

GUIDANCE AND HELP ASKED OF HISTORICAL COMMISSION IN RESTORING OLD FORT HERE

(Editor's Note: A letter addressed to the Executive Secretary of the Georgia Historical Commission from William G. Haynes, Jr., urging official guidance for restoring historic Fort King George is printed below:)

March 1, 1965

Mrs. Sidney B. Jewett, Exec. Secy.
Georgia Historical Commission
116 Mitchell St., S. W.
Atlanta 3, Ga.

Dear Mrs. Jewett:

By this time I am sure you will have seen the enclosed letter which I wrote to the Darien News regarding the development of the Old Fort King George site. The letter seems to have been favorably received. However, I have been informed that the "unsightly borrow pit" which I mentioned is "actually the site of a Spanish mission," and that "any cleaning up operation should not touch this spot."

This immediately puts us in a dilemma. The Commission has stated that the community of Darien must demonstrate its good faith before receiving help from the Commission. This can only be interpreted by the community to mean the care and improvement of the grounds of the site, for we are not capable of doing more. But the pit mentioned above is most unsightly however you view it, and the State and Commission are responsible for its existence and thereby its present condition.

The situation here now, I believe, is that the people are interested in the restoration of Ft. King George, and a certain amount of willingness is being expressed, but we are floundering in uncertainty because of the lack of official guidance. What we need is a plan toward which we can work and that is your responsibility. The Commission ought to send someone fully qualified to advise us that no historical evidences shall be destroyed.

My suggestion from knowledge of this locality would be to depend upon the natural beauty of the area improved by the planting of flowering shrubs, and of trees, rather than in construction. As for the borrow pit, something will have to be done to that, and I recommend that if you do not wish to fill it up, then make it into a little formal walled garden. And I beg of you, do not promote the erection of a pseudo mission building which would be the height of absurdity.

If the Historical Commission is prepared to put up a museum building and maintain it, that will be fine, or even the restoration of the old Fort (although this will not be upon the original site because of the river having engulfed it).

The main thing is that we need a good plan to follow and real and careful guidance.

Sincerely yours,
W. G. Haynes, Jr.