

History of the Town of Darien, Georgia - Established 1736

There are over 100 miles of pristine coastline, 400,000 acres of salt water marsh and 15 Barrier Islands that bring a uniqueness to Coastal Georgia that you will seldom find anywhere else in the world. The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway which stretches from Key West to Boston, is connected to the local Altamaha River, which is the second largest fresh water discharge east of the Mississippi River. This charming coastal Georgia town sits just off of the mouth of the Altamaha River on the local deep-water docks of the Darien River. It is located just 25 miles from the prestigious shoreline of Sea Island, Georgia, one of the fastest growing luxury markets in the country and home to some of the country's wealthiest ... movie stars as well as professional athletes.

FOUNDED BY SCOTTISH HIGHLANDERS ON JANUARY 19, 1736

The town of Darien has a wealth of history dating back to the 1700's. In October 1735, a band of Highland Scots, recruited from the vicinity of Inverness, Scotland, by Hugh Mackay and George Dunbar, sailed from Inverness, Scotland on the Prince of Wales. On January 19, 1736, General James Edward Oglethorpe founded the new Georgia colony of New Inverness, which later became known as Darien, Georgia. Located at the mouth of the Altamaha River, Fort King George was built in 1721 along what is now known as the Darien River and served as the southernmost outpost of the British Empire in the Americas until 1727. It is the oldest English fort remaining on the Georgia coast.

CENTER OF BANKING IN THE EARLY 1800'S

In 1816, Darien was incorporated and shortly after in 1819, The Bank of Darien opened for business. The deposits of Federal funds in the Bank of Darien in the 1820s reached huge proportions, later peaking at 1.6 million in 1836, when Darien was at the height of its commercial prosperity.

LEADING CENTER OF EXPORT- TIMBER & COTTON 1830-1900

During the first few years of the 1830s, Darien reached its peak of commercial greatness. Pine timber, rafted down the Altamaha to Darien thru the hand dug mile long waterway known as Rifle Cut, made the town the leading center of export for lumber on the southern Atlantic coast during the late Nineteenth Century. Exports of baled cotton from Darien were exceeded only by the ports of Charleston and Savannah.

Darien became an international port as ships from Europe, Asia, and South America frequented the local waterways to load lumber. The peak of the Timber Era was reached in 1900, when more than 100 million linear board feet of timber and lumber were shipped from Darien.

GLOBAL LEADER IN OYSTER HARVESTING 1900'S

From 1880 to 1910, McIntosh County oyster harvests were among the highest in the world, rivaling even the Chesapeake Bay. The oyster industry went into a long decline after the early 1900s. As the oyster beds declined, a new commercial fishery developed: shrimping.

LARGEST SHRIMPING FLEET ON THE GEORIGIA COAST 1960'S

By the early 1960s, Darien and McIntosh County had the largest shrimping fleet on the Georgia coast, with several shrimp and oyster packing houses in towns along the banks of the Altamaha. Today, Georgia's shrimpers struggle to survive against competition from cheaper, imported shrimp. However, Wild Georgia Shrimp is proudly served in local Darien restaurants and seafood connoisseurs can readily appreciate the difference in flavor and freshness.

A WEALTH OF HISTORICAL SITES

Darien is fast becoming an exciting tourist destination among the Golden Isles of Georgia, partly due to its central position, but also due to its wealth of historic sites and its picturesque, refurbished waterfront. It is truly one of the best kept secrets of the Georgia Coast, a quaint small-town setting where you can sample great wines at the upscale Waterfront Wine and Gourmet Cheese Shop or dine on delicious local seafood at Skipper's Fish Camp enjoying the Darien Riverfront views and restaurants. There will be a brand-new boutique hotel and shops opening on the water front in the summer of 2019.

CONVENIENT TO AMMENITIES

Located just 10 minutes by boat from Black Island, Darien is close to all major services and amenities including air transportation, shopping, banking, restaurants, world class golf, hospitals and the 5 Diamond Sea Island Resort. Black Island is accessible by a causeway so you can be in downtown Darien and off the island in 5 minutes.

Darien is conveniently located one hour south of Savannah, Georgia, one hour north of Jacksonville, Florida, and just one mile east of Interstate 95. Visitors traversing, I-95 from Maine to Florida can easily visit Darien and still keep their travel schedules on track.

World Class Golf at Sea Island

A tradition since 1928, Sea Island, located just 25 miles from Black Island, provides championship golf courses, top instructors, new teeing areas and practice greens and a brand new , 17,000-square-foot, state of the art Golf Performance Center where many train for the PGA Tour. It is the perfect spot for juniors starting out in golf to PGA champions. In fact, Davis Love III learned to play golf with his father at Sea Island and is still a resident to this day!

Weather

Black Island is suited for outdoor activities year-round.

Annual Weather:

Month - Average High - Average Low

January 60 43

July 90 75

February 63 46.

August 88 74

March 69 52

September 85 72

April 75 58

October 77 62

May 82 66

November 70 53

June 87 72

December 63 46

History of Sapelo Island

If somewhere on a beach ... sipping something strong ... is your cup of tea Sapelo Island Beach, which provides 13 miles of pristine unpopulated shore line on the Atlantic Ocean is only 30 minutes by boat from Black Island.

Sapelo Island is home to the historic Reynolds Mansion. It was owned by the Coffin Family in the 1920s and hosted Presidents Calvin Coolidge (1928) and Herbert Hoover (1932). The Coffin Family also established the Cloister Resort on Sea Island during this era.

Sapelo Island is currently 97% owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the remaining 3 % is under private ownership. Placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1996, Hog Hammock Historic District, known as the last known Gullah Community is located on Sapelo Island.

It's a step back in time and is still a full-time home to some of the original descendants of the Gullah-Geechees Tribes, descendants of enslaved West African people brought to the island in the 1700s and 1800s to work on the island plantations. You can rock on the front porch underneath the massive old Live Oaks and enjoy lunch at Lula's Kitchen, a direct descendant of the Gullah tribe and enjoy a taste of the Gullah cuisine as well as experience the native Gullah language still spoken by the locals.

Sapelo Island is also home to the second oldest surviving brick lighthouse in America and the oldest surviving construction of the great lighthouse architect Winslow Lewis. The brick oil house was restored, along with the lighthouse, in 1998 which stored the kerosene used to power the light. Five gallons of kerosene would usually keep it burning all night.

Sapelo Island is accessible by boat and there is a daily ferry that runs which is only a short 20-minute trip.

Native American History

Black Island holds Native American treasures dating back to the 17th thru 18th centuries. While exploring the island we found arrowheads and shreds of pottery related to the Spanish Missionaries Era from the Altamaha ceramic series which are red clay, possibly brick ware that has been in a fire. Dr. Eric Poplin of the University of Charleston has researched this era of history extensively.

The Guale Indians were also known to have settled in the Black Island area. The Guale Indians were a mound building tribe of Georgia, allies of the Creek Indians. Their language was poorly attested, but appears to have been Muskogean. The Guales no longer exist as a distinct tribe. They merged into the Creek and Yamasee tribes after a devastating smallpox epidemic.

Dr. Richard Jefferies of the University of Kentucky has been on site multiple times and done several excavations in the Black Island area regarding the Spanish Missions and Guale Indians. Please see attached link for more detailed information of the Native American influence in this area.

Black Island's location is prime when it comes to boating to other popular island destinations. It is a short 10-minute boat ride to the docks of the charming historical town of Darien, 30 minutes from Sapelo Island, 35 minutes to the Atlantic Ocean and 1 hour to the famous docks of St. Simons/Sea island.

Georgia's Little Amazon

Garden and Gun Magazine coined the Altamaha River the "Little Amazon of the South" with its vast water ways. The area surrounding the river contains one of the last known stands of Virgin Tidewater Cypress in the Lower 48.