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THE JEKYLL ISLAND CLUB HOTEL, AN ARCHITECTURAL GEM
With a Charming Historic Ambience

The Jekyll Island Club Hotel, located on a Georgia barrier island of great natural beauty, is a Victorian treasure. Recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1978, it has been designated a Historic Hotel of America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Originally a hunting retreat for the nation's wealthy elite, the hotel today is a unique resort with architectural character and a charming historic ambience.

The main structures, built between 1887 and 1917, were designed by Charles Alexander of Chicago; Charles Alling Gifford of New York; and Chicago partners, Henry C. Dangler and David Adler. Alexander designed the original club house in the American Queen Anne style, incorporating into its plan the turret that dominates the roof line, encompassing verandas, bay windows, extended chimneys and overall asymmetrical design. Handsome interior details include Ionic columns in the dining room, twelve- and fifteen-foot ceilings, oak wainscoting and other handsomely detailed woodwork, as well as leaded art glass and distinctively detailed fireplaces.

Gifford, associated with the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, designed a majority of the other club buildings. Well known for his American Renaissance designs and the "shingle-style" resort cottage, he incorporated elements from each of these styles into his Jekyll Island designs: the Annex, Sans Souci, the billiard room (present hotel lobby) a dining room addition, and the club stables (present Museum Visitors Center). He also built a large, brick, sound-proof cottage for Joseph Pulitzer and "Mistletoe Cottage" for Henry Kirke Porter. All are extant today with the exception of the Pulitzer Cottage.

Crane Cottage and Cherokee Cottage, renovated and added to the Hotel's collection in 2002, are Italian Renaissance in design. Originally built for Richard Teller Crane, Jr., in 1917, Crane Cottage is reminiscent of a villa the owner and his wife admired on their travels in northern

Italy. The two-story building features a central courtyard surrounded by arcaded loggias; originally it had twenty rooms and seventeen baths. The south lawn features a large, formal sunken garden with white walls and fountains at either end. Although the architect of Cherokee Cottage remains unknown, its design reflects the Italian Renaissance style made popular by McKim, Mead and White in the early 1880's. This cottage was built for the George Frederick Shradley family in 1904 and is among the most beautiful on the island.

As an exclusive hunting retreat for the nation's wealthiest financiers and industrialists of the time, the Jekyll Island Club was the site of events and meetings of historic significance during the latter part of the Victorian period. William K. Vanderbilt, J.P. Morgan, William Rockefeller, Joseph Pulitzer and 50 or so of their friends, contemplating the ideal location for their hunting club in 1886, chose Jekyll Island. Its climate, abundant wild life and natural beauty appealed to them. Once the decision was made, it took just two years to incorporate the club, purchase the island and have the club house constructed. In January of 1888, they gathered their families and boarded their yachts for the first "season" on Jekyll. They expected to have a wonderful time.

And they did. A collection of sepia photographs captures the spirit of these families enjoying Jekyll's considerable outdoor pleasures...morning hunting trips, lawn parties, carriage rides, and leisurely afternoons at the beach. For years there was unofficial competition among yachting members to see who would arrive in the longest, fastest, most beautifully appointed vessel. Dinner each evening, however, was the high point of the day. Women would spend hours selecting the dresses they would wear to the dining room; men would have definite ideas about what they hoped to accomplish in over-dinner conversations with each other. In those conversations decisions might be made which would literally determine the next president of the country, the health of the nation's economy, or the career of any of their peers.

For example, in 1899 President McKinley was facing re-election, and club member Cornelius Bliss was determined that McKinley, "his man," would be successful. He and Marcus Hanna invited McKinley to Jekyll Island, and two days before he was to arrive, it was discovered that Thomas B. Reed, Speaker of the House and McKinley's arch rival, would also be on Jekyll at that time. Through the machinations of Bliss and Hanna, a meeting of the two was arranged,

pressures were brought to bear, and Reed ultimately did not oppose McKinley's re-election even though he was adamantly opposed to McKinley's imperialistic policies regarding Cuba and the Philippines.

Finance, as well as politics, was of paramount concern to many club members. J.P. Morgan could create or quell economic panics on Wall Street with the financial resources at his command. George Baker, head of the First National Bank of New York, and James Stillman, head of the National City Bank of New York, also members of the Jekyll Island Club, were nearly as wealthy as Morgan. In 1907 when a particularly virulent economic panic caused a run on the banks, one of these three men paved the way for a secret meeting on Jekyll. Senator Nelson Aldrich and five other bankers were to attend. The purpose of this meeting of banking experts was to develop a plan, quickly and quietly, for a centralized banking structure for the country; the result, the creation of the plan for the Federal Reserve System and the Federal Reserve Bank. Communications was the field of Theodore Vail, president of the company which later became AT&T. When his company laid the telephone lines for the first transcontinental telephone call in 1915, he was on Jekyll Island and ill. He had the linemen lay the lines to Jekyll where he was convalescing so that he could participate in this momentous event in communications history.

Guests visiting the Jekyll Island Club Hotel today may enjoy dinner in the Grand Dining Room where former members of the club made significant decisions, enjoy the beauty of the leaded art glass and other interior details, and imagine visiting the club for the "season" in the early 1900's. Whether their primary interest is architecture or history, guests find rewarding their visit to the Jekyll Island Club Hotel, a Victorian treasure.

For information or reservations, contact the Jekyll Island Club Hotel, 371 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, GA, 31527, or call 912-635-2600 or 800-535-9547. The Email address is reservations@jekyllclub.com. Visit our website: www.jekyllclub.com.

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