

## History

### The Kiawah Indians

The name "Kiawah" (KEE-a-wah) is derived from the Indians who lived in the area during the 1600s, where they hunted and fished. The Kiawah and their ancestors may have lived in the vicinity of Charleston Harbor for thousands of years. Some Indian pottery found on Kiawah Island dates as far back as 4000 years, making them among the earliest ceramics produced in the New World. Also discovered on Kiawah, by accident in 1956, was an approximately 800-year old dugout canoe. By 1682, the Kiawah had but 40 warriors and their entire population was about 160 men, women and children. The advent of the European gun and diseases, such as small pox and measles to which the Indians had no built-in resistance, rapidly killed off those who were not enslaved. By 1684 many Lowcountry Indian tribes sold their lands, as they were so reduced in number. The Kiawah did not cede their lands in 1684, yet apparently exchanged their lands on the Ashley River for Kiawah Island. In 1695, "Kayawah Indian settlmt" was written across Kiawah Island on a printed map. In 1716 there was mention of a Chief of Kiawahs living on the Cooper River, near Mulberry Plantation. In 1743 the Kiawahs last appeared in public records as a tribe.

### George Raynor

In 1699 the British Governor issued a warrant for the island to be surveyed. In 1700 the Lords proprietors granted the entire island to George Raynor, a man of some mystery. Based upon a letter written on February 28, 1700, by Quaker founder of Pennsylvania William Penn, it was believed that Mr. Raynor was a pirate: "Carolina is known to be harboring suspected pirates connected with Captain Kidd. They are settled as planters, etc., one, Raynor, their captain, lives in Carolina." George Raynor's daughter, Mary, married Roger Moore, the son of Governor James Moore. (Governors Drive was named after him in the late 1700's.) When Mary passed away, Roger Moore inherited Kiawah. The Island stayed in the family until 1719, when Kiawah Island was purchased by John Stanyarne.

### Vanderhorst & Schoolbred

John Stanyarne shifted from the agrarian activities of cattle and subsistence crops to the cultivation of indigo. "Blue gold" would propel Stanyarne to enormous wealth. It is recorded that Stanyarne deeded the eastern half of the island to his granddaughter Elizabeth, who was then married to Revolutionary war hero, General Arnoldus Vanderhorst. The western half of the island was deeded to his other granddaughter, Mary Gibbes. Mary later married Thomas Middleton, but passed away a year after her marriage. This section of the island was managed in trust for John Stanyarne's great-granddaughter, Mary Middleton, who in 1797 married James Schoolbred. General Arnoldus Vanderhorst, Governor of South Carolina from 1794 to 1796 and twice mayor of Charleston, built his home on the Eastern half of the Island in 1802. James Schoolbred, who served as South & North Carolina's first British Consul under the administration of William Pitt, built his home in the area of present-day Rhett's Bluff. Vanderhorst's side of the island was always a working plantation, while

Schoolbred's side remained a tropical retreat for he and his family. In 1864, with the ravages of the Civil War, the Schoolbred mansion was vandalized and then destroyed by fire. In 1900, the Vanderhorsts purchased the Schoolbred property, to reunite Kiawah Island under one owner.

During those 200 years of Vanderhorst occupation, many events occurred in the colonies that affected Kiawah Island. Although there is no evidence of actual combat during wars, there is evidence of soldiers occupying the Island during times of war. Soldiers in the Revolutionary War were issued passes allowing the sick and wounded junior officers to pass through the lines to get to Kiawah Island for rest and recreation, while soldiers from the War of 1812 were located on the island to protect the city of Charleston. The first shots of the Civil War, fired on April 2, 1861, could be heard on Kiawah Island coming from Fort Sumter, located just 21 miles away. During the Civil War, Union soldiers scribbled the graffiti "How are you General Beauregard" and "varitas vincit" (truth overcomes) on the walls of the Vanderhorst Mansion (which still stands today with the visible graffiti). Throughout World War II, U.S. Army teams were assigned to patrol the Island's coast with horses and jeeps. The Vanderhorst legacy ended in 1951 when C.C. Royal purchased Kiawah Island for a mere \$125,000.

## **The Royal Family**

Charles Clarence ("C.C.") Royal, who made his fortune in the lumber business, brought his young wife, Eugenia Mae (known as "Mae"), to the island and asked her to select a site for their home. Barefoot on the beach, she selected a high dune crest, where their home was later built. C.C. Royal named the road leading to their new home Eugenia Road. After purchasing Kiawah, C.C. Royal received a note from the only inhabitant of Kiawah Island at that time, Charlie Scott, a ninety-year old black man who had made his home by Bass Creek, asking to live out the remainder of his days on Kiawah Island. Scott was known for regaling visitors with stories of the island's lore. C.C. Royal obliged and permitted him to remain for the remainder of his life on Kiawah. C.C. subdivided the property along Eugenia Road into 65 lots, which he sold in the 50's and 60's to his soon-to-be influential friends, including a governor of South Carolina and several senators. C.C. & Mae Royal spent several months each year on Kiawah, raising their seven children. Known for their hospitality, C.C. and Mae often had an open invitation for all their friends, their friend's friends, and anyone visiting the island, to come by for steaks, burgers, and great music. In 1974 the Royal Family Trust sold Kiawah to the Kuwait Investment Company for \$18.2 million, a substantial increase from C.C. Royal's 1951 investment of \$125,000.

## **Kuwait Investment Company**

The Kuwait Investment Company, supplemented with the income of oil production, moved ahead with the development of Kiawah Island. A land plan was instituted, which incorporated the lessons learned from the development of Sea Pines, Hilton Head Plantation and Amelia Island. This plan sought to combine resort operations with residential development. One of the first green space development projects was the establishment of Beachwalker County Park. The plan to preserve beach and dunes was unprecedented in its

time, but today this environmental foresight is still regarded as one of the greatest preservation movements in the state's history. A stock market crash in Kuwait in the mid-1980's marked the beginning of the end of their involvement in Kiawah.

## Kiawah Today

**Kiawah Island Community Association (KICA)** was incorporated in 1976, under the Kuwait Investment Company, and still continues as the master homeowners' association today. The developer and KICA general covenants, which were written in 1976, are still in use today and provide the framework for KICA and the rights & obligations of its members. KICA owns and maintains roadways behind the main gate, island drainage systems, rights-of-way, the [Sandcastle Community Center](#) & pool, boardwalks, bridges, lakes and leisure trails. KICA also provides 24-hour security to the island, rules & regulation enforcement and management of deeds, plats and records.

In July 1988, a partnership was formed between three related Charleston families – the Darbys, Ways and Longs – as well as Frank Brumley and Pat McKinney, who had left Kiawah in 1979 to form their own real estate development firm in Charleston. This partnership purchased Kiawah Island for \$105 million, which at the time was the largest real estate transaction in South Carolina history. [Kiawah Resort Associates \(KRA\)](#) continues today as the master developer, in the development of new neighborhoods and roadways. Most roadways built by KRA will eventually be deeded to KICA, which will assume all maintenance responsibilities. KRA also owns Kiawah Island Club (including the Beach Club, Cassique & River Course), Kiawah Island Real Estate, Freshfields and Kiawah Island Utility.

In 1993, Virginia Investment Trust purchased from KRA the portions of Kiawah Island that compose the present-day [Kiawah Island Golf Resort \(KIGR\)](#). Kiawah Island Golf Resort owns and manages the Kiawah Island Inn, The Sanctuary hotel and shops, East & West Beach Tennis Centers, numerous island restaurants, Night Heron Park & Nature Center, Mingo Point, East Beach Conference Center, four Kiawah golf courses – Cougar Point, Turtle Point, Osprey Point & Ocean Course – and Oak Point Golf Course at Hope Plantation.

The [Town of Kiawah Island \(TOKI\)](#) was incorporated on September 13, 1988. The primary reasons for incorporation were: 1) local control over residents' futures, 2) provide responsive local government, and 3) prevent potential annexation by the City of Charleston. The Town is financed primarily through business licenses, franchise fees and accommodation taxes. The Town is responsible for beach management, wildlife, solid waste collection, judicial services through its municipal court, as well as planning and zoning.

In 1994 a **Development Agreement** was negotiated between the Town and KRA, and serves as the planning tool for future development of the island. It also provides for the eventual transition of control of KICA from KRA to the property owners.

Credits to: *Kiawah Island Legends Magazine*

Song of the Kiawah (1999)

The Settlement Legacy (1998)

Crossing the Test of Time (1996)

Honoring Old Ideals (1993)

Charles Fraser: Remembering the Natural Order of Things (1990)