

As I sit, moss-covered and crumbling, watching people tour the island of Jekyll, I wish that I could speak and find utterance for all I have to tell of Jekyll the smallest of the six "Golden Isles" lying off the coast of Georgia. Its history has been varied and colorful-- part of it I have been privileged to see, and of part of it I have heard. I am the ruins of William Horton's two-story home on the north end of the island, and if you listen, I shall speak to you.

Many people have come and gone from the shores of Jekyll. The first inhabitants were the Guale Indians, who called the island Ospos.

The first Europeans to visit Jekyll were the French Huguenots, who called it Isle de la Somme.

Then in 1566 came the Spanish led by Pedro Menendez de Aviles who had established St. Augustine the previous year. He brought with

him Jesuit priests and built on Jekyll the mission of San Buenaventura, but Indian uprisings and pirate raids forced Spain to abandon her missions which were a part of the colonization race with England.

In 1733 General James Edward Oglethorpe established the colony of Georgia. As a refuge for debtors and as a buffer state between the older colonies and the encroaching Spaniards. On an

excursion to select a site for a fort he saw Jekyll Island and named it for his friend, Sir Joseph Jekyll, who had contributed to the founding of Georgia. Once when the Spaniards visited Oglethorpe, he entertained them on Jekyll, keeping secret his fortifications on St. Simons. When the cocksure Spanish sailed up the Frederica

With the second group of Georgia settlers came my owner, William Horton, who was granted 500 acres on Jekyll Island. He brought with him 16 indentured servants as slavery was prohibited in Georgia. He furnished Frederica with vital food, and the barley and hops for Georgia's first brewery came from his fields. He also built the home of which I am the remains.

After Horton's death the island was owned by

Clement Martin and Richard Leake, finally coming into the possession of Christopher Poulain du Bignon, a Frenchman who had fought for the colonies in the American Revolution.

Georgia had originally forbade slavery but in 1858 "The Wanderer", the last ship bringing slaves directly from Africa landed on Jekyll. The crew was arrested and the case caused quite a stir.

The island remained in the du Bignon family until 1886 when John du Bignon sold it to the Jekyll Island Club. This private group was composed of many social leaders including the Vanderbuilts, Rockefellers, and Morgans.

The Jekyll Island Club's last season was in 1941, the outbreak of war cancelled all plans for opening.



In 1947 the island was purchased by the State of Georgia as a State Beach Park and has been the center of controversy since then.

The island and I have seen many, many things. We have weathered storms and hurricanes and shall weather many more.

Once the home of simple Indians Jekyll became the playground of millionaires, but I have seen

it pass from the hands of an exclusive few to the inclusive hands of all, and it will bring joy and pleasure for years to come.