

## **“Unearthing the Past” a Georgia Outdoors Production Teacher Guide**

### **Synopsis**

Archaeology is often plagued with misconceptions of exciting adventures and buried treasure by the general public. In reality, archaeology is not long work done by passionate people who seek the truth of the past. Archaeology as a science did not gain worldwide popularity until the 1900's and American popularity until the 1930's. Since then, films such as *The Mummy* and *Indiana Jones* drove the public to believe that archaeology is simply a hunt for buried treasure, instead of a search for and understanding of lost people and cultures.

“Unearthing the Past” a Georgia Outdoors Production explores archaeology in the state of Georgia and the ongoing search of our past. From slave cabins to ancient Native American cities, host Sharon Collins invites you to witness and understand the work of some of Georgia's best archaeologists and to understand why it is important to learn about their hidden past.

### **Pre-viewing Questions**

1. What do you think an archaeologist is?
2. What is the primary goal of an archaeologist?
3. Has anyone thought of becoming an archaeologist?

### **Post-viewing Questions**

#### *Part 1*

Archaeology has a lot of misconceptions in the general public due to films like *Indiana Jones* and *The Mummy*. What are these misconceptions and discuss what it is really like to be a modern archaeologist.

#### *Part 2*

Discuss your community and think about the history associated with it. If you were to dig into the ground, what do you think you would find that would provide evidence of people who lived there before you?

#### *Part 3*

Native Americans lived in the United States more than five times longer than all of recorded European history. As an American, why or why not is it important to understand Native American history, as it is to understand our own history?

#### *Part 4*

If humans were to disappear from the planet and your house left exactly as it was, what things in it would paint a picture of your life? What would future

archaeologist conclude if they were to find present day human civilization exactly as it is?

### *Part 5*

In 1956, a famous archaeologist once said, “Every archaeologist knows in his heart why he digs. He digs that the dead may live again, that what is past may not be forever lost.” What does this quote mean? Why is it important to understand what life was like before Americans were here?

## **Quiz Questions**

### *Part 1*

1. Unlike how it's portrayed in the movies, real archaeology is what?  
(Hard, hot, tedious, work.)
2. Nick the archaeologist has a specific niche in the archaeology world. What does he specialize in?  
(Plantation archaeology)
3. What did Nick find on Sapelo Island that he found significant to understanding slave life and culture on the plantation?  
(Beads and/or pottery)

### *Part 2*

1. What is the main dilemma that faces modern archaeologists when deciding to excavate an archaeological site? Why would they want to wait for future archaeologists to excavate instead?  
(Once a site has been excavated, it will not have the ability to be excavated in the future. Archaeologists may want to wait for future technological improvements before attempting to excavate a certain site.)
2. What is the problem facing the tabby ruins at the Chocolate Plantation on Sapelo Island?  
(If left unprotected, the ruins will eventually erode and disappear. If covered and protected, the reality and appeal of the site will be diminished.)
3. What does Nick the archaeologist say is the “fun” part about being an archaeologist, despite the hardships and tedious nature of excavation?  
(To discover and record the remains and to piece together a portrait of life that no longer exists.)

### *Part 3*

1. Nick the archaeologist found a piece of clay from a pot. How old was it? What does this say about the history of humans on Sapelo Island?  
(Over 4,000 years. There have been people living on Sapelo Island since prehistoric times.)
2. Pottery is very important when found at an archaeological dig. Why is it so important? What does it mean for the people who made it?  
(It is important because it means that the people who made it intended on settling at that area. Pots could not be carried around easily, so the

- existence of pottery suggests that there may have been a community at that location.)
3. In the 1930's, the United States government invested greatly into archaeology by hiring large amounts of people to excavate across the country. What happened in the 1930's that would influence the government's decision?  
(The Great Depression)
  4. Archaeologists believe that this group of people lived in the modern United States for over 12,000 years before European explorers discovered North America.  
(Native Americans)

#### *Part 4*

1. For many years, historians and archaeologists believed that large mounds were built by a now extinct group of people. What did they call these people?  
(The lost race of mound builders.)
2. C.C. Jones revolutionized how archaeologists and historians looked upon the past Native Americans. What did he theorize?  
(He suggested that Native Americans had an advanced civilization far before that of Europeans.)
3. When excavating a Native American village, the archaeologist compared the remains of a house to that of what?  
(A time capsule.)

#### *Part 5*

1. What do Georgian archaeologists know least about when it comes to the state's previous inhabitants?  
(The initial Native American settlement of Georgia over 12,000 years ago.)
2. There is evidence that Georgia was once connected to West Africa. What is this evidence?  
(Rocks found in West Africa are also found in Georgia.)