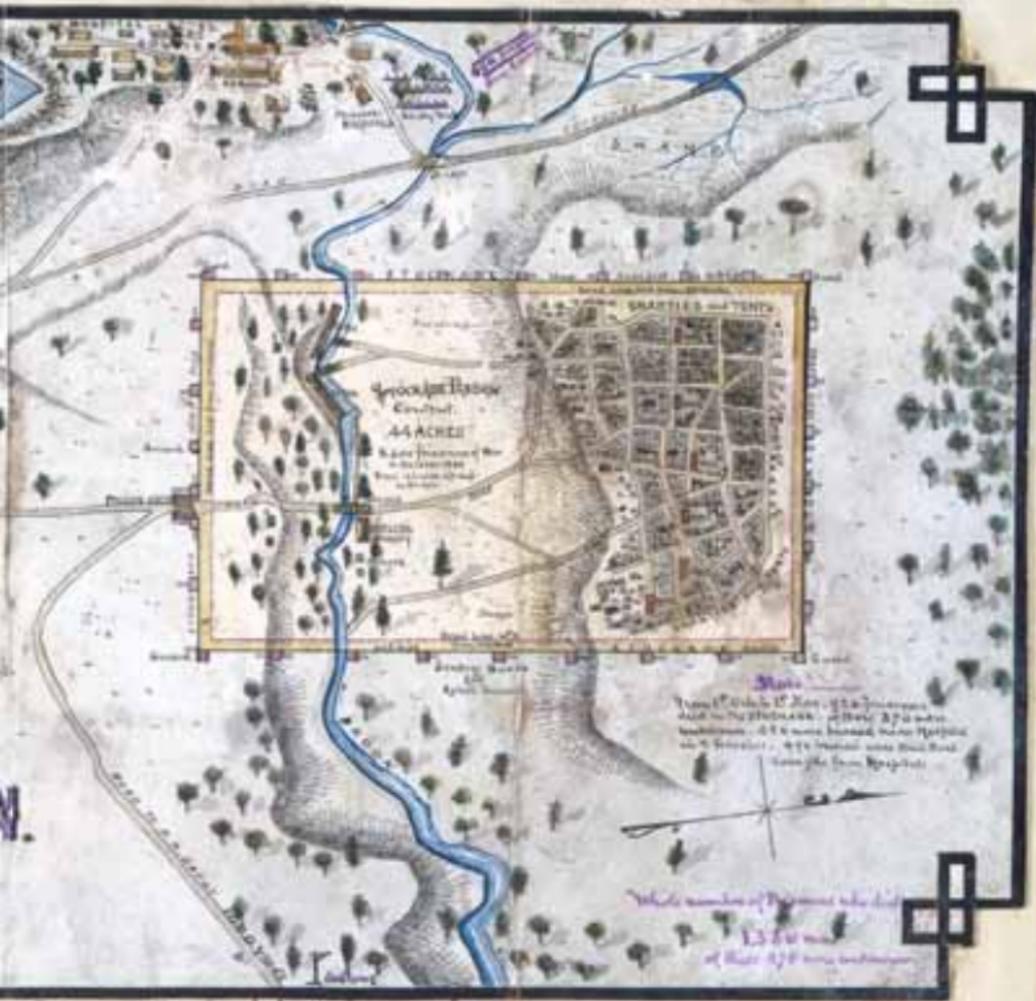


# The Camp Lawton Archaeological Site

*Bo Ginn National  
Fish Hatchery*



my Corps, under Brig Genl John W. Geary, completely destroyed the Fort, as well as the 2 other Forts on which were in an unfinished condition. Rebels were burnt alive, Genl Miles with his staff by Genl Wood 2 days previous to Savannah.

No 369

321

## Timeline of Events

*August, 1864:*

Construction of Camp Lawton begins near Millen, Georgia, as a Confederate prison for captured Union soldiers.

*November, 1864:*

As General Sherman's forces approach, the camp is evacuated.

*September, 1939:*

A Civilian Conservation Corps camp is established on the site, and construction begins on Magnolia Springs State Park, a 1,000-acre recreational park, operated by the state of Georgia.

*1950:*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) establishes Millen National Fish Hatchery, later renamed Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery, adjacent to Magnolia Springs.

*1996:*

As a cost-cutting measure, Bo Ginn ceases operations, and the FWS transfers use and occupancy of the hatchery to the state of Georgia.

*December, 2009:*

The state of Georgia transfers use of the hatchery back to the FWS.

*Spring, 2010:*

Artifacts from Camp Lawton are discovered on land at Bo Ginn NFH by Georgia Southern University archaeologists. The FWS secures the area to protect it for the American people.

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*Artifact  
photography by  
Amanda Morrow,  
Georgia Southern  
University.*

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## Overview

During the last days of the Civil War, the Confederates built a prison camp near Millen, Georgia, at a site called Camp Lawton.

Covering 42 acres, it was the largest Civil War prisoner of war camp in terms of area. The post was hastily abandoned in 1864 when threatened by Sherman's march on Savannah, Georgia. For most of the last 100-plus years the site has rested relatively undisturbed, the exact location of the camp having been lost to time. Prominent archaeologists had long ago dismissed the possibility of significant findings, especially of personal artifacts.

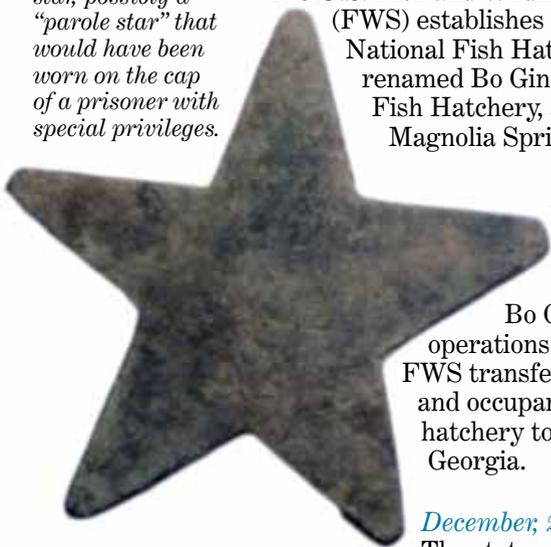
In the spring of 2010, archaeologists from Georgia Southern University discovered artifacts from Camp Lawton on the property of Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery. According to archaeologists, the find may be one of the most pristine Civil War archaeological sites found in decades.

Camp Lawton is an important part of our national heritage. The exciting archaeological research also serves as a sobering reminder of the immense sacrifices made. An estimated 750 soldiers died from starvation, deprivation and disease on these grounds, making this among our nation's sacred sites.

Bo Ginn NFH accesses springs that are estimated to flow at seven to nine million gallons a day. Bo Ginn NFH is a valuable tool in conserving aquatic resources. The hatchery will play a critical role in propagating and providing a refuge for imperiled, threatened and endangered fishes and other aquatic species.



*Front and back of a Heintz and Henkle Token, a privately minted token that would have had the value of a Small Cent.*



## How Camp Lawton Looked

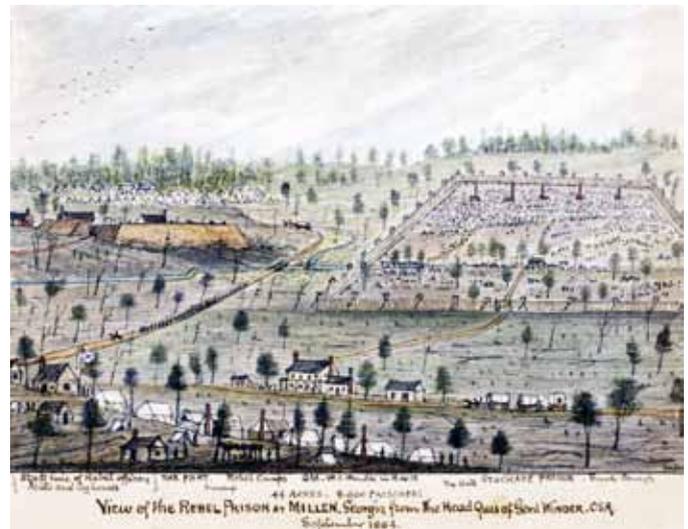
The only known illustrations of Camp Lawton as it existed in 1864 are from the hand of Robert Knox Sneden (1832-1918), a Union private who was a prolific sketcher and illustrator during the Civil War.



*Illustrations are used by permission of the Virginia Historical Society.*

An architect's apprentice from New York, Sneden saw action at many battles, including the siege of Yorktown and Second Bull Run/Manassas, frequently drawing maps and making sketches of what he observed. He was captured by the Confederate Army in November, 1863, and began a 13-month odyssey as a prisoner, including a stint at Andersonville and another at Camp Lawton. Whenever possible, he drew what he observed, frequently in secret.

Sneden was freed in a prisoner exchange in December, 1864, and returned home to New York. He wrote a memoir of the war, and converted many of his simple pencil sketches to watercolors. When he died in 1918, his work was unknown, but it was discovered in 1993 in a Connecticut bank vault and sold to the Virginia Historical Society. His illustrations and maps are the largest collection of Civil War art by a single individual known to exist.





## The Big Discovery

When Kevin Chapman, an archaeology graduate student at Georgia Southern University, began work at Bo Ginn NFH and Magnolia Springs State Park at the beginning of 2010, his goal was simple: Find the footprint of the stockade at Camp Lawton.

Instead, Chapman began finding artifacts. First, a couple of nails. Then some buttons from Union uniforms. Then a coin: an 1834 U.S. Large Cent.

“I held it in my hand and I realized we had a pretty undisturbed site,” Chapman recalls.

Working with his advisor at Georgia Southern, Dr. Sue Moore, and others at the university, Chapman and the team began finding more and more artifacts from Camp Lawton, unearthed and held by people for the first time in almost 150 years: bullets, coins, eating utensils, a tourniquet buckle, a small brass picture frame, a pocket knife, a hatchet head, a small clay pipe that still showed a soldier’s teethmarks on the stem.

The artifacts are not only visually impressive; they also tell their own stories. The pipe tells of the ingenuity of the soldiers in the face of adversity. The keepsake items such as picture frames speak to their feelings of separation. The tourniquet buckle and bullets are testaments to the horrors of war.

Through them, the past comes to life for today’s students of history.

During the Civil War, there were many prison stockades in the South. But most sites have been disrupted or disturbed by years of plowing, landscaping or construction, and in some cases by looting.

Camp Lawton, however, is relatively pristine – a unique piece of history. Because the site and the artifacts belong to the American people, they are being protected so that archaeologists can carefully extract, study and preserve them.



*Top: A German-made token features George Washington. Not actual U.S. currency, but may have been used that way. Below: a knapsack hook.*

*Next page, top to bottom: Enfield rifle bullet, brass clasp, Union Infantry uniform button, non military-issue silver spoon, probably a personal possession.*



*Above: a fork, possibly from a mess kit, below: a soldier’s clay pipe with improvised lead bowl, teeth marks on stem;*



*At right: a buckle from an enlisted soldier’s Kepi hat.*





*The woods at Bo Ginn NFH are now protected by a security fence and other measures.*

### **Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery**

The FWS expects to bring the Bo Ginn NFH into operation in the spring of 2011.

Located in Millen, Georgia, halfway between Augusta and Savannah, the 127-acre Bo Ginn hatchery is a valuable asset for aquatic resource conservation in the Southeast. The hatchery accesses crystal clear springs that are estimated to flow between seven to nine million gallons per day. It will serve as a refuge for threatened and endangered aquatic species and other rare species of concern.

Species of fish raised at the hatchery will depend on the particular needs at the time and will be in cooperation with partners, including the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Fish that occur in more than one state, such as striped bass, are priority species for the National Fish Hatchery System, and will likely be raised at Bo Ginn NFH.



The Bo Ginn Aquarium at the hatchery has been operated by the Jenkins County Development Authority for the past year. The Service plans to continue that partnership and anticipates the aquarium will

eventually become a fully functioning component of the hatchery.



*Above: the Bo Ginn Aquarium is open to the public. Below: the natural spring that once supplied Camp Lawton now supplies Bo Ginn NFH.*

In 1950, the FWS established the Millen National Fish Hatchery on the site, and it began operation in 1952. In 1988, it was renamed the Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery and Aquarium in honor of Ronald "Bo" Ginn, who represented Georgia's 1st District in Congress from 1972-1982.

In 1996, Bo Ginn ceased operation, and the FWS transferred use and occupancy of the hatchery to the state of Georgia. In December, 2009, Georgia transferred use of the hatchery back to the FWS. The land itself has remained in federal ownership since 1948.

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Camp Lawton Archaeological Site at Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery



USFWS/Phil Kloer

*How was the site discovered?*  
Investigations to determine the stockade boundaries began in earnest in 2009 through a partnership between Georgia Southern University and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Georgia Southern archaeology students, led by Dr. Sue Moore and Kevin Chapman, designed a survey plan based upon all available clues, and used advanced and traditional

investigative techniques to locate the stockade wall.

*What can the public see at the site?*  
The newly discovered site is closed to the public at this time due to its fragile nature. However, Magnolia Springs State Park contains earthworks dating to the Civil War as well as interpretive signs detailing the history of Camp Lawton.

*Will the public be allowed to view the artifacts that have been found?*  
The public will be able to see some of the recovered artifacts. A plan for displaying them is in the works.

*Who do the artifacts belong to?*  
The artifacts are the property of the American people, held in trust by the U.S. government. The FWS, as the federal land manager of Bo Ginn NFH, is responsible for their care on behalf of the American people.



*Left: Kevin Chapman revisits the site of his discovery of the artifacts. Below: knife, possibly from a mess kit.*

*Is the site being protected?*  
The Camp Lawton site is protected by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and the American Battlefield Protection Act of 1996. Anyone who damages the site is subject to criminal prosecution. A security fence and other security measures have been put in place.

*Can I tour the site or volunteer to help with the archaeological investigation?*

Not at this time. The FWS welcomes volunteers, and there may be different types of volunteer opportunities at a later date.

*I am a descendent of a Civil War veteran who was at Camp Lawton. I would like to share information about him for your research into the site. Who should I contact?*

You can contact Dr. Susan Moore, an archaeologist at Georgia Southern University; Richard S. Kanaski, the Regional Archaeologist for FWS; or Dr. David

Crass, the State Archaeologist for Georgia Department of Natural Resources.



*This page, top to bottom: a U.S. Large Cent, also known as a Matron Head; a tourniquet buckle would have been used to keep a bandage fastened to stop bleeding—a small scrap of fabric is still attached; a piece of silver jewelry.*

*How many men died at Camp Lawton? Where are they buried?*  
The exact number of prisoners who died at Camp Lawton is not known. Most accounts number the dead at around 750, but some sources list the total dead closer to 1,250. The dead were buried in trenches near the prison, but were moved after the war, first to the short-lived Lawton National Cemetery in Georgia and later to Beaufort National Cemetery in South Carolina. There has been no archaeology in areas believed to contain burials and none is planned.

Information: <http://www.fws.gov/camplawtonsite>  
The site and the hatchery are currently not open to the public.

Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery, 1053 Magnolia Springs Drive,  
Highway 25 North, Millen, GA 30442

August 2010



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



GEORGIA  
SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY

*Front and back cover illustration is used by permission of the  
Virginia Historical Society.*



On Dec 31 the 2<sup>d</sup> Division of the 20<sup>th</sup> A  
Millen. They burnt the Stockade and  
the rising ground South East of the Prison  
All the Co. houses which were built by the  
whole Staff and the former guard