

# CHOWAN HERALD

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## Artifacts reveal historical grounds

Town worker donates  
treasure to history

By Ritchie E. Starnes  
and Rebecca Bunch  
Editor  
Staff Writer

It all started with the fortuitous discovery of a coin — a 1786 Connecticut Copper.

Since then, Bobby Williams, 64, has spent the last six years consumed with research and combing the surrounding grounds of Edenton's wastewater treatment plant, located off Macedonia Road. Williams, a town employee since 2004, spends his lunch hour scouring the hallowed earth where the Blenheim Manor House, later known as the Pagett Plantation, once stood centuries ago. Penelope Barker of the Edenton Tea Party fame, was among the heirs of the property and once lived at the estate.

First armed with a metal detector and an archaeological survey, dating back to the town's acquisition of the land for the treatment plant, Williams dedicated his spare time to roaming the property. What followed is a bounty of artifacts that has drawn the interest of historians and anthropologists.

"They say 'there must have been a collector who lived there,' but I think different," Williams said. "There was something going on there."

Williams has unearthed a number of military artifacts, dating back to the Revolutionary War or the War of 1812. There are musket balls, bullet-pierced brass buttons.

Williams points to the fact that academicians cite the absence of records that would prove that the area was once home to military skirmishes from that era.

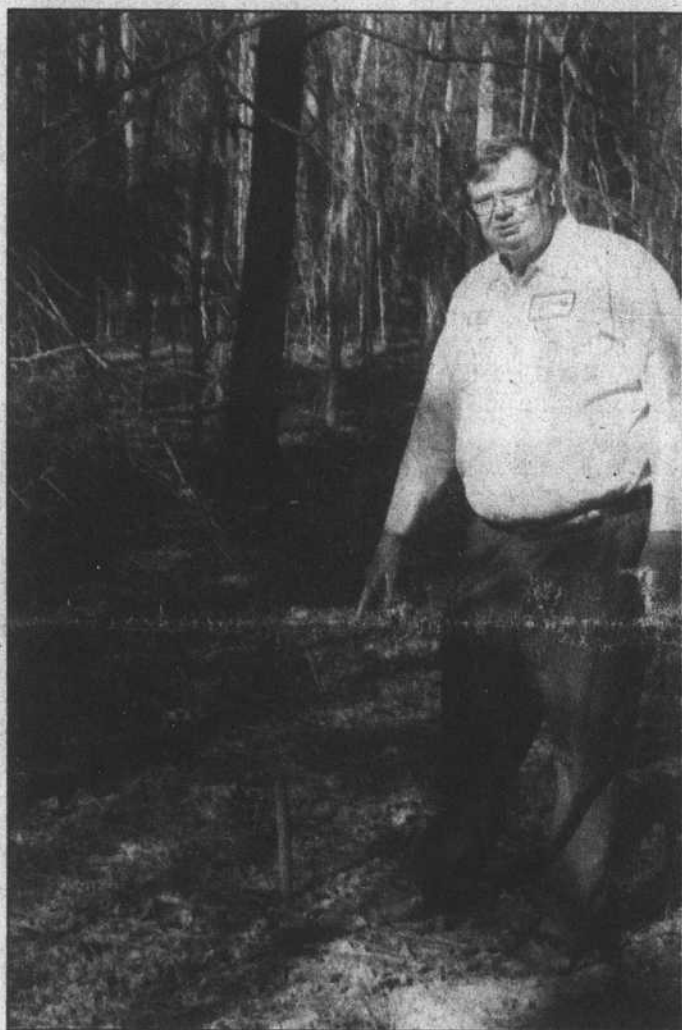
"They don't have anything that shows there was any military activity here," Williams said. "Who said some didn't run off. They marched from St. Augustine (Florida) to Yorktown (Pennsylvania). Who knows what route they took?"

Williams believes that there are enough artifacts to



CHOWAN HERALD PHOTOS BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Bobby Williams found an assortment of artifacts, such as these pictured. Among the items are part of a meat cleaver, fork, currency, handmade brick, and the bones and teeth of a slaughtered hog.



support the past presence of a Spanish fort.

"I don't think it's a Spanish site, but it's interesting," said Charles Ewen, professor of anthropology at East Carolina University.

Williams has deferred

to Ewen for his expertise. Ewen has sent an archaeological team of students to the site with plans for further study. Tests show that there are anomalies beneath the surface. It also confirmed that there are

In the left photo, town of Edenton employee Bobby Williams points to a spot on the ground where he found a rare coin believed to associated with the history of the colonial Blenheim Manor, later known as the Pagett Plantation. Inspired by the discovery near the town's wastewater treatment plant, Williams spent six years scouring the historical site.

traces of a brick structure still underground. Williams said his research suggests that there's a cellar.

Williams also solicited the assistance of the University of Notre Dame, who identified the original coin that set the town employee in motion.

Other artifacts from the early 18th century through the early 19th century include buckles, a wine tap, a pocketknife, blacksmith tools, upholstery tacks, horse tack, spurs, latches and assorted pieces of ceramics, pottery, and earthenware.

Ewen acknowledged that the artifacts suggest that the home was one of wealth and that the families enjoyed affluence. It's that affluence and the types of recovered artifacts that also indicate that the people of the

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CHOWAN HERALD PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Edenton native Adrian Backus addresses hundreds at Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. observance at Swain Auditorium.

## Backus calls for community building

By Ritchie E. Starnes  
Editor

"I don't look at the color of opportunity, I look for the opportunity."

Those were a sample of the words Edenton native Adrian Backus delivered at Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. observance. Backus encouraged the hundreds that filled Swain Auditorium to stay King's course of seeking social improvements.

"Don't be crying about what you don't have," Backus added.

He reminded those in attendance that blacks have been conditioned to resist opportunities, adding a few personal anecdotes from his days living in Edenton where King once visited and spoke in 1962.

Despite Backus professional and personal success, he said that he still feels the emotional scars that cause him anxiety when mingling with whites in contemporary settings.

He warned those of his generation not to succumb to such scars and transfer their roots of hate to their children.

"We have been conditioned to sit where we are and say 'why should I get involved,'" Backus said.

Backus encouraged the

**"Don't be crying  
about what you  
don't have."**

Adrian Backus

Speaking at Monday's  
Martin Luther King  
observance

youth in attendance to stop with their insolent behavior and, instead, become productive citizens in their community.

"This is not the time to sit on our backside and do nothing," he added.

"I don't want to hear another black man tell me they don't want to work. You find work!"

Backus pointed to the importance of building communities without racial barriers, using the current plight in Haiti as a reminder that much needs to be done throughout the world. He urged everyone to work to improve relationships regardless of race.

"You can't go your own way, you have to do it with others," Backus said.

Backus is a '72 graduate of John A. Holmes High School. He currently serves as the vice president of information and technology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

## Town accountant: Raise reserves to 40 percent

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Next month during its annual retreat, the Edenton Town Council is expected to look at ways to increase its reserve funds.

The town's accountant, Jim Winston, said that while the town had a "clean" audit, meaning that there were no areas of concern, he recommended that the town increase its reserve funds to 40 percent. Currently, the town's reserves are at 33 percent.

"Several years ago the

council set a goal to grow the general fund reserve to thirty percent," Mayor Roland Vaughan said. "We met and exceeded that goal as of June 30."

"(Jim Winston) has urged us to get to 40 percent, which is what the average reserve is for municipalities with populations of 5 to 10,000 people and with electric systems."

The mayor acknowledged that achieving that goal would require some creative thinking.

"It will be a challenge to increase the reserve, and this is a goal that the council will like discussion at our upcoming Vision Session (retreat)."

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said that Winston has not made specific recom-

## Former deputy heads to court

From staff reports

The former veteran Chowan County Sheriff's deputy charged with nine sexual offenses involving a high school student heads to court Monday.

William Greg Whitehurst, 48, is scheduled to appear in Superior Court and answer the charges related to an alleged 2005 incident. At the time, Whitehurst was working as a school resource officer (SRO) at John A. Holmes High School. Charges include three counts of second-degree sexual offense, three counts of indecent liberties with a student, and three counts of sexual activities with a student.

Whitehurst was recog-

nized as the '04 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the American Legion Post 40.

The complaint was originally reported directly to the State Bureau of Investigation in Elizabeth City in 2008. At that time, Whitehurst was placed on administrative leave, pending the probe.

Whitehurst was dismissed from the Sheriff's Office earlier this year after 21 years on the job.

Prior to working as a SRO, Whitehurst worked in civil processing and patrol.



Whitehurst

From staff reports

Thieves broke into two downtown businesses and stole assorted items, including cash, according to Edenton police.

Employees arriving to work Friday morning at Blount's Drug Store and Eye Care Center of Edenton found that their respective businesses had been broken into sometime after closing Thursday, police say.

Police were first called to Blount's at 8 a.m. Friday where thieves had pried ajar bar-covered windows at the rear of building and entered, said Jim Blount, storeowner.

Blount said his store was "trashed." He declined to specify what had been stolen, but a police press release indicated that drugs and undisclosed amount of cash were among the items taken.

Police Chief Jay Fortenberry said he believes that the suspects targeted the businesses because of drugs.

While no drugs were taken from the Eye Care Center, thieves made off with a laptop computer, a medical optical device, and an undisclosed amount of currency, according to police reports.

As with Blount's, the suspects entered through a broken window.

"They had a busy night," said Blount, referring to a number of other downtown businesses that he learned were unsuccessfully targeted during the night.

"It's very frustrating," Blount added. "I feel thoroughly violated."

Blount said that the break-in marks only the second after hours crime at the store in his 41 years of operation.

Police have no suspects at this time, but evidence was collected from the crime scenes and forwarded to the State Bureau of Investigation for analysis, Fortenberry said. Anyone with information is asked to call Edenton police at (252) 482-5144.



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