

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: Archeological Educational Outreach at Shoal Creek Park

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You may see some unusual activity at the Shoal Creek Park this coming week and next. Starting June 16, tents will pop up and young folks with shovels may be spotted digging at regular intervals – under close supervision of trained archeologists.

What you are seeing is a partnership between the city, the University of Alabama's Office of Archaeological Research (OAR), and the University of Montevallo's summer Upward Bound Program. The project goal is to identify and interpret the site of the meeting house of Shoal Creek Baptist Church – the first Baptist church in Shelby County – and its associated graveyard. Both were located somewhere in the northeast corner of the park and have considerable historic interest, dating back to the first half of the 19th century.

Students in the Upward Bound program will get an introduction to the profession of archeology, including field methods and ethical excavation strategies, data collection and processing, and the need for appropriate dissemination of information and findings. Field work will consist of excavation of test pits – or shovel tests – across the area adjacent to the supposed cemetery location. Students will also perform a metal detector survey. Both methods seek to locate concentrations of artifacts and architectural elements that may indicate the original church's location.

Be assured, none of the potential grave sites will be disturbed. Shovel tests will be relatively shallow, no more than 50 cm (i.e. under 20 inches) in order to avoid unintentional impact to potential graves. And everything will be done under the watchful eyes of a team of trained archeologists from UA.

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