



Amphitrite: Built for War, Refitted for Leisure

In the summer of 1928, motorists crossing the causeway to St. Simons Island would have seen an interesting vessel on the Frederica River: a three-story floating hotel. The *Amphitrite* provided accommodations for visitors playing the new course at Sea Island Golf Club while The Cloister was under construction. The ship was anchored at the Sea Island Yacht Club dock just south of the causeway.

According to an article dated June 1, 1928 in the *Brunswick Pilot* newspaper, the ship provided every amenity for the discerning guest. All 76 rooms faced the decks, had running water, and were “furnished in sumptuous style.” Every other room was equipped with a private bath. A spacious roof garden could be found on top of the vessel, perfect for music and dancing on a summer evening.

The ship had an interesting history. Launched in 1883, she had been designed using the same general plan as the famous Civil War ironclad warship, *U.S.S. Monitor*. Before and

after seeing action in the Spanish American War, the *Amphitrite* served as a training ship. She visited the Brunswick area several times between 1895 and 1901. The *Pilot* reported that she was used for local naval militia training exercises in 1897. Anchored in the river near Quarantine Island, the ship was used for gunnery practice, with “local boys” firing “big and little guns at targets distributed down the river and in the marsh over toward Jekyll.”

Later converted to a floating hotel, the *Amphitrite* spent seasons at Palm Beach, Florida and Beaufort, South Carolina before coming to Georgia. She was eventually scrapped in the 1950s.



This month's images show the Amphitrite as a floating hotel and the Sea Island Yacht Club.

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.