

An aerial photograph of a coastal area, likely St. George Plantation. The image shows a sandy beach in the foreground, a body of water, and a large, developed area with roads, buildings, and greenery. A small airplane is flying over the water in the lower right. The title "The History of St. George Plantation" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font.

The History of St. George Plantation

*Leisure Properties, Ltd.
Promotional brochure
circa 1980's*

*THE EARLY YEARS 1977 - 1985
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2*

**Unspoiled,
natural beauty
on an island in
the Gulf of Mexico
where white sand
and blue water
are waiting to
be discovered.**

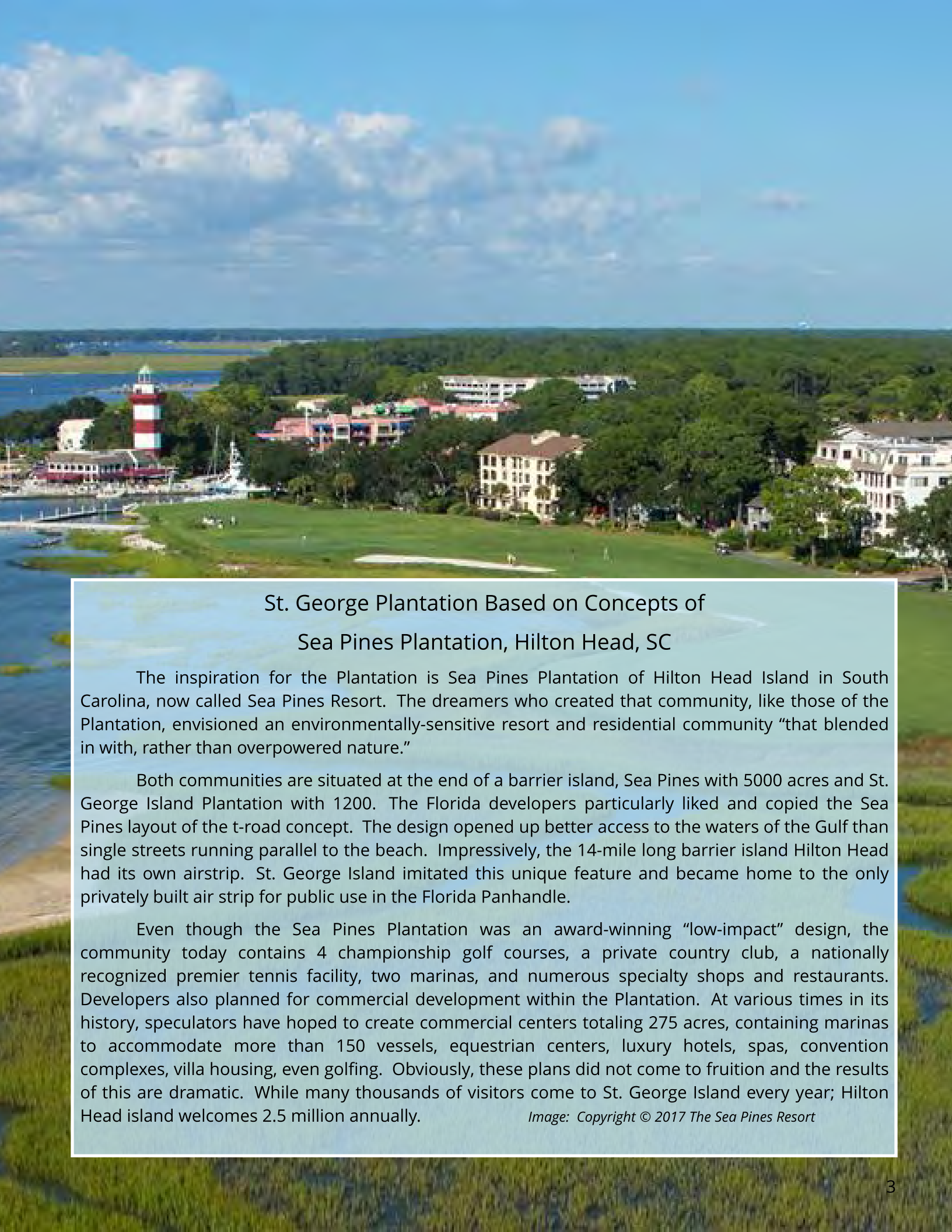


Introduction

How do you take an unspoiled barrier island and develop it? This is the story of how the St. George Plantation came to be. To tell the story visually, most of the pictures and even full page layouts such as this page, have been taken from promotional materials of that era.



*Leisure Properties, Ltd.
Promotional brochure
circa 1980's*



St. George Plantation Based on Concepts of Sea Pines Plantation, Hilton Head, SC

The inspiration for the Plantation is Sea Pines Plantation of Hilton Head Island in South Carolina, now called Sea Pines Resort. The dreamers who created that community, like those of the Plantation, envisioned an environmentally-sensitive resort and residential community “that blended in with, rather than overpowered nature.”

Both communities are situated at the end of a barrier island, Sea Pines with 5000 acres and St. George Island Plantation with 1200. The Florida developers particularly liked and copied the Sea Pines layout of the t-road concept. The design opened up better access to the waters of the Gulf than single streets running parallel to the beach. Impressively, the 14-mile long barrier island Hilton Head had its own airstrip. St. George Island imitated this unique feature and became home to the only privately built air strip for public use in the Florida Panhandle.

Even though the Sea Pines Plantation was an award-winning “low-impact” design, the community today contains 4 championship golf courses, a private country club, a nationally recognized premier tennis facility, two marinas, and numerous specialty shops and restaurants. Developers also planned for commercial development within the Plantation. At various times in its history, speculators have hoped to create commercial centers totaling 275 acres, containing marinas to accommodate more than 150 vessels, equestrian centers, luxury hotels, spas, convention complexes, villa housing, even golfing. Obviously, these plans did not come to fruition and the results of this are dramatic. While many thousands of visitors come to St. George Island every year; Hilton Head island welcomes 2.5 million annually.

Image: Copyright © 2017 The Sea Pines Resort

The Story of Leisure Properties: Part 1

EARLY DAYS OF "ST. GEORGE'S PLANTATION" CLOUDED WITH CONTROVERSY

From the days when the island's first developer, William Popham, offered state-owned oyster beds as incentives for people to buy lots from him on St George Island, the area has been the setting for more lawsuits and disputes than would be worth anyone's time to count. The core of this fight has been the bitter struggle between development and preservation. The company most closely identified with this struggle on the island is Leisure Properties, Ltd, and its founders John Stocks and Gene Brown. No single opponent has been more influential in thwarting their plans than the Franklin County seafood industry.



Leisure Properties had several promotional videos made by Peter Barton.

Here is one about the Plantation:

<https://vimeo.com/203475503>

Here is another focused more on the island:

<https://vimeo.com/214773803>



*Undeveloped beach front ~
looking west toward "Cut"
circa 1980's*

Created by Tallahassee lawyer Gene Brown and Alabama developer John Stocks, Leisure Properties followed the path of other real estate investors in the 1970s and 1980s who saw unique opportunities for large financial returns in the coastal areas of the South. These investors created upscale "planned" communities, exclusive "life-style" enclaves with amenities, clubhouses, golf courses, shopping and a combination of housing options. Favorable tax laws made real estate investment appealing. The lure of warm, uncrowded coastal settings was difficult to resist, particularly in brutal northern winter months when targeted advertising flooded late night television.

*Plantation Collection
Archived photos*

cont.



Gene D. Brown



Stocks

cont. from p.4

In the early 1970s, Stocks and Brown bought nearly a third of the island, 3,500 acres, for \$6M and immediately began planning development. The company envisioned an ambitious, exclusive resort island including a cluster of low-rise but expensive condominiums, single-family homes on one acre lots, 200 slip marina, luxury hotels, a convention center, restaurants, spa, horse stables, and an airport.

The west end of the island, where most of the commercial development would be located, would become a gated residential community, called St George's Plantation, modeled after barrier-island community Sea Pines Plantation in Hilton Head, SC. (see article, p.3). The advertised intent for both developments was to preserve "the integrity of the island's natural landscape."



Located off the coast of Franklin County, 70 miles south of Tallahassee and 70 miles east of Panama City, Florida, St. George Island lies at the entrance to a market area of unusual potential. Business projections indicate that the Southeast, the fastest growing region in the nation, will continue that growth and expansion well into the 1990's. Leisure Properties Ltd. has begun the implementation of the development of St. George Island, while endeavoring to preserve its distinct ecological endowments and its charm. For information concerning St. George Island, contact John R. Stocks, General Partner.

LEISURE PROPERTIES, LTD.
2027 Thomasville Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32303
(904) 356-1103

From the moment the plans were filed, arguments against it began. The bitter, often personal, and financially-draining battle would last for more than a decade. Where developers and investors saw "private island paradise," the seafood industry, as the major employer in the area, could see only disaster. The potential pollution from development threatened the health of the Bay and, therefore, their annual \$10M seafood business. The state regulators' praise for the planned project did little to assuage the concerns of the industry. They turned their energies on the Franklin County Commission where certain commissioners had old family ties to the trade.

It would be 1977 before the Franklin County Commissioners and Leisure Properties

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cont. from p.5

reached agreement. The St. George Island Development Order was finally issued in September of that year. St George's Plantation could have its three commercial areas, including a marina with dry storage, luxury hotels, recreational amenities, shopping areas, an air strip open for public use, and one acre residential lots. The company would also construct sewage treatment and drainage systems. The County was adamant: Even though they would soon approve such structures in the central part of the island, there would be no condominiums nor multi-family structures inside the Plantation.

The Development Order came with many conditions, the most significant of which provided the Commission the opportunity to approve or disapprove the details of this conceptual plan. This forced the developers to return again and again before the Commission. As a result, the commission found itself caught solidly between the potential "progress" that might come as a relief to the low-income county and the damage—and change—that "people pollution" inevitably would bring. Instead of settling the arguments, the agreement provided grounds for even more disagreements.

Because the Development Order placed construction constraints only on the Plantation, Leisure Properties began efforts to build multi-family structures in other Leisure Property holdings on the rest of the island.

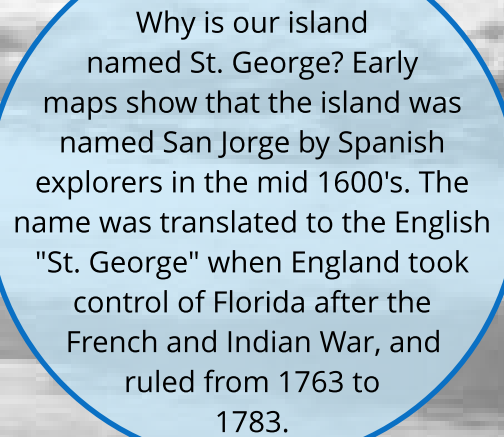
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"These millionaire people," said oysterman Wilson, "they're going to develop that island one way or another. There's nothing us fishermen can do about it...You can't stop it. You can't fight money."



*1975 Oyster Boats on St.George Island,
Oyster Shells
Visit Florida Collection
State Archives of Florida*



Why is our island named St. George? Early maps show that the island was named San Jorge by Spanish explorers in the mid 1600's. The name was translated to the English "St. George" when England took control of Florida after the French and Indian War, and ruled from 1763 to 1783.

cont. from p.6

Their plans included a 55 unit condo on the Gulf-front property called "Sunset Beach" and 381 homes sites on a 120-acre Bayfront parcel known as "Unit 4," which was adjacent to the most bountiful oyster bed area of the Bay--East Hole.

Within months, however, the County thwarted these plans also by adopting strict construction measures affecting the entire barrier island. An emergency moratorium stopped the potentially lucrative high-density multi-family structures. Arguing they needed time to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the county, the Commission also slowed down growth by requiring pilings for all structures, prohibited the filling of beach lands for construction, and prohibited the leveling of protective dunes.

"If you can't disturb the dunes, you can't build," objected Gene Brown, partner in Leisure Properties. In an act of defiance, the developers sent bulldozers to level the dunes

at Sunset Beach on the day before the ordinance became law. The County sued for restoration and the partners announced they would counter sue, including filing suit accusing the county of illegally obstructing their development.

Tallahassee Democrat Staff writer Deborah Ibert captured the hostility of this fight in her July 20, 1980, article. As she explains, for those in the seafood trade, "working the water" is not merely a way to make money but a beloved lifestyle handed down through the generations or oystermen and fisherman that no "outsiders" could ever understand. Their fathers, grandfathers, and great grandfathers might go off to war, but they always came back to the Bay.

"The whole family ain't never done nothing but work on the bay," said Bud Wilson, a 55-year old oysterman whose great grandfather Jack worked the oyster beds in the 1860s. "It's all we know."

Undeveloped coastal dune

State Archives of Florida

cont.

...“ 'working the water' is not merely a way to make money but a beloved lifestyle handed down through the generations of oystermen and fishermen that no 'outsiders' could ever understand...”

cont. from p. 7

The developers, likewise, felt threatened because their private property rights were at risk. Moreover, they considered the pollution risk to be overrated. They fought back hard. By the 1980s, there were 11 lawsuits against the county and individual commissioners. One alone sought \$60M, claiming conspiracy among the commissioners. The developers accused individual commissioners, who owned seafood houses, of being polluters of the bay far worse than what could potentially happen under planned growth. By this time, the state and federal agencies had become more involved in protecting

the Bay and officially recognized the fragile area as a critical habitat. By then the fight was personal.

“I’m a warrior from way back, and I intend to win,” said developer John Stocks. “I know how to play hardball. That island’s going to be developed...and if I don’t do it, my children will.”

“These millionaire people,” said oysterman Bud Wilson, “they’re going to develop that island one way or another. There’s nothing us fishermen can do about it...You can’t stop it. You can’t fight money.”

This article is based on information reported in the Tallahassee Democrat during the late 1970s and early 1980s.



Even though final approvals were still in question and the future was uncertain, in the early 1980s Leisure Properties invested in high quality marketing of St George's Plantation in major national newspapers and periodicals as well as television. Of course, materials did not reflect the frustrations and stress experienced by the parties to the struggle.

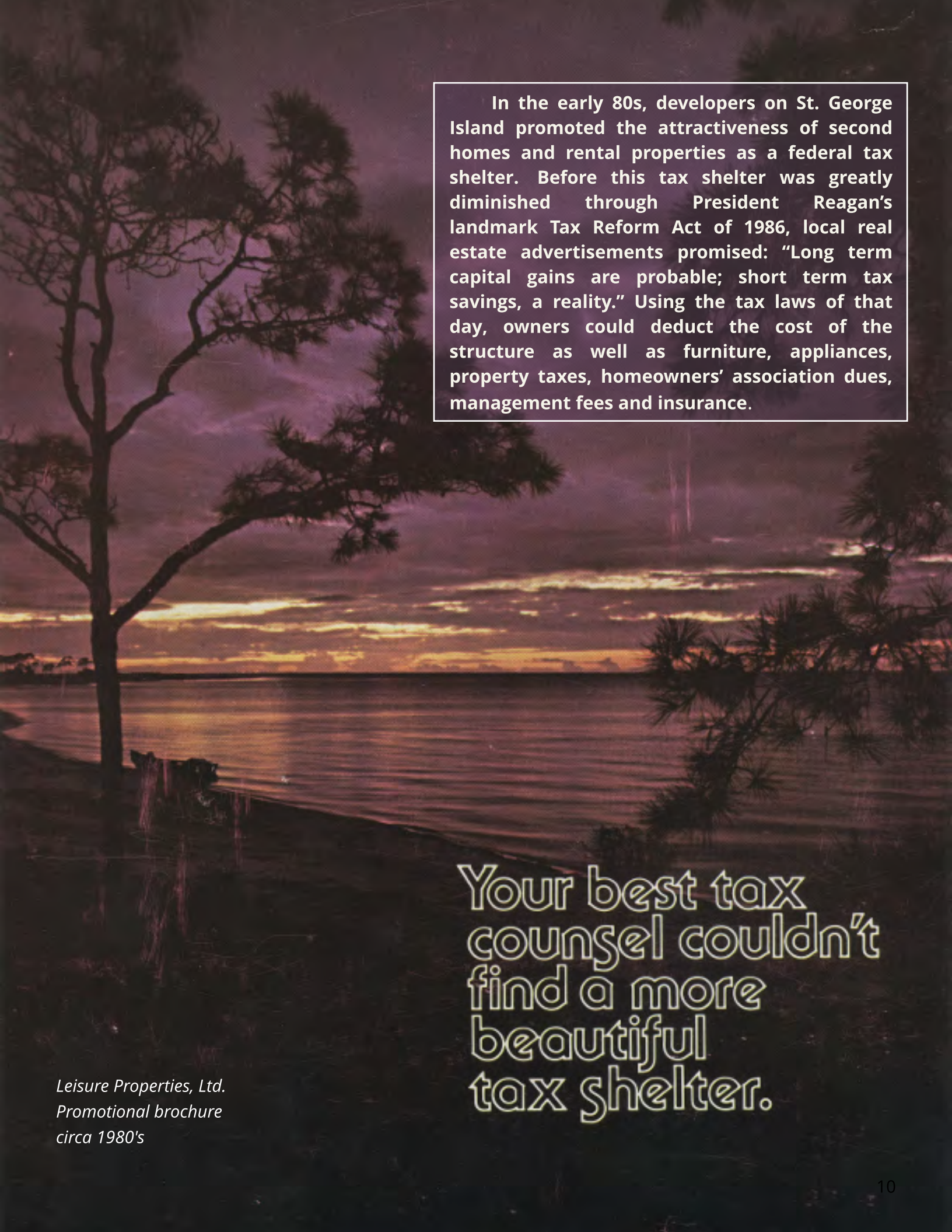
The images are as beautiful and appealing today as nearly 40 years ago.



*Leisure Properties, Ltd.
promotional brochure
circa 1980's*

St. George Island. The uncommon Florida.

St. George Island is as lovely as it is unusual. Linked to the Florida mainland by a bridge and causeway, it is easily accessible by automobile. Yet it is one of the few beaches in Florida that remains largely undeveloped. The sea oats, 30-foot dunes, smooth white beaches and its oak, pine and palm thickets indicate that St. George Island remains in a near-primitive state. Dedicated to preserving that natural quality while affording more people access to its beauty, Leisure Properties, Ltd., owns 2,502 acres of the island, including 8.5 miles of oceanfront and 15 miles of bayfront.



In the early 80s, developers on St. George Island promoted the attractiveness of second homes and rental properties as a federal tax shelter. Before this tax shelter was greatly diminished through President Reagan's landmark Tax Reform Act of 1986, local real estate advertisements promised: "Long term capital gains are probable; short term tax savings, a reality." Using the tax laws of that day, owners could deduct the cost of the structure as well as furniture, appliances, property taxes, homeowners' association dues, management fees and insurance.

Your best tax
counsel couldn't
find a more
beautiful
tax shelter.

*Leisure Properties, Ltd.
Promotional brochure
circa 1980's*



State Park and St George Island Utilities Intertwined

The state purchased nearly 1800 acres of the original Leisure Property holdings in 1974 for \$6.5M. The land would become one of the nation's most highly regarded state parks.

An interesting requirement imposed by the state was that Leisure Properties would provide fresh water to the park. No fresh water system existed on the island at the time. This requirement created an opportunity for St George Island Utilities, which was owned by Leisure Properties, to become the sole provider of fresh water across the island with financial assistance from the state. A later version of that same company continues to provide water today.

As with other Leisure Property endeavors, the agreement did not always move smoothly. In December 1978, when the state disputed "the necessity of the charges" billed under this contract, John Stocks ordered the 4.2 miles of 6-inch water lines already in place from the bridge to the state park to be removed. After 1,800 feet of pipe was torn up, the state acquiesced and paid the bill of \$126K.

After his victory in this skirmish with the state, Stocks suggested to the newspapers that the battle might not be over. He threatened—perhaps jokingly—that the Utilities Board, controlled by Leisure Properties, might ask the state to pay for the re-installation of the pipe, which he estimated at \$300,000. Whether the demand was made or the state paid is unknown.

The Story of Leisure Properties: Part 2

Between 1980 and 1986, the Leisure Property proposals to bring commercial development to the Plantation came to the County Commission for approval again and again. Each effort seemed to produce more ill will.

In early 1983 it appeared that the situation might ultimately improve. Famous and widely respected FSU football coach Bobby Bowden, along with L. Gary Smith, who had served as chief-of-staff to popular Governor Bob Graham, took an option on Cut property still owned by Stocks. Bowden was not a developer, but the company “gifted” him interest in exchange for his highly valuable promotional appearances. In their negotiations, the Bowden team and the county reached agreement: 23 environmental restrictions and 1,980 vacation townhomes. A county planner called their proposal the best ever received, “a golden opportunity.” It appeared finally that commercial development—even multi-family units—might begin.

Before the Commission could consider the application, however, a new obstacle beset the project. Coach Bowden pulled out. Although he cited the demands of his busy football schedule, observers questioned the timing. Only weeks before, Bowden had been interviewed by the FBI, who was investigating allegations of “fraud” and “other irregularities” in another Stocks’ island project, in which Bowden was also involved, this one off the Mississippi Gulf Coast. It was too much for the Coach.

“My name and reputation mean more to me and my family than any amount of monetary gain I might realize,” wrote Bowden when he

resigned from the project. The speculation was that Bowden had sacrificed more than \$600K when he walked away.

The story told by newspapers is that years earlier John Stocks had acquired Petit Bois Island for \$100 and a note for \$1.7 M. Immediately, he and his partners began subdividing and selling lots. His purchase occurred just months before the federal government finalized its plans to include Petit Bois and other Mississippi barrier islands in a national sea shore chain. In the absence of a willing seller, the government would acquire the property through eminent domain proceedings, where fair payment would be decided by a judge.

cont.



*Free t-shirts,
free car
rentals,
and a
private
airstrip
were
used as
incentives
to get
prospective
buyers
interested
in island
property.*

*Leisure
Properties,
Ltd.
1980's
Promotional
brochure*



Look for the Big American Flag and Get a Free St. George Island T-Shirt.
As you come over the bridge to St. George Island, you'll probably see a giant American flag—that's Plantation Realty. Come by and take our one hour guided tour and we'll give you a free St. George Island t-shirt (limit 2 per family). You can also get more information about St. George Island and help with accommodations. We look forward to seeing you.



St. George's Plantation
Plantation Realty, Inc.
Box 126 • St. George Island
Eastpoint, FL 32328 • (904) 670-2521
40 #1981

Developer Gene Brown built one of the first houses inside the Plantation, before paved roads and power lines to the site. Positioned atop the dunes (inset), a location which might not be approved today, the "Penthouse" would never have its views blocked by other construction, which was set further from the shore.



cont. from p.12

The federal government valued the deserted island, with only water access, at less than \$200K. Because of its development potential, Stocks argued at trial, the island was worth much more. The condemnation Court agreed with Stocks and U.S. District Judge Walter Nixon ordered the government to pay Stocks \$6.1M plus interest.

Not long after, Stocks and his partners became caught up in the web of an FBI investigation targeting Judge Nixon, who was convicted in an unrelated matter and sentenced to five years in prison. Although Stocks suspected that the allegations

against him had arisen from his Franklin County enemies determined to discredit him, he was indicted.

The issue plagued Stocks for years. The first trial ended in a mistrial. Stocks demanded his payment for the island from the government and in 1984 famously attempted to put a lien on Air Force One. After a second trial that resulted in an acquittal, the court ordered that Stocks be paid what he was owed for Petit Bois Island--\$9M, with interest.

But the St. George Plantation commercial development was dead again.

St George Island's Most Unique Feature: A Public-Use Airstrip



To make the Plantation an appealing and unique coastal community in the Florida Panhandle, Leisure Properties proposed to construct an airstrip that might attract more affluent buyers for the residential and resort properties. The award-winning and successful Sea Pine Plantation in South Carolina, on which this community is based, has a 5000 foot airstrip. The County Commission conceptually approved construction along with relocation of the community's main road Leisure Lane in 1977 after the developers agreed to make the strip available to the public and adopt certain environmental protection measures.

But progress proved difficult. The County's

ability to approve or disapprove the implementation of each element of the Plantation development delayed the project, at one point with an order to halt construction. When it appeared in 1980 that the County might not approve the airstrip after all, John Stocks threatened to build it anyway and use it for parking. "It will be the only parking lot in the country that meets FAA standards," he said.

Later in 1982, the County finally agreed to settle a dispute with Leisure Properties over the ownership of land where the strip was being created. To resolve the issue, Leisure Properties conveyed 86 acres of low and marginal lands



along the Bay to be preserved and received the deed for the airstrip property and its surrounding land.

In December 1982, St George Island Airport landed its first airplane to a crowd of 150 people. According to the newsletter of Leisure Properties at the time, creating the airport took nearly 5 years of paperwork to gain approval and cost \$350,000, the first airstrip to be built by private funds for public access. The airstrip contained space to tie-down two airplanes.

To attract potential buyers, Leisure Properties touted its airstrip and offered the use of a car free for two days, if the prospect

participated in a one-hour guided tour of St. George's Plantation. By 1983, pilots had a reception area with a telephone to call for transportation anywhere on the island. Plantation Security often provided the service. When Plantation owners left their cars at the airport for convenience, they quickly learned they could not leave their keys in their vehicles. Other pilots would "borrow" the vehicles for their own use. Future plans called for a fixed-based operation featuring fuel, lights, radio communication, maintenance service and hangar facilities. Such proposals never received approval.

The Story of Leisure Properties: Part 3

The partnership between Gene Brown and John Stocks terminated in 1981 with an agreement that Stocks would retain the properties designated as commercial and Brown would take the rest of the Plantation. Even with these clear lines, their business affairs would remain entangled for years to come.

In 1984 Gene Brown announced plans to develop the Cut property with a \$100M project to include a marina, resort hotels, convention center, 400 single family residences, nine stadium-sized tennis courts and a self-contained sewage treatment facility that would deal with the wastewater the large development would create. The project would be built out slowly over ten years. This would be his final attempt to build what the company had envisioned a decade before.

Again, the impact on the Bay was the greatest concern to the county, particularly his proposed marina. Rather than going to war, Brown made concessions, but he argued that supporting this luxury proposal would lead to more high income residences than the island had ever experienced.

The economy of the entire county could benefit. But the marina was critical. Wealthy people would expect a place for their large water craft.



Without it, he might as well build convenience stores and t-shirt shops like Panama City, the beach community to the west which catered to motorcycle clubs and spring breakers. The area had already been approved for hotels and shops back in 1977; so the possibility was real.

As the review process progressed toward the end of 1984, Brown was hit with an unanticipated threat. His former partner John Stocks warned he would file suit because Brown, by trying to build a marina at the Cut, was violating their dissolution agreement. The County had tentatively approved a

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Architectural renderings of the proposed development of the "Cut"

*Summer 1984
Plantation News*



cont. from p.16

marina at Nick's Hole in 1977. Stocks knew if approval were granted at the Cut, the County would never permit a second marina at Nick's Hole, which he controlled. And he wanted the 200 slip marina.

The lawsuits continued to pile up. After Stocks threatened to sue Brown to stop his Cut marina, Brown sued Stocks for failure to pay a \$1M debt. Not to worry, indicated Stocks to the press, because Brown actually owed him \$2.5M. He promised a "long, drawn-out, bloody battle" with his former friend and partner.

Finally, good news for the developer Brown came in March 1985. The state's Regional Planning Council granted conditional approval of the marina, stating their review proved the marina at the Cut "would not have a significant impact on the [seafood] industry." Even better, Franklin County Planning also gave the nod to the project.

Within days, former partner Stocks complicated Brown's momentum. He announced a plan to restore his dilapidated dock near the bridge (located in front of Harry A's restaurant) to a modern marina.

Suddenly, the County Commission would have three marinas to consider. Only a few months earlier, more than 300 seafood workers had marched on the Courthouse to protest the Cut marina, but many business owners were now speaking in favor of the economic development the project would bring. At its June meeting, the commission voted neither approval nor disapproval. Instead, they voted to suspend for up to two years any decision on any marina on St. George Island.

In July, the commission approved the remainder of Brown's Cut project, with the omission of the marina. At last, they had approved the first multi-housing in the

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Plantation—352 units. Finally, it appeared that the vision would be fulfilled. But in September, after eleven years of fighting, Brown acknowledged that he no longer had the resources. With his approvals in hand, he needed investors to be able to build.

In 1986, in a final effort to recoup their investments, the former partners individually offered their St. George Plantation holdings to the state. Stocks offered Nick's Hole, asking a price that would cover his \$6.4M mortgage. Brown urged the state to pay \$9.5M for the Cut properties. He would use these funds, he argued, to build a sewage treatment facility that could benefit the whole island. Furthermore, he suggested, the unique Bob Sikes Cut area, its jetties and high dunes, would be great location for another state park. What happens next will be reported in the next issue.

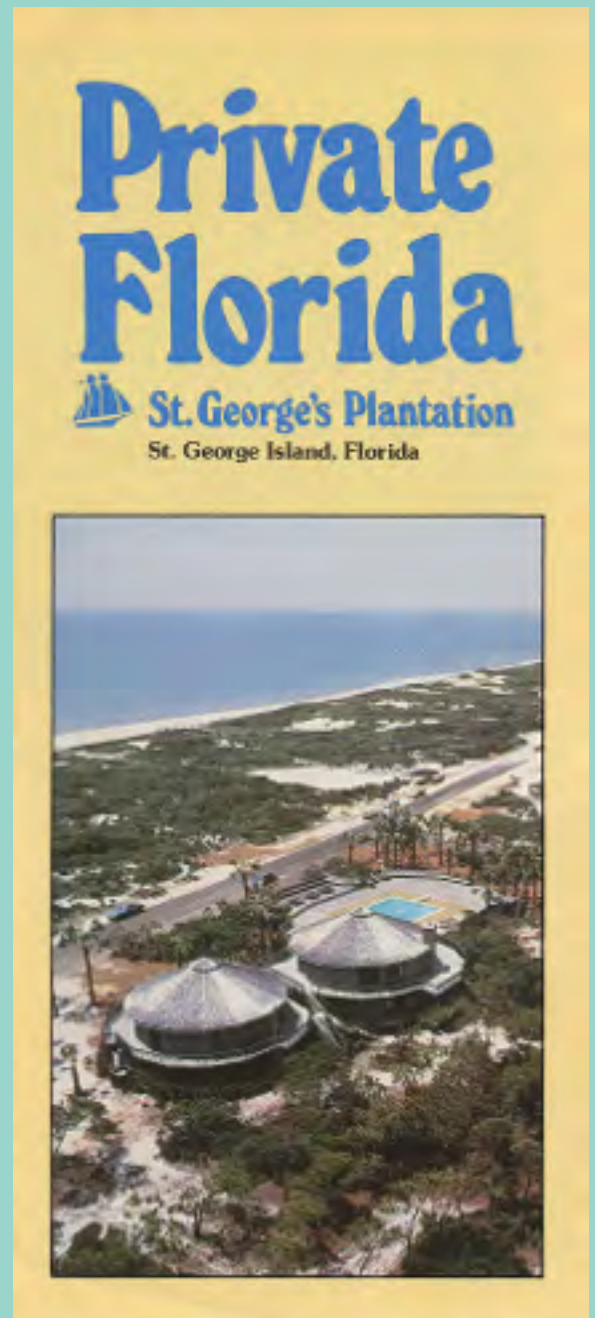
Reflection...

We drove from our Tallahassee home and restaurant business 40 years ago looking for a family vacation place with good beaches that was close enough that if we were needed at work, it wouldn't take long to get back. When we came over the bridge we were pleasantly surprised at what we saw, especially in the Plantation - no crowds, beautiful beaches, lots of trees and vegetation. Helen Spohrer had built a house on Magnolia, and it was for sale. We bought it from her right away and used it for short vacations and rental property until the mortgage was paid off.

About ten years later, we met Bob Shiver. His five-year-old daughter became a playmate for our little girl. I remember how much farther it was for the kids to walk to the beach then, and that they always had to wear shoes to keep their feet from burning. I think we have lost about half the beach we had then.

We still own a restaurant in Tallahassee and still enjoy having a place here where we can enjoy our grandchild.

Zeke and Carla Bardhi



*Leisure Properties, Ltd.
Promotional brochure
circa 1980's*

The Gulf Winds running club from Tallahassee held events in the Plantation in the 1980's



COUPLE PROVIDES UNIQUE SECURITY FORCE

No, Bob Shiver was not always the Director of Security for the Plantation. Husband and wife team Doug and Carol Parker provided 24 hour security, seven days a week, in the early years of the development. In addition to manning the gate from daylight to dusk every day, the couple also performed roving patrols to the Cut and security checks at homes and construction sites. Very few of the streets were paved in those early days so one of the biggest challenges was guarding the beach and dunes from four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Doug and Carol lived, with their young daughter Candy, in a new house on Lot 1 Osprey Village, which still overlooks the entrance gate.



Plantation Collection, Archived photos

Reflection...

When we first came to Apalachicola in 1981, we wondered what was on the island. So we came over to explore and ended up buying. The old picture of our family (*inset*) was taken in 1983 on the day we moved into our house with our three daughters.

In 1985 two hurricanes caused a lot of damage to the area. Hurricane Elena came over Labor Day weekend and we evacuated to Tallahassee. [Elena stalled for 48 hours south of Dog Island, causing a 9.8' storm surge and severely damaging the oyster beds-Ed.] Water covered the whole island and both ends of the bridge were washed out so no one could get on or off the island, except by boat. The police would drive you as close to your house as they could get. Then Hurricane Kate hit on Nov. 21. [Kate came ashore near Mexico Beach as a Category 2 hurricane. Tides were 10' above normal, causing more erosion, damaging the newly rebuilt bridge, and further devastating the oyster industry-Ed.] We had to live for a while at El Rancho Inn in Apalachicola, doing all our cooking on a grill.

Back then the power in the island went out all the time. The problem was that the cable was on the bay floor and would get cut by shrimpers dragging over it and be out for weeks. When that happened, we'd have to haul water from the clubhouse swimming pool to our house to flush the toilets!

To fish at the Cut, you would drive to the end of the road in a 4 wheel-drive vehicle and then hike for a mile. The bugs would about eat you alive but the fishing was incredible. We love the island and believe the Plantation now is the best it's ever been.

Tom and BJ Tiffin



Plantation Collection
Archived photo

Reflection...

I was living in Tulsa, OK, in 1979, when a friend came to my office and said, "I've just been to Paradise." The friend, Roger Burch, had just returned from the Forgotten Coast where he had emceed the Seafood Festival in Apalachicola. He showed me a Leisure Properties brochure and handed me a business card for Shawn Donahue. I decided to go check it out and was smitten. Not long after falling in love with SGI, I was hired as sales manager of Leisure Properties working exclusively in the Plantation. I was the first one to get over \$100,000 for a beach front lot. My best day was when I sold 49 properties, but the buyer only took title of the six beach front lots.

Paul Cowan

Fly In and Visit St. George's Plantation. We'll Give You a Car FREE for Two Days



Let us give you a one-hour guided tour of St. George's Plantation and we'll give you a car free* for two days. Visit one of the most beautiful, uncrowded areas still left in Florida. It's Florida with privacy—and that's rare.

*Leisure Properties will pay for basic rental plus mileage. All you pay for is gasoline.



*Above: Leisure
Properties, Ltd.
1984 Brochure*

*Left: Center,
Gene Brown,
developer*

*Right: Third from
left, Paul Cowan,
1982 Plantation
News*



*Alexander Family, John Anderson: Left to right Terry C. Mitchell,
Robert T. Spolner, Paul H. Cowan and Shawn Donahue.*

Reflection...

In 1978, our company at the time, Bean Builders, took advantage of an opportunity when Leisure Properties, anxious to see growth in the Plantation, offered to subordinate lots to local builders for speculation. Our realtor friend Paul Cowan found lot 17 Windjammer Village for us.

We were attracted to the area because it was a gated community with natural beauty. We started construction on the magnificent bay front lot without any power available or a paved road to the property. We built an octagonal post and beam two bedroom, two bath home to capture the 180 degree views. (*photo inset*)

Rather than selling the house, we decided to keep it to rent to other Plantation owners while they were building their homes. Currently the home is owned by Lee and Randy Sewell.

We had no idea if buying and building would be a good investment, but the builder subordination program made it worth the risk. We were fortunate to be able to keep the house until the market appreciated.

Bean Builders was successful in building several homes in the Plantation in the 1980s and 90s. We built a home for ourselves in Sea Palm Village, and we own a Plantation canal lot.

It's been a joy to be a part of this beautiful development.

Mason and Marilyn Bean



Early road construction in Plantation



Reflection...

In 1980 Tommy kept a boat at East Pass in Destin and we fished as often as possible. He was unhappy with the crowds so we looked at Gulf Shores and moved east. We spent two weekends on St George Island with another couple and began looking at property. We decided the Plantation was the only place to be. I wanted beach property but lost out to the bay side for a place to keep a boat. We bought three lots, one for a house and two for investment. In 1982 we started our house, the first one on the bayside. It was finished on Labor Day weekend, with appliances being delivered while the kids were still painting. It has always been a family house. Tommy had a place for a boat, I had a beach with no people, and we

met friends that have become almost family. In 1992 we had our first grandchildren, two little girls. They went in their baby carriers to the homeowners meeting that year. This year they will be 25.

Tommy passed away in 2016, but I am so proud and happy to be one of the first owners in the Plantation. The children and grandchildren all said keep "the St. George House." Of course I am. The Plantation has become a place for protecting the environment and our wonderful bay, but also a place to promote the arts, sports, and social enjoyment. WE'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY!!



Betty Day



Although the topic of permitting rentals inside the gate would be debated for years during the history of the Plantation, the original plans contemplated rental properties. Leisure Properties had its own property management agency. "Tidewater," pictured here, is a two-bedroom located on Denise Drive, that rented for \$400 per week in the Spring of 1984.

Summer 2017 Issue

What happens next in the saga of the Plantation will be reported in the third issue of this continuing History. Hint: a major shift in governance occurs when the owners wrest control of the association from the developer. It's the beginning of the plague of lawsuits for the Plantation owners' association. The state says no to placing a state park at the Cut. And the community steadily continues to grow.

Our thanks to former and current owners and employees who helped us collect these valuable materials and contributed to the articles.

These memorabilia and more will be available for viewing in person during the Owners' Weekend on October 20 - 21, 2017.



Correction to Issue 1, p. 11 (Egret Pond):

"In the description of the two aerial 'before and after' pictures, it states the water looks white because of reflected sunlight. This is not correct. The normal state of the pond is to be completely covered in duckweed, the case in both these old photographs. It's the duckweed that shows up as white in these aerals. For some reason the duckweed has been absent for the last few years."

Submitted by owner, Boyd Ellison

The History of the St. George Plantation is the undertaking of the volunteer Communications Committee. We welcome your comments and contributions.

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