



Preserving the Past, Shaping the Future: **2030 Vision**



*Striving to become the center for the study of
Coastal history that this region deserves.*

The mission of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society is to connect people to Coastal Georgia's dynamic history through the stories we share and the collections we preserve.

OVER THE PAST DECADE,

we have seen steady progress in the development of our facilities, programs, community relationships, and financial stability. Coastal Georgia Historical Society has earned the reputation as an institution committed to excellence. This foundation has allowed us to be bold when considering our roles and responsibilities to the Coastal region over the next five years.

“Preserving the Past, Shaping the Future: 2030 Vision” expands our scope, capacity, and geographical reach to become the center for the study of Coastal history that this region deserves.

WE ASPIRE TO BE A COMMUNITY MUSEUM

During strategic planning, one of the most inspiring discussions was a focus group with leaders from across the community. They viewed the Society as a trusted partner, and history as a powerful tool for building a stronger community. We have taken this to heart and are eager to focus more energetically on our role as partner, collaborator, and community resource. Opportunities that we will explore include:

- **Strengthening heritage tourism because of its potential to promote economic development and the sustainability of local cultural organizations.**
- **Leading local collaborations like the ones last year during the 100th anniversary of Harrington School and the F. J. Torras Causeway.**
- **Sharing facilities on the mainland to expand our ability to present new exhibits.**
- **Partnering with teachers to provide meaningful educational opportunities in the classroom.**



Igbo Landing Marker Dedication sponsored with the Glynn Academy Ethnology Club, the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition, and the Georgia Historical Society

In all that we do, we will be committed to working with others to deepen appreciation of our shared history.



WE ARE DEDICATED TO BECOMING A TOP-NOTCH REGIONAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

The fascinating, centuries-long history of the Georgia Coast provides ample opportunities for further research and interpretation. We will contribute to the study of this region's history through:

- Expanding the study of coastal archaeology as an essential component to understanding the past.
- Collecting important cultural and archaeological artifacts that are representative of the people who have lived here throughout history.
- Promoting research, scholarship, and quality educational experiences for all ages.
- Sponsoring a regional conference on history, archaeology, and preservation utilizing local collaborations and generating greater community awareness of our region's remarkable history.

To achieve this vision, the Coastal Georgia Historical Society has made a significant investment in its professional staff. Whitney Nell Stewart will serve as Director of Collections & Education. She has a master's and Ph.D. in history from Rice University. Last year she published her first book, *This is Our Home: Slavery and Struggle on Southern Plantations*, which won several awards. Aaron Ellrich, staff Archaeologist, holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Florida, as well as a master's in museum studies. Whitney and Aaron are scholars and experts in their fields who see the enormous opportunity that the study of our regional history provides.



Whitney Nell Stewart, Ph.D.



Aaron Ellrich, Ph.D.

Archaeology and Collections

The work of our Archaeology Lab will become even more valuable as we broaden our scope and geographical reach through cooperative alliances.

Our partnership with the St. Simons Land Trust at

Cannon's Point is a great example. The Preserve is a repository of historical evidence, and the recovery of Native American, African American, and European artifacts on the site has provided fresh insights into the lives of coastal peoples.



The history unearthed through future investigations across the region will offer new opportunities to document past communities and share their stories. Archaeology will be featured in our educational activities, and we will evaluate and address the needs of the Georgia Coast as we face climate change and disasters like the burning of the Huston House in Darien during 2024.

Another strategic goal—expansion of our archival collections—will be achieved through an active program for securing and protecting this region’s treasures. Original materials are immensely useful to scholars, as well as general researchers, who want to learn about the history of an area. A more comprehensive collection of unique and representative artifacts, documents, photographs, oral histories, and other media will assist us in creating a respected research center right here in Coastal Georgia.



Matilda Coffin (1929) by Frank O. Salisbury

THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES...

as we take intentional steps to transition and grow into a regional role. It is a bold and dynamic path that we are choosing, one that will provide the “cultural glue” that our community is seeking.

“Not often do I attend a Historical Society meeting and am moved to tears. This is an organization going places. Two new hires with Ph.D.’s who are tops in their fields. This is not your local coastal Historical Society. This is a Society that has truly national proportions, and it is a real pleasure to be here for this meeting.”

Nathaniel Philbrick, CGHS Winter Program speaker and noted author



American
Alliance of
Museums



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2025-2030 strategic plan