and well kept facility for your entire family to enjoy. Whether it is the maintenance of our waterway, the upkeep of building assets, the preservation of the cultural landscape and grounds, or the protection of the natural environment, we strive to provide you with an educational experience that broadens your thinking about our cultural past. Let us know how we're doing. Your suggestions may be able to help us improve for those who follow in the future. Thanks

**New Junior Rangers**



Every year, Frederica National Monument has a strong commitment to maintain the national monument so you have a safe and well kept facility for your entire family to enjoy. Whether it is the maintenance of our waterway, the upkeep of building assets, the preservation of the cultural landscape and grounds, or the protection of the natural environment, we strive to provide you with an educational experience that broadens your thinking about our cultural past. Let us know how we're doing. Your suggestions may be able to help us improve for those who follow in the future. Thanks

- ★Layn Harrison, age 11, Baltimore, MD
- ★Matthew Johnson, age 6, San Jose, CA
- ★ID Johnson, age 12, San Jose, CA
- ★Paul Johnson, age 10, San Jose, CA
- ★Hudson Brumbarger, age 6, Westfield, IN
- ★Ianner Brumbarger, age 9, Westfield, IN
- ★Katie Marzarella, age 10, Cumming, GA
- ★Samantha Marzarella, age 8, Cumming, GA
- ★Eable Marzarella, age 5, Cumming, GA



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

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