



Ossabaw Oracle

Revealing the voices and mystery of Ossabaw Island

Vol. XVII No. 2

Fall 2011

A publication of the
Ossabaw Island Foundation

Remembering Jim Bitler: November 11, 1955 - April, 10, 2011

The Ossabaw Island Foundation is saddened by the unexpected death of our dear friend and colleague Jim Bitler on Sunday, April 10, 2011. He was 55 years old.

Jim worked for The Ossabaw Island Foundation for almost eight years as On-Island Coordinator. His energy and expertise made Ossabaw come alive for thousands of people in the years that he lived and worked on the island. He was an outstanding professional who took great pride in sharing this unique place that he loved as if it was his own.

Jim died while taking a nap in his living quarters on Ossabaw Island during the mid-afternoon. Ossabaw staff was on the island preparing to host and take part as a team member in a two day workshop with nationally recognized experts in African-American history and culture. Elizabeth DuBose, Executive Director for the Foundation, Paul Pressly, the Foundation's Education Alliance Director, and Robin Gunn, Special Projects Staff, were on the island as part of the history project. Jim was last seen by Department of Natural Resources staffer Codey Elrod, walking his dogs at about 1:30 in the afternoon, talking excitedly about that afternoon's workshop. About two hours later, Paul Pressly went to Jim's

quarters and found him in a napping pose, seemingly at peace, and no longer with us. Paul and Elizabeth coordinated with state personnel in response to Jim's untimely death.

Jim embodied the vision of The Ossabaw Island Foundation: "To reveal the voices and mystery of Ossabaw Island."

During his nearly eight-year tenure with the Foundation, Jim led hundreds of groups on the island, ranging from the Boy Scouts to Elderhostel. He developed the first comprehensive interpretive program for Ossabaw Island, encompassing the geological, environmental, cultural and human history of the island. He was a key facilitator for the OssaBEST program, a science and technology education project funded by the National Science Foundation that operated for three consecutive summers on Ossabaw. He enhanced Ossabaw's Visiting Artist Program, taking it from a "day trip" program to an overnight on-island immersion experience.



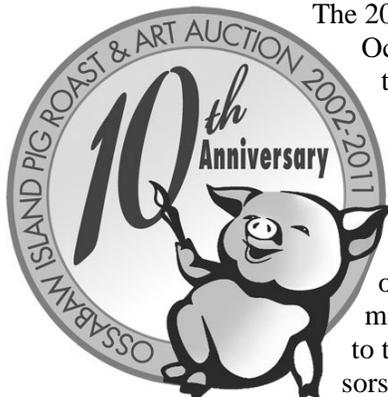
Jim Bitler
Photo Credit: Diane Kirkland

Because of his vast knowledge about indigo cultivation and processing, Jim was asked by the editors of The New Georgia Encyclopedia to research and write the encyclopedia's entry about this 18th century cultivar.

Jim's lively personality and love for Ossabaw

Con't p. 2

10th Annual Ossabaw Island Pig Roast & Art Auction!



The 2011 Pig Roast is Saturday, October 15 on the grounds of the Torrey-West House on Ossabaw Island. The sole annual fundraising event sponsored by The Ossabaw Island Foundation is made possible by our generous sponsors and host committee members. Thank you to this year's Pig Roast sponsors!

Special thanks to SunTrust and King & Spalding, for sponsoring the Pig Roast each year since our first in October 2002.

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Thank you to our 2011 host committee:

Ron Bailey, Patricia Barmeyer, Carl & Linda Bleicken, Philip Carter & Seth Goodman, Susie Clinard, Callie Downing, Helen Downing, Celia Dunn, Peggy Galis, Bill & Gigi Haile, Laura Hardman, Jim & Susan Noyes, Zelda Tenenbaum.

Jim Bitler, continued from page 1

Island were captured beautifully in his obituary in the Savannah Morning News: "Few can boast so much love for their job. Accompanied by his two Boston terriers, Beau ("that's Beau-regardless," he would say) and Kate ("Katherine the Great"), Jim would greet visitors at the dock, load them in his truck, drive them to their quarters and start the magic. Through Jim, the island's history came alive. He was scientist, raconteur and naturalist. He could point out the island's 11 long leaf pine trees. He knew the gestation period of an armadillo (120 days), how to identify and cook "chicken of the tree" (an island mushroom), and just the right amount of oyster shells, lime, sand and water to recreate the original tabby surface of the three standing slave cabins on the island's north end. His quarters were simple, his mind a steel-trap retrieval system. He was a stand-up comedian. If he bumped up a story a notch or two, it was only to make it better. He taught himself to make baskets out of sweet grass. He was a watercolorist. He grew indigo."

Jim graduated from Ohio University with a degree in wilderness skills. As a naturalist he worked for Little St. Simons, Wilderness Southeast, Sea Island Company and Disney's Hilton Head Resort, where he was employee of the year.

He is survived by his partner of 18 years, Jack Sinopoli; one brother, Jon Bitler of Sanford, Fla.; one sister, Dougless Strickland of Tallmadge, Ohio; one niece, Dougless Bitler, and legions of friends and admirers.

Jim's death marks the end of an exceptional period on Ossabaw Island—one of unprecedented growth in programming and professionalism. Since his death, The Ossabaw Island Foundation has been overwhelmed and touched by the outpouring of support from longtime friends of Jim and the island, and from those whose first meeting with Jim was weeks or days before his death. Jim's passing leaves a huge hole in our organization and in the

lives of each of us on staff and on the Ossabaw Island Foundation board. Our love and support go out to his partner Jack and to his family. We join them in grieving the loss of our colleague and friend.

In lieu of flowers, Jim's family has requested that contributions be made in Jim's memory to the Ossabaw Island Foundation, 305 Fahm St., Savannah, Georgia 31401, or on-line at ossabawisland.net.

Contributions In Memory of Jim Bitler

Thank you to the following who made contributions to The Ossabaw Island Foundation in memory of Jim Bitler. Donations received through August 1.

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Geraldine Zdunczyk, Churchville, PA
Jennifer A Zdunczuk, Bensalem, PA

A Poem about Jim Bitler

Since the death of Jim Bitler in April, many apt and moving tributes have been shared with the staff and board of The Ossabaw Island Foundation, and with Jim's partner and family. Essays, letters, photographs and artwork have been sent in. Touching and funny remembrances were shared at Jim's memorial service.

We choose to share with you a poem that was written a few years ago in the Ossabaw Island Visitors' Book that's kept in the Clubhouse. We believe that this writer, age 10 at the time she wrote the poem, captured in only a few lines the essence of the island, and of Jim's role on Ossabaw.

Beautiful trees
Skies of Blue
Crystal waters
Shine so blue
Sand as golden
As gold and Jim, oh Jim.
Jim is NOT like an ignorant
annoying tour guide.
Jim is a naturalist working to help
the world.

-- Lucy Ahmann age 10, Decatur, GA

Rookery Members Dig Ossabaw during Spring 2011 Archeology Trip

Digging in the dirt took on a new meaning in June 2011 for members of The Rookery, The Ossabaw Island Foundation's major giving society.

This year's Rookery "thank you" trip was a day excursion to Ossabaw Island to participate in an archeological dig on the island's North End.

Rookery guests began their one-day field school experience with a 45-minute presentation by Dr. Nick Honerkamp, of UT-Chattanooga, director of the Ossabaw Field School. In a makeshift classroom in the living room of the Clubhouse, he led the group through table exhibits of artifacts collected from the dig in the last four days. Ancient pottery shards dating back several thousand years lay alongside ceramic fragments from the late 19th century, telling a story of centuries of human life on the island.



TOIF Board President Susie Clinard enjoys an authentic "Ossabaw moment" on the Clubhouse Porch during the Rookery trip.

After lunch, the Rookery group took their turn at digging for archeological treasures. Aided by teams of graduate students, the guests assisted in digging and sifting through dirt in carefully measured and labeled dig sites near the tabbies and the Boarding House. On the porch of the clubhouse, guests sifted through bags of materials collected by dig teams, an early stage of identifying and cataloguing those important artifacts.



Rookery members sifting for artifacts during the Archeology Field School, June 2011.

Donors contributing \$1000 or more are considered members of The Rookery—where friends of Ossabaw flock together. A Rookery-members outing is sponsored each year by TOIF as a thank you for their generosity.

The 2012 Rookery trip will be an overnight turtle watching excursion.

Ossabaw Artwork Abounds!

From Richmond Hill to downtown Savannah, artwork created by "Ossabaw artists" has covered gallery and museum walls in coastal Georgia this year.

In April, "Arts on the Coast" sponsored its annual show of paintings, drawings and photography created during their yearly weekend-long trip to Ossabaw. The dozen or so artists live in or near Richmond Hill. They gather each spring on Ossabaw for a working retreat. The group dedicated their 2011 show to Jim Bitler. The Arts on the Coast 2011 show was displayed in the Richmond Hill City Hall.

Fall brought on a wave of Ossabaw art in downtown Savannah. The opening for Ossabaw: Works on Paper and Wood was held Thursday, September 8 at Atwell's Framing, in conjunction with the Fashions Night Out celebration on Broughton Street. The show, which ran through September 30, featured thirteen art-

ists who have spent time making art on Ossabaw. Curated by Christine Sajecki, the show is "a tribute to Ossabaw and its caretakers." A portion of sales proceeds are being donated to TOIF in memory of Jim Bitler.



L-R, Jack Sinopoli and TOIF Executive Director Elizabeth DuBose at Atwell's for the Ossabaw art show.

Nearby at the Telfair Museums' Jepson Center for the Arts, Savannah artist Betsy Cain's solo show In Situ includes several works created on Ossabaw or inspired by her many visits. Over the years she has organized working trips to Ossabaw for artists from many creative disciplines. Her show will run through December 4. For more information on Betsy Cain's show, visit www.telfair.org.

Jill Stuckey's exhibit of Ossabaw Island color photographs opened on Friday, September 30 at 24e Furniture Store at 24 E. Broughton Street in downtown Savannah. The show was part of the Savannah Oceans Exchange during September, was planned as a "one night only" event.

Planning for the Future: The Ossabaw Island Foundation Endowment Fund

We are pleased to announce that, thanks to a bequest from the Thrower Family of Atlanta, GA in memory of their mother Margaret M. Thrower, The Ossabaw Island Foundation has established an endowment fund. An endowment is a permanent fund to be used for specific purposes, as established by the endowment's advisors and the Board of Trustees. Unlike donations to the Ossabaw Fund or other Ossabaw Island Foundation funds, contributions to the endowment go toward building a permanent fund that will generate revenue for TOIF for years to come, in the form of interest and investment income.

This bequest is a significant seed planted to commit to TOIF's future.

The bequest did not restrict the uses of the fund. Instead, those decisions will be made by the Board of Trustees, based on recommendations from a newly-established Endowment Committee.

Trustee Patricia Bar-meyer is chair of the Endowment Committee; other members are past Trustee Bill Haile, current Trustee and Treasurer Chris Kirkpatrick, and Ossabaw Island Education Alliance director Paul Pressly.



Photo courtesy of Alan Gardner

Establishing an endowment has been a goal of the Board for several years, and is one of the strategies identified in the recent revision of TOIF's Five Year Strategic Plan. This generous and unexpected bequest allows TOIF to realize this goal immediately, as we continue our practice of wise stewardship of financial resources.

You can be a part of Ossabaw's future! To contribute to the endowment, or to make a bequest in your planned giving arrangements, please contact Elizabeth DuBose, Executive Director, at Elizabeth@ossabawisland.org or 912.233-5104.

Complimentary Visiting Artist Program: 2002 - 2011

For the past ten years, The Ossabaw Island Foundation was pleased to have offered complimentary visits to Ossabaw Island for visual artists. Known as the Visiting Artists Program, the program began with daytrips in 2002 and expanded to overnight stays in 2006-2011.

The Ossabaw Island Foundation welcomes all creative people, including visual artists, to come and work on the island, whether on a day visit or overnight, to be inspired by Ossabaw's solitude and beauty.

However, in order to continue to balance our operating budget, we are no longer able to provide complimentary

stays for visual artists.

Effective September 1, 2011, all artists desiring to come to Ossabaw Island are encouraged to submit a study visit request under the Island Access guidelines and associated fees that apply to all visitors.

Those guidelines and the application process for groups of six or more are outlined on the Ossabaw Island website under the Island Access tab.

As in past years, any visual artist who visits Ossabaw Island is encouraged to donate a piece of Ossabaw-inspired artwork to the Annual Pig Roast, held each October. As a thank you for the donated artwork, the artist will receive one

complimentary ticket to the Pig Roast, a \$150 value.

The Ossabaw Island Foundation is grateful to the many artists who have visited Ossabaw under this program over the past ten years. We appreciate your understanding that this adjustment is necessary, given the rising costs of maintenance of the buildings and vehicles on Ossabaw Island, and to assure that we can offer the island to visitors for decades to come.

Please visit our website to review the application process for visiting Ossabaw Island under the "FORMS" button. For more information, contact Elizabeth DuBose, Executive Director, at 912-233-5104 or at Elizabeth@ossabawisland.org.

Visit Ossabaw with one of our Partners!

Visits to Ossabaw Island are available throughout the year thanks to some of our partner organizations.

Clean Coast held two volunteer beach clean ups on Ossabaw Island in 2011, collecting



Clean Coast volunteers with Ossabaw Island beach debris. Photo: Sammy Moore

1100 pounds of washed ashore debris.

Clean Coast works to combat marine debris by holding beach cleanups on the Georgia Coast. For information on 2012 outings, call 912-961-

6190 or visit cleancoast.org.

For a three-hour Ossabaw Island experience contact Coffee Bluff Marina, for education trips led in conjunction with Tybee Island Charters. 912-925-7474 or coffeebluffmarina.net.

Wilderness Southeast regularly offers The Beaches and Creeks of Ossabaw Island, a four-hour open boat excursion that meanders the inner tidal creeks and marshes of Ossabaw, as well as a beach walk experience. Call 912-236-8115 or visit wilderness-southeast.org.

Ossabaw Island History: The Story of Betty and Hercules: An Enslaved Ossabaw Family's Yearnings for Freedom

By Paul M. Pressly

The American Revolution threw slavery into question in Georgia and precipitated a massive movement of enslaved black people around the new state. Many escaped from their plantations; others were moved by owners to distant locations; some were used by Patriot and British forces for heavy labor. The logic behind the revolt against the British Crown created a powerful ripple effect among the thousands of enslaved black Georgians who embarked on their own quest for liberty. Life on the barrier islands was not immune to the turmoil.

On October 11, 1781, a fugitive-slave ad in the *Royal Georgia Gazette* announced that nine enslaved people had fled Ossabaw Island in a new yawl, a "ship's boat" meant to be rowed by four



Photo: Africa Fine

to eight people and with a small mast and sail. They were thought to be headed to Kilkenny on Ogeechee Neck (on the mainland, near present-day Richmond Hill.) The owners, the Morel family, offered one guinea reward for each adult and two dollars for each child. Given that most fugitive enslaved during the colonial period were young men, the fact that this group included women and children underscores how the Revolution created a new dynamic. The escapees -- Hercules, Betty, and their compatriots -- were demonstrating a grim determination to realize their deepest aspirations.

Runaway family members included Hercules from Angola; his wife Betty, who was "country-born," and their children, Peter, 13, and Winter, 5. According to the ad, Hercules was "a short, thick fellow," of the Angola country. The other escaped family consisted of Jupiter, black complexion, who spoke good English; Auba his wife; her son, Sancho, 9, and a "sucking child." Finally, there was Jack, 45 years old, of

the Angola country, who spoke bad English.

Two of the three men were from Angola and, whether or not they spoke the same language, shared the same broad cultural background. It is not inconceivable they were "shipmates" on the vessel that made the Middle Passage bringing them to North America, and shared a tight bond based on that experience. Betty

was "country-born," and so presumably was Jupiter, who spoke "good English." His wife Auba bears an African name, and her son, a Spanish name, raising the possibility that Auba was bought by the Spanish or Portuguese in West Central Africa and was brought to Georgia indirectly through a secondary market that crossed imperial boundaries.

Betty, Hercules, and Winter had already attempted to escape from the Morels at Kilkenny Plantation on the mainland at the end of 1780. Once they were recaptured, they were sent to Ossabaw, where escape was more difficult.

In a fugitive slave ad on October 20, 1785 (*Gazette of the State of Georgia*), Peter Henry Morel noted that none of the escaped had been returned to Ossabaw three years after the end of the war. The ad noted that the family of Hercules was still together and in the possession of Col. Thomas Brown, formerly of the King's Rangers, in East Florida. Col. Brown was the most effective and most notorious of the British guerilla fighters in Georgia during the Revolution. He led several hundred men in devastating cavalry raids into the Georgia backcountry, especially around the Augusta area. The fact that Hercules and Betty attached themselves to him showed their ability to identify powerful figures capable of helping in their quest for freedom. The ad noted, "Peter is now in the sugar house in Charleston," a comment

that suggests that reclaiming lost "property" several years after the Revolution within the boundaries of the new United States was no easy matter.

The ad concluded that Jupiter, Auba, Sancho, Auba's infant child, and Jack "were sent up among the Indians from St. Augustine, and have not been heard of since." The British and Creeks had long enjoyed close ties based on the exchange of deerskins for merchandise. African Americans played integral roles in the trade as packhorsemen or laborers at the stores maintained by traders in native towns. Creeks had a mixed view of Africans but, over time, many blacks became fully accepted into native society. Black Creeks were a notable feature of that world after the Revolution. During the war, the Creeks sided with the British, so it was only natural for Jupiter and his family to make their way into native territory.

Thomas Brown was a not untypical Englishman who had his eye on the mainline in terms of plantations. He migrated shortly afterwards to the Bahamas and established a major holding with a considerable number of enslaved. Did Betty and Hercules end up on his estate or did they manage to find freedom in Nova Scotia or elsewhere? We do not know. Whatever the case, we know the odds were heavily against them.

The Revolution disrupted the institution of slavery in Georgia, caused a massive outflow of people, and gave blacks an opportunity to assert greater independence and negotiate new terms for labor. As late as the mid-1780s, planters were complaining of their "saucy" attitudes and tendency to disappear. By the end of the decade, the planters had had their revenge by tightening the legal foundation of slavery in ways that made it more severe and coercive than before the Revolution.

For the advertisements, see Daniel T. Elliott, *Archaeological Investigations at Tabbies 1 and 2, Ossabaw Island, Lamar Institute Publication Series, Report 108, n.d., page 32.*

Our Generous Supporters

Thank you to the following Friends of Ossabaw, who contributed to The Ossabaw Island Foundation since the publication of our December 2010 newsletter, through August 1, 2011.

Please note that the list of donors in memory of Jim Bitler is on page 2.

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Lucky the Ossabaw Pig \$100-\$499

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A gift from Jacqueline Jones, Austin, TX, in honor of Paul Pressly's good work
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Scott Lewis and the J.C. Lewis Foundation, Savannah, GA
A gift from Herb McKenzie, Savannah, GA, in honor of Everett Boaen and Roger Parker
A gift from Mary and Howard Morrison, Jr., Savannah, GA, in memory of Paul Pressly's mother, Alice Pressly
Paul & Jane Pressly, Savannah, GA
A gift from Betty Foy Sanders, Atlanta, GA, in honor of the Betty Foy Sanders Fine Art Department, Georgia Southern University
Henry & Debbie Whitfield, Savannah, GA

Woodstork \$1,000-\$1,999

Laura and John Hardman, Atlanta, GA
Robert L. Harrison, Savannah, GA
A gift from Carla House, Atlanta, GA, in honor of Sandy West!
Captain Chris Knight, Savannah, GA
Ethel M. Loom Foundation and Mrs. Peter Coy and Tim Coy, Savannah, GA
Linda Fisk Morris, Savannah, GA
Mr. & Mrs. James L. Noyes, Savannah, GA
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Solomons Jr., Savannah, GA
Kathryn Standard, Arcadia, FL, in honor of her daughter Elizabeth DuBose.
Bradley Taylor, Savannah, GA
Zelda Tenenbaum, Savannah, GA

Snowy Egret \$2,000-\$4,999

Susie Clinard & Harley Lingerfelt, Savannah, GA

Great Egret \$5,000-\$9,999

Helen Downing, Savannah, GA

Great Blue Heron \$10,000 and up

Patricia T. Barmeyer, Atlanta, GA
The Thrower Family, Atlanta, GA. In memory of Margaret M. Thrower, for the establishment of an Ossabaw Endowment

Dear friends and partners of the Ossabaw Island Foundation,

I want to take a moment to thank you all for the many expressions of kindness and concern offered to all of us since Jim Bitler died in April.

In your notes, emails, phone calls and visits, many have asked, "How will you ever replace Jim?" "What is going to happen on the island now?" and "What can I do to help?"

I am pleased to share with you that, despite the unfillable gap left by Jim, the island has continued to be busy with groups who booked their island visits before Jim died, as well as groups who have signed up more recently. In fact, thanks to assistance from many friends and partners with expertise in a wide range of fields including archeology, marine ecology, and African American history, 2011 is shaping up to be one of the most active years on Ossabaw in recent history.

The Board of Trustees of TOIF held its regular springtime meeting in early May. Short- and long-range island operations were major discussion topics at this day-long retreat. In many ways this was a natural outgrowth of our recently completed Five-Year Planning process that occurred in Fall 2010 and was adopted by the board in January, but with a new and poignant sense of urgency.

At Jim's memorial service, I shared that many of the ideas Jim and I came up with "on the fly" years ago evolved into official island operating policies or procedures. Both Jim and I were already

making some changes to those old ways of doing things in light of the expansion of housing options, major new program initiatives, rising costs of maintaining buildings and vehicles on a barrier island, reductions in donations, and an increase in the demand for group visits in recent years.



TOIF Executive Director Elizabeth DuBose with Jim Bitler, 2010

Based on these new realities, the board has established an ad-hoc Island Operations Committee, to evaluate on-island needs and creative solutions based on current and future programming and funding. The committee is including in its discussions the suggestions that have poured in from many of you.

We have decided to adjust the staffing model for the island. We do not intend to hire anyone as a permanent staff person on Ossabaw Island for the foreseeable future. Jim possessed a unique set of skills that are rarely found in a single



TOIF Board at May, 2011 Retreat.

person. We are discussing how those different skills as well as other needed skills might be found in several contracted people.

We are contracting with both current and retired staff from UGA Marine Extension Service, and others.

We are continuing to book groups, specialty educational day trips and overnights. If you have a group trip request, the forms to schedule these visits are found on our website, www.ossabawisland.org, under the button labeled "FORMS".

I am personally grateful for your kindnesses over the past several months. We will keep you up to date as new ideas become reality on Ossabaw Island.

Elizabeth DuBose, Executive Director

Register Now for the 2012 Ossabaw Island Writers' Retreat

Save the dates of February 12 – 16, 2012 for the Second Annual Ossabaw Island Writers' Retreat. Experience the island muses that for nearly fifty years inspired notable fiction and nonfiction writers such as Ralph Ellison, Annie Dillard, Olive Ann Burns, Margaret Atwood, T. C. Boyle, Rosemary Daniell, and Alice Walker, and poets Edwin Honig and David Hamilton.

Three instructors (one each in fiction, creative non-fiction and poetry) lead writing workshops, one-on-one manuscript consultations, craft seminars and readings. Confirmed instructors for

2012 are fiction writer Craig Johnson and poet Linda Lee Harper.

Enrollment is limited to five participants in each genre, assuring an intimate setting and plenty of interaction with instructors. Participation fees include four nights lodging, meals, and round trip transportation to the island from Delegal Creek Marina at Skidaway Island, Georgia (a suburb of Savannah.)



Since the retreat takes place the same week as the Savannah Book Festival, participants who wish to stay for the festival will be offered special hotel rates in Savannah for the weekend of February 16-19. Participants have an opportunity to read excerpts of their work at the festival.

Visit ossabawwritersretreat.org or call Tony Morris, director, (912) 344-3123. Or email him at write@ossabawwritersretreat.org.

“Revisiting the Ossabaw Island Project: A Gathering of OIP Alumni” May 1 - 3, 2012

Attention all alumni of the Ossabaw Island Project! The Ossabaw Island Foundation is cooking up a gathering just for you on Ossabaw Island.

“Revisiting the Ossabaw Island Project: A Gathering of OIP Alumni” will be an OIP “reunion” on May 1-3, 2012. This will be an opportunity for up to 26 people who participated in OIP at any time during its 23 years (1961 – 1983) as a groundbreaking interdisciplinary experience, to return to Ossabaw Island and experience its timeless, unique, and unspoiled environment. Eleanor “Sandy” West, co-founder of OIP and resident of Ossabaw Island, is looking forward to your return.

Tentative plans include an outing to the beach and a visit with Sandy West at her home, the Torrey West House, site of the Ossabaw Island Project. A facilitated and recorded conversation recalling attendees time at OIP is being considered, as we continue to

collect the stories of the 20th century on Ossabaw.

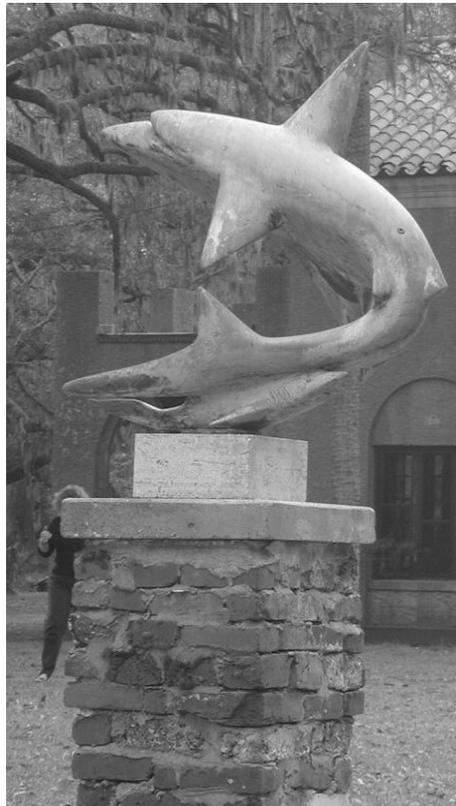


Photo courtesy of Gordon Matthews

collect the stories of the 20th century on Ossabaw. The fee for the three day, two night OIP reunion is \$325 per person for those staying in the Club House and \$425 for those staying in the Boarding House. Fees include round trip transportation to Ossabaw Island from Delegal Creek Marina at Skidaway Island, a suburb of Savannah, six meals, overnight accommodation in comfortable dormitory-style housing at the Clubhouse and semi-private rooms at the Boarding House, facilities cleaning fee and all associated programming. Par-

ticipants will arrive in time for lunch on Tuesday, May 1 and depart just after breakfast on Thursday, May 3.

Attendance is open to OIP members and one guest per OIP attendee. (spouse, child, friend, etc.)

A note on sleeping arrangements: The Club House accommodations on Ossabaw Island are more “communal” than was the case during the Ossabaw Island Project. There are no private rooms, and some rooms are shared by four to ten guests in bunk beds. Of the 22 beds available, nine (9) are in upper berths. The first 13 paid Club House registrations will be assigned the lower berths. Other than assigning upper or lower berths, room choices are self-selected on arrival at the island.

The Boarding House has three semi-private rooms with shared baths.

Even if you are unable to attend, please make sure we know you are an OIP member! Also, please contact us with information on the whereabouts of any of your fellow OIP participants.

To register for the OIP reunion, email Elizabeth DuBose, Executive Director, at Elizabeth@ossabawisland.org, or at 912-233-5104, or visit our “Ossabaw store” website at ossabawisland.net.

See you on Ossabaw!

Genesis & Ossabaw Island Project Alums— Donate Your Journals & Preserve Ossabaw’s History

In August, a package from Antonia “Toni” Hamilton arrived at The Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF) offices. Enclosed was a worn black and white composition notebook filled with penciled comments, to do lists, addresses and even a recipe for pumpkin bread. This notebook is Toni’s journal, recording her stay on Ossabaw Island from May 4 – June 8, 1981, as a member of the Genesis Project, the “experiment in human ecology” (a cooperative, semi-sustainable community) that operated at Middle Place on Ossabaw Island, from 1970 – 1983. Tucked inside the back cover of Toni’s journal were photocopies of four columns she wrote during that time for a publication known only as “The Weekly News” (no city) including three with datelines from Ossabaw. This battered notebook is an important original document from Ossabaw’s history. To keep it preserved, and to make it available to historians, Toni’s Genesis Project notebook and the Weekly News columns are being added to the Ossabaw Island and Torrey Family Papers archival collection at the Georgia His-



torical Society.

Records in the Ossabaw collection date from 1699 to 2007, providing insights into the people, events, and use of the island and its history for over four centuries. Some materials in the collection include the original grant from King Georgia II in 1760, slave inventories from 1812 to 1817, historical maps from the 18th through the 20th century, photographs, and extensive records and research compiled during the era of the Ossabaw Island Project and Genesis Project.

All collections in the archives at Georgia Historical Society are stored in their secure, environmentally controlled archives wing and housed in archival quality boxes and folders.

If you or a family member participated in the Genesis Project or the Ossabaw Island Project (an interdisciplinary fellowship program on Ossabaw Island from 1961 – 1983) please consider donating your journals, letters, photos, sketchbooks or other materials from that era to Georgia Historical Society.

Note that not all materials offered for donation are accepted by GHS. Prior to accepting donated materials, GHS staff

will conduct an assessment of items offered, primarily to determine if the material fits with their collecting mission.

For information on how to contribute your Ossabaw items, contact Nora E. Lewis, Georgia Historical Society’s Director of Library and Archives, at nlewis@georgiahistory.com, or 912-651-2125.

Toni Hamilton’s recipe for “Sophia’s Pumpkin Bread”

(Transcribed exactly as written in the back of her 1981 journal from Genesis Project)

Note: Prepare this recipe at your own risk. This recipe has not been tested in 30 years! Also, please note that no length of baking time was given in the notebook.

Preheat to 350 degrees, Makes 1 loaf
Sift [the following ingredients]

1 ½ c sugar
1 2/3 c flour
1 tsp soda
½ t bak powder
¾ t salt
½ t cloves
½ t cinnamon
¼ t allspice

Combine: 1 c pumpkin
2 eggs
½ c oil
1/3 c H2O

Georgia Restaurants Moon River Brewing Company & Taqueria del Sol Host TOIF Benefits

Where would we be without our friends? In August and September, two popular locally-owned Georgia restaurants and watering holes turned their annual celebrations into fundraisers benefiting The Ossabaw Island Foundation!

On August 27, Moon River Brewing Company, Savannah’s only micro-brewery, threw their annual Bahama Bash, an island-style party to cool off from the long hot humid Savannah summer.



Owner Gene Beeco and his wife

Kristine cooked up the idea of the Ossabaw Bahama Bash benefit while on the July 2011 turtle watching overnight trip on Ossabaw. Thanks to the staff and management of Moon River for a great night.

Two weeks later, on September 11, Taqueria del Sol in Atlanta once again designated TOIF as recipient of proceeds from their annual Hatch Chile Celebration. For the sec-

ond year, owner Mike Klank hosted a block party celebrating the yearly harvest of chiles from Hatch, New Mexico, serving chile rellenos, green chile cheeseburger sliders, and other spicy treats. This popular Atlanta party is a must for longtime and new Ossabaw friends.

The two events raised a total of \$4,000 thanks to friends of Ossabaw doing what they do best. We are grateful for their support, and for the support of all our friends!

A Trip to Ossabaw Island

By Dr. David Crass, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division Director & State Archaeologist

[Editor's Note: The following item appeared in the June 2011 issue of Preservation Posts: The Online Journal of the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Reprinted with permission.]

I recently had the opportunity to spend time on Ossabaw Island with DNR Commissioner Williams. We were visiting two archaeological investigations. I am always struck by Ossabaw's combination of a rich archaeological heritage, outstanding historic buildings, and ecological systems. This time, however, I also realized that Ossabaw Island represents one of DNR's most successful partnerships—and how important that partnership is to our mission of instilling a conservation and preservation ethic in Georgia citizens.

The non-profit Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF), through a public-private partnership with DNR, inspires, promotes and manages educational, cultural and scientific resources that are designed to maximize the experience of Ossabaw Island, while minimizing the impact on its resources. Over the last 15 years, TOIF has raised over \$4 million to restore or rehabilitate historic structures and provide programming on the island. Three early 19th-century tabby structures built as housing for enslaved people have been restored and are now interpreted for visitors. Two

historic wood frame structures - the Clubhouse and the Boarding House - have been restored for use as housing for researchers visiting Ossabaw Island. Deterioration of the early 20th-century Torrey-West House has been halted thanks to private grants and fundraising events to replace the roof with a historically compatible Ludowici tile roof.

The archaeological excavations I visited with Commissioner Williams were the product of yet another partnership—this between DNR, TOIF, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, and Georgia Southern University. DNR and UT-C have partnered for years to sponsor an archaeological field school on Sapelo Island, and we partner with Georgia Southern at the ongoing project at Camp Lawton but this was the first time all of us joined up with TOIF.

Students had the opportunity to work at a site being excavated by UT-C, including structures built before the American Revolution and then burned near the end of the war by Loyalist troops. They then rotated to a circa 2,200 BC Archaic shell mound being tested by DNR prior to stabilization. Finally, they were

trained by Georgia Southern University personnel on a new technology known as LiDAR, which is short for Light Detection and Ranging.

LiDAR systems use a laser to find and record the distance to a point on an object. LiDAR creates extremely accurate, fine-grained images. Here in Georgia we are using LiDAR not just to map archaeological sites, but also to document historic buildings like the tabbies on Ossabaw.

At night the students retired to the Clubhouse and the Boarding House to cook

and go over the day's field notes and artifacts. They experienced a unique total immersion experience in coastal cultural and natural resources, all under the watchful eye of Paul Mitchell, one of the island's resident pigs.

Through training programs like this one DNR accomplishes several goals. We are gathering management and interpretive data on Ossabaw's precious resources. We are also training future practitioners who know and understand the unique characteristics of coastal archaeological sites. Finally, the students will be more educated voters who understand how blessed Georgia is to have unspoiled places like Ossabaw Island.



HPD-DNR staff excavate Cane Patch shell mound, May 2011

The Bigelow: TOIF's "New" Boat

Thanks to generous donation by the Courtney Knight Gaines Foundation and Zeke Gaines, and supplemented by a donation from Moon River Brewing Company, TOIF has purchased a 23-foot, 1994 Parker 2320 boat and trailer. The boat features an enclosed cabin and an outboard 225 horsepower 4-stroke Yamaha engine, ideal for transporting materials and staff in any condition of weather or water. Thanks to Art Jeffries of Airtime Watersports of Virginia Beach, VA and to Mark Frissell for

making this project possible.

The "new" boat replaces The Miss Pauline, TOIF's work boat that we are retiring after 13 years of steadfast service. The 20-foot, 1984 Chris Craft was donated to TOIF in 1998 by the Tenenbaum family. The Miss Pauline was a true workhorse, transporting loads of construction materials, supplies, and workers and staff for projects ranging from the restoration of the



Clubhouse, the tabbies and the Boarding House, to trips for installing the Barrier Island Observatory Towers.

The donation from The Gaines Foundation that made the boat purchase possible was given in memory of Jim Bitler. In that spirit, we are naming the boat The Bigelow, which was one of Jim's "island names" given to him by Richard Boen, a 50-year employee of Eleanor "Sandy" West.

Ring in the New Year with a “Wild Night on Ossabaw”

Ossabaw Island’s beach and night sky will come alive December 31, 2011 – January 1, 2012 during an on-island overnight educational journey. Arrive on Ossabaw Island on Saturday, just in time for a catered lunch. Following lunch, naturalist John Crawford will lead an interpretive driving tour across the island to the beach. For those who prefer, the afternoon may be spent relaxing at the Clubhouse or exploring the island’s North End on their own.



Laura Lawton

Following dinner on Saturday night, experience the universe and beyond as astronomer Laura Lawton leads a sky watching program on Ossabaw’s North End. Learn how to identify constellations, and hear the legends associated with them. Marvel at the Milky Way and Andromeda galaxies, and peer through an eight-inch reflecting telescope to see the moons of Jupiter. Then, enjoy more legends (others’ or your own!) around a



John Crawford

nighttime campfire. You’ll return to the mainland Sunday after breakfast.

Fees include round trip transportation from Delegal Marina on Skidaway Island to Ossabaw Island’s North End; three catered meals, comfortable dormitory-style overnight accommodations in the Clubhouse on Ossabaw Island, plus the nature and astronomy programs. This trip is designed for adults and for children age 12 and over. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or supervising adult.

Fees:

\$200 Friends of Ossabaw.

\$250 for Future Friends of Ossabaw (includes "friend" membership)

Space is limited. Your payment secures your reservation.

To register for your "Wild Night on Ossabaw", go to www.ossabawisland.net or call (912) 233-

5104.

No Refunds

New Ossabaw Gift Shop Item! Byrd Cookie Company’s Ossabaw Gift Tins – Benne Wafers and Low Country Cheddar Biscuits Now Available for Purchase

Just in time for holiday gift giving, The Ossabaw Island Foundation has teamed up with Savannah-owned Byrd Cookie Company for two commemorative food tins featuring Ossabaw’s celebrity pig, Paul Mitchell. The colorful artwork on the tins was designed for TOIF by Longwater & Company, and made its debut as the invitation to the 2011 Pig Roast.

Ossabaw Cookie Tins feature two of Byrd Cookie Company’s most popular items:

Benne Wafers, small not-too-sweet cookies made from the honey-colored benne seed, are fabled to bring health and good luck. Benne seeds are indigenous to Africa and were brought to America by African slaves. Benne is the African word for sesame, a versatile seed that can be used the same way as nuts. The seed has a nutty, sweet aroma with a milk-like, buttery taste. When toasted, its flavor intensifies, yielding an almost almond like flavor.

Low Country Cheddar Biscuits are bite-sized savory cheese cookies with just a nip of a spicy taste. Sharp cheddar cheese



and fancy pecans provide a rich flavorful crunch with a touch of cayenne pepper for extra zip.

Ossabaw Cookie Tins are \$12 each, shipped US Postal Service Priority Mail. Shipping and handling is \$6 for up to two items shipped to a single address, \$3 for each additional item shipped to a single address.

Orders are shipped within three business days of receipt of payment. For holiday delivery, place orders by December 1.

Profits from cookie sales benefit the Ossabaw Island Foundation.

Ossabaw Byrd Cookie Company Tins

Benne Bits: _____ (Qty)

Cheddar Biscuits: _____ (Qty)

Total Tins: _____ (Qty) x \$12 ea. = \$ _____

Shipping:

First two tins to a single address, \$6 shipping

Each additional tin to a single address, \$3 shipping

Total Shipping \$ _____

Total Enclosed: (Add Tins & Shipping together) \$ _____

Order online at www.ossabawisland.net or mail check to TOIF, 305 Fahm Street, Savannah, GA 31401

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2011 Board of Trustees**

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**Save the Date! Upcoming Ossabaw
Island Foundation Events**

Please check our website, ossabawisland.org,
under the “News & Events” box for the most
up-to-date list of activities.

Saturday, October 15, 2011

Tenth Annual Ossabaw Pig Roast and Art Auction

**Saturday, December 31, 2011 to
Sunday, January 1, 2012**

Wild Night on Ossabaw: Stargazing Overnight Trip.
(See page 11 for registration details)

Thursday, January 12, 2012

Annual Meeting & Sandy West 99th Birthday
Celebration. The Ossabaw Island Foundation, at
Coastal Georgia Center in Savannah.

February 12-16, 2012

Ossabaw Island Writers’ Retreat. Co-sponsored by
The Ossabaw Island Foundation.(Details on page 8)

May 1-2, 2012

“Revisiting the Ossabaw Island Project: A Gathering
of OIP Alumni” (Details on page 8)

What is Ossabaw Island?

Ossabaw Island is a barrier island on
the Atlantic Ocean owned by the State
of Georgia and located in Chatham
County.

**Who is the Ossabaw Island
Foundation?**

The non-profit Ossabaw Island
Foundation, through a public-private
partnership with the State of Georgia,
inspires, promotes, and manages
exceptional educational, cultural, and
scientific programs that are designed
to maximize the experience of
Ossabaw Island, while minimizing the
impact on its resources.

