

Glatney Landing

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2011

57 and 59 Bluff Drive were known at one time as the Glatney Tract. It is rumored that a dwelling owned by someone named Glatney was once situated on these two lots. In the 1920s, the only structure remaining on the land was a very small frame cottage occupied by a black family who had worked for the Glatney family for years and years.

In the 1940s, the large tract (now two lots) was vacant and was so completely overgrown with an impenetrable thicket of vines and small trees that it was known as the Green Castle. There was a small path, which was more like a tunnel, down the center of the lot that led to the small Black community known as the Ridge located across from the present Isle of Hope Elementary School. A right fork in the path led to the one room Isle of Hope School house located on what is now Rose Avenue next to the Isle of Hope Baptist Church.

Across the Bluff fronting on the river was a community beach that was known as Shell Landing or Glatney Landing. It was gently sloped and was covered with dried oyster shells, making it a perfect place for anyone from Isle of Hope to keep and maintain their bateaus and sailboats there.

Until the 1940s there were quite a few Isle of Hope commercial fisherman who made their living by launching their boats from this landing and fishing, crabbing and oystering in the nearby rivers and creeks. There were many former slaves living on Skidaway Island who would often row or sail up to the landing with their freshly caught seafood to ride on the streetcar to Savannah to sell their catch door to door in Ardsley Park and other suburban neighborhoods. These hucksters could be heard walking up and down the streets crying out “a crab, a swimps, get yo fresh fish here.”

In the spring of 1945, an Army Air Force B-25 Liberator bomber stationed at Hunter Field crashed in the Stevens Creek marshlands next to Skidaway Island, resulting in one fatality. The Air Force barged the remains of the aircraft to the Shell Landing late one afternoon and planned to transport the wreckage to Hunter Field the following day.

An older retired person was hired to guard the wreckage overnight. When some of the teenagers on the island learned that this tempting pile of war souvenirs was on Isle of Hope, the night watchman was mysteriously provided with strong spirits and soon passed out! Many war mementos quickly disappeared. Among the missing were .50 caliber machine guns and ammunition, the top secret Norden bombsight, oxygen masks and tanks, and many other small items.

The FBI was quickly put on the case, and they soon identified a few of the culprits (I am thankful that they did not identify all of them [me]), and most of the sensitive material was quickly recovered. For years after the incident, the sound of exploding .50 caliber rounds could be heard in the woods surrounding the small community, especially along the streetcar tracks where some miscreants had placed the ammunition to be set off by a passing streetcar! (I don't know if the statute of limitations has run yet, so I can't say which boys were involved in this dastardly activity!)

In 1946 immediately after WWII, a colorful Isle of Hope native, Nanny Roberts, began building a large wooden barge on the Landing that he planed to use as a dock-building pile driver in his new

business venture. Many of the residents donated their time and some materials to assist Nanny. When the pile driver was completed, the entire community was invited to the launching ceremony and party! Nanny operated the barge around Isle of Hope for many years, building most of the docks on the Bluff and surrounding areas. A few of his docks are still standing.

In the late 1970s the property was subdivided into two lots and the present homes now known as 57 & 59 Bluff Drive were constructed.