

Buddy Sullivan Lecture Index

Segment 01 – Introduction to Coastal GA

Buddy Sullivan begins with an introduction to the history of the coast from ecological perspective, particularly how the landscape and waterscape changed people's lives sociologically, economically, culturally. The lecture will focus mainly from a European and Afrocentric perspective from colonial times to the present day. Those who moved to coastal Georgia had to adapt to the ecosystem because of its unusual conditions and circumstances. Sullivan points out that a key point to notice is all the estuaries on the coast where the river that flow through the center of GA flow into the sea, making the coast the perfect place to cultivate rice

Segment 02– Agriculture: Rice

1700s when colonists came to GA, it was known that the economy was going to focus on agriculture just like in the South Carolina colony. The big 2 cash crops to be cultivated in GA were rice and Sea Island cotton

Rice:

In early 1700s SC, slaves were brought to the colony to aid rice cultivation by English planters who adopted the African techniques for rice cultivation using the tidal flow method used in West Africa for generations using fresh water river systems and tidal offshore waters. Though there was an initial ban on slavery in GA, the colony was lagging economically so there were people in the colony advocating the adoption of slavery so they utilize the same successful agricultural methods as SC. Once Slavery was allowed in the mid 1700s, Georgian colonists began implementing the same rice cultivation techniques used in West Africa and SC and utilized the task system of labor. Rice was then shipped to the Mediterranean and Africa, but much of it remained in GA as rice was a staple of everyone's diet.

Segment 03 - Agriculture: Cotton

Sea Island or Long Staple Cotton:

Introduced to the United States in 1786 from the Bahamas through British Royalists who left America during the Revolution and went to live in the Bahamas and Caribbean and sent black seeds back to their friends in America as an experiment. Sea Island cotton was planted for the first time in coastal GA and the U.S. in the 1780s. Sea Island cotton producers utilized this part of the country for the cotton plantations because of the ecosystem which provided warm, generally mild weather and dry porous soil. Sea Island was cotton used for delicate and refine fabrics.

Prior to the Whitney cotton gin, a cotton gin was invented in the 1785 in the Bahamas by a man named Joseph Eve called Eve's Roller Gin used to process sea island cotton specifically. Eve's Roller Gin rolled and pressed the seeds out of the cotton to help preserve the cotton for its later use spinning delicate fabrics

Segment 04 – How people used the ecosystem to further their agricultural, economic, and commercial development

Waterways and Transportation:

Merchant vessels were built in great numbers to facilitate the shipment of agricultural commodities using the preexisting rivers and waterways flowing through GA.

Tabby:

True essence of what it means to use the local ecological system to develop an aid to economic and social lives. A building material that used oyster shell (and the lime it produces when burnt), sand and water first used by the Native Americans in Florida. Used the material to build nearly all structures in the eighteenth century

Pine Trees:

The Timber business became popular after the Civil War and the end of plantation agriculture - utilized the Altamaha river to float the timber down the river to the coast to be shipped to the North, South America, Europe and many other global places. More pine timber in south GA and N Florida than anywhere else in the world. Explosion of the timber industry supplied thousands of jobs for people in GA after the Civil War until 1900, including jobs for African Americans which is why coastal GA was able to economically recover faster than other parts of GA after the Civil War

When the pine timber was overcut along the rivers, it no longer became cost-effective to cut timber miles away from the river, ship it to the river, and then ship it down river. The supply of pine timber decreased overtime because pine timber was never replanted in the areas it was cut down

Oysters and Shrimp:

In 1889 the U.S. Coastal Survey determined that the GA coast had an abundant supply of oysters. Oyster harvesting industry exploded around the GA coast during the early 1900s. In particular, African Americans began harvesting oysters once the timber business started slowing.

The decline in the timber business also led to the emergence of the shrimp industry. By the end of WWII the shrimping business exploded in coastal GA. However, the shrimp was overly caught and in the interior waters in particular the shrimp disappeared. Shrimpers learned to stop shrimping in the sounds so the shrimp were able to develop and their numbers replenished. However, in the 1970s the cost of fuel increased to a point where fishermen couldn't afford to catch shrimp at a high rate and foreign shrimp harvesting became popular, driving the domestic price of the shrimp down, so they could not make a high enough profit and many shrimp companies went out of business

Segment 05 – Coastal Georgia during the ongoing Environmental Movement

Late 1800s many southerners could not afford to keep their land, especially on the coastal islands, so they sold it to wealthy northerners who built winter homes on the land. Northerners wanted to preserve the land they found unique, and many families handed the islands over to the National Park service to ensure there would never be development on them.

Segment 06 Archeology and Anthropology in Coastal Georgia

St. Catherine's Island – Artifacts found belonging to the Spanish mission that once existed on the island. Talks about the history of Savannah including the town planning, its importance as a seaport during the colonial period

Explains the existing structures and ruins that still stand in coastal GA, including slave quarters and burial grounds on Sapelo Island. Burial grounds tell a lot about the culture of those who are buried there, and who did the burying.