



The Women Who Helped Shape the Island's Economy

A scrapbook donated to the Coastal Georgia Historical Society in 1991 documents the activities of the former St. Simons Women's Club and provides a snapshot of island life during the 1950s, before tourism became a booming industry. According to a report included in the scrapbook, club members had identified a growing need to attract visitors throughout the year to provide a more stable economy for area residents. The report noted that "St. Simons has remained for fifty years more a summer beach resort with only a three months' business."

In 1953, the Club established an "adult center" in the Village, open year round, to welcome visitors. The Center was

adjacent to the Golden Isles Hotel, which was located on the west side of Mallery Street near the pier. In addition to providing a handcraft shop, lending library, and restroom facility for visitors, the Center hosted weekly activities enjoyed by the community, such as bingo, bridge lessons, and sewing workshops. The Center also had a television set for public use and by 1956 boasted two air conditioning units.

Over the next few years, the Club took over additional space in the hotel buildings and also sponsored numerous recreational activities at other island locations. These included youth programs such as weekly dances, tennis

clinics, water skiing lessons, and a children's choir. Visitor services that were pioneered by the Club are now managed and funded by Glynn County and the Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau.

This month's images feature the Center's shop, where handcrafted items from Georgia were sold, and a view of the west side of Mallery Street. The St. Simons Women's Club was located in the building on the left.

