CHARLES P. BEROLZHEIMER:
TEACHER, LINGUIST, TRAVELER, SCIENTIST

ST. SIMONS ISLAND

In the early 1900s, Emil and Philip Berolzheimer were constantly on the lookout for sources of red cedar or other softwoods to provide raw material for the Eagle Pencil Company.

O. F. Chichester, manager of the company's Timber department and Cedar Mills at Chattanooga, Tennessee, enjoyed fishing among the Georgia barrier islands. On one of these excursions he saw red cedar trees and other wild growth on Little St. Simons Island. Chichester's discovery" of that 15-square-mile island, one of the famed "Golden Isles," opened an important chapter in the Berolzheimer family history. (In jest, Chichester would write that he was the "Christopher Columbus" of Little St. Simons Island.)

THE GOLDEN ISLES

A quick look at the coast of Georgia: About eighteen thousand years ago (Pleistocene epoch) the last ice began recede, leaving a wild array of land formations. Mixing with tidal action and seasonal storms, embryos of the future Barrier Islands began to appear. Little St. Simons emerged from this erosion and violence. Today, peacefully curls around the north end of St. Simons Island, separated from the larger island by the Hampton River.

Each of the Barrier Islands has a similar history. Native cultures pervaded the area; European incursions — mostly English, Spanish and French — occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; followed by slavery, the American Revolution, the plantation era, and the War Between The States. In spite of this human intercourse, in this century, virtually undeveloped Little St. Simons Island remains one of the few Georgia sea islands that looks, feels, and behaves like it did during and immediately after the last Ice Age.

O.F. Chichester's plan for the island — endorsed by his boss, the senior Philip Berolzheimer — was to cut down the red cedar for pencils, pen and ink holders, and other Eagle products. Chichester calculated, based on a quick survey, that "20,000 to 30,000" cedar trees were growing on Little St. Simons Island. In a letter to New York, he estimated that those harvested trees could be sold for almost the Island's purchase price, and "it would make us easy for sometime." The Island was thereafter purchased from Mrs. Frances Butler Leigh, absentee-owner (London, England) for $12,500. On

March 6, 1908, the sale of the Island to Eagle Pencil Company was recorded in Glynn County, Georgia. Chichester signed the papers.

Chichester's logging crews commenced cutting the cedar trees. St. Simons' mills turned them into planks and slats. Skilled island mill hands had long been available, as commercial logging of St. Simons Island forests can be dated to 1794.

In the 1790s, the U.S. government found Georgia live oaks perfect for shipbuilding. Quote from the Department of Navy: "The first tree felled for the U.S.S. ('Constitution old ironsides') was an oak on St. Simons off the Altamaha River. The stump stood for my years as 'Constitution Oak.'" Continuing this addition in the 1870s, the Dodge Meigs Lumber Company successfully operated several sawmills at Gascoigne Bluff, today's site of the eastern end of the bridge between St. Simons Island and the mainland.

Alter the purchase of the Island by Chichester, St. Simons Island sawmill operators noticed that many of the trees had been severely bent by winds, thereby making them relatively useless for Eagle. This set the scene for Little St. Simons' next chapter.

Within four months, Chichester' s name disappeared as owner, replaced by Emil Berolzheimer. On December 30, 1912, four years after the Island's purchase, Emil conveyed the deed to his brother Philip. What happened? The short version is that Philip Berolzheimer fell in love with Little St. Simons Island. He visualized it as a family retreat, which coincided with the realization that the island' s cedar wood could not be used for pencils.

FAMILY- OWNED

A rude bungalow (large cabin) was erected at the Island's south end, embellished with a crow's nest, flagstone walkways, a fountain and formal gardens. Family members and their friends began to make annual visits. Everyone lived off the land and from the waters. Menus consisted of oysters, fish, crab, clams, marsh hen, plover and duck. Staples were delivered by boat.

Little St. Simons Island introduced Clara and Philip's son and daughter, Charles and Helen, to an outdoor, free-spirited world they had never before imagined. Their New York City environment was very different:
ceaseless above- and below-ground traffic, noisy street vendors, art treasures throughout a grand five-story home, neighbors abutting their home on both sides, servants everywhere, proper dress for each occasion.

Quoting from a letter Charles wrote to his mother on June 7, 1914 (preserving Charles's twelve-year-old spelling and punctuation):

> "Dear Mother:
> I am having a fine time down here (on the Island). I will tell you what we did each day. On Friday in the morning we went turtle egg hunting. In one nest we found 157, in the other 106. The turtle digs a big hole in the ground, lays his (her) eggs, covers it up, and leaves for the sun to hatch. We tried some turtle egg omlet (good) and boiled turtle eggs (bad) which I did not like & did not eat after tasting it. On Fri. afternoon we rested. (I, in the hammock). Saturday we went to Mosquito Creek. The new bungalo is fine. I sure you will like it. We went allegator hunting and shot (with rifle) an allegator. In the afternoon we took a walk to S. end and got one little allegator which I kept for a pet and named Jimmie. We have seen no rattlesnakes but have seen one shark (no whales.) I have been in swimming 2ice once with a bathing suit & once (to-day) without, while we were waiting outside bungalo creek at low tide. I get feet wet all time. It don't hurt me. Went in up to waist with cloths on.
> This morning we went to pelican bank fishing with a net. I helped and went in the water up to my waist. While outside this creek I took my clothes off & have it on still with my wrapper & slippers. We are resting all afternoon. Soon I will dress and take supper. Then we will to turtle hunting. At the top of this letter I will put how many turtles we got this evening. From. Charles"

Charles could explore his virtually limitless interests in nature and science with abandon. One of his vivid memories was observing the nocturnal activities of huge loggerhead turtles at Rainbow Beach, even standing atop one of those lumbering monsters. His sister Helen remembered the long boardwalk from Bungalow Creek the house. She also recalled fishing in the creeks and using her personal .410 shotgun to hunt plover. Accenting this excitement, the children experienced rattlesnakes, alligators, raccoons, mosquitoes, occasional stormes, duck hunting — soon to become an Island tradition, and a kaleidoscope of barrier island activity involving small boats, beach flotsam, and interesting personalities, several of whom were African Americans, en called "negroes," "darkies," or "colored people."

GETTING AROUND

Another adventure was the sometimes complicated and aired array of conveyances that ferried Island visitors and family up and down the East Coast.

For example, in the 1920s a ship departed New York City from a pier on the Hudson River. Stops at Charleston, South Carolina, and Jacksonville, Florida, included a day or so layover at hotels, including shopping, tourist attractions, and restaurants. At Jacksonville everyone boarded the yacht *Frederica*, with Captain Doug Taylor at the helm (the sea-worthy Frederica had two successors: *Frederica II* and *Frederica III*.)

Other boats in service were two *Teals, Baby Helen* and *Helen*, and a launch called *Buddy* named for Island manager Nathaniel I. “Buddy” Hasell. Buddy held the manager’s job for ten years and was Captain Doug’s stepson. A former commercial airline pilot, he also landed his small plane on a bumpy Island airstrip, now returned to grass and hummocks. There was also a barge called the *Cap ‘n Doug*, in memory of the Island’s famous manager, Douglas Taylor, who held the job for over seventy years. Cap’n Doug came from a long line of St. Simons boat captains and landholders. He would be especially remembered as a wise mentor to three generations of Berolzheimers. In more recent years the 16-passenger *Cap ‘n Joe*, named for Maintenance Superintendent Joe Taylor, who died in January 2010, was put into service.

While plying what would later be called the Intracoastal Waterway, Doug Taylor would arrange stops at the Jekyll Island Club, famous for its 1890s resident millionaires, and at Fort Frederica on St. Simons Island. The fort is now one of the most famous tourist destinations along the Georgia coast. It had been the southern-most headquarters of English General James Edward Oglethorpe in the 1730s. Occasionally a layover occurred
at the Victorian, Stanford White-designed hotel Oglethorpe, in Brunswick, Georgia.

Other modes of travel included riding the bumpy coaches of the Southern Railway, Atlantic Coast Line, or Seaboard Airline (a railway, not an airline). occasionally these trips began aboard a train departing from Hoboken, New Jersey. Michael G. Berolzheimer also recalled boarding a train called the Silver Meteor at New York’s Penn Station.

When he was a student at Harvard College, Charles would wave a burning newspaper to stop a train at Everett, Georgia. In the 1930s, he climbed aboard a Ford Tri-Motor airplane in California, then boarded two trains to Brunswick, Georgia. In other words, getting there was exciting and challenging, and Island rewards were always waiting.

Following the war, and despite his service in the U.S. Army Air Corps, Charles refused to fly. From 1948 to 1953, Charles, Lois, Philip, and Michael would board a Southern Pacific train in either Sacramento or Los Angeles for the three-day and -night journey to the Island. Sometimes they would travel the “northern route,” Chicago to New York City, then to Georgia. At other times they would take the “southern route” via New Orleans to Jacksonville. (The “southern route” always included dinner at New Orleans’s famous Antoine’s restaurant, established in 1840, where Oysters Rockefeller were introduced.)

According to Jim Gould, in the days of senior Philip Berolzheimer, governors of Georgia and other friends
were conveyed from place to place aboard an elegant pale green trailer pulled by an old Hudson coupe of the same color. Jim was a child at the time but he recalls the trailer’s comfortable accommodations, with over-stuffed sofas, wicker chairs,

drapes, a bar, and a conductor/bartender in attendance. The Hudson and its trailer picked up guests at Thalman or Waycross, Georgia (whistlestop train depots) for transit to St. Simons Island to meet the Little St. Simons boat. A young Michael G. Berolzheimer vividly remembers Thalman and its “colored” and “white” restrooms.

Occasionally, the Hudson and trailer took guests to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where everyone checked into first-class hotels. These Florida excursions lasted for several weeks, with fishing, hunting, and card playing among the favorite diversions. Off-season, the Hudson and its trailer were kept on Doug Taylor’s St. Simons Island property.

TAMMANY VISITORS

Philip’s political activities resulted in visits from New York nabobs, many of whom had never set foot on a wild Georgian island. The first such gathering called itself “Bandits.” Their boss, Mayor John F. Hylan, may have provided that moniker through a farewell letter he sent dockside, referring to their destination “made famous by Captain Kidd.”

Mayor Hylan, despite his Tammany connections, was dubbed “Honest John.” His two terms were considered models of good government. He once declared city employees --must not roll in city automobiles with cigars their mouths.. - (or) be conspicuous at baseball games hen they should be in their offices.” Philip Berolzheimer was obviously part of an enlightened administration. (In contrast, Mayor James “Jimmy” Walker, known as “Beau James,” succeeded Hylan. Walker was a Broadway bon vivant who spent most of his time writing hit songs, wooing showgirls, and vacationing in Europe.)

A homemade book, written by one of the guests, Anning Prall, was called *The Log of the Bandits of 1921.* After a similar 1922 visit a follow-up book entitled *Saga of the Band*, subtitled *The Adventures of Chamberlain Berolzheimer’s 1922 Hikers*, was produced by band (or bandit) member Willis Holly. A result of this revelry and comradeship was an appreciation dinner for Philip Berolzheimer in 1922 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. At that event, the Little St. Simons flag was hoisted: eight ducks flying over a prancing buck. The ducks represented the high-flying Bandits (and hunting); the buck symbolized Island wildlife in general. That flag remains today as the informal symbol of Little St. Simons Island.

THE NEXT GENERATIONS

Although only two “Bandit” visits to the island are recorded, the Berolzheimers frequently and generously entertained visitors. That tradition continues. Charles may have been the Island’s best host. All his life he insisted that a parade of friends, family, scientists and local residents visit Little St. Simons — and they did.

After their teen years, Charles and Helen helped their parents look after Island affairs. On December 5, 1929, Philip and Clara legally turned the Island over to their children. That transfer was reaffirmed in a document dated January 19, 1940.

Upon their father's death in 1942, Charles, and to a lesser extent, Helen, took an intense interest in/every aspect of the Island.

Prior to assuming actual control of the Island, Charles investigated potential activities beyond its use as a family retreat. For example, in June 1925, Charles wrote a letter to F.H. Post of East Williston, Long Island, New York, inquiring about the feasibility of "raising ponies suitable for polo, on a place in Southern Georgia." Mr. Post, a polo pony expert, had been wintering polo ponies in South Carolina. Post's reply patiently described the intricacies of breeding polo ponies, and the importance of having thoroughbred English stallions available. It appears the polo pony idea didn't go any further.

Almost until her death Clara Berolzheimer directed family events, especially the still-celebrated Christmas gatherings. In later years a Thanksgiving event was added for Michael G. 's family, while Charles Sr. and Philip's family continued the Christmas tradition.

Clara remained skeptical about the ability of city dwellers to accept a measure of rusticity and privation on a Georgia sea island but she herself had no problem with Island life. She hosted visitors, made special arrangements for meals and celebrations, and occasionally roamed the creeks shooting plover and rail hiding in marsh grass.

On one outing, Clara recorded the names or every creek heading west on Hampton River from the Old Bungalow Bungalow-Shell-Clam-Eagles Nest-Pine Island-Mosquito-Gabriel-Old House-Quash Cutoff-Three Hawks-Timothy-Lazy-Cut-Isaac-Canoe-Devil ElbowI-Pitman). She also recorded the distances and amount of time it took to travel between key points to and from the island.

Charles's wife Lois Johnson Berolzheimer, Charles and Lois's daughter-in-law Anne Watkin Berolzheimer, and Michael G. Berolzheimer assumed Clara's duties for their respective families and guests. They each, in turn, became ad hoc social secretaries and Island coordinators for the virtually endless stream of visitors on holidays and special occasions.

By 1917, the Bungalow had barely survived a number of sea storms — it faced the Atlantic. In 1914 construction was begun on the Hunting Lodge which was built on protected and more centrally located Mosquito Creek. The old Bungalow mysteriously burned down in 1930.

Hunting was the Island's major adult activity. During the early days of Patriarch Philip a formal fall hunt was organized. That main event was hosted and planned by the elder Jim Gould and Doug Taylor. Hunting dogs, guides, and rules about the use of firearms were an integral part of the scene. Because the Island is private, the owners were obligated to see that

safety precautions and the proper disposal of game were observed. Ducks and deer were the favorite targets, raccoons next.
Venison was consumed on the Island, while raccoon meat was given to the guides. Raccoon skins were used for carpets and wall decorations, including at the Berolzheimer apartment, 300 E. 57th Street, in New York City.

The Island's hunting traditions have been handed down through each generation of Berolzheimers. Philip C. recalls seeing the "Sky black with duck" over Little St. Simons Island in the late 1950s. And Michael once shot sixteen ducks with four shots (one cartridge spraying several birds at a time).

One example of the generational hunting connection is a story told by Parke Berolzheimer, Anne and Philip's youngest son. Parke recounts the time he shot a deer and was found cleaning it by his grandfather. Charles chided Parke for using a truck to carry the deer carcass and then described how it was done in "his" day.

Charles said that Island hunters would cut a large pine or cedar branch. After securing the carcass onto the branch, one man at each end would carry their quarry back to camp, perhaps up to a two-mile journey. After bagging his next deer, Parke cut a palmetto branch, fashioned a sling for his gun, and carried his prize alone on his back about one mile to camp. When he arrived, grandfather Charles was sitting under an oak tree with what Parke called his grandfather's "quintessential Berolzheimer smirk" of pride and satisfaction. Parke said that he rarely used a truck again.

Michael G. remembers another Island tradition: smearing blood on the face of a hunter after his or her first kill. The neophyte hunter' s companions, after cutting the deer's throat, gleefully did the smearing as part of a according to Michael.

After assuming responsibility for the Island in the 1930s-1940s, Charles Sr. and his father Philip introduced several changes. The swimming pool was upgraded. Philip built the comfortable Helen House (1928-1929) as a wedding gift in celebration of his daughter's marriage to Ransom Yateman Place. (It occupies the approximate site of Captain Doug Taylor's old cabin.)

Phillip also introduced Island game and a few domestic animals: turkeys, geese, elk, goats, fallow and other deer, marsh tackles" (wild ponies), and purebred hunting dogs. At this point, programs to manage those critters were developed by his offspring. Philip and Clara also experimented with citrus trees, but they had to be abandoned after sudden killer frosts.

Later innovations included the planting of exotic species, constructing a new Mosquito Creek bulkhead, opening up

additional artesian water sources, draining the old rice fields, and letting creek water find its natural route. Throughout these changes the central philosophy was to preserve the Island's natural surroundings and not alter those precious qualities beyond recognition, as had occurred on most other Sea Islands. Charles unequivocally endorsed this approach. His and Helen's children and grandchildren have never strayed from letting Mother Nature have the upper hand on the Island.

OLD GEORGIA CONNECTIONS

Jim Gould, who was Charles P. Berolzheimer' s friend and neighbor on next-door St. Simons Island, recalled — as did everyone, it seems — Charles standing on his head. Jim's children loved to watch the headstands, and they also remember Charles wearing a long hooded cape. The cape, flowing behind him over his long striding legs, gave rise to them calling Charles "Superman." Charles apparently found the "Superman" nickname amusing.

Although Charles usually remained on Little St. Simons Island during his Georgia visits, when he was a boy he used to spend time at what Jim Gould called "The Pier." It was at the south end of St. Simons Island, near the lighthouse, and served as the boat link to Brunswick, Georgia. That water route, St. Simons to Brunswick, was how people got to and from the Island before the causeway was built. Charles followed this route whenever he disembarked or embarked the train at Thalman, Georgia.

Using a more direct route, Charles's father, Philip, often stayed aboard the Frederica, or another craft, all the way to Little St. Simons Island. The town of St. Simons, or The Pier, was where Jim Gould's Aunt Mary ran the U.S. Post Office, one of Charles's favorite places to loiter and kibitz with the postmistress.

Captain Doug Taylor, manager of the Island for seventy years and close friend of Charles and his sons, was active with his wife, Berta, in historic Christ Church. Charles made his own connection with the church when accompanying Captain Doug and regularly attended Sunday services when in the area. This probably led to Charles providing money for the purchase and later repair of a church organ. Charles's father, Philip, bought the church's first organ, which was later moved to St. Ignatius Church on St. Simons Island. Later family members were also baptized at Christ Church (sometimes arranged by Buddy Hasell' s wife, Jackie) or on Little St. Simons Island, with the church's rector officiating. Fittingly, Captain Doug Taylor was laid to rest in Christ Church's famous graveyard.

A WARTIME ISLAND

After Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Little St. Simons Island became a kind of East Coast U.S.

government protectorate, with a wartime code number of 246A.

Except for one or two brief visits, the family did not see the Island for four years. Soldiers and Coast Guard units patrolled the beaches looking for submarines and saboteurs. Leaving the Island to the military, Charles joined the U.S. Army Air Force and went to North Africa and Italy.

When the war ended, the family returned to Little St. Simons Island. Charles and Helen's children were young and attending school, but they began their annual visits in 1948. After a few years' lapse, and with the help of experts, the younger generation began to investigate ways to make the Island self-supporting. Some of their ideas included selling deer, tree farming, oyster raising, mullet growing, organizing duck-hunting expeditions,
establishing a fishing club, cattle raising and inviting binders to use the Island. Many of these and other projects were implemented by Island manager Buddy Hasell. Buddy's wife, Jackie, helped by occasionally serving as the Island's substitute hostess.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In the 1970s, a guest program was developed, which is in place today. Hunting programs were also introduced in 1973, followed by bird-watching expeditions. Abetting these programs, full-time naturalists guide guests and family around the Island, helping protect and study Little St. Simons Island' s flora and fauna — all of this endowed and encouraged by each generation of the family. Charles Sr. may have known more about this unique natural world than anyone, thereby establishing a self-perpetuating legacy of professional naturalists, which evolved from his own lifelong investigations and interest in nature.

Today, probably beyond Philip and Clara' s wildest dreams, besides the comfortable, rustic Hunting Lodge
(1917), Helen House (1928-1929), and Michael Cottage (1930s), visitors can relax in the quasi-luxurious River Lodge and Cedar House (1980s).

INDELIBLE FAMILY LINKS

After the Island' s seasonal occupation by Indians, and year-round occupation by plantation owners, slaves, and the occasional game poacher, it became a true home for the Berolzheimer family. The Island's wildness, sea-driven surprises, and informality seeped into the lives of every family member (and often their guests). Stewardship of the Island became not only a serious responsibility, but it also generated a source of family satisfaction and pride.

On Little St. Simons Island, Berolzheimers lived, played, studied nature, ate off the land and from the sea, got married, celebrated anniversaries and holidays, and found opportunities to think, read, write, and discuss family and other matters. The “outside” world took on a different perspective from the Island’s vistas, ponds, creeks, hummocks and beaches.

While the Island’s stewardship was sometimes in the hands of hired managers, Captain Doug being the most famous and senior of that select group, ultimate responsibility for the Island’s preservation and future was always by family members. That responsibility began with Philip Sr., then his son Charles P., followed by Philip C., Charles II, Carin and Michael G.

Philip and Anne’s son, Charles II, served as the family representative and resident manager from mid-1983 through the end of 1984. He handled guest operations and marketing, with general manager Buddy Hasell taking care of maintenance and roadwork. Charles, in concert with lawyer Tom Dennard, successfully reduced the Island’s property taxes. After Charles and his wife Ginger returned to Stockton, California, and Buddy retired, others were hired as general managers.

Charles continued as family representative until 1993, helping his first cousin, Canin, take over. Charles and Ginger had lived on the Island and were faced with large issues of achieving profitability and maintaining its natural setting. He also reorganized and outlined training programs for personnel. Charles managed to rid the Island of cattle (which for a hundred years had damaged the dune system and inhibited natural plant succession), reduce the deer population, and undertook a number of construction projects (with Buddy Hasell), while searching for answers to long-range problems.

From 1994 to 2004, Michael G. and Wendy’s daughter Carin took the managerial reins, enhancing the guest program, protecting natural resources, and launching a professional publicity program. She also improved overall standards, happily accepted awards for the Island’ s reputation as a guest haven, and increased revenues. One special award was the Conde Nast honor as the number one Inn (under 50 rooms) in America. Since 2004, a new management team has been in place.

Canin has noted that her Island responsibilities deepened an appreciation for her great-grandfather and great-grandmother (Philip and Clara), whom she never met, and the Island initiatives they introduced. Similar to other family members, the Island’s wildlife and natural beauty have become part of Canin’ s life. In fact, she has recently moved her permanent residence to next-door St. Simons Island.

Many Island family milestones can be cited, but images of marriages, holiday celebrations, deaths, and the ceaseless investigation of a flourishing natural garden remain high points. In 1947, Clara Berolzheimer and Judge Edgar Bromberger

were married on the Island in what was described as a “small” gathering. In 1979, Michael G. Berolzheimer and Janet Sue Saberton celebrated their marriage during an Island sunset.

Perhaps the most poignant family event in recent times was the November 29, 1980 death of Wendy and Michael’s sixteen-year-old son Philip Michael Berolzheimer (named after his grandfather and father). Despite often using a wheelchair because of muscular dystrophy, at that time he was taking advantage of everything possible at the Island with two friends, Mike Hoffman and Alain Martin Pierret. Philip had contracted a mild respiratory infection, which suddenly worsened one night. (Philip’s sister Laura wrote a touching essay about her experiences the morning after her brother’s death.)

Wendy, looking back on Philip’s short life, recalled he had three wishes: 1. To drive a car, which he accomplished with the help of friends; 2. To have a girlfriend, which was realized when he met Gretchen Berglund; and 3. To avoid going to a hospital, which was ironically achieved because he was on a semi-remote island with, it was thought, non-threatening cold-like symptoms.

Little St. Simons Island gives and takes. To this day, indelible images of the Berolzheimer family’s presence can be found everywhere on this 10,000-acre Golden Isle.