



1920s St. Simons Island: Boston Lettuce and Bathing Beaches

The economic optimism of the Roaring '20s was reflected in publication of the magazine *Georgia* by a consortium of statewide business organizations promoting the state's opportunities and resources.

The July 1926 issue of *Georgia* magazine contained a special section on Glynn County as a leader in agriculture for the region. On the county's mainland and islands, fields that had once produced the world famous sea island cotton had been repurposed for truck farming—production of vegetable crops on a large scale for shipment to distant markets.

An article by George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley* (Ga.) *News Banner*, stated that the secret to successful truck farming was timing, as demonstrated by Florida trucker, E.C. McLean. He acquired a farm on St. Simons Island and scheduled his crops to be ready for harvest in the interval between Florida and California production. With careful planning, a Boston lettuce field on St. Simons could yield a railway carload per acre, valued at more than \$1,000. In 1926, lettuce grown on thirty-seven acres by McLean and other farmers sold for \$43,500 to East Coast markets. Other profitable crops on St. Simons included tomatoes and peppers.

The magazine also reported on recreation opportunities, noting that St. Simons Island was the only nearby island "open to the general public, as the others are game preserves and playgrounds for men of wealth." In contrast, St. Simons was connected to Brunswick by a "splendid road," had "three wonderful bathing beaches," and "was the safest resort on the South Atlantic."

This month's images from the 1926 issue of *Georgia* magazine are a Boston lettuce field on St. Simons Island and surf bathers at East Beach. A rare copy of the magazine is preserved in the Coastal Georgia Historical Society archives.

Our monthly images on this page are from the vast archives of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society. The Society's mission includes the "administration, restoration and maintenance of historic facilities and resources ... preserved as a living part of the historical and cultural foundations of our coastal community." Society facilities include the St. Simons Lighthouse and Museum, the A.W. Jones Heritage Center, and the Historic Coast Guard Station. To learn more about the Society, its diverse programs, and the benefits of Society membership, please call 912.634.7090 or visit coastalgeorgiahistory.org.