

## Weathering the Storms ... Again

**B**ecause Irma came to visit while we were in production on this issue and interrupted our ability to communicate and transfer information to others, we thought we'd go ahead and reprint a previously run SSI Archives that fit the occasion. The Golden Isles made it through Dora in 1964, and again through Matthew last year, and today, although Irma tossed around some of our beloved Johnson rocks, our community WILL recover from and rebuild following the aftermath of this storm with the same indomitable spirit and strength.

In September 1964, Hurricane Dora roared across St. Simons Island and the Georgia coast, and she was no lady! Packing winds of 125 mph, Dora made landfall just north of St. Augustine on September 10 and then moved slowly northward along the coast through Jacksonville.

Dora slammed ashore on St. Simons Island on September 12, where 90 mph winds and flooding rains pummeled the island for 18 hours. The storm's winds and 13-foot storm surge wreaked havoc along the beaches, gobbling up shoreline, toppling hundreds of trees, destroying structures and toppling some beachfront homes into the ocean. Hastily built dikes prevented the lobby of The King and Prince Hotel from being flooded. On September 13, Dora moved further up the coast, resulting in final total damages estimated at \$250 million and a death toll of five.

Shortly after the storm, the island had another, more welcomed visitor. President Lyndon Johnson arrived on St. Simons Island to survey the damage, remarking to a member of his party, "It's worse than you told me." The resulting Federal aid that followed came in the form of thousands of massive granite stones placed all along the island's high water mark to help guard against further beach erosion. This still-standing revetment is locally referred to as the "Johnson Rocks."

Fortunately, direct hits by hurricanes such as Dora continue to be rare here, thanks in part to the Atlantic Bight that places southeast Georgia within the westernmost section of the eastern seaboard, but the devastation caused by these storms can still be significant.

This month's images, from the archives of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society, show some of Hurricane Dora's damage to Island beachfront homes and structures.



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 Maritime Center (formerly the U.S. Coast Guard Station). To learn more about the Society, its diverse programs, and the benefits of Society membership, please call (912) 638.4666, or visit [www.saintsimonslighthouse.org](http://www.saintsimonslighthouse.org).