

THE WAY THINGS USTA WAS MEMORIES OF ISLE OF HOPE

A little History

Isle of Hope is a quaint little village about seven miles from Savannah. There are two beautiful drives that lead from the city to the island. La Roche Ave winds through palm trees and oaks and connects to a bridge on one side of the island.

Skidaway Rd travels through the community of Sandfly and across the marsh to the causeway which leads to the gates of Wormsloe. This causeway is lined with palm trees planted more than 75 years ago as a tribute to World War 1 soldiers. In 2007 10 more trees were planted to replace those lost in past years. These trees were dedicated to the troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Situated on a high bluff on the Skidaway River the island is shaped like a horseshoe and is home to approximately ----- families. Bluff Dr. follows the bends of the river and with the cooling breezes that flow onto the island , the walkers and joggers are given a relaxation of mind and heart. Sometimes the light from the sky reflects colors of gold, rose and green and a seagull will light on the calm water and surround every passerby with peace. The old fashioned white picket fences, the magnificent oak trees , enormous azalea bushes with their different color blooms and the magnolia trees with their white fragrant blossoms all welcome newcomers to our island with the hospitality for which Southerners are known . Children ride their bikes and learn to swim as early as they learn to walk. There is never a stranger for long, as everyone on the island is eager to welcome each other with a smile or a wave.

How did Isle of Hope get its name? One source says that the French who had fled their own country from the revolution, called the island L'Isle d'Esperance, which translates into Isle of Hope.

The name of Isle of Hope has also meant the place of refuge for many people to escape the yellow fever epidemic of 1876 in Savannah.

There are many records kept at the Georgia Historical Library giving a short history of the island and of the people who lived there when Oglethorpe set foot on the land he named Georgia.

Col. William Stephens was a member of the English Parliament and wrote the first descriptions of the island and of the people in his journal. From this journal we learn about the first three families who settled on the island, named Isle of Hope, were Noble Jones, the John Fallowfields and the Henry Parkers.

The founding of Isle of Hope is related to the history of Wormsloe which dates back to the days of Oglethorpe when he arrived at Yamacraw Bluff in 1733. Noble Jones sailed aboard the Ann with General Oglethorpe. After three years of living in Savannah he received a royal grant from the British crown of 500 acres on what was to become Wormsloe .

There have been two reasons for the name of Wormsloe. Some say it was named because of the silkworm production. Another belief is that Jones named his plantation after his county seat in England named Wormslow.

Noble Jones began building his tabby house in 1739 and completed it five years later. The house was built like a fortress to protect against attacks by the Spanish and the Indians. During the war in 1740 between England and Spain, Noble Jones was in command of a company of 12 marines who lived in huts at Wormsloe. There was also a wooden fort called Jones Fort on the property to guard the narrows at the Skidaway River against the Spanish. Noble Jones and a company of colony soldiers manned the fort with one four- pound cannon. Brig Gen Lawton, as a reward, presented the men with a steel rifle Blakely gun. Today the only reminder of the fort are the tabby walls.

Jones served under Gen. Oglethorpe in the battle of Bloody Marsh against the Spanish in 1742. He was later named coroner, which was a high post in the colony. His son, Wimberly Jones later became the first president of the Georgia Medical Society.

Confederate camps located on Isle of Hope included Camp Claghorn and Fort Wymberley. The Chatham Artillery Company stationed at Fort Pulaski, was transported aboard the steamer, "Ida", to Camp Claghorn at Isle of Hope, on Sept.28,1861. Captain Claghorn soon had his camp in order with horses, white tents and a hospital. His 121 soldiers skilled in becoming accurate marksmen used cannons fired at targets that were placed at Burnt Pot Island across the Skidaway River.

Confederate General George A. Mercer commanded the troops on Skidaway Island and when General Sherman began his march to the sea, Camp Claghorn was abandoned and the camp was moved to an old field near Ferguson's place, a few miles from Bethesda, near an old Indian mound . From there they went to Causton Bluff and then to White Bluff. General Mercer decided to move his troops to the mainland after he had heard of a visit to Mr. Waite's house by a number of Yankee soldiers trying to find out information of the Confederates. (the Waite house is located on Hopecrest Ave.) In December 1864 when Confederate forces under the command of General Hardee evacuated Savannah, Fort Wymberley and Wormsloe Plantation was occupied by one -hundred of Sherman's troops.

The roadway leading through the arch at Wormsloe is lined with more than 400 oak trees planted by Wymberley Jones to honor the birth of his son. Engraved on the gates are the dates of 1773 the founding of Savannah and the date of 1913 which marks the year the arch was erected. The library at Wormsloe was the first library in the state.

Direct ancestors of Noble Jones still make their home at Wormsloe. Mrs. Craig Barrow lived on part of the property for many years and this land is still occupied by the Barrow family.

Just past the gates of Wormsloe is the subdivision of Wymberley.

Another historical landmark which lies across Cedar Hammock from Isle of Hope is Bethesda, the oldest existing orphanage in America. It was founded by George Whitefield in 1740.

Henry Parker was a naval officer and later became Governor of Georgia. Mr. Parker leased about 640 acres from the trustees. He was granted the northern end of the island. He had two orphan boys, named Peter and Charles Tondee who helped him on his property. Their father had died only two months after arriving at the colony. Later in life Peter became the owner of Tondee's tavern where he became famous in the American Revolution and he became a delegate with Georgia's Second Provincial Congress. The Declaration of Independence was read from the porch of Tondee's Tavern.

The island was divided evenly among the three and although the exact number of acres that Fallowfield owned is not mentioned, we assume the center portion of the island was about 500 acres. He was an honest man and was later appointed Collector of the Port of Savannah. But after nine years, he and his family moved to Charleston because of the unsettled conditions of Savannah.

Forty years after the Revolutionary War, in 1808 a group of French Huguenots from Santa Domingo arrived and the Dupons and the Brenans became property owners on the island. The Dupons became the biggest property owners. One tract of land shows 127 lots bounded by Skidaway Rd, Parker Rd., and the old streetcar tracks and included several water front lots from Barbees to Solomons Liberty Hall (which is better known as the (Schwalb, Brawner, Cullen or Chesner property.) Burnt Pot Island also became the property of John Dupon given to him by Dr. Stephen Dupon. Dr. Dupon also gave the land that the Methodist Church is built on and also gave the land for the Lady Of Good Hope Catholic Church. His home was on the Bluff at the corner of Parkersburg Rd and when Isle of Hope became too populated he moved to Harrock Hall.

He was highly thought of as a doctor who would sit all night at the bedside of his patients. When the doctor was needed on Isle of Hope a family would hitch up the horse and buggy and ride to the bridge and holler across the river or a gun was shot three times as a signal for the doctor to come.

Near the center of the island, facing the park is the chapel of The Lady Of Good Hope. This Catholic mission was organized by two Benedictine monks in 1874. Bishop Gross of the Diocese of Savannah gave them a check for \$280 and with the help from Stephen Dupon who gave them the land and a frame house, the chapel was built. The chapel is a part of St. James Parish today.

The Methodist Church is located on Parkersburg Road and was built in 1859. During the War Between the States the church was used for a hospital and in the churchyard are buried thirty- three farmers from Effingham County who volunteered for service and were killed while on duty.

When Sherman's men made camp at the church they took the bell from the steeple to melt for cannon balls.

George Wylly who was a member of the church later replaced the bell. During World War I and World War II the bell was rung at noon each day as a call for silent prayers.. For many years the Methodist Church was the only church on the island and it welcomed people of all religions. A key was kept by the front door to welcome all who came to worship.

The land on which St. Thomas Episcopal Church is built was originally owned by Christ Church, Savannah, and was intended as a site for an orphanage or a home for girls. Mrs. Maria Henderson whose family acquired the land from Christ Church gave the land to build St. Thomas Church, which was dedicated in 1923

The Isle of Hope Baptist Church was started as a mission of the Bull Street Baptist Church in 1952. Their first sanctuary was built in 1954.

At the end of the war the property at Isle of Hope changed hands often. The house at the south end #1 Noble Glen Dr., had belonged to Noble Jones then to his son Noble Wymberly and later handed down to the Glens, Bullocks and Claghorns. In 1888 Col John Estill, who was the owner and publisher of The Savannah Morning News, built a mansion here. The estate was then bought by George Tiedeman in 1909. He renamed it Carsten Hall. The house was built in 1820 as the caretaker's house of Judge Tiederman. Judge Tiedeman's main house burned in 1933 and he and his family moved into the caretaker's house and enlarged it. The cottage remains today and is said to be the oldest house on the island having been built in 1820. The Wilson family now live here. This was part of Camp Claghorn. Helen Artley and her husband Jim lived in their home on the remains of the main Tiedeman home.

Near the home was a bridge from Wymberley to Skidaway Island. This bridge was constructed in 1858 by the landowners of Skidaway Island, which enabled them to bring supplies over from the mainland to the island. It was a wooden bridge built on pilings, which connected Wormsloe to Long Island and across the Skidaway Narrows. Early in the War Between the States, Northern warships were seen off Tybee and Wassaw and Ossabaw Sounds. Most of the white residents moved to Savannah and Skidaway Island's population became primarily Negro slaves. Because the commanding general concluded that the strength of the northern troops was too great and he could not defend the island, the bridge was burned. After the war the bridge was rebuilt but mysteriously burned again. It was rumored that the Isle of Hope residents did not like the

traffic from the bridge through Wormsloe. The Skidaway River later was dredged and made wider for the Inland Water Way.

Just past the gates of Wormsloe is the subdivision known as Wymberley which was first settled by John Fallowfield. When Fallowfield left the colony in 1763, Noble Jones was granted the property from the crown. Later Wymberley was divided among six families which included the Bullochs, Claghorns, the Jones ,Hunters, Bacons and the Glens.

Noble Glen was the former owner of the site of the present gate cottage.

East of Wymberley is the Skidaway River, Wilmington Island and to the south is the Florida Passage, known as the Narrows.

Wymberley was made into one estate when in 1888 John Estill bought the property and built his home on the river. *****Estill was the publisher of the Savannah Morning News and it was in his honor that Estill Ave. now Victory Drive was named.

Judge George W. Tiedeman bought the property in 1909 and renamed it Carsten Hall for his son. In 1933 the mansion burned but the gate cottage remained.

In 1940 William Flinn bought Carsten Hall and used the property for his timber operations he had on Skidaway Island.

James Richmond bought the land in 1946 from Flinn and restored the name of Wymberley.

MOVE

The Gingerbread House at 15 Bluff Dr. was originally constructed in 1875-1976 as a yellow fever house where residents from town came to escape the yellow fever epidemic. The house was purchased by a cotton broker named McLaughlin in 1911 who made it his permanent residence. The house was renovated by Jane Coslick in 1980-1981. Today Dr. David Knopf and his family live here.

At the other end of the island were the 500 acres granted by the king to Henry Parker. Parker who was one of the original settlers of Isle of Hope was Colonial Governor of Georgia from 1751 to 1754. Ann, his widow, left the property to her son Dr. William Parker White who was a Confederate officer and a graduate of the University of Georgia. His wife had died and he was raising his 4 children when he was shot to death by an assassin named Grimes. According to a newspaper clipping of 1864, Grimes was hired by a carpet bagger who Col White had caused to be punished for his crimes and dismissed from the service. White willed the land to all of his five nieces and nephews except 10 acres which he left to the Christ Episcopal Church. Louis Fairchild was deeded the property in a marriage settlement and in 1843 he sold 51 acres to John B. Gallie.

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In the summer of 1873, The Hardee family rented a small cottage from Mrs. Annie Stubbs and when White Hall plantation was put up for sale by the sheriff for unpaid taxes Maj. Hardee borrowed \$5000 to buy the property. This was in 1878. When he had

finished remodeling there were 7 rooms in the basement, 6 on the first floor and 6 on the top floor. All of the windows were French down to the floor. Both floors had a 10 foot wide hall with 3 rooms on each side. There were ten foot porches on the east, south and west sides.

The Wallace Pierponts bought the Hardee place in 1920. In 1948 James Barnett purchased the home and later sold it to his daughter Peggy and her husband David Johnson. They then sold to Linda Kelly. Now Dr. and Mrs. Baker are the proud owners.

The Hardee's house was 3rd from the north end of the island. The Olin McIntosh family were at the extreme end next to the Johnson home.

Next was the Theus (Quaile) house at 15 Island Dr. It was a Victorian summer cottage facing the inland waterway.. Built in 1870 it had been the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charlton Theus .The home with its high ceilings and central hall was designed to capture the cool summer breezes. Mrs Theus was an antiques expert, author and lecturer and her home was furnished with furniture made in the South. Today her daughter, Will, and husband, George Quaile live in the home having restored it in 2004.

Their home sat next door to Col. Pritchard's house before the Bonauds bought it , then the McTeer nursing home and Chief Bonaud's little blue house on the corner.

John B. Gallie was a major in the navy who had an invalid wife. They began building their dream house at the same time Jefferson Davis was moving into his home, Beauvoir, (meaning beautiful view), in Biloxi, Miss. These two houses are said to be sister houses as the same blueprints were used. The property was part of the land leased by Henry Parker in 1734-5 and then granted to him by the king for his services. 51.51 acres was sold to John B. Gallie. Their dream house was begun immediately, the lumber and brick being brought up the river on slow-moving flat-boats, Scows, they were called. The dining room being downstairs, the butlers pantry here too and the kitchen being in an out building, with a passage way that was covered. A little dumb waiter was in the corner of the Butler's pantry which lifted to the first floor which would save the sickly Mrs Gallie from going up and down the stairs. Later when plumbing came in, a bathroom of tremendous proportions was above the kitchen. Twenty feet in back was a two room house and to the left was an old slave hut, the home for Brutus. Mrs. Gallie died shortly after the house was completed in 1848 and Gallie put the house up for sale. Major Gallie joined the confederate navy and was stationed at Fort McAllister where he was the only Confederate officer to lose his life. George Washington Wylly bought the property from Gallie in 1854. He paid 4,100 dollars and his family lived there for 88 years.

Alberta Wylly and Charlie Ellis were married in the living room. Charlie Ellis had lived down the Bluff , which later became the Cope house and the Holden residence. When Alberta was a young girl she and her friends , Kate and Hallie Dawson, Marie Bonaud, the Mueller girls and Gertie Barbee played dolls under the big oaks . Alberta lived with her father, Fred Wylly, her uncle, Mr. Wash, and her grandmother, Mrs. Bea. There were the usual number of servants-cook, laundress, yard boys and men and then Uncle Ben who caught fish and opened oysters at the little boat house that Mr. Wylly had built at the

water's edge of the property, in a direct line with the public road to keep it from becoming a public landing.

The Negro baptisms were always planned to take place on an out going tide so the sins of the participants could be carried away. They were held at the shell rake near where the marina now stands. Mr. Wylly's wagon was used to take the dripping wet , newly baptized members home. Alberta was allowed to ride to the baptism but she always had to walk home. But it was well worth it as each candidate put on a dramatic show as he saw the light and was ducked in the briny water to come up sputtering and struggling. A near tragedy happened one Sunday. It was customary for two white robed staff members to escort the preacher out into the water until the rippling waves reached his armpits. Leaving him there they returned to shore to escort the candidates one by one from the shore to the waiting preacher. This particular morning the staff left the preacher who was a rather short man on the edge of a hidden shelf and after reading a verse from the Bible he asked the members on the shore to join in the singing. A very fat sister was towed out and she saw the light quickly and with much shouting on her part and waving of the arms she was dunked backwards into the river water. Unfortunately the preacher was caused to take a step backwards into the deep water. Both disappeared then struggled upwards frantically yelling for help. Both were rescued and a near tragedy was avoided. One Saturday morning a tremendous size automobile, filled with Negroes drove to Isle of Hope. Reaching the Bluff, at Wylly's corner, the driver failed to make the sharp right angle curve and the big car ploughed past Uncle Ben's small oyster house and continued on across oyster shells and mud flats. The excited passengers hurriedly got out and bogged back to shore, the mud half way up to their knees. "How comee you didn't put on dat mercy brake," one of the women demanded at the top of her voice. I tell him to put on dat mercy brake," another put in."He ain't do nuttin bu suck'e teet at me".

The first of the automobile races used the road along the river bluff, and the corner of the Wylly property was made into a banked curve. In front of the Naismith house is the 8 mile marker. This race was part of the American up and Vanderbilt Cup era, which started near Waters Road and La Roche and followed the marsh to Isle of Hope.

In 1942 the family had to sell the house after George Wylly's death. His will was contested by his children and to settle the dispute the plantation and property was sold.

Olin T. McIntosh bought the property for \$32,000 and he divided the 51 acres. In 1944, Noel Wright, Sr. a special agent with the FBI in charge of the Savannah district, bought the house for his family. The house has been in the Wright family for 62 years, now owned by Noel Wright Jr.

The Wrights have restored the house back to its 1854 appearance. The interior and exterior walls have been stripped of old paint and wallpaper and repainted with the original colors of that day.

The Wrights have made some improvements to the house by adding central heat and air conditioning. The earthen floor on the first story has been concreted and the grounds are landscaped with over 300 species of camellias, magnolias and magnificent oaks. But the Wrights have tried to restore the home, keeping it in the tradition of an 1850 home. The

main living area stands a full story above the ground and is surrounded on three sides by a wide porch. All of the windows on this floor reach almost to the ceiling and open onto this porch . There are thirteen fireplaces in the house.

The old plantation house had at one time consisted of 60 acres and extended back to the marsh, which is now Cardinal Road. Cardinal and Cornus Dr. did not exist then nor did La Roche to the Herb Creek.

The grounds contained all the necessary buildings for an active plantation: 2 slave houses, one of which was in poor condition and in the other slave house was still living an ex slave, Brutus, who was cared for by his daughter who lived in Sandfly. There was an old sawmill, a carriage house with stables for six horses, a hayloft and a syrup kettle for converting sugar cane into syrup.

On the bluff on the edge of either side of the property was a dock house used for commercial fishing and oystering. One had a sign saying, " Ben's Fish House " A three-foot high brick beacon was also in front of the house. Some say the chimney was used with a bonfire to guide ships home. Also smudge fires had been used so smoke would blow towards the house and keep mosquitoes away as the windows had no screens. The 'old People' said it was used to keep the slaves from running away. Probably a run-away slave would take to the river and then make his way to one of the many islands.

Several movies were made here in the 1970's. "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" for NPR .

One of the most exciting events at this home was the making of the movie Gator," starring Burt Reynolds and Lauren Hutton. The premiere was Savannah's first movie premiere in twenty years.

Chapter I WAR

In 1943 My Dad purchased a home at 19 Bluff Dr. and we moved to Isle of Hope, two years before the United States had entered World War II. My brother, Jack, was training to be a marine pilot and soon would be sent to the Pacific to fight the Japanese. I remember how proud we were of him. When he was younger he had been diagnosed as having polio and had to wear a brace on his leg. All symptoms disappeared as he grew

older and we thought it was a miracle that he had passed the medical tests for flight school. He was later diagnosed as having Lew Gehrings disease.

Dad had bought the house from John Rollinson who wanted to move out of town. He was tired of sharing his wife with a neighbor, who lived down the road. At least once a year she changed husbands. She just couldn't make up her mind and usually it took a fur coat or a diamond to woo her back and forth.

I am sure there were children my age living on the island, but I was very shy and didn't make friends easily, so I was content to play alone in my walk-in dollhouse that Daddy had built for me at his lumberyard, Bright Brooks Lumber Co. By this time I was too old for dolls but I loved to read, so I turned my dollhouse into a library and brought out all my Nancy Drew, Judy Bolton, and Hardy Boy books. I had visions of making this into the Isle of Hope library.

During the summer, I met two girls my age who lived toward the south end of the bluff at 67 Bluff Dr. They were twins and I had a hard time at first telling them apart. Jean and Joan Cope later became my best friends, and we had a wonderful time that summer playing war games in my back yard. We were war nurses and we used the scary basement as a bomb shelter.

The Cope house had belonged to the Ellis family but when---died it was purchased by Jack and Kitty Cope. Jack worked for the Reliance Fertilizer Company and Kitty was an aspiring actress having had her own radio show. She looked like the actress, Katherine Hepburn, and even talked like her. They had twin daughters, Jean and Joan and a son named Jack Jr. One summer in 1954 when Polio was raging in Savannah, Jack, Jr. then 16, came down with the disease and died.

War was always on our minds because submarines had been sighted off the Georgia coast. The island folks had a meeting about the siren that would be used when a sub sighting had been reported. All windows had to be covered and all lights turned off when the siren sounded.

My Dad was a block warden and when we heard the alert he would put on his helmet and walk up and down the street making sure no lights could be seen from the houses.

At the north end of the island on the Johnson's dock were plane spotters who manned the phone to report to the central command headquarters all planes that flew over. I worked there after school and learned to identify B17s, Corsairs and-----

One Easter Sunday as the Johnsons were having an Easter Egg Hunt on their front lawn, a B17 crashed across the river into the marsh. Three airmen lost their lives but others were saved when party members jumped into their motor boats and pulled the flyers out of the mud. They brought the wounded back to the lawn and cared for them until help arrived.

There would be more plane crashes in the next few months. One occurred near La Roche Ave in the mud across Herb Creek with no survivors. Another fell across the Skidaway River into the marsh with the pilot parachuting and landing on Wilmington Island.

You could always tell when a plane was in trouble when you heard the moaning of the engine going into a spiraling dive.

The recovered parts of the crashed planes were brought to the shell beach by the FBI but before they were able to make an investigation most all of the plane parts disappeared. It was never determined if these accidents occurred because of sabotage or the assembly of the aircraft was not done correctly because of the rush to get the job completed.

Chapter II Friends

One day as Jean and Joan, Will Theus, and I were playing Mah Jongg on the porch, we saw a new kid on the block walking alone. A boy! And a cute one! "Come up on the porch and play cards with us," we called.

And to our surprise, he did. His name was Noel and he and his family had just moved into the house at 3 Bluff Dr.

The summer dragged on and we had fun swimming and crabbing. One of the girls' special things was collecting pictures of movie stars and trading them with each other, each time trying to get a special movie star that was our favorite. My favorite was Tyrone Power, and I could never get enough pictures of him. I think he reminded me of my brother, who I thought was so good looking

I met more friends as time went on and we called ourselves the gang. Betty Roberts moved into the house at 9 Bluff Dr. Betty Rollinson moved in to the house at 17 Bluff Dr. We met Will Theus and Bobby and Katherine Johnson who had lived on the north end of the island before I moved to Isle of Hope. Guerard and Allan Bond lived on Grimball Creek. George Van Giesen's family rented the Gate Keepers cottage on Bluff and Noble Glen Dr. and Tommy Moore lived at Grimball Point. Edward Johnston, Noel's cousin, spent every summer with Noel and his family.

Betty Rollinson her brother Harry and parents Harry and Essie Rollinson lived across St. Thomas Ave. from me. Harry Rollinson and Essie Mell had been long time residents of Isle of Hope before they married. When Harry Sr. was young he lived on Central Ave. and had a gym in his back yard where all the boys learned how to box.

One night Betty's house burned to the ground. But they built it back much prettier than ever. Betty's brother, Harry Jr., was later killed when he was 16 in an automobile accident on the "steel bridge" crossing Herb River. His parents never got over his death.

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Quattlebaum bought the Rollinson home after the death of Essie and Harry and remodeled the 100 year old home. Now it is owned by Dr and Mrs. Lindley.

Betty Roberts' home was known as "The Grayson Home". It was built in 1876 by Issac Beckett, a practicing attorney in Savannah and was the U.S. Referee in Bankruptcy for the State of Georgia.

It was built on land 1/2 acres by Beckett and his two small sons. Oak was shipped from Louisiana and every piece of flooring, walls and ceiling were handmade and put together with wooden pegs and mortised joints.

Beckett later sold the home to Aaron Reppard, a relative, who built the Seaboard Railroad to Charleston from Camp Gordon in Atlanta in World War I.

Later the house was bought by Wm L. Grayson who became a judge in Savannah.

Betty's parents were Adrienne and Bill Roberts. Bill owned the Electric Magneto Co. on Liberty Street and Adrienne was active in city affairs having started the roundhouse restoration on Martin Luther Blvd.

Dorsey and Mary Flanders own the house now.

Since the war was still going on everyone had to save on gasoline. All families were given ration stamps which entitled us to a certain amount of sugar, gasoline and etc. Since there was no junior high or high school on the island the children had to go to school in Savannah. We carpooled with fathers going to work but in the afternoon we rode the streetcar home. During the warm days the open air streetcar would travel along the tracks from Abercorn to Habersham to 50th Street through what is now Memorial Medical Center to Sandfly across the Herb River and would end up right in front of Barbees pavilion. It was red white and blue and was called the Victory streetcar. It had no sides and you could buy 4 tokens for a quarter. Two tokens could take you all the way down town.

Guerard and Noel were always getting into trouble by throwing lighted matches off the back of the streetcar which would start fires along the tracks. They were finally banned from riding and had to find other ways of getting home from school.

The electric trolley car started its run to Isle of Hope in 1890. Mr. Alexander Barbee became the conductor of the Isle of Hope line. Before that, he had driven the horse car on the Thunderbolt line. He retired in 1910 after twenty years as a conductor.

The streetcar line ended across the street from Barbee's Pavilion where there was a restaurant and a terrapin farm.

In 1918, Alexander' son, William Barbee, and bride, Rose, lived upstairs above the pavilion and worked there too, renting boats and starting the terrapin farm. Their famous restaurant featured terrapin soup, which they canned and sold. Marathon Dances were held and William Barbee brought Jack Dempsey and other well- known prize fighters to fight at the pavilion.

Later the Little Theatre put on musicals such as "Hello Dolly."

Later, after the trolley had been replaced by a bus, William Barbee bought the site of the present swimming pool and playground which had been part of the street car terminal and deeded it to the Community Club for the use of a park. The park is named for Ebbie Paxton, who was the only man from Isle of Hope who lost his life during World War II.

The girls all joined the girl Scouts and our leader was Ella Lebey. I only lasted one day as the meetings were held in her basement and she told us about pirates who she thought had buried treasure around her house and whose ghosts were still lurking about. Her home was one of the oldest homes on the island and was the spookiest. Her mother, Mrs. Clementine Lebey read books from the Wormsloe library and learned about French pirates like De Strade. She said that Blackbeard would not waste his time in a small area because he preyed on larger ships up the coast. But it was believed that De Soto visited Isle of Hope years ago and there is a legend that he might have buried a chest of gold somewhere on the island. This is now the home of Dr. Daniel.

Tommy Moore, was the oldest of our group and had his own car, which was a Mercury sedan. He would pick us up and ride us around the island. I don't know whose idea it was to speed through Wormsloe with the boys riding on top of the car and the caretaker chasing us. I can't understand why he never caught up with us and why no one got hurt. It just proves that teenagers have no sense but that the Lord does try to protect them.

Guerard would sometime borrow his father's Buick but Guerard was the kind that had trouble follow him. His father raised fighting chickens and often had cock fights on his property which was totally illegal. Several times Guerard would borrow the car during these activities but trouble always followed.

One night after a several days of rain the gang piled into the Buick and decided to ride around the Tiedeman property to the old sawdust pile on Richmond Dr. and Ave of Pines that had been left there when Mr Flinn had his saw- mill. I think it was the same spot that Roland--built his home and where the Walt Beasleys now live. The property had been sold to Mr. James Richmond and work had been started on clearing the woods and restoring the name of Wymberley. We had not gone too far when the wheels bogged into the mud and try as we might there was no getting the car out. There was nothing to do but start walking home. No one went with Guerard to face his father. For several days we did not see our friend.

Chaptr III Brady's Boat Works and Barbee's Pavilion

The marina was a gathering place for all the men. Lukie Stein was the main mechanic and manager. Working for him were Mike Wright, Shorty Grant, and Willie Daise. They knew everything about pulling boats out of the water to have the hulls painted. As there was little dockage at the marina itself, the boats were anchored out at night, and it was Willie's job to row every evening to the anchored boats and place a lighted oil-lantern on each boat. In the early morning, the order would be reversed. Willie was a Gullah and was heard to describe one of the newer boats as having "a box what coolie heself". Willie and Shorty walked to work every day from their homes in Thunderbolt and never missed a day's work. Shorty was known to bring a fried fish in his pocket for lunch.

The excitement of the week was the barge traffic which flowed down the intercoastal waterway during the war years. When you heard the revved up sounds of an engine, you knew a barge was not going to make it around the bend. At that time tugs pulled their barges, rather than pushing them, and many a dock has been known to crumble under the force of the crash.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Brady lived across the street from the boat works. Bill Brady owned the marina and it was known as Brady's. Mrs. Brady was Gertrude, the daughter of Alexander Barbee Sr. Their home was built at the turn of the century by a Mr. Reynolds. The home was famous for its music room, which contained many music boxes and different musical instruments.

Later the home was used as storage for the Isle of Hope Marina. In 1983, Dr. and Mrs. William Darden bought the home and restored it. Today -----owns the property.

MOVE

Alexander Barbee, Mr. Willie, and his wife Rose built the pavilion, which became famous for the terrapin farm. As a teenager Alex Barbee joined the business and soon became a partner and the business was known as A.M. Barbee & Son. There were Saturday night dances (we were too young for this) and Little Theatre plays or you could just stop by for a delicious ice cream cone. We were all excited about a movie, Cape Fear, being filmed on the pavilion and the marina. It starred Robert Mitchum. After Mr. Willie died the property of the pavilion was leased to Brady Boat Works and the pavilion was torn down.

The steel bridge on Herb River, which connected the mainland from the island, was a favorite place to climb on and jump into the Herb River. Guerard and Noel especially liked to climb and jump off completely naked. In those days there were few cars and no one lived around except for Guerard's parents. They would leave their clothes in the woods and climb up the bridge and stand there until they saw a car coming and then at the last possible minute would dive into the water.

Of course this was too tempting for us girls so we decided we would gather up their pants and hide them, which we did. It was after dark before Noel made it back home, after running through the woods.

It seems that Noel had an obsession about swimming naked. He and his friend, George Van Giesen decided to leave from Tommy Moore's dock on the Grimball Creek and swim out into the Skidaway River and then on to Isle of Hope. Tommy was to bring their clothes to Noel's dock so they would have pants when they arrived.

But when they reached the Skidaway River the tide had turned and they were unable to swim against the tide. They managed to reach land but had to wait until dark to be able to come home undercover.

A BIG MOVE

In 1946 The island was changing, and when my Dad found out that Col Lawton, son of Gen Lawton , who was stationed at Camp Claghorn, was going to sell his beautiful home at 7 Bluff Dr. we put our home up for sale and bought our dream home. This house had screened porches up and down stairs. Beautiful chandeliers hung in the wide hall downstairs. In remodeling we found a confederate sword that had been hidden from the Yankees during the war. My Dad hired a well-known landscaper from Scotland, Scottie Forbes, to lay out the English formal garden in the back yard. It was an elegant house and best of all it was right next door to Noel.

We sold our home at 19 Bluff Dr. to James and Margaret Barnett and their two daughters Peggy and Janet. James was opening a Desoto Plymouth car dealership here. Janet became a member of our gang. I remember we were upstairs in what was the playroom playing "spin the bottle" when Peggy caught us and threatened to tell her mother.

We had a great time during the summer months swimming down the river to the sandbar, never worrying about sharks. Once Noel and George swam all the way to The General Oglethorpe Hotel on Wilmington Island just to go swimming in the pool. This is an article that was in the newspaper.

Savannah Morning News 1947

Two more teen-age swimmers have coursed the five – mile swim from Isle of Hope to the Hotel General Oglethorpe on Wilmington Island in two and quarter hours, beating the time made by two other amateurs last week by almost three hours. However they did swim with the tide.

George Van Giesen, Jr. 16, and his partner, Noel Wright, Jr. 15, planned to try the swim ever since they heard the last pair, Sonny McLaughlin 18, and his sister, Nan.16, accomplished it on Tuesday, Sept. 2.

The boys were reported to be dead tired by the time they reached Wilmington, but jubilant over their success. Although they were swimming with the tide, they didn't drift. "We swam hard all the way", said George.

The McLaughlin couple completed their swim in four and a half hours last week, swimming against the tide.

George and Noel, both from Isle of Hope, are not sure whether or not they will try the aquatic feat again, but they both like swimming. Neither has done any noteworthy long distance swimming before. George is in the eleventh grade at Savannah High School, while Noel attends school away from home.

Sometimes the boys grew tired of the girls tagging along. They decided to build a tree house in the back yard of Noel's house in one of the tallest oak trees. It was elaborate with electricity and completely screened in. They had a ladder that they could pull up when they were in the tree house, which meant that the girls would have to climb if they wanted to reach the top.

Unfortunately, I could not climb and I was very jealous of Jean and Joan and Allan who were tomboyish and were able to see the inside of the tree house.

George moved from his home on Noble Glen Dr. to the corner of Grimball Pt. Rd. It had a lot of property and George was able to have a horse, which he named Sparky. Since there were few paved roads, there were many places to ride and George and Noel cut down bushes and made trails into the woods. When George was old enough to get a driver's license, his father bought him a Model A Ford. Soon after, George and his family moved to Gainesville, Ga.

One summer Guerard, Noel and George planned a trip to Quebec, Canada in the Ford. This is part of a letter that George wrote to Noel after he had moved to Gainesville.

"Dear Noel,

Well I guess you've got a steady job by now and are making \$100 a week at least. I've had a job for about 2 weeks now hauling feed down at Daddy's feed house.

Are you ready to go to Quebec yet? At the end of this week, I'll have a little over \$100, and I'm about ready to take off. I'm not kidding, I'm ready to go if you can get some money. We ought to be able to make it on \$100. If you don't have any money I'll bet you can get some from your pa or grandma. If you think there's a chance of going, let's try to start planning when we can leave. We ought to be able to find plenty of places to stay on the way. We could stay with Mack in Va. And then some of your school buddies. Well, anyway let me know what you think about it right away cause we'll have to start planning. I'll write Guerard and find out what he says.

My car is in perfect shape but that's what we thought before). Well at least it runs continuously.

Well I guess I've written enough. Write me back in a hurry and let me know what's coming off.

I'll be seeing you soon.

Your friend, George."

After two years my Dad decided he wanted to build a new house and the property next to Noel was for sale by Olin McIntosh at #1 Bluff Dr. While waiting for our house to be built, we moved into Anna Beckman's apartment, 3 Rose Ave., that she had for rent on one side of her house after we sold our dream home to the Campbell family. Jack Campbell became our newest member of the gang. Miss Beckman had a kindergarten in her back yard named "Chickadee Kindergarten."

Meanwhile, the lot #5 between the Wright house and now the Campbell house had been sold to a Doctor Shaw and his family. He built a red brick modern flat roof home that did not fit in with the style of the island. One memory of the family was the time when the doctor decided he wanted to raise chickens in his back yard. He asked Johnny Rodewalt, who had a chicken farm where Paxton Heights now is, to build the chicken houses. After discovering that someone was stealing his chickens he built a chain fence around the yard and bought a mean bulldog to guard his chickens.

One night his elderly mother heard a noise coming from the backyard and thinking that someone was stealing, she wandered into the fence. The bulldog attacked her and bit out one of her eyes. Shortly after this incident the house was sold to the Blairs who owned a radio station and Blair Jr. often worked there. He became one of the gang.

The father was pretty bad about the bottle and very often loud shouts of anger could be heard coming from the house. He was a wonderful swimmer and during the summer when the water in the river was warm he could be seen swimming and at times clinging to a marker in the river with a hot water bottle tied around his neck. It was not filled with water. He disappeared for a long amount of time and it was rumored that he was in prison on Cuba.

Dr. and Mrs. Ed Filson bought the house from the Blairs. He and Kate had seven children and they completely remodeled the house so that it fit in with the style of all the others on the Bluff. The Goldsmiths now live there.

Times were changing and Noel was sent to boarding school at St Andrews in Delaware. He only came home for Christmas and summer vacations. George had moved away to Gainesville Ga. and Guerard and Edward were sent to Fishburne Military School. So the girls were left with school activities until the gang was together again.

The Campbells moved away from #7 and the Kenneth Roberts bought their home. Kenneth Jr. was our age and we became friends. Later Dr. and Mrs. Zellner Young bought the house. They lived in the house until it was sold to Edie Thomas.

CHAPTER V UNFORGETTABLES

Sim Jordan must have been in his late seventies when he came to do yard work for us. On Wednesday mornings he would leave his house on the corner of Grimball Pt. Rd., drive his mule and wagon to our house, and come in the door and yell. "All right mam". He was a hard worker. He and his wife Rosalie had about 6 children and he named some of them after the people he worked for. They were Harry (Harry Rollinson), Freddie (Fred Schwalb), and Andrew (after my Dad). My Dad was honored, as Sim named his mule "Mr. Bright." The poor mule was fed nothing but moss and died before Sim did. Rosalie always called my mother when it was time to deliver her babies and Mother would drive her to the infirmary on 37th St. Rose Bud was their last child.

When I was sixteen my father bought me a Comet sailboat. Neither Noel nor I knew how to sail but we practiced constantly because we wanted to sail in the races on the Wilmington River. The most fun was being towed by the McIntosh's cruiser that would pull at least 10 sailboats behind their boat. Most of the boats were Lightings, which were the large sailboats, and their skippers were experienced sailors. Our Comet was the smallest boat in the pack. We had entered in several races but turned over in everyone and never finished.

One Sunday there was a regatta that everyone wanted to win. My Dad drove his boat over to anchor in front of the Oglethorpe Hotel to watch the race. Noel was always the skipper while I pulled in the jib and did what I was told. Before the race we practiced turning the boat and heading into the wind and before we knew it our boat headed directly to my Dad's boat and crashed into the side just above the water line. I will never forget my Dad leaning over the side of the boat and then calmly starting up the motor and heading home. We stayed to compete in the race but as usual we turned over and never finished. I believe that was the last time we raced and the boat was sold.

In 1945 we heard that World War II was over. My friends and I drove around the island in my Mother's car blowing the horn and yelling out of the windows. It was a wonderful day.

In 1948 I graduated from Pape School and because Noel was off at school, Guerard took me to all the graduation festivities. I attended Armstrong Junior College and then transferred to the University of Georgia where Noel and I both graduated. Noel and I became engaged in 1953 and we were married in August 1954 in the living room of my home at 1 Bluff Dr. After spending two years in the army at Fort Sill, Ok we returned to Savannah with Elizabeth and soon to arrive were Noel 111 and Kathy. We bought our first home in 1958 at 25 Col Estill Dr. in Wymberley where we made so many friends. The Ralph Vicks and their two children Cindy and Ralph lived next door. Elizabeth and Valerie Dixon were inseparable and Kathy and Tammy Way played every day. The Herndon boys lived right behind us and everyone in our neighborhood knew each other. Ralph and Noel became very good friends because they both liked to fish and hunt.*****

There were so many memorable characters living on Isle of Hope. Nanny Roberts was known by everyone and had friends far and wide. He owned the only dock pile driving barge around and built almost every dock on Isle of Hope. You could never miss seeing or hearing Nanny if he was in a mile of your presence. He was about 6 feet 6 inches tall and was all legs and arms. His voice was loud, his laugh deep, and every other word was a bleep. But you expected this from Nanny. It seemed as if he had always lived here and he was a friend to all and was admired by all.

No one was a better marsh hen hunter and several times Noel accompanied Nanny and his black lab, Richard, plodding through the marshes on a spring tide in water knee -deep. Richard had become almost as well known as Nanny. He was well trained and Nanny always bragged about his talents. Richard was probably the only dog that had a driver's license.

Nanny was so popular and was such a great skeet shooter that he became president of the Forest City Gun Club. He along with his wife Sarah, Carl and Bessie Quante, and Ralph and Eva Newton were always planning events at the club and the women would cook elaborate suppers for members and visitors. The most memorable meal was called The Wild Game Dinner. This was your chance to taste snake, turtle, deer, alligator, coon and possum.

Nanny was also known for his jokes and tricks. When he would tell something you were not sure if it was true but you always went along. Nanny knew that Ralph Newton was deathly afraid of rattle -snakes. He decided to pull a trick on his best friend. He caught the snake, cut off his fangs and dropped him into a croker sack. Then he called Ralph and told him, "I've got something you have always wanted." Ralph should have known better but he stuck his hand in and brought out the snake. Not saying a word Ralph ran off to the laughs of all around. But in a few minutes he returned with his shotgun and had a few people dancing.

Noel and I met Harry Hucks when we returned form Oklahoma. He was the best fisherman around and supplied us with many fish dinners. Harry and his wife, Stella, lived at 55 Henderson Ave. and raised six children; Inez, Harry III, Sarah, Portia, Lula, and Carson.

Harry started fishing in 1928 when he worked on a boat named the" Nellie C" owned by Joe and Raymond Hallman of Isle of Hope. The boat was kept at Barbees Pavilion. Then, when he found an old boat abandoned on Mason Hammock, he reconditioned it and because it had a picture of Mickey Mouse on the bow, he named the boat the Mickey Mouse. He hunted and trapped for Dr. Tory on Ossabaw Island.

In 1936 He purchased a heavily built boat named the Dill Pickle and converted it into a shrimp boat. Shrimping was good and he unloaded his catch at Barbees pavilion where they canned the shrimp along with the terrapins and clams. But in 1940 the shrimp fishing was not so good and he sold the boat and took a job with the Corps of Engineers working as the operator of a tug boat. During WWII he transferred to the Henry Bacon and was flown to Guam to dig a new harbor. He remained there until the end of the war and retired after 29 years of service.

Harry became part of our family and ate every holiday meal with us. Our children thought of him as their grandfather. He would sit on our dock and we called him the dock-master. When Bubba and his friends came over to swim, got rowdy and began to throw mud at each other ,he immediately made them stop and clean up the dock. But he always wanted them to learn about the islands and often took them on camping trips to Wassaw and Ossabaw.

Blackie is an island fixture. You can see him riding in his camoflauge golf cart with his wife Harriet by his side. Most of the time he would be barefoot. He is a true Cajun and is proud of it. His wife was Harriet Reynolds whose family were long time residents of Isle of Hope. Harriet had two sons by a previous marriage, Sammy and Howard Moore. Sammy lives across the street from the Baptist church in a house that belonged to his Grandmother Gert Reynolds and he commutes back and forth to Louisiana for his job. Howard has lived with Blackie and Harriet . He has had some health problems and does not drive but can be seen dressed in his usual Indian garb with a bandana around his head, hitch hiking to Sandfly.

I remember Mrs. Kinsey who was the post -lady and later opened a store on Parkersburg and Rose Ave. that was stocked with candy. There was also a gas pump in front of the

store where at times I would buy 50 cents worth. She later married George Paxton whose brother was the only person from Isle of Hope to die in WWII.

A smelly diesel bus replaced the streetcar, and the one room schoolhouse was abandoned for a modern brick elementary school with at least 25 teachers. A community pool was built and Barbee's Pavilion was torn down to make room for the marina expansion.

Our children attended Isle of Hope School and when Kathy entered the first grade I began teaching the fourth grade. I think I taught almost all the children living on the island. Then later we all transferred to Savannah Christian School.

My mother and father moved to Sarasota Fl in 1960 and sold their home at 1 Bluff Dr. to the Beckwiths. When Noel's Mother died in 1984 we sold our home at 153 Hopecrest Ave and remodeled the family home at 3 Bluff Dr. and moved in on June 1985.
