

Golden Isles of Guale



Native Transportation on the Sea Islands.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

THE Atlantic's rolling waves do not break against the mainland of Georgia. A startling statement, that. Yet it is true, for the surf shatters on the smooth sandy beaches of the islands that stretch like a protecting band off the coast.

These are the famed Sea Islands of Georgia, the "Golden Isles of Guale" as they were known to sixteenth century Spanish map-makers. The low-lying lumps of land, spawned by the tides and winds off the 100-mile arc of the Georgia coast, were once friendly hunting grounds, where Indians stalked deer, wild turkeys, raccoons, opossums, and waterfowl. Today, as subtropical playgrounds and winter retreats of happy isolation, they have again become hunting preserves and game sanctuaries.

What history has marched across the savannas and hammocks and beneath the moss-scarfed arms of the mighty live oaks of these islands in the nearly four-century span since white men entered this New world theater!

Here, in the late sixties of the sixteenth century, came Spanish grandees and black-frocked friars, from their Florida headquarters at St. Augustine, to plant sword and cross among the Indians to the "glory of the king." Here, too, came adventurous French voyagers to trade and to make unsustainable colonial claims.

Bold pirates and buccaneers, such as Argamont (the notorious "Abraham") and Blackbeard, after plundering along the Spanish Main, brought into the hidden anchorages of these secluded waterways their treasure galleons and, under cover of the island oaks, found respite from their high adventures.

Here, in the 1730's, came Gen. James Edward Oglethorpe and his followers, who, within a few years, struck blows that helped preserve for the Anglo-Saxon race a large portion of the continent.

Refugee Santo Domingo planters, escaped French royalists, human cargoes from African "slavers," wealthy antebellum aristocrats of the old South, masters of extensive island plantations; then ruin, and, finally, delayed rehabilitation, mark the succeeding chapters of the Sea Islands' history.

Five flags have waved over this offshore cluster of lands where some of the earliest seeds of American trade were sown.

Lesson in Coastal Geography.

However, the unfolding panorama gained from the vantage point of an airplane cockpit is essentially a lesson in coastal geography, not history, even though isolated bits of old Spanish ruins, Oglethorpe's Fort Frederica, and remnants from prosperous colonial days can still be distinguished through the foliage.

Between the leeward side of the islands and the mainland lie expansive reaches of salt marshes, ranging roughly from two to eight miles in width. Generally wide at the northern end, toward Savannah, they narrow at the lower portion of Cumberland, the southernmost member of the Golden Isles.

As you fly along the chain of islands you can trace a continuous serpentine passage in the network of soundings, delta-divided river mouths, and meandering creeks. It is the Inside, or Florida, Passage, a portion of that inside water route which extends all the way from New York to the Florida Keys.

As you swing to a course over the ocean side of the islands, an interesting feature of their formation is revealed to advantage. Heavily wooded areas appear in long bands, stretching in a north-and-south direction, and are separated by slender marshes and ponds, in some cases even expanding into narrow lakes.

Through the passing centuries the tides and winds have piled the sand and river-debouched sediment into a series of parallel dunes interspersed with the swamps—hammocks and sloughs, they are termed in Georgian parlance. Enormous live oaks, pines, cedars, and other trees luxuriate here. On Sapelo island alone remain the wide, open fields where colonial plantations flourished.

Here and there are tiny islands, with little more than a fringe of sandy beach to inclose a small area of marshland.

Where De Aviles Landed. One cannot visit St. Catherines without recalling that April day in 1566 when Menendez de Aviles, one of Spain's ablest pioneers, and his party

of 50 men dropped anchor and came ashore on this island. He had established St. Augustine, in Florida, only the year before, and was already out to destroy the remaining traces of any settlements the French may have founded.

One writer pointed out that nowhere else had he seen such a delightful setting for a great house as that on Sapelo island. In the midst of a cathedral-like tower of live oaks, with hoary beards of Spanish moss depending from their outstretched limbs, stands a majestic colonial home. Projecting from the porticoed entrance is a cruciform formal pool which catches and tosses back the reflection of mossy oaks and vast white walls.

Since its reconstruction, two Presidential parties have been guests at the mansion. One day, while one of First Ladies was admiring the nearby rock garden, her cicerone was heard to remark, "They even used imported stone for this rock garden."

The big house of the South End plantation was first built by Thomas Spaulding in 1800-1802, after he had returned from England to take up plantation farming on Sapelo.

As noted a farmer as he was a builder, Spaulding cleared more than a thousand acres on his island kingdom, and raised indigo, sea-island cotton, sugar cane, and staple foodstuffs.

He it was, in fact, who introduced cane cultivation and sugar manufacturing into Georgia. The live oaks which he cut while clearing the forests to make bigger fields serve to fill large timber contracts for the budding United States navy. He also supplied the navy and merchant marine with beef and hogs.

As a slave owner, however, Spaulding came ultimately to suffer, even though he treated his "helpers" with such kindness that the planters in the South dubbed Sapelo "Nigger Heaven."

Then came the Confederacy, against every protest of this aged man. Sherman's march to the sea laid waste the big house and the plantation developments. Fortunately, Spaulding did not live to see that day of ruin.

Vines and bramble claimed the fire-smoked tabby walls of the mansion until the present owner cleared them and rebuilt again in 1925.

Modern Improvements.

Today, too, the old canals have been dredged and new ones have been cut in many places to supplement the drainage of the island. An adequate supply of fresh water is provided by 36 gushing artesian wells. More than a thousand beef cattle now graze on the luxuriant carpet grass, Japanese clover, and Bermuda grass that have been sown in the one-time cotton and indigo fields.

Delightful trails and motor roads lace the island retreat. In many places they wind beneath bewhiskered old oaks; elsewhere they skirt the broad savannas and cross between marshy ponds that teem with ducks, teal, and other waterfowl.

On the west shore, commanding the approach to the Florida Passage, stand the tabby ruins of the octagonal fort built by the Spaniards in 1680. Within its concentric walls troops were stationed to protect the friars of the Mission of San Jose de Zapala. Thomas Spaulding built a sugar mill on the mission foundations, and within recent years the "long tabby" has been converted into a guesthouse, a portion of which is now used as a schoolroom for the nine white children on the island.

A short ride farther north brings one to the ruins of Le Chatelet. This old site recalls the colonial efforts of five Frenchmen who bought the island and settled at several places in their little haven. The agreement which they made in St. Malo, France, before the beginning of their venture, is one of the treasures of the Sapelo library.

Soon to disagree, four of them moved to Jekyll Island. Later Le Chatelet passed into the hands of Marquis de Montalet, a French nobleman who had fled from Santo Domingo, where his whole family had been massacred in a slave uprising.

Many of the descendants of Spaulding's slaves still live on tiny farms on the island. Of the three settlements—Raccoon Bluff, Hog Hammock, and Shell Hammock—the former is the largest.

At Hampton Point and Retreat on St. Simon island the first sea-island cotton was grown from seeds introduced from the island of Anguilla, in the West Indies. This remarkable long-fiber cotton created much comment among cotton buyers when the first crop, shipped from Hampton Point, reached Liverpool.

The Man I Love

By WALDO THAYER
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WNU Service.

YOU'RE gathered around to hear this last will and testament—gathered, I shall presume, as I instructed Mr. Attorney Willetts to have you. Beatrice on his left, Dick across from her, and Fred at the far end of the table. As I write I have a nice picture of you waiting eagerly for the important part of this.

Well, you sha'n't be kept in suspense long, my dears; though perhaps what's coming won't quite fulfill your expectations. You see, I'm putting this down just as I feel it, without any "I, Nancy Gregg, being of sound mind" rigamarole. That's principally so there can't be any misunderstanding of what I have to say to you.

You three have been close to me during these last nine years—at least, so you think. In all that time, not one of you has missed spending some hours with me each day. My wants have been cared for by you jointly—using my money, of course. Each of you has possessed the same motive: desire to be the one or among the ones called to hear the reading of this document. And so it is.

To you I shall speak first, Beatrice, for you were the first to figure in this new life of mine—this bitter, bedridden mock of an existence. You it was who rushed to me in the hospital as soon as the studio notified you of my accident. And how grateful I was then for that apparent sisterly solicitude! It really wasn't until after the first year that I saw in you a duplicate of the wretched man we once called father.

For nine straight years you've been, in ever-mounting degree, a liar and a cheat. On four occasions that I'm certain of you've plotted to poison me and only held back through the most craven sort of fear. Does that make you know how thoroughly I've been aware of all you thought hidden? To you I make one bequest, Beatrice—the bed in which I have lain for this eternity shall be yours—if you keep and sleep in it yourself.

And now, Fred. All I have said already may be repeated to you; yet I feel no hatred, for you have been only weak and silly. Those you always were, too. I remember clearly your absurd, vain little mannerisms as we played that scene together the day I fell.

And ever since, day after weary day, you have come mingling in to see me with great sorrowful cow eyes and second-grade roses. Could you think me so stupid as not to realize you stayed hours after your brief visits to my room, often overnight? That your chief mission in life was consoling Beatrice for her "privations" and "sacrifices," so that you might attain a firm grip upon my estate? You foolish, transparent little charlatan! I will you the lovely plaster cast which has embraced my body so many years.

As for your part, Dick, it is too shoddily shameful to dwell on long. To you I was engaged when it happened. Staunchly you reaffirmed devotion and your desire to marry. Only the strange new sanity of vision I had somehow acquired saved me from being fool enough to accept. Of course you were eager! I had a million and a half, you nothing; and an invalid wife in those circumstances would be ideal. And, since six months after my refusal, I have been aware that you were living on sums from my account, extorted through blackmail threats from Beatrice. To you, my gallant cavalier, I tender as a last gift the love letters you wrote me when we were young. May they bring you pleasure.

And so to the ending. One person there is, there has been, in all this wilderness of melancholy and disillusion who means anything of worth, of joy, to me. He is the man whose tender, yet wholly professional, ministrations have made this sluggish hell of inch-by-inch dying bearable. Kind and wise and wonderful, he has entered into my heart, become the sole object of such full and genuine emotions as I may still know. It is my single happiness now at last to bequeath without reservation, save as heretofore enumerated, all I own to Dr. John Renny.

One final word: Perhaps you who hear this wonder why he is not present. It is because I wish to spare him the unpleasantness of coming again into this house until all of you have left it forever. Therefore he has been notified privately of this will's terms. The rest of you will now please go, that the man I love may come home, for thus I like to think of it.

For a moment after the lawyer's droning voice ceased, there was no sound. Then savagely a chair scraped back and the large gray-haired man on his right arose.

"Well, of all the wild, monomaniacal messes I ever heard," he stated with vehemence, "that certainly is the limit! Why, it would be child's play to have it set aside—though of course I shan't dream of doing any such thing. I dare say our fine friend, the so clever doctor, has been notified and is waiting in high glee to take possession?"

Attorney Willetts slowly raised his head to meet the other's eyes. His tone's tempo matched that of the moment.

"No," he said, "not exactly. I myself went this morning to tell Doctor Renny. His office door was open. He was in his chair, dead from a dose of cyanide. A framed photograph of Nancy Gregg lay face down on his desk. Under it I found a note which said simply: 'I'm coming, dearest.'"

Forty Billion Germs to the Pound of Farm Soil

Instead of being inert and dead, ordinary farm land is teeming with life. Cultivated soils have anywhere from a few million to five million bacteria in a pound of top-soil; under certain favorable conditions the germ population per pound may run as high as forty billions, says Literary Digest.

So we are told by the service division of the American Agricultural Chemical company. To quote a press bulletin issued by the Mandeville Press bureau (New York):

"These organisms are very small, consisting of single cells only one-hundred-thousandth of an inch in diameter. They are the lowest form of plant life, and contain no chlorophyll, the matter which enables ordinary plants to produce substances suitable for the support of life.

"Most persons think that all bacteria are harmful, but actually, the reverse is frequently true. Without the bacteria in the soil, plant and animal life would probably soon disappear from the world. Only a comparatively few bacteria are harmful to mankind. One of the purposes of the cultivation of the land is to promote the growth of beneficial soil bacteria.

"Farmers may increase the usefulness of bacteria in the soil by adopting methods of cultivation and soil treatment which favor their development. Plowing under of organic matter so that the bacteria can make humus, rotation of crops to include legumes on which nitrifying bacteria thrive, draining of wet lands, the adding of limestone to acid soils, and the use of fertilizers are recommended."

"The Little Brown Church"

"The Little Brown Church," poem and music, were both written by an old member of the Congregational church in Bedford, Iowa, a small village about two miles from Nashua, Iowa. Doctor Pitts, the author of the song, was inspired to write it when coming down the hill toward the little old Bradford church after an absence. The church, in a practically abandoned village, has dwindled to only a few resident members.

Branding Runaways

The Statute of Laborers, passed in the reign of Edward VI, ordered a runaway servant to be branded on the breast with the letter "V" for vagabond, and judged him to be the slave of any purchaser for two years. His owner, we are told, was to give him "bread, water and small drink and refuse meat and cause him to work by beating, chaining or otherwise." If the man absented himself for 14 days during his two years of servitude he was to be branded on the forehead with the letter "S."—Montreal Herald.

Island of St. Helena Is Reduced in Population

The island of St. Helena is located 1,200 miles from the west coast of Africa, and contains an area of about 47 square miles. It was discovered in 1501 by Juan de Nova Castella, a Portuguese navigator, who gave it its name because he first saw it on the day consecrated to St. Helena. In the following century the Dutch took possession and retained it until 1673 when it was seized by England, notes a writer in the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

When Napoleon was first banished to the island and held there as a political prisoner under British surveillance, the population was about 800, the soldiers numbering 200 and the slaves about 300. Subsequently, the population increased until it exceeded 6,000. Emigration has since reduced it.

One of the factors which lessened the importance of the island was the opening of the Suez canal, and the consequent rerouting of the Indian trade. It has still a great value, however, as a naval station, and is one of the strong keys to English power in the south Atlantic.

"Make Money"

Among the many definitions of make "to attain as the result of effort; procure; gain; earn." In this sense, the expression "to make money" carries no suggestion of any nefarious method. In fact, the expression, in the sense of "to earn or procure money" is very old. It was common long before the time of Shakespeare, who used it repeatedly. In Othello (written in 1604) Iago, in the first act, says: "Make all the money thou canst. . . Thou art sure of me. Go make money."—Literary Digest.

Negro Hair Cuts Itself

How often it happens that in searching for one thing another thing is found. The Wool Industries Research association set itself to solve the problem of the too easy breaking of the wavy wool of the merino sheep, and in the process discovered why the negro has close frizzy hair. It seems that frizzy hair and wavy wool have a circular way of growth before they appear above the skin level, and this continues during external growth. Both hair and wool are found to be thinner at the bends than in the rest of the curls, and at these thin places both break easily. Thus, when a negro in civilization brushes his hair, or in the jungles of Africa rubs it with his hands, it breaks off, and saves him the trouble of having it cut. As far as merino wool is concerned a corrective is in sight, and perhaps the negro will use the same device for taking the kink out of his wool!—Tit-Bits Magazine.

Norwegian Elkhound Is Famous for Keen Scent

Self-reliance in abundance bristles from the short erect ears to the tightly curled tail of the Norwegian elkhound. Without this characteristic, observes an authority in the Los Angeles Times, he could never hope to perform the monstrous task of hunting Norwegian elk, the moose of northern Europe.

In this assignment he is not required to chase the game, but rather to stealthily locate and hold the angry animal at bay. Great running speed is not required, and his body must not present the "racy" tucked-up appearance of the greyhound or whippet. But he must be possessed of great endurance and agility; be capable of dodging, with spring trigger precision, the kicks of quick hoofs and jabbing swings of sweeping horns.

For scenting powers he is one of the most remarkable of all hunting dogs, able under favorable conditions to scent an elk or bear at three miles' distance.

His origin is ancient, dating back to the time of the vikings. Many, upon first sight, are impressed with his likeness to a possible cross between the German shepherd and the chow-chow. Like both of these breeds, he is a member of the important, wolfy-looking spitz family of northern dogs. It is not unlikely that the entire family may have evolved from the Norwegian elkhound.

Birds That Mimic

Birds from the ostrich down are very imitative. The ostrich where he lives alone, is silent, but in a country where the lions abound he roars. The reason for this is, we are reminded, that admiring the lions roar, he gradually learns to roar himself. As for small birds, buntings imitate pippeets, and green finches imitate yellow hammers. They seek their food in winter together and they gradually steal each other's call. The jay is an insatiable imitator. Some jays will include in the repertory not only the cries or songs of other birds, but also the bleat of the lambs and the neigh of a horse. Even the nightingale imitates. In a nightingale's song it is sometimes quite easy to detect phrases he has borrowed from other birds.

Reason for the Curfew

The reason for the curfew was that in the early days all the houses were made of wood and thatched straw, says the Montreal Herald. There were no chimneys, and the smoke had to escape through a hole in the center of the roof, and thus fires often occurred. To prevent this happening at night the rule of putting out all fires was strictly enforced. They were usually extinguished by placing over them a large copper hood.

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