A Walk Through History

General Oglethorpe renames the island in tribute to his friend Sir Joseph Jekyll, an English politician.

John Eugene Dulcigno sells the island for $125,000 to wealthy American industrialists who create a hunting retreat, the Jekyll Island Club.

A secret meeting at the Jekyll Island Club results in the basic plan for the future Federal Reserve Banking System.

The first transcontinental telephone call is made with Club member Theodore Vail participating on Jekyll Island.

Restoration of Crane Cottage and Cherokee is completed at a cost of $5.5 million, adding 23 additional specialty sleeping rooms to the Jekyll Island Club Hotel.

The Jekyll Island causeway and original lift bridge are built connecting the island to the mainland.

The Great Depression takes its toll on the fortunes of some members.

The Club is elevated to National Historic Landmark status.

Georgia purchases Jekyll Island for $675,000 and it becomes a state park.

The Jekyll Island Club is added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Hotel is designated a Historic Hotel of America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In a joint effort with the Jekyll Island Authority, the Hotel renovates the historic indoor tennis center for $3.8 million.

Photos are provided by the Jekyll Island Museum, Jekyll Island; Coastal Georgia Historical Society; St. Simons Island. Others Courtesy of Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.
As you tour the Club, note the carefully preserved original woodwork, leaded art glass and heart pine floors.

The Hall of Mirrors begins your tour of the historic Jekyll Island Club. As you gaze into the first mirror on your right, look into infinity through the last original mirror and seamless frame lining this hallway.

The first room on the right is the Federal Reserve Room, where six of the country’s most wealthy and highly respected financiers drafted the Aldrich Plan in 1910; this later became the basis for the Federal Reserve System in 1913. In addition to its use for meetings, men and women enjoyed this room for a friendly game of billiards.

The adjoining Aldrich Room, initially the Club card room, was named for Senator Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island. He was chairman of the committee which met on Jekyll Island in 1910 and created the forerunner of the Federal Reserve Plan. The decorative motif in the mantelpiece emulates the Lincoln commemorative wreath. A wreath of this design embellished Lincoln’s casket in 1865. Thereafter, this motif became fashionable in mantel decoration.

Across the hall is the Alexander Lounge, formerly the Ladies’ Parlor. The drawing displayed over the mantelpiece, rendered by architect Charles Alexander, represents the “front” of the Hunt Club he designed. A lovely leaded art glass piece serves as a skylight above the bay window.

The Pulitzer Room, adjacent to the Alexander Lounge, was formerly the main parlor. On the wall opposite the fireplace is the last original mirror and seamless frame lining this hallway. The room was enclosed for year-round use after the Club opened.

Just off the Pulitzer Room is the Aspinwall Room, named after the first president of the Club; Lloyd Aspinwall (1888). It was originally an open porch and a popular place to watch the yachts arrive. This room was enclosed for year-round use after the Club opened.

Initially all meals were served in the Grand Dining Room as the Club House housed the only cooking facility. Chefs from around the world prepared twenty-two meals and, dining time was approximately three hours. Today, a tradition lives on as chefs prepare and serve breakfast, dinner and brunch on Sunday. The Grand Dining Room is open to the public.

The Riverview Lounge (adjacent to the Grand Dining Room). An afternoon tea is served Fridays and Saturdays with an array of fine teas, tea sandwiches, petite pastries and warm scones, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Lounge may also be reserved for small private functions.

Through the windows you will see the smaller than Olympic but larger than standard size Pool which was originally filled by an Artesian spring well, rumored to have medicinal benefits. The pool has been modernized and is heated in winter.

In 1901 the Club House Annex was added to provide eight additional private apartments for Club members. The Annex was the first building to have indoor plumbing. Each Club member was given a certain number of specially printed guest cards to invite friends to visit during the season. The “strangers,” as they were referred to by the Club members, were permitted to visit for no longer than two weeks and resided on the third floor.

The Grand Staircase is an exact replica of the one removed during the installation of elevators in the 1950s. Much of the original balustrade was hand turned and so is the present one.

In 1917, the home sprawled over two lots and originally featured 22 bedrooms and 17 bathrooms. The Italian Renaissance home was valued at $50,000, twice as much as any other cottage on Jekyll at the time. Richard Teller Crane Jr., the youngest surviving son of Richard Teller Crane and his wife, Mary Josephine Prentice, was the president of the Crane Company; a successful family business renowned for plumbing and bathroom fixtures. Today, Crane Cottage accommodates up to 13 guests and special events for up to 130 guests.

“Sans Souci,” the name of which means ‘without care,’ was built in 1896. This six-unit apartment building is considered to be one of the first condominiums built in this country. The floors, leaded glass, stairway and skylight are original.

Edwin Gould, the son-in-law of the first owners of the cottage known today as Cherokee, was in large measure responsible for the building of this Italian Renaissance residence. He purchased lot 32 from the estate of Walter Gurnee and submitted plans to build a two-story house on it for his in-laws, Dr. George F. Shadrake and his wife, Hester. The cottage, which originally contained twenty rooms and six baths, was constructed in 1904 and first appears on the tax rolls in 1905 with a value of $19,000. Restored in 2001, Cherokee now features 10 guest rooms and space for special events for up to 50 guests.

Built between 1914-1917 by Richard Teller Crane Jr., Crane Cottage is the most expensive house to ever be constructed during the club era. Completed in 1917, the home sprawled over two lots and originally featured 22 bedrooms and 17 bathrooms. The Italian Renaissance home was valued at $50,000, twice as much as any other cottage on Jekyll at the time. Richard Teller Crane Jr., the youngest surviving son of Richard Teller Crane and his wife, Mary Josephine Prentice, was the president of the Crane Company; a successful family business renowned for plumbing and bathroom fixtures.

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To further explore the days of this lavish style, visit our Gift Shop, offering souvenirs and additional historical information found in “The Jekyll Island Club” written by William Barton McCash and June Hall McCash, along with other books about the Club.