

# Lorene Townsend Howard collection on Sapelo Island (Ga.)

## Descriptive Summary

<b>Repository:</b>	Georgia Historical Society
<b>Creator:</b>	Howard, Lorene Townsend.
<b>Title:</b>	Lorene Townsend Howard collection on Sapelo Island (Ga.)
<b>Dates:</b>	1823-1999
<b>Extent:</b>	1.0 cubic feet (2 boxes)
<b>Identification:</b>	MS 1681

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## Biographical/Historical Note

Sapelo Island is Georgia's fourth largest barrier island; it measures approximately 10 miles long and 4 miles wide (17, 950 acres). The year-round population of Sapelo Island was around 70 in 1998, consisting mainly of residents of Hog Hammock, an African-American community descended from former slaves. Sapelo Island was first used by Native Americans. The Spanish then inhabited parts of Sapelo, including the mission of San Jose de Zapala during the 16th and 17th centuries. After the English established the colony of Georgia in 1733, legal rights to Sapelo Island shifted between the British, the Creek Indians, and Mary Musgrove, an interpreter for the British. Musgrove relinquished her claims in 1760. In 1789, the island was purchased by five Frenchmen who created the Sapelo Company, a shared agricultural venture that was dissolved in 1793.

Several large landowners dominated Sapelo's history for the next 150 years. Thomas Spalding (1774-1851) purchased the south end of Sapelo in 1802, creating a plantation based on timber, sugar cane, rice, and Sea Island cotton. From 1807-1810, Spalding constructed a main residence for the plantation, the "Big House." Following Spalding's death, his descendants and allied families held portions of the land during most of the nineteenth century. Many of Spalding's slaves and their descendants continued to live on Sapelo.

Detroit entrepreneur and engineer Howard E. Coffin (1873-1937) was the next to own large portions of the island from 1912-ca.1933, rebuilding on the foundations of Spalding's "Big House," farming, and raising cattle with the help of his cousin, Alfred W. "Bill" Jones. Coffin sold his interests to tobacco mogul Richard J. "Dick" Reynolds, Jr. (circa 1906-1964). Until his death in 1964, Reynolds continued many of the agricultural activities begun by Coffin and modernized the "Big House." He also consolidated the African-American settlements on Sapelo to Hog Hammock, an area of about 435 acres.

In 1949, Reynolds established the Sapelo Island Research Foundation. The University of Georgia Marine Institute began on the South End in 1953, nurtured by Dr. Eugene P. Odum. The Institute supports research in various natural sciences including marsh ecology, geologic processes, and marine biology.

In 1969, the State of Georgia purchased the North End from Reynold's widow, Annemarie Reynolds, to establish an 8,240 acre wildlife refuge to be administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In 1976, the state purchased 5,000 acres from the Sapelo Island Research Foundation to establish the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Sanctuary administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The only remaining private lands are Hog Hammock and isolated tracts near towards the north end of the island. Sapelo was opened for public day tours in 1977 and President James E. "Jimmy" Carter used the island for vacations during his 1977-1981 administration.

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## Scope and Content Note

This collection consists primarily of photocopies (with some original copies) of printed publications primarily collected by Lorene Gassert Townsend Howard, librarian at the Sapelo Island Marine Institute, who worked there from 1966 until 1995. The photocopied materials are largely newspaper clippings, but there are also some typescripts, general correspondence, and memos. Dates range from 1823 to 1999 with gaps, the bulk of the items ranging from the early 1960s to the mid-1990s. In addition to some materials already at Sapelo when Howard arrived, friends and colleagues who knew about the collection sent addenda to her. The original clippings and files remain at the Institute. The collection is divided into two series: coastal area and Sapelo Island. The coastal area series contains two subseries: Georgia geographical location

and coastal history and life. The Sapelo Island series is divided into two subseries: history and ownership and subject files.

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## Index Terms

African Americans--Georgia--Golden Isles.  
Blackbeard Island (Ga.)  
Clippings (information artifacts)  
Conservation of natural resources--Georgia--Golden Isles.  
Darien (Ga.)  
Georgia. Department of Natural Resources.  
Howard, Lorene Townsend.  
Islands--Georgia.  
Lighthouses--Georgia--Sapelo Island.  
McIntosh County (Ga.)  
Research notes.  
Reynolds, Richard J.  
Sapelo Island (Ga.)  
Spalding, Thomas, 1774-1851.  
University of Georgia. Marine Institute.

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Material was acquired from creator.

### Preferred Citation

[item identification], Lorene Townsend Howard collection on Sapelo Island (Ga.), MS 1681, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

### Acquisition Information

Gift of Lorene Townsend Howard, 2003.

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## Restrictions

### Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

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## Sponsorship

Encoding funded by a 2012 Documenting Democracy grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

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## Container List

## **SERIES 1:: Coastal area, 1823-1998**

This series contains materials concerning the coastal region of Georgia. It consists of two subseries: 1.1, Georgia geographical locations; and 1.2, coastal history and life.

### **SUBSERIES 1.1:: Georgia geographical locations**

This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

#### Counties

#### **Box Fldr**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Glenn, 1987  |
|   | 2 | Liberty, 1987  |
|   | 3 | McIntosh, 1976-1989<br>(includes Altamaha River information) |

#### Islands, general

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | 4 | Golden Isles of Georgia, 1967-1988                               |
|  | 5 | "Guale: The Golden Coast of Georgia," by Eugene P. Odum, 1973    |
|  | 6 | "History of Georgia's Barrier islands," by Carroll Hard, undated |

#### Islands, specific

- |  |    |                                  |
|--|----|----------------------------------|
|  | 7  | Blackbeard, 1955, 1988, undated  |
|  | 8  | Butler, 1987-1988, 1996, undated |
|  | 9  | Cumberland, 1970-1977, 1987      |
|  | 10 | Jekyll, 1977-1979, 1987          |
|  | 11 | Ossabaw, 1974-1979               |
|  | 12 | Patterson, undated               |
|  | 13 | Saint Catherines, 1977, undated  |
|  | 14 | Saint Simons, 1987               |
|  | 15 | Skidaway, 1968, 1988             |

#### Towns

- |  |    |                               |
|--|----|-------------------------------|
|  | 16 | Brunswick, 1987               |
|  | 17 | Darien, 1901, 1936, 1986-1997 |

## **SUBSERIES 1.2:: Coastal History and Life**

This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

African American Sea Island communities

(see also Hog Hammock Community)

- 18 General, 1982-1987
- 19 "Gullah: A Vanishing Tribe," by Barbara C. Mock, 1974
- 20 Ecology and conservation of Barrier Islands, 1971-1973, 1987
- 21 Seafood industry, 1987-1989, 1994

## **SERIES 2:: Sapelo Island, 1896-1999**

This series contains materials relating directly to Sapelo. It consists of two subseries: 2.1, history and ship; and 2.2, subject files.

### **SUBSERIES 2.1:: History and ship**

This subseries is arranged chronologically by period.

#### **Box Fldr**

- 1 22 General history overviews, 1934, 1949, 1969-1993, undated
- Prehistory (prior to 1760)
- 23 Archaeology, "Sapelo Island: A General Report", 1975
- 24 General, 1977
- 25 Colonial period and French era (1760-circa 1802), 1984-1990
- Thomas Spalding and descendants (ownership 1802-1900)
- Thomas Spalding (1774-1851), 1823-1842, 1973, 1986-1997
- 27 Charles Spalding (1808-1887)?, 1878
- 28 "Memories of Sapelo" by Charles Spalding Wyly (b. 1836), 1916
- 29 Inverness community (1891-1914), 1896, 1898, 1975
- 30 Howard Coffin (ownership 1912-circa 1933), 1977-1982
- Richard J. Reynolds and family (ownership circa 1933-1964)
- Reynolds, Annemarie (b. circa 1929), 1964, 1976, 1987

Reynolds, Marianne O'Brien (d. 1984), 1975, 1981

Reynolds, Patrick (b. circa 1949), 1986-1989

Reynolds, Richard J. (1906-1964), 1949-1998

"Sapelo Sound," Newsletter of Camp Sapelo, 1952-1953

State, Local, and Federal Agencies

Department of Natural Resources

General, 1975-1978, 1987, undated

Management Issues, 1975, 1981-1998, undated

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 1987, 1995

Sapelo Island Research Foundation, (began 1949)

**Box Fldr**

2 39 General, (with gaps), 1963-1998, undated

40 "Special Report to the Sapelo Island Research Foundation", 1991

University of Georgia Marine Institute

Facilities, (with gaps), 1957-1990, undated

Newsletters, 1964-1965

Staff

Eugene Odum, 1961-1998

General, 1958-1994, undated

Lists and Directories, 1971-1973, undated

Specific staff articles, 1987-1988, undated

**SUBSERIES 2.2:: Subject files**

This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

**Box**

2 Arts and culture  
(See also *Hog Hammock Community, Sweetgrass Baskets*, folder 64)

Menaboni, Athos (mural artist), 1984-1990

Poetry, undated

Visual arts, 1984-1990

- 50 Bibliographies, 1978, 1988
- 51 Boats ( *Annemarie, Janet, Kit Jones*), 1968-1999
- 52 Carter, President Jimmy, 1976-1979, undated
- 53 Cooking and recipes, 1987, 1991
- Ecology and conservation  
(*See also Department of Natural Resources, Management Issues, folder 37*)
- Conservation, 1974-1977, 1986-1988, 1996
- Timber and logging practices, 1986, 1992
- Wildlife hunting and fishing, 1979, 1987-1992, undated
- Wildlife and plant life, 1964-1994
- Historic Preservation
- "Big House", 1979, 1987-1989  
(*See also University of Georgia Marine Institute Facilities, folder 41*)
- General, 1987, 1995-1998, undated
- Hog Hammock Community
- Bailey, Cornelia Walker, 1986-1990
- General, 1976-1983, 1989-1998, undated
- "Historical, Demographic, and Biochemical Studies on Sapelo Island, Georgia"  
by Jana Earl Hesser, undated
- Individuals, 1979, 1987-1988, 1997
- Sweetgrass Baskets (Allen Green, Yvonne Grovner), 1975-1998
- 65 Hurricanes, 1975, undated
- Land use
- Land disputes, 1984-1987, 1995
- Tourism, 1977-1998
- 68 Lighthouse, 1979-1998, undated  
(*See also Marianne O'Brien Reynolds, folder 32*)
- 69 Miscellaneous, 1967-1988, undated
- 70 Post Office, 1996-1998
- 71 Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society, 1997