

CASE STUDY: Johnson Dean Park



History, Inc. Digs Into Norcross History

As the second city to be chartered in Gwinnett county, Norcross maintains a strong connection to its past. When the city decided to create a park on property that overlaps an established Historic District, the Parks and Greenspace Commission decided to take a closer look at the land with some help from History, Inc.

"In many cases, State or Federal regulations require evaluation of project sites," said Dina Bazzill, Project Archaeologist. "History, Inc. provides a range of services from archive and site surveys to excavation, analysis and curation of materials, all in compliance with the requirements of the applicable agencies. The Johnson

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Dean Park project was different in that the Commission initiated the inquiry itself. Because there are historic structures and homes in the area that date from the 1920s and earlier, it was hoped we would find additional artifacts on the land."

"We didn't want to undertake changes to the property without knowing whether there was a treasure there to be preserved," said Commission member Connie Weathers. A cultural resources investigation was made a requirement in the RFP. The winning bid was submitted by Columbia Engineering, and included a subcontract for History, Inc.

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A Project Designed for Community Education

"Our first step was background research, to understand what types of artifacts we could expect to find," said Bazzill. "Then we began a systematic survey, in accordance with guidelines set by the Georgia Council of Professional Archeologists."

The History, Inc. survey team dug approximately four shovel test pits per acre, and processed the artifacts found in each. "Our final task was to write a report for the citizen advisory committee," said Bazzill. "Frequently, our reports are written for State Historic Preservation Offices or engineering firms. In this case, we wanted to create a document that was user friendly and useful to anyone interested in the history of the community."

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According to Bazzill, the artifacts found on the site were relatively modern in origin and not unique. "We already knew the area had been heavily farmed early in the 20th century," Weathers said. "What the archeologists found was that the agricultural practices used then contributed to severe erosion, so any older artifacts probably were washed away long ago."

The committee is still working to find a way to incorporate History, Inc.'s findings into some sort of educational display in the park.

"We were very pleased with the work done by History, Inc." said Linda Lurwig, landscape architect on the Johnson Dean Park project for Columbia Engineering. "They were responsive and very enthusiastic, which is important. This type of project can tend to creep, and they were very flexible to answer questions and provide advice."

History, Incorporated employs professionals meeting the Secretary of Interior Professional Qualification Standards. With over 1,100 Section 106 Review projects completed in the southeastern United States, History, Incorporated staff has the specialized knowledge and experience to perform the required Section 106 Review documentation and to secure all necessary agency approvals. History, Incorporated staff provides professional services and accurate, high quality deliverables in fast turnaround times at reasonable cost.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dina Bazzill by phone (770-667-2060) or email (dina.bazzill@HistoryIncOnline.com). We believe our experience in performing cultural resource compliance work for public and private undertakings makes History, Incorporated an excellent choice for your organization.

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