

Jekyll Island

G E O R G I A ' S J E W E L

FROM MILLIONAIRES TO THE MASSES:
TOURISM AT JEKYLL ISLAND, GEORGIA

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On an early summer afternoon in 1962, Bryan Deneroy and his wife were driving through Georgia on their way to Florida. Keenly aware that certain south Georgia towns were notorious for speed traps, the couple from Newburgh, New York, stayed well within the speed limit. Suddenly the flashing lights and siren of a Brunswick police car beckoned them to pull over. Mr. Deneroy could hardly believe it, but he grudgingly pulled the car to the side of U.S. Highway 17. When the officer approached the car, he looked at them and asked “You folks on vacation?” Hoping it would make a difference, Mr. Deneroy confirmed that they were indeed tourists. “Will y’all come along with me?” The patrol car escorted them not to the city hall or jail, but instead to the Chamber of Commerce building, where a committee of local boosters greeted them warmly. “How’d you like to spend the night with us?” one of them asked. Still not sure what was going on, Deneroy responded cautiously, “Where, in jail?” The men burst into laughter and finally told them that they were in the midst of a major campaign to promote Jekyll Island, off the Brunswick coast, as a resort. To boost word-of-mouth publicity, they were hauling in out-of-state motorists and offering them a free overnight stay at Jekyll.¹

The Deneroy’s “tourist trap” experience is indicative of the remarkable changes Jekyll Island underwent in its evolution as a tourist resort. A few decades earlier, Jekyll had been a retreat for one of the wealthiest and most exclusive private clubs in the world, and a visit would have required an invitation from a club member like J. P. Morgan or Marshall Field. Now a state park for the masses and accessible by automobile, local boosters were going to great lengths to divert the Florida-bound traffic to the island, something that would have been unthinkable during the club era.

The story of the island's transition is an amazing tale of southern politics at its worst, sometimes its best, and certainly its most colorful. Although replete with rumors of political corruption, it also contains critical moments of individual integrity and caring that would profoundly affect Jekyll's future. In the end, despite trial-and-error methods of development, incessant criticism, and periodic reorganization, the administrators of Jekyll Island succeeded in creating Georgia's first coastal state park with an appeal for a true cross-section of citizens. The Jekyll experience holds many lessons for other states wishing to develop similar "playgrounds" for their people. The Jekyll experience is unique, yet it was shaped by the larger trends of tourism in the South. It all began many years before the state acquired the island.

Jekyll's early history is one of Native American tribes, notably the Guales and Timucuas, Spanish missionaries, English colonists, enslaved Africans, and French planters. Prior to the Civil War, the du Bignon family, members of the Breton merchant nobility, emigrated from France to escape the upheavals of the French Revolution. They eventually settled on the Jekyll Island and cultivated sea island cotton using slave labor. However, in the difficult times following the Civil War and the shift away from a plantation economy, most of the island was sold in parcels. One member of the family, John Eugene du Bignon, a great-grandson of the first du Bignon in America, was intent upon repurchasing the entire island to resale for profit. With his brother-in-law Newton S. Finney, who was by 1884 living in New York, he conceived the scheme of selling the entire island to a club composed of wealthy men, which Finney, a member of the city's elite Union Club, the so-called "mother of clubs," decided to organize.²

The move to sell the island to affluent northerners was part of a much larger development of coastal tourism in the South. As railroads opened accessibility and increased capital, resorts catering to the new industrial elite began to flourish along the southern coasts. The sale of Jekyll and the creation of the club had been facilitated, perhaps, by the fact that in 1881 Thomas Carnegie, brother of Andrew Carnegie, had purchased large portions of adjacent Cumberland Island, where he built a magnificent estate, Dungeness.³ Carnegie was the first of a number of wealthy capitalists, among them Henry Ford and R. J. Reynolds, who discovered the beauty of coastal Georgia and established homes there within the next several decades.

The city of Brunswick, still seeking full economic recovery from the war years, did its part, and the local *Advertiser and Appeal* in 1885 printed a pamphlet called *Brunswick—The City By The Sea*, probably the first ever published in the city to solicit the tourist trade. It touted

Glynn County's attractions as a tourist resort and sought to allay some of the understandable fears about the miasmatic climate of the area, where malaria and yellow fever had periodically ravaged the population. It boasted for the area a climate "as pleasant . . . as can be found" and claimed that, while the winters "are never severe, snow being almost unknown and ice a rarity," the summers are also rendered "quite pleasant by constant refreshing breezes."⁴

In fact, John Eugene du Bignon, a New South entrepreneur of the first order, was most likely the primary instigator of the pamphlet. He clearly perceived the potential for tourism in the area and became a major promoter of both Brunswick and Jekyll. Not only was he involved in the management of various newspapers and publishing companies, among them the *Brunswick Times Advertiser* and later the *Brunswick News*, he was also the principal owner of Brunswick's Oglethorpe Hotel. His other tourism-related businesses included a steamboat company, a transit company, and a railroad. Such interests clearly reflect his awareness of the possibilities of tourism in the area, the importance of promotion, and tourists' needs for lodging and transportation. As a consequence, he busied himself in preparing Jekyll Island to receive northern visitors, stocking it with abundant game, and readying his newly-constructed house to serve as temporary living quarters for potential buyers.⁵

While his du Bignon brother-in-law made the island ready for visitors from New York, Newton Finney set about to interest fellow Union Club members in the new organization he planned to call the Jekyll Island Club. To say that he was successful in his salesmanship is to put it mildly. Henry Hyde, president of the Equitable Life Assurance Corporation, after reading the club's prospectus, said it sounded like "a fairy tale" and quickly added, "I will be happy to join."⁶ Before it was over, Finney had enlisted in his club what the *New York Times* would call the *crème de la crème* of New York and Chicago society.⁷ Founding members included names that were virtually synonymous with wealth in America, like J. P. Morgan, William Rockefeller, William K. Vanderbilt, Joseph Pulitzer, Pierre Lorillard, and Marshall Field. Indeed, estimates suggest that members of the Jekyll Island Club once represented one-sixth of the world's wealth, and in 1904 *Munsey's Magazine* called Jekyll "the richest, the most exclusive, the most inaccessible" club in the world.⁸

It took a great deal of work to get the island ready for its opening season in 1888. Club officers hired a Chicago architect, Charles A. Alexander, to build a magnificent clubhouse, while landscape architect, William Horace Shaler Cleveland, laid out the grounds. Even though the

club was for the wealthy elite, officers and designers sought to adopt to a strict philosophy of simplicity and take complete advantage of the natural setting the island provided. From 1888 to 1928 club members constructed “cottages” on the island that were, for the most part, in keeping with this adherence to simplicity. Unpretentious (though undeniably large by ordinary standards) Queen Anne and shingle styles prevailed in the early years, while later cottages would reflect architectural trends of Italian Renaissance and Spanish eclectic styles. Some of the nation’s most prestigious architects designed cottages for Jekyll members, among them David Adler, Charles Alling Gifford, John Russell Pope, and Carrère and Hastings. In all, club members would construct fourteen cottages on the island, in addition to the one that had been built in 1884 by John Eugene du Bignon. In 1896 the Sans Souci, a complex of six apartments, was begun, with club members William Rockefeller (who also owned a cottage) and J. P. Morgan among the original apartment owners. Finally, in 1901 an annex of eight privately owned apartments was attached to the clubhouse, with owners including Cornelius Bliss and Edmund Hayes.

The Jekyll Island Club operated only in the winter months from January to April, when members and guests sought refuge from the icy northern winters and the harried business world as well as leisure time with their social peers. The seasonal nature of the club necessitated both a year-round staff and seasonal employees. For the most part, year-round employees were local residents, many of them black, who attended to construction, care-taking, landscaping, and road maintenance duties. Seasonal laborers, including the chef, waiters, and specialty cooks, as well as a large contingent of chamber maids, many of them recent immigrants into the United States, were brought in from New York in late December or early January. In addition, club members and their families arrived with their own bevy of servants—maids, butlers, secretaries and tutors.

While it took a small army of workers to meet the needs of the millionaires, the primary occupation for the club members themselves was relaxation. Leisure activities varied for the millionaires throughout the club’s fifty-four active years from 1888 to 1942, as its members followed the whims of national trends. Jekyll was established initially as a hunting club, to take advantage of the island’s abundant game of deer, quail, pheasant, ducks, marsh hens, doves, wild hogs, and even an occasional alligator.⁹ Although hunting, enjoyed by both men and women, always remained a Jekyll pastime, it would soon be rivaled in popularity with bicycle riding during the Great Bicycle Craze of the 1890s. Other pastimes included horseback riding, carriage

driving, and eventually golf. Swimming was not initially a particularly popular activity among club members in light of the fact that they were on the island during the winter months when ocean waters were chilly. However, in 1927 when the club opened its swimming pool in front of the clubhouse on the leeward side of the island, well protected from the cool sea breezes, it was an instant hit with the younger members, male and female, whom it sought to attract.¹⁰

From the outset in 1886, the club was conceived as a family resort, and the first article that announced its formation noted that it was not intended to be “a selfish and exclusive man’s club” but that “ladies . . . will be freely admitted to all the privileges.”¹¹ Indeed, by 1893, the first woman joined the ranks of club members, and by the end of the 1930s, approximately 25% of the club members were female. Admission to the club was never easy, and most of the members after 1886 had a family or business connection with another member, who would nominate them for membership. Only once in the 1920s did the club accept a full contingent of 100 members.

The coming of the Great Depression, however, would make membership in such an exclusive and expensive club difficult. Membership rosters began to decline dramatically in the early 1930s, 34 percent in only two years, despite the fact that J. P. Morgan, Jr. was serving as president, thus guaranteeing that the club’s prestige remained intact. In earlier years, the club had kept itself afloat financially with annual assessments and large donations from individual club members, who were less eager to provide such support during the Depression years. At the end of the 1932 season, the club treasurer reported a deficit of \$28,000. Alarmed at the growing deficit and declining number of members, club officers in 1933 inaugurated “associate memberships” in an effort to raise revenues and attract new people to the club. These associate memberships would allow the club to add up to 150 members to the club rosters. Associates could join for a fraction of the cost of what they now called Founders’ memberships. Dues for Founders stood at \$700 in 1933, while Associates paid only \$150.¹²

While the increased participation and revenue that resulted from new memberships kept the club afloat, the Depression took its toll. So too did changes in club management. In March 1930, Ernest Gilbert Grob, club superintendent who had for forty-two years attended to the club members’ needs with gracious, old-world charm, retired. The hiring of a new, and largely absentee, superintendent with more “modern” managerial techniques, exacerbated the problem. By this time most of the original members were either dead or too old to make the journey to Jekyll.¹³ Further, the club’s Victorian atmosphere, while popular with today’s visitors, in the

1930s seemed out-of-date. The northern elite preferred faster-paced and more stylish vacation spots in Florida or on the French Riviera to old-fashioned Gilded Age resorts like Jekyll Island.

World War II would finally bring an end to the club era and, in its wake, epochal changes in tourism in general. Jekyll's last club season was 1942, when in April of that year it closed its doors forever. Club officers considered reopening for the following year "on a very limited scale," but fuel, supplies, labor, and transportation had been largely diverted to the war effort.¹⁴ Although submarine activity off the coast of Georgia has been blamed for the closing of the Jekyll Island Club, the earliest news reports about such activity occurred only after the season's end, and club officers never mention any such activity or danger in their correspondence.

During the war years, however, the United States military, with full cooperation of club officials, occupied the island. In the meantime, Bernon Prentice, Jekyll president at the end of the club era, was exploring the possibility of reopening after the war, though on a somewhat different and more modern basis that would allow them to compete more effectively with newer resorts. He envisaged "intelligent changes," including "a Casino on the beach," another golf course, and helicopter access to the island.¹⁵ Considering the formation of a syndicate to buy the island and make it into a more commercial resort, he discussed the idea with Alfred W. ("Bill") Jones, whose Sea Island Company had overseen the Jekyll properties during the war years. The greatest obstacle to such a scheme was, of course, money, and Jones was pessimistic that it could be found, although he was willing to canvass various possibilities. However, when Frank Miller Gould, the grandson of millionaire Jay Gould and the only remaining club member with sufficient funds to bankroll such a plan, also expressed an interest in the syndicate, they began in earnest trying to buy up members' shares and outstanding bonds. But Frank Gould's unexpected death on January 14, 1945, at the age of forty-five, dashed their hopes.

Uncertainty loomed once more over the future of Jekyll Island. Prentice, confronting declining interest on the part of its few remaining members and the loss of its key benefactor, turned to Sea Island associates Bill Jones and James D. Compton for guidance through the difficult post-war transition. Jones and Compton, respectively the chairman and president of the Sea Island Company, drew their considerable experience from administering the Cloister, a luxury resort on nearby Sea Island that their predecessor, Hudson automobile tycoon Howard Coffin, had opened in 1928. Sensitive to the implications of Jekyll's post-war development on their own resort, they feared that it might "fall into the hands of strangers" whose "character of

operation and development would be unpredictable and might indeed be highly undesirable and even damaging to the Sea Island Company.”¹⁶

They briefly considered buying Jekyll Island themselves, but, after conducting a feasibility study, they were not optimistic about its prospects. Jones clearly understood that the rise of automobile travel was altering the nature of tourism. “In the old days. . . families went to a vacation spot and settled down for one, two or three months. The automobile has basically changed this. Though there are some people who spend the entire winter at the Cloister the average length of stay is less than ten days.” He believed that the construction of a causeway and bridge was the key to Jekyll’s future and suggested that it would have to be financed with private capital, because government funding would not come “for a long, long time.” Jones also considered the island’s entire utility infrastructure outdated. Outlining the staggering costs of modernizing the resort, he asserted that “successful operation of the present club facilities. . . would be practically impossible unless some fairy godfather could make up operating deficits.”¹⁷ By mid-1946, even the normally optimistic club president Bernon Prentice lamented that “there is no way that I know of for the club to go as it has been.”¹⁸ They began to discuss quietly among themselves the possibility of selling the island.

At this most uncertain time, the State of Georgia stepped in. In August 1946, Revenue Commissioner Melvin E. Thompson was actively looking for a Georgia coastal island for the state to acquire as a public park. After inquiring about St. Simons, Blackbeard, and Ossabaw Islands, Thompson and a special beach park commission appointed by Governor Ellis Arnall began investigating the prospects for purchasing Jekyll Island from the struggling private club.¹⁹ Although club officials coyly insisted they still intended to open for the 1947 season and that the island was not for sale, Thompson moved quickly to propose its acquisition. Two of the remaining cottage owners bitterly resisted relinquishing their Jekyll property, but club officials seemed resigned to the state’s acquisition of the island and pledged that “the club will cooperate . . . to provide a public beach for the people of Georgia.”²⁰

Adding further confusion to an already uncertain situation, the Georgia state government was thrown into chaos following the death of governor-elect Eugene Talmadge in December 1946, prior to his inauguration. With no clear guidance from the state constitution about who should assume executive powers when a governor-elect died before being sworn in, a highly-partisan political battle erupted that halted governmental action on Jekyll for more than two

months. The succession controversy pitted M. E. Thompson, who had been elected Lieutenant Governor, against Talmadge's son, Herman, who proclaimed victory through a campaign of write-in votes. The pro-Talmadge state legislature, determined to settle the matter in Herman's favor, boldly elected him as governor. Governor Arnall, however, supported Thompson's claim as his rightful successor and declared that the courts must settle the matter. When Arnall refused to give up the governor's seat to anyone but Thompson, Talmadge's supporters physically removed him from the executive mansion. Thus, Talmadge operated as governor in the executive mansion, while Thompson acted as governor-in-exile at a downtown Atlanta office building. This dual governorship continued until March 19, 1947, when the Georgia State Supreme Court upheld Thompson's claim.²¹

Within days after this court decision, Thompson resumed his move for state acquisition of Jekyll Island, this time acting in the capacity of governor rather than revenue commissioner. When negotiations for an outright purchase of Jekyll reached an impasse, Thompson initiated condemnation proceedings on June 3 to acquire the island by right of imminent domain. Talmadge, still chafing at the outcome of the succession crisis, loudly protested "Thompson's Folly," insisting that his cronies wanted an island "where they can go to hide from the people and scheme to spend the state's money for the favored few."²² Thompson, however, dreamed of a much different future for Jekyll. Trying to whip up support for the Jekyll purchase in the face of unrelenting criticism from Talmadge, Thompson insisted he merely wanted "to convert Jekyll Island . . . into a state park for the plain people of Georgia."²³ He, like many others, recognized that the automobile had democratized tourism and made the coastal areas accessible to a greater number of people. A larger middle class population in the post-war years created a need for affordable tourist accommodations. He contended that he was merely "thinking of the poor farmers' sons" in considering the acquisition of the island.²⁴ While some editorials denounced it, most news writers supported Thompson's proposed takeover of Jekyll, which they envisioned as "a southern version of New York's Great Jones Beach" or a "new Coney Island."²⁵

With a series of legal maneuvers in the summer of 1947, the State of Georgia quickly settled disputing claims and acquired the island through condemnation, compensating the former property owners in the amount of \$675,000. The state took possession of Jekyll Island on October 7, 1947, thus ending Jekyll's period of splendid isolation as a millionaires' retreat and beginning its era as a state park for the masses. This transaction was symbolic of larger post-war

changes in southern tourism. Not only does it reflect the democratization of tourism and the rapid rise of middle-class resorts, it also illustrates the increased role of state governments in promoting and financing the growth of tourism after World War II. Although a few club members and cottage dwellers were greatly distressed by the course of events, Bill Jones declared it to be “a good solution to a difficult problem.”²⁶

Still under attack by Talmadge, Thompson moved quickly to prove the worth of his purchase before the special gubernatorial election to be held 1948. After consulting with Jones throughout the entire acquisition process, Thompson was also persuaded of the need to bring automobile accessibility to Jekyll Island. Hoping to lure some of the millions of tourists who traveled by car through Georgia every year en route to Florida, he immediately unveiled a plan for a multi-million dollar project to build a state-financed causeway and bridge to Jekyll.²⁷ Though Thompson predicted that the road-building project would be completed within a year, it would, in fact, be another seven years before Jekyll Island was finally accessible by automobile.

Meanwhile at Jekyll Island, Georgia State Parks administrators contracted private hotel managers (Thomas S. Briggs, 1948; Barney Whitaker, 1949-51) to open the former Jekyll Island clubhouse as a hotel for tourists. The Brunswick Chamber of Commerce, eager to promote the tourist trade to cushion the economic blow from a recent wave of post-war closings of factories and shipyards, even offered to provide free boat transportation to tourists. Nevertheless, still without convenient automobile access, few visitors ventured out to Jekyll Island.²⁸

To make matters worse, the political prospects for Thompson’s plan to build roads and develop Jekyll Island plummeted after Herman Talmadge was elected governor in 1948. Still nominally opposed to state ownership of Jekyll Island, Governor Talmadge decided in 1949 to lease the island’s facilities to private enterprise for the remainder of his term, and he requested that state legislators create a Jekyll Island State Park Authority to administer the leases.²⁹ Established in February 1950, the Jekyll Island Authority, as it is now called (and henceforth referred to as JIA), is a quasi-public corporation that has broad powers to develop, administer, and promote the island as a tourist attraction. Consisting originally of five members appointed by Governor Talmadge, the Authority was obligated by its charter to permit development on “not more than one-half of the land area of Jekyll Island, which lies above water at mean high tide,” and to create a vacation spot “at the lowest rates reasonable and possible for the benefit of the people of Georgia.”³⁰

As the legislature deliberated the bill, Talmadge offered to let Glynn County representative, Charles Gowen, name one of the authority members in exchange for his support. Gowen, who had worked with Governor Thompson in smoothing the way for the acquisition of Jekyll, made the fortunate, and, as it turned out, critical choice of the Sea Island Company's president, J. D. ("Jim") Compton. Compton brought not only experience and understanding of the coastal landscape and its attraction to tourists, but also a sense of integrity to an otherwise inexperienced and politicized body. No one knew the island better than Compton, who had helped to oversee Jekyll facilities from 1942 to 1947 and had administered the Sea Island Company's feasibility study a few years earlier. Judging from the deliberations recorded in JIA Minutes, Compton, above all others, underscored the need for careful planning of Jekyll's development, while being ever mindful of the Authority's mandate to make the island accessible to all Georgians.³¹

Compton persuaded the JIA to hire Robert and Company, Associates, a nationally known Atlanta-based engineering firm, to draft the master plan that would become the basic blueprint for the next half-century of development on Jekyll Island. The chief architect of the plan, Robert and Company's engineer Andrew Steiner, credits Compton for the Authority's approval of his "natural beauty" plan over another competing designer's layout for "another Daytona," which some JIA members preferred. Steiner spent six months studying the island in consultation with Compton and planning its future layout, to include a network of roads, residential subdivisions, a shopping center, a small airport, golf courses, and beachfront development of motels, condominiums, and amusement parks.³² Perhaps most notably, the master plan called for going beyond the state requirement and leaving approximately two-thirds of the island undeveloped and in its natural state—one of the most treasured qualities of Jekyll Island to this day.

While the plan was being drafted, Authority members addressed several more immediate concerns. Most problematic was the continued lack of automobile access to the island. By early 1950, the causeway to Jekyll was complete, but construction had not yet begun on a bridge over Jekyll Creek. Although JIA members and Glynn County commissioners pressed for "the prompt completion of an access highway by the bridging of Jekyll Creek," both political foot-dragging and the federal government's need for steel during the Korean War delayed construction of the bridge for another four years. Consequently, the Authority decided "that the Island Facilities shall close on January 15, 1951."³³ Although the island was open on a limited basis to visitors

via a ferry from Brunswick, Jekyll would not fully reopen to the public until December 1954, prompting some journalists and politicians to complain about inefficient administration on “Georgia’s Padlocked Island.”³⁴

In reality, the Authority made significant progress during those years, and, in fact, the state legislature would pass a resolution in March 1953 commending the Authority “on its devotion to duty and the progress it had made.” Not only did they carefully craft and approve the master plan, they also initiated “improvements” on the island, using convict labor to build roads and clear lots for residential use. In April 1951, the JIA hired the park’s first superintendent, Hoke Smith, to oversee the facilities and to guide the work of convict labor.³⁵ Additionally, like administrators at other southern resorts, the Authority was compelled to confront the issue of developing a state park for all Georgians within the framework of the state’s Jim Crow laws. According to newspaper accounts in the 1950s, Jekyll Island possessed the only public beaches in Georgia accessible to African Americans. Not surprisingly, local black citizens made it clear as early as 1947 that “negroes are just as much interested in the development of the resort as whites.”³⁶ Likewise, shortly after the JIA announced it would lease residential lots on the island, they received a letter from black leaders in Savannah “inquiring about the status of a negro development on Jekyll Island.” Replying that “the Authority has given careful consideration to the needs of the negro citizens of Georgia,” the JIA set aside for African Americans the remote south end of the island, the area least developed and the farthest away from the historic millionaire’s village.³⁷

The JIA intended to develop the segregated black section of Jekyll Island, which they named St. Andrews for the sound that lay between Jekyll and Cumberland, along lines similar to the all-white northern end of the island. Thus, plans for St. Andrews included beach facilities, a bathhouse, a picnic pavilion, a hotel, a restaurant, and a residential subdivision, which was officially opened on September 24, 1955. Although the pricing of leases on these lots were “exactly comparable to white subdivision lots,” as was usually the case in the Jim Crow South, the facilities for blacks at Jekyll were separate but unequal.³⁸

As the JIA began implementation of its plan, Georgia politics entered the picture once again, ushering in a troubled period of what many journalists judged to be corruption and political favoritism. In January 1954, the State Highway Department awarded a \$207,893 paving contract for the Jekyll Island causeway to Acme Construction Company owned by state senator

James ("Jimmy") Dykes from Cochran, Georgia.³⁹ Dykes was also reportedly a good friend of Governor Herman Talmadge, future governor Marvin Griffin, State Highway Chairman James Gillis, and JIA Chairman D. B. Blalock, who himself owned two businesses that sold road paving equipment. These political connections were vital in Dykes's ultimate control, direct or indirect, of almost all business activities on the island.

After the Jekyll Creek Bridge finally opened on December 11, 1954, Dykes's influence grew rapidly. By the end of 1955, he had acquired exclusive leases on paving projects, building supplies, hotel properties, concessions, a gas station, and general contracting. In fairness to Dykes, he was sometimes the only bidder on the various projects. On the other hand, he clearly had an advantage in that he often had prior knowledge about the call for bids, which, after the posting in newspaper announcements, usually gave bidders only two weeks to submit. Ever since he had acquired the lease to open the island's first business, the Bonded Building and Supply Company, he had the additional financial advantage of having crew and materials already on the island. As a consequence, for a time Dykes would have a virtual monopoly on the construction and contracting business on Jekyll.⁴⁰

In late May 1955, the Authority leased the Jekyll Island Clubhouse as a hotel to a firm from Cochran, Georgia, after Dykes had assured JIA that he had no connection with the company. After the lease was granted, however, it was revealed that, not only was Dykes a principal stockholder, he was also designated as the operator of the Jekyll property. Although JIA chair Sen. D. B. Blalock insisted that "it was two months before we ever had any inkling that Jimmy was connected with it," he seems to have benefited financially as well from Dykes's operations.⁴¹ An audit in 1955 showed that Blalock's firms had sold more than \$85,000 worth of road building machinery and parts to the state for use at Jekyll. It also revealed that Dykes was in arrears in the rent on his leased properties. Even after these conflicts of interest and lease violations were discovered, the Authority negotiated an additional \$218,000 paving contract with Dykes and his brother-in-law and allowed him to open the Jekyll Insurance Corporation, which also dealt in real estate and cottage rentals on the island.⁴²

These shady dealings did not go unnoticed. Jim Compton, who oversaw JIA purchases, began to question requisitions and invoices related to Dykes. On June 17, 1955, he complained to Blalock that "I am opposed to the very sloppy way in which materials and equipment are being ordered . . . I don't think anyone can tell what has been ordered, what it cost, and who

authorized the [purchase]. I do not care to be involved in the controversy which is very likely to arise over the placing and payment of these orders.” Six weeks later, on July 30, Compton stunned Authority members by tendering his resignation, ostensibly for reasons that “have to do with my business and my health.” However, in a private letter to Blalock, he begged: “Please don’t let any one individual or group get control of all the island’s best facilities, as has been the tendency during the past eight to ten months, for it will hurt the further development of the island and bring great criticism down on the authority.”⁴³

Compton’s words were prophetic, for within a few weeks of his resignation, the state’s Legislative Economy Committee launched an investigation of the Jekyll Island Authority. The committee’s controversial hearings resulted in a 78-page report that severely criticized the Authority for sloppy bookkeeping and recommended dissolving JIA and turning the island over to the State Parks Department or selling it altogether.⁴⁴ This report was released amid an avalanche of criticism from politicians and journalists, directed at the high prices at Jekyll Island and the Authority’s policy of leasing residential lots. Throughout the mid-1950s, many people complained that the cost for accommodations at Jekyll “is far out of reach of the average Georgian” and urged the Authority to build low-cost housing and motels “so the average man could take his family there for a summer vacation.”⁴⁵ More importantly, the residential leasing policy came under heavy scrutiny after lessees had difficulties securing mortgage loans on leased property and a Georgia Supreme Court ruling apparently cleared the way for Glynn County to tax Jekyll properties. Asserting that the leasing policy inhibited development of the island, some legislators viewed it as “out of step with the way America does things” by putting the state in competition with private developers.⁴⁶

Governor Marvin Griffin, asserting “I’m a free enterprise man myself,” indicated he was in favor of selling residential lots outright or perhaps swapping the entire island for a nuclear reactor. To study the matter, he created a special legislative commission, which recommended that the state keep Jekyll Island as a state park and even spend another \$397,731, most of it earmarked for properties leased by Jimmy Dykes.⁴⁷ Governor Griffin acquiesced to the committee’s recommendations, and the controversy over Jekyll Island temporarily waned. However, in July 1956, shortly after the opening of the \$10 million bridge linking the Jekyll causeway to Brunswick, all hell broke loose. First, Dykes was accused of selling beer on the island without a liquor license; then the *Atlanta Constitution* published a series of scathing

articles that charged the Authority with corruption. In response, Griffin announced that he wanted “to dispose of this ‘white elephant’,” and he froze all further spending on Jekyll.⁴⁸

In the wake of such publicity, tourists flocked to the island “to see what the ruckus was all about,” but overall they were pleasantly surprised by what they found. One Atlanta visitor commented: “I went down expecting, from newspaper reports, to find a jumble of inefficiency and beer joints, but I found neither. . . In fact, I have never seen a more beautiful, natural or better-run place.”⁴⁹ Nonetheless, after nearly a year of negative publicity, there was still strong sentiment to shake up the Authority or sell the island. In the legislature, a compromise emerged that rejected the notion of selling Jekyll and instead created a new Authority comprised of high-ranking officials, including the secretary of state, the public service commissioner, the state auditor, the attorney general, and the director of the Department of State Parks.⁵⁰

Established in March 1957, the new Jekyll Island Authority ushered in a prolonged period of rapid development and political stability. The recently appointed members had clear ideas about how they wanted to develop Jekyll. State Auditor B. E. Thrasher, who served as JIA’s secretary and treasurer, commented: “I like the idea at Daytona Beach with its great expanses of attractive motels and small apartments. . . . I lean that way for Jekyll.” The new Authority chairperson, Secretary of State Ben Fortson, also surmised that “people mostly come to Jekyll to go to the beach.”⁵¹ Thus, the Authority sped up beach development, and within two years, Jekyll’s beachfront boasted a shopping center, two motels, concession stands, a concrete boardwalk, acres of paved parking lots, and several new homes. The JIA also leased properties for a campground and an amusement park and initiated plans for a convention center and an indoor pool. Fortunately, all of these developments took place within the framework of Robert and Company’s original master plan, which the new Authority members pledged to follow.⁵²

Although the legislative act that reorganized the Authority empowered JIA to sell commercial and residential lots, some members were adamantly opposed to turning over state property to private enterprise. Before he was named to the Authority, Thrasher, who was very reluctant to join JIA in light of recent controversies, made it clear that “if it was their idea to make a real estate development out of the island, they had better leave me off the board.” Both he and Fortson believed that if Jekyll were to live up to its promise as a resort for all Georgians, then the state must maintain the leasing system and finance the construction of motels and other inexpensive accommodations. When the Authority undertook a legal study of the leasing system

on Jekyll, they concluded that they could not break the leases "without bringing them into court." As a consequence, they opted not to exercise their right to sell lots.⁵³

Nevertheless, the JIA moved quickly to address Jekyll's greatest source of embarrassment for the last few years—the leases held by Jimmy Dykes. They ordered an examination of his leases and found that he had defaulted on several provisions, including nonpayment of rent and the failure to have proper amounts of insurance. Although he paid his back rents, they still brought legal action to strip him of his leases, against which Dykes fought and prevailed in the courts. However, still under pressure, Dykes finally signed a quit claim deed relinquishing all his business leases on January 22, 1960, and by 1963, he had severed all his ties at Jekyll.⁵⁴ In spite of the crackdown on Dykes, rumors of political influence peddling on Jekyll Island persisted, with the most common charge being that legislators and political bureaucrats received preferential treatment in receiving residential lots on Jekyll Island. The *Atlanta Constitution* undertook an investigative probe in 1964 to look into the matter and discovered that, out of 326 houses that had been built by 1964, only 15 belonged to present or former state legislators, state officials, or their family members. Although there is no question that the Authority did grant leases to former legislators to build beachside condominiums and apartments, the rumors of influence peddling appear to have been somewhat exaggerated.⁵⁵

During the 1960s, Jekyll Island enjoyed a welcome period of sustained growth and stability. Few officials talked of selling the island anymore; to the contrary, journalists and politicians all over Georgia praised the work being done at Jekyll and hailed it as the state's finest beach resort. Furthermore, the State of Georgia launched a concerted effort to promote tourism by eliminating speed traps, lifting tolls, and boosting the state's image. Governors Ernest Vandiver and Carl Sanders in particular set out to compete with Florida for a greater share of the tourist trade. Vandiver's efforts led to the creation of tourist welcome centers, the establishment of a tourism division within the Commerce Department, and an increased budget for tourism promotion, while Sanders, who also vowed to give Florida a "run for their money," endorsed the state's "Stay and See Georgia" campaign. These efforts, combined with local promotional campaigns, paid huge dividends as tourist spending in Georgia grew to nearly \$400 million by the mid-1960s. By 1965, Jekyll Island had moved out of the red and into the black, generating \$600,000 of revenue for the state.⁵⁶

Even during this boom period, however, Jekyll was wrestling with the South's traditional moral dilemmas of alcohol and race relations. During the term of Governor Vandiver (1959-63), who threatened once again to sell Georgia's state parks if segregation could not be maintained, the Authority stayed faithful to Jim Crow, providing often inferior facilities to black visitors. Typical of such efforts was the new Aquarama, a large indoor swimming pool within an architecturally dramatic and modernistic structure, unveiled by the Authority in 1961; three years later, for the African American tourists on the south end, they built a much smaller pool inside a building that resembled a big tin box. Whether it was for lack of promotion, lack of investment, lack of equal facilities, or lack of interest, the St. Andrews development rarely drew large crowds of black visitors and, thus, the plan for a separate residential and commercial district never fully materialized. The "for-blacks-only" Dolphin Motel struggled under several different managers, never making a profit. It was 1963 before the first black-owned house was built at the St. Andrews subdivision. In fact, during the 1960s only four black families built houses on the south end of the island before St. Andrews was later opened to white lessees.⁵⁷

The first public stirrings to desegregate Jekyll Island came in May 1960, after the NAACP announced its plans to integrate public beaches along the southern coast. Attorney General and JIA member Eugene Cook responded by issuing a prepared statement calling upon the governor to declare martial law on Jekyll if integration were attempted. Other Authority members, namely Fortson and Thrasher, did not support Cook's proposed course of action. Thrasher publicly stated that JIA probably could not close the resort, and that he, for one, did not want to.⁵⁸ The issue came up again in March 1963, when the biracial Georgia Council on Human Relations asked the Authority to voluntarily desegregate Jekyll Island or face court action. Fortson responded that "a majority of white people won't accept integration" and "as custodians of the island, we must do what is best for the majority of people." Nonetheless, he pledged to confer with other Authority members before taking any action. A few days later, NAACP leaders from Savannah and Brunswick tested the segregated facilities at Jekyll Island, visiting the amusement park, beach houses, cafeteria, indoor swimming pool, picnic areas, motels, and golf course. A spokesperson announced: "We were denied entrance to all these places except the drug store, where two of our group ate lunch at the counter."⁵⁹

As a result, in September 1963 state and local NAACP leaders filed a class action suit against the Jekyll Island Authority, arguing that segregated facilities violated the Fourteenth

Amendment rights of black citizens. Governor Carl Sanders vowed to fight the suit, but seven months later, a federal district judge ordered the Authority to desegregate all state-operated facilities and later decreed that all future leases “must require that the lessees operate without discrimination as to race or color.”⁶⁰ In the aftermath of these rulings, Jekyll Island integrated peacefully and quietly. As most black tourists began to use motels and recreation facilities elsewhere on the island, occupancy at the Dolphin Motel plummeted, forcing it to close in 1965. The Authority later converted the Dolphin into a facility for youth groups.⁶¹

Throughout the 1960s, Jekyll Island also struggled over the issue of liquor. Although Glynn County was “wet,” most people assumed that selling liquor on state property was illegal. Nevertheless, it was widely known that several Jekyll facilities served alcohol. In the 1950s and 1960s, motel operators fought in vain to acquire liquor licenses, but politics kept getting in the way. After the state attorney general announced in 1965 that he knew of no law prohibiting the sale of liquor on state property, the Glynn County Commission promptly granted liquor licenses to several Jekyll motels. But Governor Sanders, under pressure from such people as Dr. Louie Newton, a Baptist preacher and longtime crusader against “the blight of liquor,” ordered the state revenue commissioner to deny the necessary state licenses to block liquor sales on Jekyll. The matter was finally decided by a May 1971 referendum in which Jekyll residents voted 223 to 96 to allow the sale of liquor. Although one local politician threatened a court challenge, the liquor wars ended a month later when the state gave its final approval.⁶²

Over the last thirty years of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the most critical issues at Jekyll have concerned environmental and historical preservation. Maintaining the historic clubhouse and cottages has been a continuous struggle against the island’s damp and salty climate. The earliest efforts at historic preservation had come in the Jekyll Island Club era when in 1898, several club members led a campaign to save the endangered Horton House, a colonial tabby structure at the north end of the island. In the early state era, however, historic preservation was not a high priority. In fact, until they began to realize that the historic homes of the island could serve as a valuable draw for tourists, early administrators made the unfortunate mistake of demolishing several of the club members’ cottages.⁶³ Most, however, were left standing, and focused efforts to preserve the club's history began in 1954 when the Authority leased the Rockefeller home, Indian Mound, to a woman named Tallu Fish, who opened the house to the public as a museum, becoming both its curator and publicist.⁶⁴

The JIA also executed a lease with Dewey Scarboro, a former Georgia Tech football star, for Villa Osposo, a cottage designed in 1927 by well-known architect John Russell Pope and built by Standard Oil magnate Walter Jennings. Scarboro and his wife restored the cottage, furnished it elaborately in antiques, and opened it to the public for a charge. Eventually he would acquire a lease on the Crane Cottage as well, designed by equally renowned architect David Adler and built for plumbing tycoon Richard Teller Crane, Jr.

Not all state officials recognized the importance of the island's historic structures, however, and State Auditor Thrasher once remarked that the hotel and cottages were “a rathole to throw money down the drain.” Fortunately such viewpoints did not prevail, and during the 1960s administrative support for historic preservation was boosted during the successive terms of JIA island directors Judge A. J. Hartley (whose official title was executive secretary) and Horace Caldwell. As early as 1963, Hartley, a former assistant attorney general and administrative aide to two governors, envisaged the restored historic district as “a sort of little Williamsburg.” By December 1965, preservation work had begun, with the newspapers announcing that the “entire village” was being restored at a cost of \$50,000.⁶⁵ The following June, the JIA commissioned J. Everette Fauber, Jr., who had worked at Colonial Williamsburg, to draft preliminary plans for restoring the “Millionaires’ Village.” Approximately two years later, the JIA employed its first full-time preservationist, Roger Beedle, who spent the next six years studying and stabilizing the structures. Landscape architect Clermont Lee was also brought in to help formulate plans to restore the district to its former splendor. However, a lack of adequate funding hampered the project, and by 1972 Caldwell was lamenting that, though the work continued, the historic structures had “deteriorated to the point that restoration is almost prohibitively costly.”⁶⁶

The Jekyll Island Club hotel closed its doors in the early 1970s, to sit empty and deteriorating for more than a decade, while the restoration project died for a lack of funding. The issue of historic preservation would not come to the forefront again until 1983 when the JIA established once again among its priorities the “restoration of Millionaire’s Village and opening of Jekyll Club.”⁶⁷ Nothing was done, however, until 1984 when a young Brunswick architect named Larry Evans persuaded a friend, Vance Hughes, to join him in an ambitious project to restore the deteriorating club house. Evans and Hughes had been looking at the club district for several years without taking action, but they decided it was now or never. Generous tax incentives and federal grants for the restoration of historic buildings were set to expire at the end

of 1986. Thus, once the JIA finally approved their proposal in February 1985, Evans and his partner worked quickly to get their financing in place, restore, and reopen the hotel by December 1986. In an amazing and determined effort, once the required \$20,000,000 funding was finally assured, Evans and Hughes, both passionately dedicated to the project, quit their regular jobs to see it through. Working frantically, both day and night toward the end, they managed to meet the deadline and complete the extensive restoration in only nine months. The result was a marvel, bringing renewed life and vigor to a languishing historic district and sparking even greater interest in restoration. The same year that the Jekyll Island Club Hotel reopened, the JIA hired a young man named Warren Murphey to oversee its preservation efforts on the various cottages. Ten years later Murphey became Director of the Jekyll Island Museum and eventually Director of Museums and Operations. Since 1986, when the preservation budget was only \$200,000 for the restoration of four structures, the historic district has become a major focus of JIA efforts, with a budgetary appropriation from the state in 1999 of \$2.5 million toward the effort. All in all, Judge Hartley's dream of making the Jekyll Island historic district "a sort of little Williamsburg" seems to be coming to fruition.⁶⁸

Environmental issues have been another major concern in recent decades. A primary problem has been the issue of beach erosion, a matter of concern even during the Jekyll Island Club era.⁶⁹ The ever-shifting contours of beaches are part of the natural life cycle of barrier islands, but at Jekyll human actions have compounded the problem. First, the repeated dredging of St. Simon's Sound north of Jekyll Island had the unintended consequence of denying beaches to the south the replenishing sands that normally washed up on Jekyll's shores, diverting them instead to fill in the dredged channel. Second, during the 1950s, the Authority, apparently unaware of the fragility and importance of beach flora and dunes, ordered a number of major dunes to be bulldozed to clear sites for motels and to improve visibility. Newspapers also reported that island workers hauled more than 100,000 cubic yards of sand from the beachfront dunes to shore up roads, bridges, and other development sites. The consequent erosion led the Authority to reinforce the demolished dunes in certain areas near the island's business district with sea walls in 1962. Just two years later, after the storm surge of Hurricane Dora destroyed beachfront facilities (including the island's amusement park Peppermint Land) and brought major erosion problems, the Authority decided to try and halt the encroaching tides with additional revetments—large chunks of granite placed on the beach to stabilize the shoreline.⁷⁰

Revetments, however, only exacerbated the problem, resulting in even more severe beach erosion of the island's north end.

In addition to beach erosion, another major environmental battle at Jekyll Island in recent decades concerned imposing limitations on development. In the late-1960s, as the Authority approached the complete implementation of Steiner's original master plan, economic pressures mounted to develop larger and more lucrative tourist attractions. Mindful of a state mandate that Jekyll Island must be economically self-sufficient by 1972, the JIA gave its approval in 1970 for the construction of Sea Circus, similar to Florida's Sea World and "a major year-round commercial tourist attraction." Si Fryer, a Jekyll resident originally from Arizona, mobilized a group of island citizens to prevent development on the six-acre beachfront site on the island's south end. The controversy over the proposed Sea Circus prompted state representative Michael Egan to draft and shepherd a bill through the state legislature that legally limited development to 35% of the island's land area, leaving 65% undeveloped. It was a provision that had from the outset been part of the Steiner master plan, but Egan's effort incorporated it into law.⁷¹

This legislation, however, did not strictly define what constituted "development," leaving an inadvertent loophole for further encroachment on the island's natural areas. For instance, some planning consultants for the JIA argued that golf courses were not really development, but rather "wildlife habitat." This debate came to a head in 1995, when the Authority incurred the wrath of island residents and environmentalists by beginning construction on a new golf course before obtaining the proper permits. Jean and Leonard Poleszak, leaders in the Jekyll Island Citizens Association, rallied island residents and regional conservationists, who convinced the state Environmental Protection Department to halt development of the golf course. This controversy prompted the resignations of George Chambliss and John McTier, respectively executive director and chair of the JIA, who had guided the island through more than a decade of self-sufficient growth. It also sparked further legislative action to cap development of Jekyll strictly at 35% and to require the drafting of a new master plan to guide the island's future. Upon signing the bill into law, Governor Zell Miller announced: "While we are going to continue to promote Jekyll Island as one of our great tourism destination sites . . . we are not going to ever overdevelop this environmentally sensitive island."⁷²

The story of Jekyll is yet unfinished. The JIA's charter and all leases on the island are set to expire in the year 2049, creating major questions about its future. Will the state continue the

“trustworthy stewardship” of the island called for by the Authority’s current mission statement? Will it turn Jekyll over to private development? Those who will ultimately decide these questions should be cognizant of the issues surrounding Jekyll Island’s history as a resort. Throughout its evolution from millionaires to the masses, the natural beauty of the island has always been its biggest draw, and, at the dawn of a new millennium, it attracts approximately 1.4 million visitors a year. Today, the Authority maintains a delicate balance between free enterprise and state control through partnerships with private investors. Governor M. E. Thompson’s dream of a public beach for “the plain people of Georgia,” nearly derailed by political machinations, has been fulfilled thanks to those who carefully planned and nurtured the island’s development to complement its natural beauty and historical significance. Visitor surveys, interviews with island residents and administrators, and the most recent master plan (1996) all concur that Jekyll Island’s preservation of “an unspoiled microcosm of the coastal environment” is what makes it a unique and enchanted place. Put simply, Jekyll’s future as a tourist destination depends on the preservation of its natural and historical amenities. Will it be done? “The longer it remains the way it is . . . it becomes more and more priceless,” says one resident. But looking out his window over the beautiful Marshes of Glynn, he worries that over-development may one day ruin it. “It would be a travesty if that happens.”⁷³

NOTES

¹ “They Nabbed This New York Tourist and Sent Him Off to Jekyll Island,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 2 June 1962. The authors would like to thank Tallu Fish Scott for lending us the scrapbooks that her mother, Tallu Fish, curator of Jekyll Island’s first museum, conscientiously collected articles about Jekyll’s development between 1954 and 1971.

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For information on the early years of Jekyll Island and the founding of the club, see June Hall McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), pp. 9-38. See also William Barton McCash and June Hall McCash, *The Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America’s Millionaires* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), pp. 1-13.

³

Lucy Ferguson to Richard A. Everett, 1 May 1965, Everett Collections, Coastal Georgia Historical Society.

⁴

Brunswick—The City By the Sea. A Pamphlet Descriptive of Brunswick and Glynn County, Georgia (Brunswick, Ga.: BAA, 1885), pp. 9, 21. Copy in Brunswick Library.

⁵ On du Bignon’s business interests, see McCash, *Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, pp. 26-29.

⁶

Henry B. Hyde to Oliver Kane King 16 December 1885, Letterpress book A-22, Henry B. Hyde Papers, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, Massachusetts.

⁷ *New York Times*, 4 April 1886.

⁸ Samuel M. Williams, "A Millionaire's Paradise," *Munsey's Magazine* 30: 5 (February 1904): 641-46.

⁹ Records of the hunts were kept in the Jekyll Island Club game book, preserved in the Jekyll Island Museum.

¹⁰ David H. King built a swimming pool in the atrium of his cottage, which he constructed in 1897 and sold three years later to Edwin Gould, son of Jay Gould. The club pool was built in 1926 and opened for the 1927 season.

¹¹ *New York Times*, 4 April 1886.

¹² See McCash and McCash, *Jekyll Island Club*, pp. 190-93.

¹³ John Claflin, the last of the original members, died on June 12, 1938, but his last season on Jekyll was the winter of 1934.

¹⁴ Bernon Prentice to Alfred W. Jones, 9 June 1942, 23 September 1942, Sea Island Company Files, Sea Island, Georgia.

¹⁵ Bernon S. Prentice to Bill Jones, 5 August 1943. Sea Island Company Files.

¹⁶

Memorandum from M.N.F. [Marion Fisher] “RE Jekyll Island Club,” 17 January 1945. Sea Island Company Files.

¹⁷ Bill Jones to Bernon Prentice, 26 November 1943, Sea Island Company Files. Although the unusually candid letter is marked "Never sent," it clearly reflects Jones's thinking at the time on various issues under discussion.

¹⁸ Prentice to Jones 5 August 1946, cited in McCash and McCash, *Jekyll Island Club*, p. 11.

¹⁹ J. D. Compton to Bill Jones, recounting a telephone conversation with Charles Gowen, 19 August 1946. Sea Island Company Files

²⁰ *Brunswick News*, 26 September 1946. The two who resisted were Margaret Maurice, the owner with three surviving sisters of the cottage Hollybourne, and Lawrence Condon, a New York lawyer who acquired the Villa Marianna as a consequence of his handling the estate of Frank Miller Gould.

²¹ Harold Paulk Henderson, “The Accidental Governor,” *Georgia Journal* (Winter 1992): 10-13, 75.

²² Unidentified newspaper clipping, 19 June 1947, Everett Collection, Coastal Georgia Historical Society.

²³ *Atlanta Constitution*, 4 June 1947.

²⁴ *New York, N.Y. News*, 7 September 1947.

²⁵ *Brunswick News*, 15 October 1947; Arthur Watson, "Exclusive Jekyll Island Site May be a New Coney Island," *Atlanta Journal*, 15 June 1947.

²⁶ Jones to Prentice, 6 May 1948, Sea Island Company Files.

²⁷ *Brunswick News*, 7 October 1947, p. 8.

²⁸ "Hotel On Jekyll to Open March 1 for 300 Guests," *Atlanta Journal*, 1 February 1948; Morgan Blake, "Jekyll Island Proves an Ideal Spot for a Fascinating and Inexpensive Vacation," *Atlanta Journal*, 22 September 1948; *Savannah Morning News*, 14 July 1949, p. 7; JIA Minutes, 5 October 1950.

²⁹ *Savannah Morning News*, 18 March 1949, p. 1.

³⁰ Jekyll Island State Park Authority Act, Georgia Laws, 1950, p. 152, approved February 13, 1950.

³¹ Oral interview by Brenden Martin and June McCash on 2 June 2000; Alfred W. Jones, Sr. reminiscence, "From Public to Private Beach at Sea Island and From Private Club to State Beach Park at Jekyll," 1982, Sea Island Company Archives; Charles L. Gowen to Alfred W. Jones, 8 February 1982, Sea Island Company Archives.

³² JIA Minutes, 26 April 1952. Telephone interview by Brenden Martin with Andrew E. Steiner, 27 May 2000. Subsequent master plans, the most recent done in 1995, have supplemented the Robert and Company plan. None has significantly modified the configurations of the original.

³³ JIA Minutes, 5 October 1950.

³⁴ Andrew Sparks, "Georgia's Padlocked Island," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 25, 1952.

³⁵ The legislative resolution is mentioned in JIA minutes 7 March 1953. Hoke Smith's hiring is recorded in JIA Minutes, 21 April 1951.

³⁶ *Brunswick News*, 25 October 1947. See "Negro Beach House at Jekyll to Open," *Atlanta Journal*, 13 September 1956.

³⁷ JIA Minutes, 23 August 1952. According to the aforementioned telephone interview with Steiner (see n. 33) revealed that the motives for relegating the south end of the island to African Americans were precisely because it was the most separated from previously developed areas.

³⁸ JIA Minutes, 30 July 1955, 24 September 1955. The first applicant for the St. Andrews subdivision was Joe Malone of Albany, Georgia.

³⁹ "Sen. Dykes Moves to Spread His Jekyll Island Empire," *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 July 1956.

⁴⁰ Jack Nelson, "Jekyll Authority Employee Bought Supplies From His Own Company," *Atlanta Constitution* 27 July 1956.

⁴¹ Charles Pou, "Dykes Record Bared on Jekyll Hotel Tie," *Atlanta Journal*, (n.d.), pg. 1 & 11. The hotel lease was approved in the name of L.L. Phillips of Cochran, Georgia, for Jekyll Island Hotels, Inc. at the JIA meeting of 14 May 1955.

⁴² "Sen. Dykes Moves to Spread His Jekyll Island Empire," *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 July 1956; "Jekyll to Need Another \$500,000, Barrett Tells Investigating Committee," *Brunswick News*, 17 September 1955.

⁴³ Jack Nelson, "Jekyll Authority Employee Bought Supplies From His Own Company," *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 July 1956; "Sen. Dykes Moves to Spread His Jekyll Island Empire," *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 July 1956. JIA minutes 30 July 1955. At the meeting following Compton's resignation, the Authority passed a resolution thanking him for his efforts and expressing deep appreciation for the "very large part" he played "in the creation of the authority's general Development Plan for Jekyll Island." JIA Minutes 27 August 1955.

- ⁴⁴ “Solons Demand Jekyll Authority Be Abolished,” *Brunswick News*, 10 December 1955.
- ⁴⁵ Charles Pou, “Low Jekyll Price Scale Urged by Rep. Bentley,” *Atlanta Journal*, n.d..
- ⁴⁶ “An Expert Gives His Opinion On Jekyll Island Lot Titles,” *Brunswick News*, 5 July 1955; “Governor to Ask Sale of Jekyll Island Lots,” *Brunswick News*, 14 November 1955.
- ⁴⁷ “Griffin Asks Jekyll Sale Reserve Beach for State,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 July 1956, p. 8.
- ⁴⁸ Jack Nelson, “Beer Sold at Jekyll After License is Denied,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 July 1956; Jack Nelson, “Jekyll Island Sale Favored, Opposed By State Leaders,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 27 July 1956.
- ⁴⁹ “Jekyll Boom Attributed to Curiosity,” *Brunswick News*, 31 July 1956; Roy LeCraw, letter to the editor, *Atlanta Constitution*, n.d.; Bruce Galphin, “Aldred Says ‘Hecklers’ Hurt Jekyll,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 October 1956.
- ⁵⁰ Jack Nelson, “Jekyll—A Golden Elephant,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 31 August 1958; Jekyll Island State Park Authority Act, Act No. 464, H.B. No. 171, 1957 Session of the General Assembly.
- ⁵¹ Willard Neal, “Fabulous Jekyll Island,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 19 May 1957; Nelson, “A Golden Elephant.”
- ⁵² “Jekyll Authority To Follow Plan Of Development,” *Brunswick New*, 25 April 1957.
- ⁵³ “Thrasher Assails Selling Lots On Jekyll Island,” *Brunswick News*, 2 February 1957; “Three on Jeykll Authority Disagree Over Lot Sales,” *Atlanta Journal*, 7 May 1957.
- ⁵⁴ “Probe of Dykes’ Leases Ordered,” *Brunswick News*, 15 April 1957; “Owes Jekyll No Rent, Dykes Insists in Court,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 May 1957. See also JIA Minutes, 15 April 1957. At the Authority meeting of June 17, 1957, minutes note that Dykes has now paid all rents in full. A telephone interview on 3 June 1990 by June McCash with Madelyn Neill, JIA secretary for twenty-five years, clarified the issue of the quit claim deed. Dykes, living once again in Cochran, Georgia, and allegedly in a state of depression, committed suicide in December 1966. “Cochran’s James Dykes Found Dead, Gun Near,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 December 1966.
- ⁵⁵ *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 June 1964; “Jekyll Oceanfront Road Closed to Make Room for Apartments,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 18 June 1972. Figures concerning the number of homes owned by state political officials or former officials is from “Liquor and Segregation Fading As Resort Problems,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 June 1964. Several other political figures had at one time owned leases at Jekyll, but had allowed them to expire.
- ⁵⁶ “Georgia Sets Plan to Compete For Florida’s Tourist Dollars,” *Florida Times-Union*, 29 August 1961; *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 November 1962; “\$600,000 Earnings Expected on Jekyll,” *Brunswick News*, 13 April 1965. “Georgia Tourism at \$385 Million Now,” *Free Press*, Thomaston, Georgia, 19 July 1965.
- ⁵⁷ See JIA minutes, 8 April 1963, 23 March 1964. Telephone interview by Brenden Martin with Henry Armstrong, 17 May 2000; “Folks Can’t Wait For Jekyll Edifice,” *Atlanta Journal*, 5 May 1961, p. 18.
- ⁵⁸ Gene Britton, “Jekyll Unit Is Cautious On Closing,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 May 1960.
- ⁵⁹ “Desegregation at Jekyll Asked by Biracial Unit,” *Atlanta Journal*, 13 March 1963; “Group Plans Court Action Over Jekyll,” *Brunswick News*, 25 March 1963.
- ⁶⁰ *Brunswick News*, 13 June 1964; “Judge Signs Jekyll Isle Racial Edict,” *Florida Times-Union*, 28 July 1964.
- ⁶¹ “Half-Million Earmarked To Remodel Jekyll Motel,” *Brunswick News*, 31 December 1966, pg. 16.
- ⁶² Ernest Rogers, “Percentage Sam Reports Jekyll is No Sahara,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 21 May 1961; William O. Smith, “Jekyll Motel Suit Likely in Liquor Permit Controversy,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 September 1965; *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 May 1971, pg. 1-A; *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 June 1971; See JIA Minutes 15 April 1971 and 4 June 1971.

⁶³ Among them was the splendid home of Joseph Pulitzer, which suffered a small fire and was demolished in 1951. Bricks from the Pulitzer house were later used to construct a golf house.

⁶⁴ JIA Minutes, 13 June 1951. Tallu Fish was a recently widowed native of Waycross Georgia, and the politically well-connected editor of the *Democratic Women's Journal of Kentucky*. From 1954 until shortly before her death in 1971, she served, in addition to her capacity as curator of the museum, as the island's public relations person and publicist, promoting an interest in Jekyll's historical importance with press releases and tourist brochures. Interview with Tallu Fish Scott, 23 May 2000.

⁶⁵ *Brunswick News*, 1 March 1960; JIA Minutes, 8 July 1963; *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 October 1956; *Atlanta Journal* 16 August 1963; *Brunswick News*, 12 December 1965. Interview with Tallu Fish Scott, 23 May 2000.

⁶⁶ JIA Minutes, 13 June 1966; "Virginia Architect Named to Restore Jekyll Village," *Brunswick News*, 19 July, 1966; "Restoration of the Rockefeller House, Jekyll Island Museum; Roger Beedle's address to the National Society of Interior Decorators, April 1970, Beedle File, Jekyll Island Museum; *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 18 June 1972. Clarmont Lee joined the project in 1970.

⁶⁷ JIA minutes, 7 March 1983.

⁶⁸ Interviews by June McCash and Brenden Martin with Warren Murphey, 1 June 2000, and with Larry Evans, 25 May 2000; JIA Minutes, 22 February 1985. Murphey attributes the success of the project in large measure to the leadership of JIA Chair, John McTier.

⁶⁹ Although club officials had earlier brought in experts to review the erosion problem, Bill Jones cites it as one of his major concerns when Sea Island was considering purchasing Jekyll after World War II. See McCash and McCash, *Jekyll Island Club*, p. 204.

⁷⁰ John Pennington, "Jekyll Ocean Front Lots Go in Hurry," *Atlanta Journal*, 28 January 1955; Marjorie Smith, "Fabled Jekyll of Millionaires, Pirates Thrown Open to Public," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 12 December 1954; *Brunswick News*, 28 June 1962; *Brunswick News*, 22 September 1964; JIA Minutes, 7 January 1964.

⁷¹ *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 September 1971, pg. 1-A; *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 18 June 1972.

⁷² "Golf Course Construction Halted," *Brunswick News*, 12 January 1995, p. 10-A; "Jekyll Authority Chief Quits," *Florida Times-Union*, 1 February 1995, pg. B-1, 8; David Layman, "Miller Signs Jekyll Bill," *Brunswick News*, 15 March 1995, p. 12-A.

⁷³

Oral interview by June McCash and Brenden Martin with JIA Executive Director, Bill Donahue, 31 May 2000; "Final Master Plan for the Management, Preservation, Protection, and Development of Jekyll Island," Robert Charles Lesser & Co. and Tunnell-Spangler & Associates, 30 June, 1996; Oral interview by Brenden Martin with Jean and Leonard Poleszak, 24 May, 2000.