

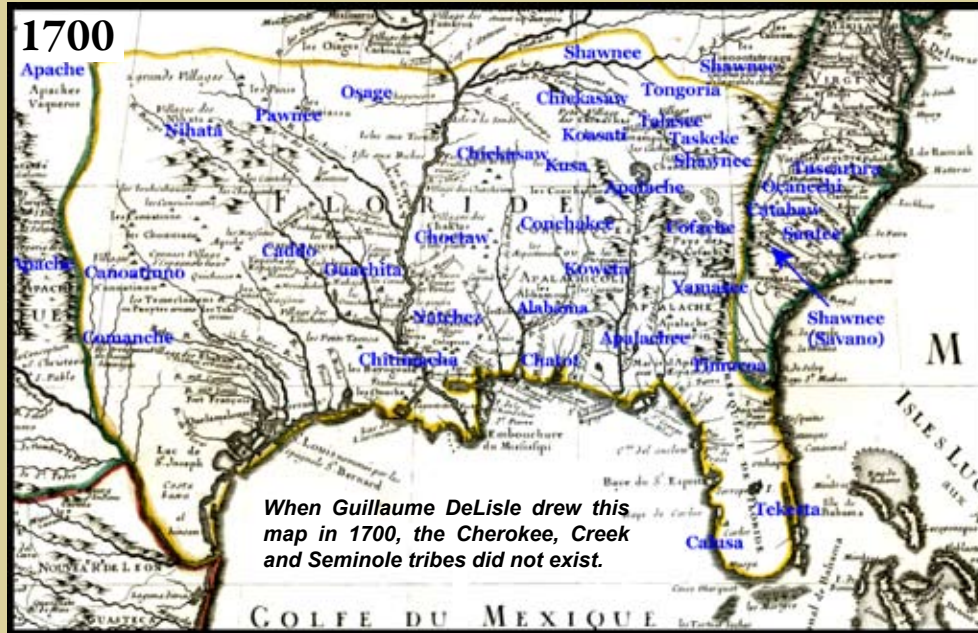
People of One Fire

Studying the Indigenous Peoples of the Southeastern United States

November 2013

SPECIAL SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION for NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

www.PeopleOfOneFire.com



The Journey to Discover Who We Are

The people, who today call themselves Southeastern Native American are not genetically the same humans, who first observed European explorers enter their ancestors territory in the 1500s. Waves of European plagues, wars, slave raids, forced labor and migrations between 1500 and 1800 reduced their population by at least 95%. The surviving remnants banded together in order to survive, but also intermarried with peoples from the Old World.

While the Spanish Empire sought to destroy the indigenous people's culture in order to create a class of peons, British and French authorities first pushed aside the native peoples immediately in the path of colonization then encouraged the survivors on the frontier to form super-tribes, plus change from equalitarian to hierarchal societies. It was much simpler to bribe a native king in order to steal a tract of land than bribe all the men in each village.

Remnants of Native American provinces were generally pushed westward and southward. The exception was the Tuscarora Tribe, whose survivors fled northward to join the Iroquois Confederacy in 1715. By 1800 very few Native towns were where they had been in 1700. Cultures were torn asunder.

Each wave of Old World immigrants, who arrived on the shores of North America, assumed that the surviving indigenous peoples had been the same in the past. The great towns and public architecture of the Southeast encountered by Spanish and French explorers in the 1500s were completely forgotten by the early 1700s. By the late 1700s, tribes such as the Cherokees, Creeks and Seminoles that didn't even exist in 1700, were assumed have been in the same locations for centuries. This misconception continues to the present. Native Americans, anthropologists and historians try to understand the past from the perspective of assimilated tribes and ethnic boundaries in the early 1800s. The Southeast before Columbus was a VERY different place.



AMERICA UNEARTHED

The Maya - Georgia Connection

December 21, 2012

NOW
SERIES PREMIERE
AMERICA
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HOME OF RICHARD THORNTON
Expert on Creek natives of Georgia

Oh my gosh!

Welcome from the People of One Fire. We began in November 2006 as professionals and professors with Southeastern Native American ancestry, who had made friends on the internet's Creek Southeast message board. There were 18 members in the original alliance. Most of us were members of state-recognized Southeastern tribes.

It was National Native American Heritage Month. Already three members had found several words in Creek that sounded the same and meant the same in either Itza Maya or Totonac. We believed that there was still much unknown about the Southeast's past. Analysis of colonial archives, linguistics, architectural studies and DNA testing were ways to broaden this body of knowledge. The rest is history . . . literally.

Hope that you enjoy this special Seventh Anniversary E-zine.

Richard L. Thornton, Architect & City Planner
Editor of the People of One Fire

Copal



The priests of Apalache maintained thousands of Painted Buntings in their mountain temples. Buildings glistened like gold because of the mica applied to their stucco.

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Music for Apalache - a CD of songs composed by Marilyn Rae

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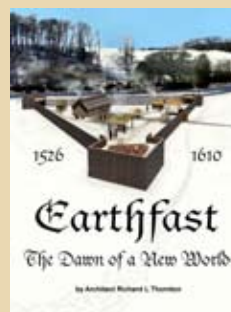
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A catastrophic drought between 1130 AD and 1180 AD caused massive outmigrations from the western desert regions. Ocmulgee's acropolis was suddenly abandoned around 1150 AD. NW Mexican style houses appeared in the Ocmulgee River Basin soon afterward.

The Gulf Coast between the mouths of the Mobile and Apalachicola-Chattahoochee Rivers was named "Am Ixchel," which means "Place of the Goddess Ixchel" in Itza Maya. The coast of Tamaulipas and the northern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula had the same name.

The Native provinces of the upper Georgia coast and the lower South Carolina coast worshipped the Tupi sun god, Toya, and had practiced many South American cultural traditions.

A massive tsunami, caused by a large meteorite striking the Atlantic Ocean, swept the Caribbean Basin in 1014 AD. This caused many peoples to migrate to the mainland.

The Colima were pushed out of Michoacan by the Purepeche from Peru around 900 AD.

TEOTIHUACAN

The real name of this great city was TULA. Several Native towns in the Southeast were also named Tula. Tula became the Itsate (Hitchiti) Creek word for town. Etowah Mounds' original name was E-tula, which means Great Town in both Itza Maya and Georgia Creek.

A massive volcanic eruption destroyed Palenque and depopulated the Itza Highlands around 800 AD.

The Southeast was an ethnic patchwork quilt.

Linguistic analysis of Native languages recorded by European explorers found words from North America, Mesoamerica, South America and the Caribbean Basin. Recent DNA testing confirms this diversity. In 1700, English explorer, John Lawson, found that almost every Native village on the Santee River in South Carolina spoke a language that was mutually unintelligible to its neighbors. Evidently, small bands of people entered the region over a period of 3000 years and then blended their cultures with those who arrived before them. We will now introduce you to the recent research projects of the *People of One Fire*.

© Richard L. Thornton, Architect

Tupi

Anthropologists have traditionally sought simple, uniform models of the Southeast's past, while its complex cultural landscape was just the opposite.



Mummification and public display of leaders

According to 17th century French ethnographer, Charles de Rochefort, like the Incas in Peru, the Apalache of northern Georgia mummified their kings and put the remains on display until they began to mold. The kings were then buried in caves along with offerings, but no human sacrifices.



Colima dogs on the Chattahoochee River

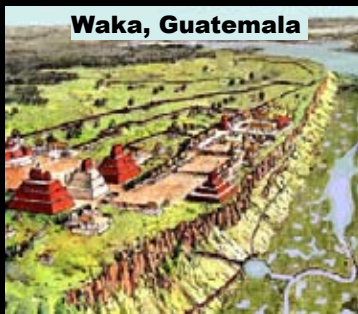
The Colima people in north-west Mexico were known for their Chihuahua effigy pottery. The Colima Creeks of the lower Chattahoochee River Basin in Georgia & Alabama were also known for their mini-dog effigy pots. Georgia archaeologists have found villages containing square houses with four interior posts and earth berms, typical of NW Mexico. None realized what they had found.



The stela on the left, found at a hill-top shrine near Atlanta, is an almost identical motif to Toa petroglyphs near Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

Two salt trading towns on the same terrain

Publications from outside the Southeast ignore Ocmulgee or treat it as an insignificant site. Ocmulgee was a megapolis stretching 12 miles along the Ocmulgee River with at least 24 satellite villages. Its mounds and "Mississippian" cultural traditions were begun 150 years before Cahokia's Monks Mound. What is especially interesting about this place, though, is that it extremely similar to Waka in Guatemala. Both are on escarpments overlooking the Fall Line of a river and an inland port area. Both were 160 miles from the ocean. Both were regional market centers on intersecting trade routes that specialized in salt distribution. The last commoners abandoned Waka about 20 years before Ocmulgee was founded. Much is still unknown about Ocmulgee's development.



Waka, Guatemala



Ocmulgee, Georgia



Large stone balls

have been found along the headwaters of the Savannah River in GA & SC. Some have glyphs carved on their surfaces.



Five-sided Pyramidal Mounds

Almost all the five-sided pyramidal mounds in the Americas are either in the ancestral lands of the Creek Indians or in the portion of Mesoamerica, occupied by Itza Mayas.



Both the Totonacs and the Georgia Creeks call their house a *chiki*. The houses in both regions were built in exactly the same way.

Tamahiti

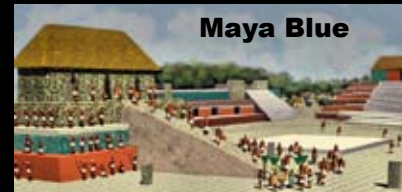
They were the most northerly branch of the Creek Indians, but called Tamahitans by Algonquians and Virginians. Their name means "Merchant People" in Itza Maya. Nearby Shawnee used the word "Tama" for maize. The Tamahiti returned to SE Georgia in the 1720s and were absorbed by the Creeks.



Shenandoah Valley

Early settlers encountered the ruins of a very dense indigenous population that built ceremonial mounds. Stone metates and tortilla grills were endemic around their former village sites. This is the only location in eastern North America where stone metates and grills were common. Virginia history books do not mention these people and infer that the Shenandoah Valley was primarily an uninhabited hunting ground.

Maya Blue



Attapulgit for Maya Blue (at least for Palenque) was mined in Attapulgis, GA then shipped south to Mesoamerica.



Maya salt drying trays were introduced by the people who founded Ocmulgee. The round ceramic trays were up to 3 feet (1 m) in diameter.

Tybee Island, GA gets its name from the Itza Maya and Itsate Creek word for salt, Taube. Salt was transported up the rivers in large dugout canoes.

South American deities & titles on Atlantic Coast



The indigenous peoples along the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia, plus the Calusa of Florida, worshiped the South American sun god, Toya. They called their kings, Paracusa. This word comes directly from from Paracus Culture of Peru!

The Maya-mi towns around Lake Okeechobee

began building a complex system of canals, locks and raised roads around 300 AD. Many cultural symbols of the Southeastern Ceremonial Cult were in southern Florida several centuries before they appeared along the Mississippi River Basin. It still is unknown how dependent they were on agriculture. The many Mayami towns and Ocmulgee's acropolis were abandoned around 1150 AD for unknown reasons.



**Comparative analysis of Southeastern indigenous art in order to understand the past
A typical Proto-Creek gorget motif found in northern Georgia and eastern Tennessee.**

Headdress of Maya Rain Dancer**Chichen Itza
Bas Relief****Broken scepter****Curved sword**

The same style wooden sword was used by Creeks in western South Carolina, northern Georgia, eastern Tennessee and northern Alabama into the 1700s.

Analysis of this gorget tells us that the woman was a member of the ruling family and was performing a ritual dance to the rain goddess. The head she carries may be carved out of wood and therefore symbolic of an ancient myth.

Southeastern headdresses probably were made out of copper alloy sheets and chains, not gold.

Weeping Eyes**Scepter of Authority****Motif commonly known as
"The Dancing Priestess"****Glyphs on pubic shields in northern Georgia**

They were probably copper or gold chains stitched to leather



Mako - Female member of royal family
Same word in Itza Maya and Itsate Creek



Mako - Male member of royal family
Same word in Itza Maya and Itsate Creek



Hene - Royal sun & symbol of sun god
Same word in Itza Maya and Itsate Creek



Apisa - Symbol of Venus on priests' kilts
Same symbol in Mesoamerica & Southeast
Similar word in Itza Maya and Itsate Creek

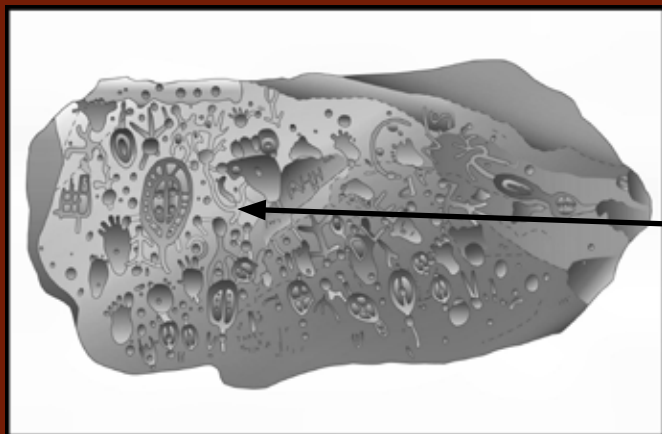
**Georgia
Mountains****Central
Mexico**

Two weeping eye rain goddesses display similar postures and composition. One was carved out of marble in northern Georgia and the other carved out of volcanic stone in Central Mexico. Both Creek and Maya women normally knelled while the men crossed their legs. The statues of Creek men show them cross-legged while Maya leaders were portrayed standing.

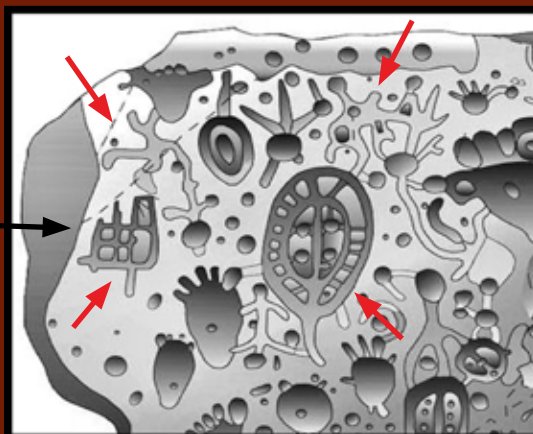
**Temple of the Moon Goddess - c. 700 AD
Ortona Town Site ~ Southern Florida**

This match tells us that the "Mississippian Culture" probably first evolved near Lake Okeechobee then spread northward into the heart of the Southeast.

A new People of One Fire analysis of the Track Rock petroglyphs provides a more sophisticated explanation.



Boulder 6 - Track Rock Gap - Union County, GA



Detailed view of left side of Boulder 6

Some astronomical glyphs



Does this mean the beginning of a half year or is it a dimpled crescent moon?



A tough one . . . This glyph may be either six suns (years) or six months. Who knows?



The two symbols on the right are obviously meteorites or comets. The date is not clear.



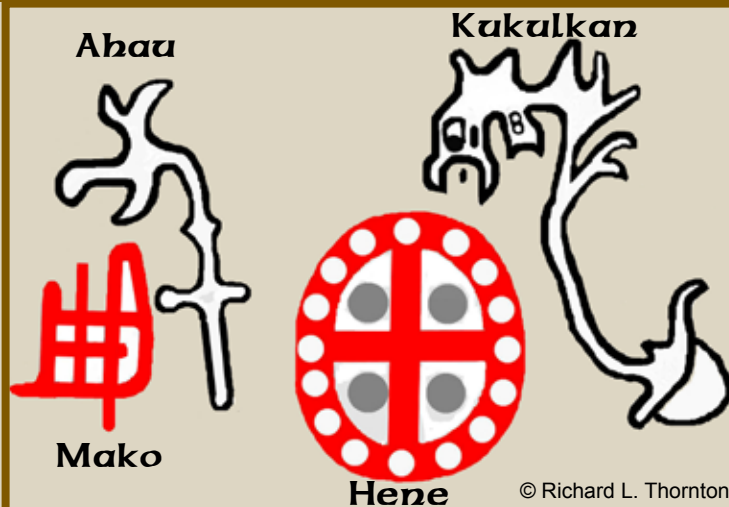
This is the Creek glyph for the Summer Solstice. The Winter Solstice is a circle.



This is the Creek glyph for the Spring or Fall Equinox. Months are crescent moon glyphs.

Four of the glyphs on Boulder Six have a meaning in Itza Maya. *Mako~Hene~Ahau~Kukulkan* mean:

Great Sun Lord Quetzalcoatl



The glyphs for *mako* and *hene* are commonplace in the regions of the Southern Highlands and Piedmont once occupied by the ancestors of the Creek Indians. The glyphs for *ahau* and *kukulkan* are primarily seen in Maya codices and murals, not engraved stone bas reliefs. The footprints below the legible glyphs may have been carved at a different time to mean either a trail or that "we walked right over you!"

Location Map

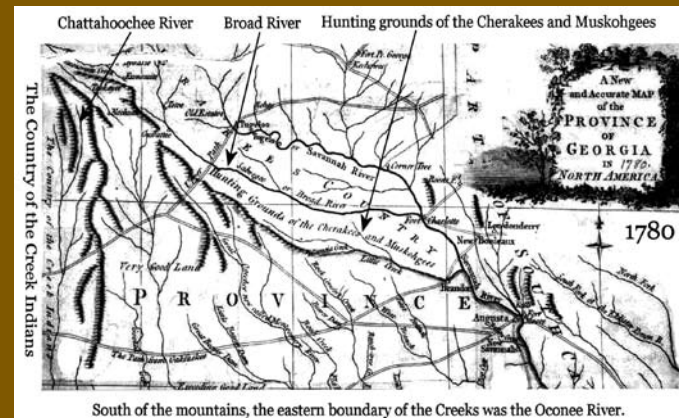


Interpretation of Track Rock petroglyphs & Brasstown Bald by U. S. Forest Service

Museum exhibits and brochures related to Track Rock Gap and nearby Brasstown Bald Mountain, sponsored by the U. S. Forest Service, present the region as being primarily Cherokee heritage. The only Native American tribe mentioned in the USFS museum on Brasstown Bald is Cherokee. Georgia's indigenous people, the Creeks, who built the large ceremonial sites, towns and mounds in Georgia, southeast Tennessee & western North Carolina, are given the generic label "mound-builders" by the USFS. The 2001 USFS archaeological report on the Track Rock Gap site described the petroglyphs as "probably the graffiti of bored Cherokee hunters."

The historical facts are quite different. Many ethnic groups have lived in the Southern Highlands. As can be seen in this official 1780 British map below, Track Rock Gap and Brasstown Bald were within the territory of the Creek Confederacy until 1785.

Brasstown is the mistranslation of the Cherokee word *Itsa-yi*, which means "Place of the Itza Maya." In Itsate-Creek the word is *Itsapa*.



The Southeastern Stone Structure Survey



Itza Maya terrace complexes in Chiapas & Guatemala are remarkably similar the Track Rock Gap, GA Complex. Although the Track Rock Terrace Complex received much media hype, including the most watched History Channel program ever, it is merely the largest and most picturesque of at least seven terrace complexes in Georgia. These sites are located on steep terrain in the Southern Highlands & Piedmont. It is still not understood why the terrace complexes were constructed contemporarily with nearby towns with mounds that were associated with Etowah.

South Carolina archaeologists have found several types of stone structures in their highlands. They have studied both a stone terrace complex and the ruins of round stone buildings that appear to predate Anglo-American settlement of the region.

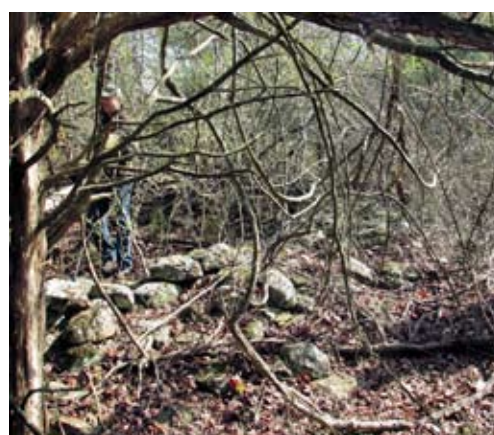
People of One Fire members in eight states are documenting probable Native American stone architecture in their environs. The POOF researchers are recording latitude, longitude, altitude and dimensions of key structures. When finished, the GIS base map will be given to state historic preservation offices, regional planning agencies and university anthropology departments. In the mid-1800s pioneer archaeologist, Charles C. Jones, wrote that many pre-European stone structures could formerly be found throughout the northern half of Georgia. Most became foundations, chimneys and crushed stone for highway projects. The purpose of this project is to create a data base for the preservation and study of the surviving vestiges left by the poorly understood indigenous peoples, who built them.



End of a 200 meter long V-shaped retaining wall at the crest of the Sandy Creek Terrace Complex in Jackson County, GA



Ruins of several rectangular structures at the crest of the Nacoochee Valley Terrace Complex in White County, GA.



Vines choke the 25 ft. by 30 ft. ruins of a rectangular stone building at acropolis of the Sandy Creek Terrace Complex.

Two stone stellae mark the plaza of a ceremonial center in Fannin County, GA, part of the Cohutta Mountains.

Great Copal

Images of Georgia's Track Rock Terrace Complex today

The Track Rock Terrace Complex is enormous. Its known ruins cover a half square mile and rise 800 feet up the side of a steep mountain. There are at least 200 visible stone walled terraces, plus at least 100 stone building ruins, cairns, effigies, hydrological structures and altars. Even in the winter, it is easy to get lost because of the dense trees and rugged terrain. There may be more. Much is hidden by a dense mat of decaying leaves and vines.

There's a dirty little secret about Track Rock Gap that the History Channel didn't tell viewers. Late 16th century and 17th century French, Spanish and English explorers knew about the capital town on the side of a tall mountain. The town is also described on the last page of the "Migration Legend of the Creek People. The Spanish called it "Great Copal" because the Apalache priests burned copal incense from their mountainside temples constantly.

In 1585 the famous English geographer, Richard Hakluyt, deposed two captive Spanish traders from St. Augustine, who had formerly lived in Santa Elena, SC. They had traded with the Apalache, who were the vassals of the Itsate aristocracy which lived at Copal.

The towns to the north and south of Copal guarded the entrances to the Shangra-La-like valley where Copal was located. This is why the Native guides of Hernando de Soto led the conquistadors in a long loop north of the heart of Georgia's Mountains, even though Kusa (Coça) was 50 miles due west of Copal. Juan Pardo planned to take the road to Kusa that would go straight through Track Rock Gap. He had to turn around when tipped off that soldiers from several Native provinces planned to ambush his company of soldiers. Most Spanish traders were forbidden access to the capital. Many of those who tried were killed. Their armor has been found near US 19 between Dahlenega and Blood Mountain.

After Great Britain defeated France in the Seven Years War, her historians and politicians erased the memory of the Jewish, Spanish, Moorish, French and Dutch settlers, who had colonized the Southern Appalachians beginning in the late 1500s. The Spanish in Florida had even built a road to the Apalache in 1646 and established a fortified trading post in the Nacoochee Valley. According to 17th century French ethnographer, Charles de Rochefort, six survivors of the Fort Caroline massacre settled near Copal. A Sephardic gold mining village thrived near there until the Queen Anne's War.

Erasing their memory also meant erasing the memory of the Kingdom of Apalache, which was described by 16th and 17th century visitors to the region. Copal, the capital of the Itsate-Creek-speaking Apalache, once ruled a vast territory of proto-Creek provinces in northern Georgia, western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. The name of the Mountain Apalache disappeared from the maps between 1700 and 1717.



(above) The ruins of several rectangular and round stone buildings can be found in the acropolis of Copal. Typical of the Itza, there are also many stone pads from long gone wattle & daub houses, occupied by the commoners. (below) View of about 1/5th of the two large plazas in the acropolis. They faced the Winter Solstice Sunset.



Images of Georgia's Track Rock Terrace Complex today



Large village terrace, ball court and linear mound aligned east-west



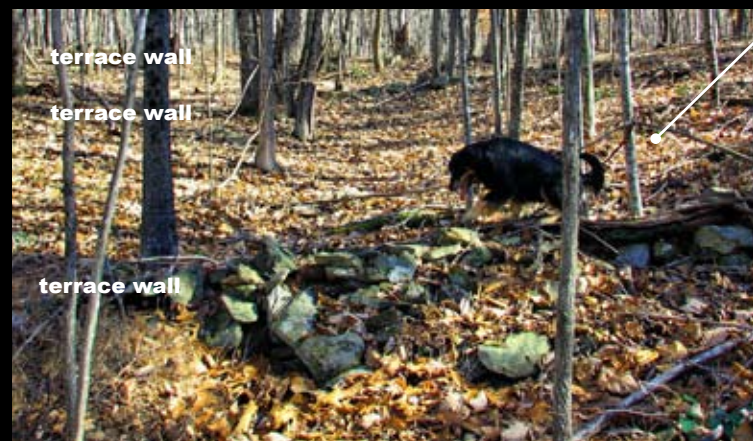
Reservoir at approximately 800 feet (244 m) above base



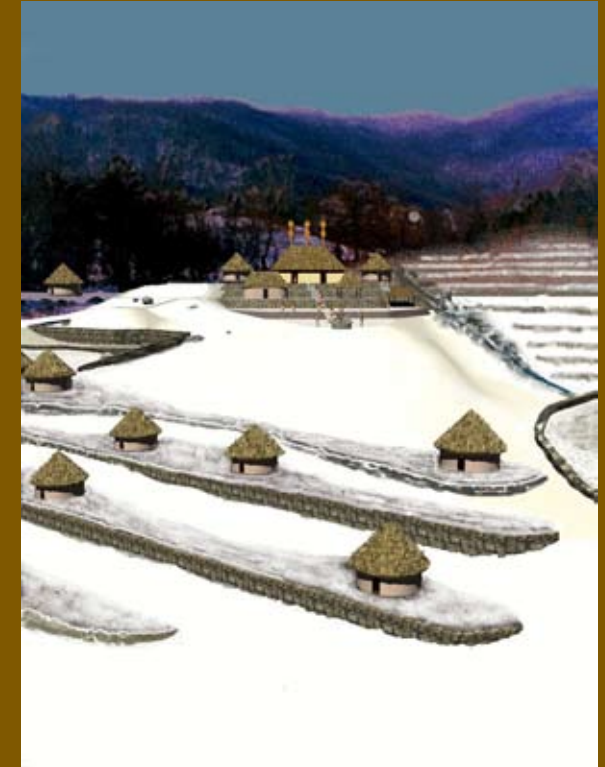
Series of crudely stacked stone terrace retaining walls



Reservoir at approximately 500 feet (152 m) above base



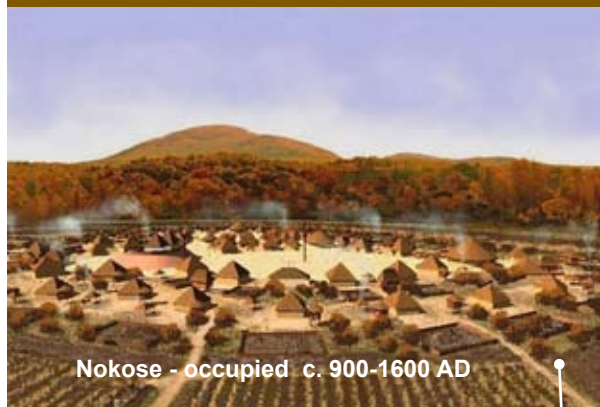
Copal ~ Computer virtual reality model of the Track Rock Terrace Complex in Georgia



The Itsate Project in Georgia's Nacoochee Valley ~ Human occupation from c. 10,000 BC to the present

Paleo-American ~ Archaic ~ Early Woodland gardeners ~ Middle Woodland (Swift Creek) ~ Late Woodland (Napier) ~ Woodstock ~ Etowah I-III ~ Proto-Creek ~ Sephardic Gold Miners ~ Cherokees

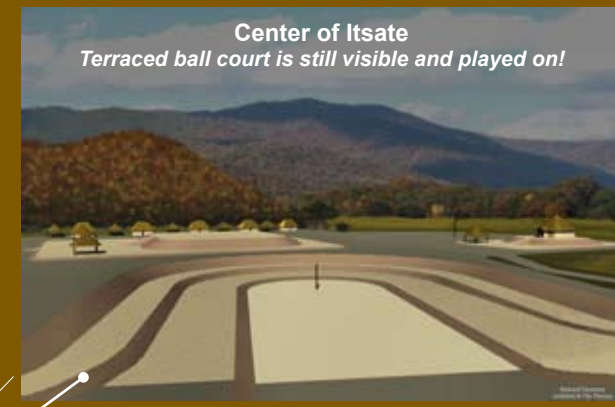
Probable location of first Itza Maya colony in Georgia Mountains - c. 700-900 AD ~ Beginning of the first gold rush in the United States in 1828



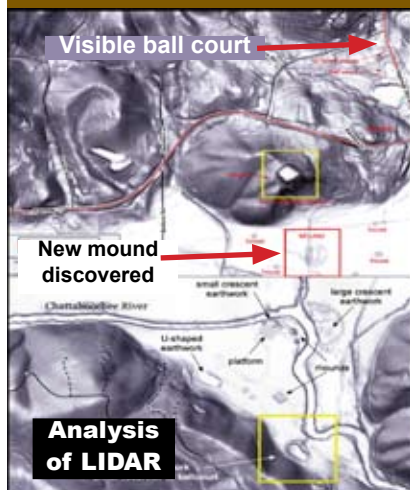
Nokose - occupied c. 900-1600 AD



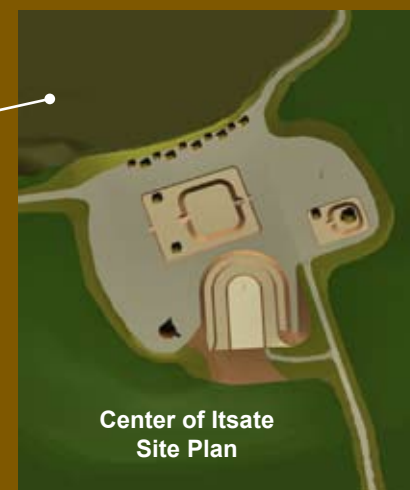
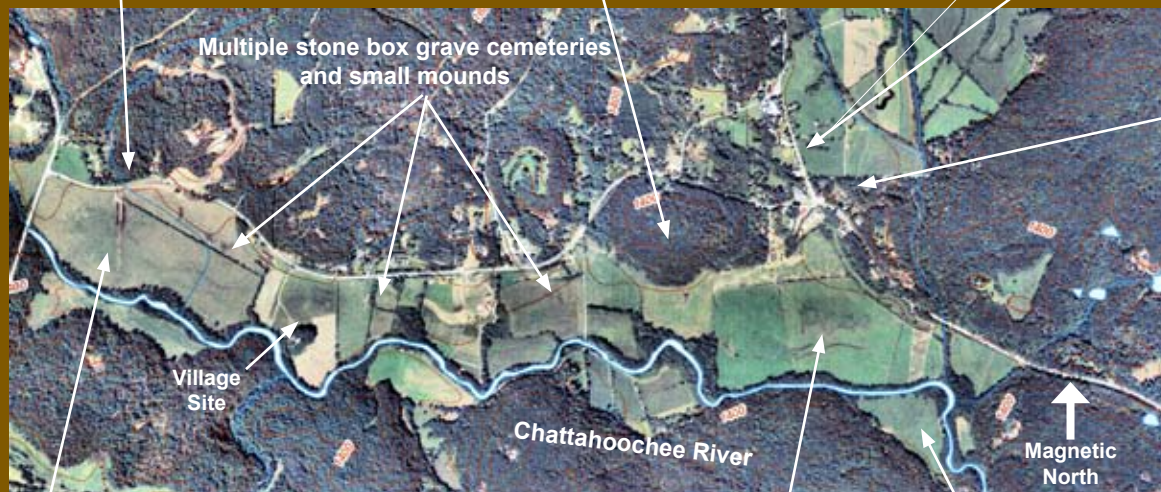
Kenimer Mounds c. 700-800 AD



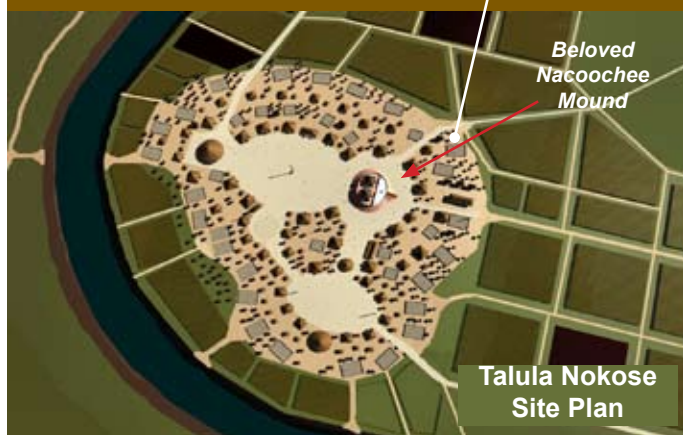
Center of Itsate
Terraced ball court is still visible and played on!



Analysis
of LIDAR



Center of Itsate
Site Plan



Talula Nokose
Site Plan



17th century Spanish fort & village
Also possibly a Late 16th century French & English hamlet



Middle Woodland -Swift Creek