

## THE TAYLOR LEGACY

Douglas Taylor's maternal grandfather was Charles Stevens, a Dane who emigrated to the Georgia sea isles in the early 1800's, round the time Pierce Butler and Fanny Kemble lived at Hampton, sometimes called Butler's Point. His life, like his son's, and like his grandson Douglas' (later manager of the Island) was the sea. The family lived at Frederica, where both Douglas and his mother were born. Grandfather Stevens hauled cargo from island to island, with Darien as his home port. His daughter, Belle Stevens, who later married Douglas' father, William C. Taylor, deeded part of Fort Frederica to the Georgia Society of Colonial Dames of America. In 1941 Douglas turned over the remainder of that Stevens property to the National Park Service for compensation and some land at Oatlands, just south of Lawrence on St. Simons.

Stories about "Cap'n Doug" are still told by St. Simons and Little St. Simons residents. For example, Michael, Charles and Lois Berolzheimer's younger son, recorded several snake stories of Captain Doug in his Island diary. After citing characteristics of tree snakes, and describing the proliferation of water moccasins on Jekyll Island, Taylor told of the time he saw a man spit chewing tobacco into the mouth of a water moccasin. The snake died in three minutes. The reason the snake was vulnerable, Taylor said is because a moccasin only strikes on touch. His mouth opens so wide that he can't see danger over his jaws.

Captain Doug knew more about Little St. Simons Island than any other person. He left few written records, but as a person-to-person teacher of Island lore and life's lessons, Taylor's influence was pervasive. Captain Doug was a St. Simons man and rarely left the area. He traveled to Missouri once to buy a bull for Little St. Simons Island, took the Frederica I1 to Miami, and picked up Berolzheimer family members in Jacksonville a few times. That was the extent of his travel beyond Glynn County, Georgia.

The Frederica II was a superb yacht and the pride of Captain Axel Holter Sparre, who had migrated to Georgia from Denmark in the mid-twenties. His seamanship and talent as a craftsman contributed to the elegant design and superb construction of Frederica II. Buddy Hasell said that it resembled "a fine piece of furniture."

During visits of distinguished guests, it was usually Captain Doug who took the wheel of a succession of Island water craft (two Teals, Frederica, Frederica II, Baby Helen, Helen). He called the shots on tides, creek depths, fishing locations (and what tackle and bait to use), dike repair, engine repair, and maintenance, and supervised the Island employees. With a sure hand in the galley, Taylor offered guests a few special recipes. A favorite was the smoked mullet wrapped in the Island's red hay leaves. His famous basting sauce for venison is as follows:

- one to oz. bottle of Worcestershire Sauce
- one-fourth cup of lemon juice
- one-fourth pound of butter

Bring the above ingredients to a boil and baste the meat while it's hot. Add Tabasco Sauce to your taste's delight.

Philip Berolzheimer's New York hunting guests were aided by platforms or blinds that Captain Doug built overlooking deer "runs." This may not have been considered fair—for the hapless deer were driven past the platforms by Taylor's crew and dogs—but he knew his boss and understood the guests' lack of experience and their questionable physical condition. Even Philip occasionally retired to a cozy, hidden pine platform with a stand floor, sipped from a silver flask with the initials "P.B.," and took his shots on cue. Today, like then, buckshot is preferred, to make the experience more sporting and because a rifle can be more dangerous to nearby hunters.

Douglas Taylor went into business with Philip Berolzheimer. They bred cattle on the Island. When sales occurred, the proceeds were split fifty-fifty between Taylor and Berolzheimer. The old cattle pens stand today, with remnants of the walk-in dip tank that was used to remove ticks before shipment. Later that area was used to raise quail for consumption at the Hunting Lodge's famous dining table. White-face Herefords were imported from St. Louis, but they slowly perished from lack of minerals in the grasses. Texas longhorn and Brahman strains were brought in, resulting in a tougher Island breed. One longhorn named "Clark" dominated the herd. Clark's four-foot-long horns now grace the Hunting Lodge fireplace.

Nathaniel I. "Buddy" Hasell knew Captain Doug as well as anyone. A former commercial airline pilot, Buddy had been Island chief pilot, historian, official greeter, maintenance foreman, Island manager, and most importantly, lifetime friend to the Berolzheimer family. When Buddy was four years old, Douglas married his widowed mother, Bertha Gould Hasell. The St. Simons Gould family was Maine-bred. James Dunn Gould came to St. Simons to find timber for the building of U. S. Navy ships. He also built the lighthouse at the southern end of that island (a story delightfully recounted in Eugenia Price's novel *Lighthouse*, (the first in her St. Simons trilogy). Buddy married Jackie Vickers, one of Glynn County's pretty debutantes and member of a well known local farming and business family. Jackie has also acted as Island hostess for years. Buddy and Jackie loved Captain Doug and saw him under every imaginable circumstance, yet their comments about this extraordinary man are balanced and clear eyed.

Buddy knew Captain Doug as a good father. He also recalled that his stepfather's tobacco-chewing habit was only rivalled by his voracious love of paperback westerns. He could keep his eye in a western potboiler while arching tobacco juice against the side of a hot stove. The Taylor-Gould family at Frederica enjoyed an outdoors kind of life. Boats, animals, gardens, fields, and creeks were routine daily experiences. There was a pear orchard on the property, and of course the Fort Frederica ruins all around their home.

Captain Doug's outgoing personality was matched with a genteel southern style that

suggested to Island guests a slower, calmer era. Taylor's demeanor, in fact, put guests at ease, assuring them that everything would be taken care of.

Little St. Simons Island and every creek, dune, tideland, and hammock thereof were familiar to Douglas Taylor. Members of his extended family—Arnold, Stevens, Gould, Bruce, and more had hunted, fished, camped, and run cattle on Little St. Simons for generations. In the early years Taylor, like his grandfather and father, worked the sea isles on a boat. Soon, Little St. Simons became his life. His Island home was a cabin that previously occupied the site of Helen's House. Later it was a little house even closer to Mosquito Creek. Captain Doug spent his weekends at Frederica, leaving for Little St. Simons on Monday morning. Among major projects that Taylor undertook during this first Island decade was the construction of a cabin at the north end in 1923 and four years later the effort to enlarge the north end duck ponds. In the early 1930's an artesian well was drilled in the southwestern corner of the new pond to replenish fresh water.

Jackie Hasell, with a woman's view, saw Douglas Taylor as a handsome, rugged man. He exuded confidence. His toughness was occasionally resented by employees, she recalled, who may have perceived a no-nonsense streak in their sometimes dour boss. Taylor was also known to stand up to his chief, Philip Berolzheimer, especially regarding Philip's children, Charles and Helen. Much later he would defend Charles's and Helen's children. Charles Berolzheimer has called Captain Doug his "second father."

Poachers were given short shrift by Captain Douglas. His efforts to preserve the Island's resources never abated. On one occasion when confronting trespassers, he listened quietly while one suspect made a grand speech indicating that he had permission to visit the Island from the Island manager. Taylor coolly looked him in the eye and said: "I am Captain Douglas Taylor; I am manager of this Island, and I didn't give you permission. Now get out!"

His birthday parties, especially in the late years, were great events. The Taylor home at Oatlands hosted reunions and a stream of visitors, all centered around the patriarch and his wife, Berta, who frequently acted as hostess on Little St. Simons Island.

Douglas Taylor's white hair and clear, pale blue eyes are remembered by family members and their guests. Philip Berolzheimer, Charles's elder son, especially recalls Captain Doug's blue eyes. At ninety years of age Doug would scan his favorite western novels without the aid of glasses. While sitting on Captain Doug's porch one night, the old man turned to Philip, pointed at a black tree against a black sky, and said: "Look at that raccoon." Philip didn't see a thing.

Captain Doug taught visitors and family members how to hunt and fish safely. Douglas' lessons in using firearms and how to spot game are recalled today by a host of Islanders. Navigating boats in the marshy creeks was also his specialty. He patiently, calmly imparted sea isle lore over a period of fifty years.

During Douglas Taylor's lifetime the family never officially conferred the title of Island manager on anyone else although several "managers" held that position. Captain Doug died in 1977. He was ninety-eight. Doug Taylor's presence is warmly felt on Little St. Simons Island even today.