RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

1. Locate possible structural anomalies.
2. Confirm the results of previous geophysical surveys.
3. Create a subsurface map of the site to guide future work.
4. Investigate the organization of the Mission community.

BACKGROUND

SIMPAP Sapelo is one of Georgia’s barrier islands and was the site of at least one Spanish mission during the 17th century. The Mission Period ended in 1715, and Cahaba River, located four miles west of the island, was separated from the mainland by a sandbar during early Spanish occupation. The Cahaba River and Sapelo Sound were navigable during the period of Spanish occupation. The Cahaba River was colonized during Cahaba River colonization in the 1610s.

Over the past five years, SIMPAP researchers have collected large-scale geophysical surveys and conducted excavations associated with Mission Period activity. In spring 2016, the researchers conducted a geophysical survey of a portion of the northern part of the site. The results of this survey are presented in this report.

In April 2017, the researchers conducted a test unit excavation to locate evidence of Mission San Joseph de Sapala and its associated community. The test unit was located in Grid IV, near the site of the previous excavation (Figure 1). The results of this excavation are presented in this report.

The geophysical surveys and test excavations conducted during the summer of 2016 and spring of 2017 have set the stage for continued research. The researchers are planning to conduct further GPR and gradiometer survey across a portion of the northern part of the site. In spring 2018, the researchers will conduct a test unit excavation to ground-truth the results of the geophysical surveys.

Previous Research

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INTERPRETATION

The results of the geophysical surveys and test unit excavation are presented in this report. The researchers are planning to conduct further GPR and gradiometer survey across a portion of the northern part of the site. In spring 2018, the researchers will conduct a test unit excavation to ground-truth the results of the geophysical surveys.

Conclusions & Future Work

The geophysical surveys and test unit excavation conducted during the summer of 2016 and spring of 2017 have set the stage for continued research focusing on identifying and confirming the site of the Mission Period community at site M23. The goals of the future research are to:

1. Identify structures associated with the Mission Period community.
2. Determine the organization of the community, such as the size and shape of the community.
3. Confirm the presence of the central plaza and other important features.
4. Investigate the organization of the community.

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A larger GPR survey was conducted in spring 2017 with the goal of confirming the presence of the central plaza and other important features. This larger survey was conducted in spring 2017 with the goal of confirming the presence of the central plaza and other important features.

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