

## Museum Around the Corner

### The Georgetown County Historical Society Museum

#### Yauhanna ©

The Yauhanna Community is an undiscovered jewel in the history in northern Georgetown County. On Highway 701, just before the Horry County line, lies this historic area that is home to the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge Center Complex, a great family outing! The following story about the history of the area was found in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service publication of July, 2012. Some very familiar names can be found in the here.

“In 2000, a 22-acre tract overlooking the confluence of the Pee Dee River and Yauhannah Lake was chosen as the site for the Waccamaw National Wildlife Reserve Headquarters and Environmental Education Center. The site, which has inspired mankind for over ten thousand years, is Yauhannah Bluff.

When the site was surveyed for archeology resources five years later, a wealth of information about past human habitation was discovered. In 1711 Percival Pawley, one of the earliest grantees in the Georgetown District of South Carolina, received a proprietary grant from King George I for 300 acres. The grant included Yauhannah Bluff. Five years later a Native American trading post was built somewhere near or on the site and run by William Waties. Waties argued for its location at “Uauenee” (or the Great Bluff)” because it was closer to English Settlements, and close to the Waccamaws, who were of greater consequence than the Pedees (now spelled Pee Dee). According to the Indian Trade Commissioner’s Journal, hundreds of deer skins were sent from this trading post to Charleston aboard a large boat. On the return route, the same boat brought back guns, blankets, agricultural implements, knives, cloth, and beads. The Trading Post was operated for only one year due to growing restlessness among local tribes. No conclusive evidence of the Post was found during the archaeological excavation. Later occupation, spanning at least 100 years, may have masked any remains of the facility.

From 1722 to 1774, the 300 acres granted to Pawley, later named Youheany, changes hands several times including to Watie’s grandson. In 1777 the property is acquired through the release of a dower by Jacob Vault, a land speculator from Charleston who sided with the British during the Revolution.

Prior to 1800, the land comes into ownership by the family of Col. William Alston, presumably by confiscation due to Vault’s allegiance with the British. A 1780’s reproduction of a 1757 map, which is a detailed map of the area, shows Null’s Ferry in the vicinity of Yauhannah Bluff. According to several historic documents, John Alston was running the ferry at Yauhannah in 1781. The Alston family retained ownership of Yauhannah from the 1780’s to the Civil War. In a letter, Alston claimed he provided a mare, horse, grain, rough rice, beef, oats, as well as the services of his ferry at Yauhany, Pee Dee, for the troops during the war. The ferry continued to operate after the Civil War under many owners, most likely ceasing operation after the wooden bridge over the Pee Dee River was constructed in 1925.

Although detailed records of its existence are relatively obscure, the remains of a plantation settlement dating as early as the 1720s was uncovered during the archeological dig. During this time period, the property had several owners including the Pawleys, Waties, Hulls, and Alstons. In 2010, during an archeological field study by Coastal Carolina University, workers uncovered several glass beads, typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century settlements of this type, and several clay beads that are unique in

the archaeological record of enslaved and free African and African American people. It is thought that these clay beads were made on Yauhannah Bluff and mimicked the more popular glass beads.

Many of the artifacts recovered on the plantation site, some of which are on display in the visitor center, reflect the wealth of the planter and include fragments of ceramics, jewelry, a coin, eye glass fragment, buttons, and eating utensils. One of the more noteworthy finds was a rare 1722 coin known as the Rosa Americana, which was likely dropped at the site sometime between 1722 and the 1730s. According to "The Coinage of William Wood: 1722-1733" by Phillip Nelson, Wood, an Englishman, succeeded in obtaining an indenture from King George I to produce coins for Ireland and the American Colonies in 1722. The Rosa Americana was made up of a mixture of alloys including zinc, copper, and silver and consequently they were less than half the weight of their English counterparts. The colonists largely rejected these new coins and Woods stopped minting them in 1723 because he could not make a profit. It is very possible that this coin was dropped by Percival Pawley.

One of the primary themes for the exhibit in the environmental education center is man's role in shaping the environment. Because of the sensitivity of this site, the Refuge has gone to great lengths to shift the new facility away from all known archeological resources as well as to avoid the remainder of the bluff which was not excavated. "