

Harris Neck Timeline

Date	Event
500 B.C. - 500 A.D.	9Mc303, a Deptford(?) Period oyster shell midden covering the north end of a maritime hammock surrounded by tidal marsh.
500-1000 A.D.	9Mc304, a small Wilmington Period oyster shell midden.
1330-1490 A.D.	Irene/Pine Harbor occupation at the Harris Neck Site [9Mc41].
1614 A.D.	Protohistoric/Contact Period Occupation at the Thomas Landing Site [9Mc42].
1570-1720 A.D.	Protohistoric Period Occupation at the Harris Neck Site [9Mc41] – this occupation seemed to have occurred after the 1596 Guale Revolt and contemporaneous with the Spanish mission “Santa Catalina de Guale” on St. Catherines Island.
1750 - 1788	Grants to varying sized tracts located on the north end of Harris Neck <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daniel Demetre; inherited by William Thomas in 1758 [500 acres]. - John Rutledge; purchased by Ann Harris in 1750 [50 acres]. - Ann Harris Demetre, acting as guardian to William Thomas Harris [350 acres]. - Daniel Demetre (3 grants) [20, 20, and 200 acres respectively] - William Thomas Harris; purchased by John Jones [200 acres]. - Levi Sheftal [100 acres]. - Benjamin Sheftal [200 acres]. - Lachlin McIntosh, Sr [200 acres]. - John Piercy; purchased by John Jones [200 acres].
1813	Jonathan Thomas’ Peru Plantation, an approximately 2400-acre Sea Island cotton plantation.
19 th Century	Thomas K. Gould Plantation – historic period occupation at the Harris Neck Site [9Mc41], interpreted as the site of the plantation’s detached kitchen.
1853	Margaret Ann Harris purchased Belvedere Plantation from Jonathan Thomas for \$2000.
1865	Sherman issued Special Order No. 15 that reserved for recently freed blacks sea islands from Charleston, South Carolina to the St. Johns River in Florida, as well as abandoned rice plantations up the rivers for 30 miles.
1865	Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands [Freedmen Bureau] established. Tunis Campbell appointed as superintendent of islands for Georgia. The islands included Burnside, Ossabaw, St. Catherines, Sapelo, and Colonel’s.
1865	Campbell established settlements on Sapelo [214 adults and 98 children] and St. Catherines Islands [200 adults and 117 children]. By December 1865, Campbell had settled 369 people on St. Catherines, 78 on Ossabaw, and 352 on Sapelo Island.

August 1865	Davis Tillson appointed as the Freedmen's Bureau administrator for mainland Georgia.
September 1865	Margaret Ann Harris's will witnessed by Campbell, Hammlton Dellegall, and Samuel Graham on St. Catherines Island.
January 1866	Tillson's control extended to Georgia's Sea Islands. Campbell fired from his position as an Agent for the Freedmen's Bureau. Special Order No. 130 banned Campbell from visiting the freedmen communities on Sapelo Island.
1866	President Andrew Johnson rescinded Sherman's Special Order No. 15 and ordered restoration of lands to their former owners.
1866	Margaret Ann Harris dies; her estate inherited by her son, Bright Baker Harris.
1866-1867	Campbell sought to acquire the 1250-acre BelleVille Plantation from C.H. Hopkins, Jr.
1870-1880	Thomas Family subdividing Peru Plantation for sale to former slaves and/or other freedmen. Harris Neck Gullah Geechee community appeared.
1875	Bright Baker Harris dies; estate, which includes Belvedere, Dunham, Harris, Sr., and Dillon Plantations, administered by W.J. Wallace. None of these plantations are located within the footprint of Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge.
1875	Belvedere Plantation [ca. 1200 acres] sold to Charles O. Fulton for \$410.
1875	McIntosh County School established at Harris Neck.
1878	Lot 4 of Peru Plantation's Parcel 6 sold to Frank Proctor.
1879	First African Baptist Church established.
1882	Earliest dated markers in the Gould Cemetery [Mark Baisden, Kate Rice]
1889	Pierre Lorillard purchased 30 acres at Thomas Landing; begins construction of two-story house, deep-water dock on the South Newport River, and horse stables. Lillie Allien (later Livingston) purchased 28 acres from Malvina Thomas.
1890	Eleanor Van Brunt Clapp purchased 7 acres from Malvina H. Thomas.
1894	Clapp's original house burned down.
1901	Pierre Lorillard dies in New York.
1920	Home Guild Lodge [Harris Neck Home & Protective Guide No. 1] acquired Tract 3; the lodge became inactive after 8 years of operation.
1926	Augustus Oemler's Oyster Plant established south of and adjacent to Pirate's Point.
1928	Oemler's widow sells the Oemler Tract and Oyster Plant to the Maggioni Family.
1930	Jacksonville-Richmond Airway route established in 1930. Reconnaissance of the route underway in order to identify locations for intermediate airstrips along the route.
1931-1942	Civilian Aeronautics Administration's Intermediate Airfield No. 8 established at Harris Neck under a renewable lease between the CAA and Courtney Thorpe [later E.M. Thorpe].
1933	L.P. Maggioni & Co. purchases the 8.23-acre Tract 58 from Courtney Thorpe.
1936	E.M. Thorpe and family moved into relocated King-Mueller House at Spring Cove on Harris Neck.

1937	Eleanor Clapp dies; she had resided on the neck from 1890 to 1937.
1937	Mosaic Lodge established on Tract 162.
1939	Canoochee Electric Membership Cooperation acquires a right-of-way across E.M. Thorpe's property. The company ran electric lines to the CAA's beacon, Thorpe's Spring Cove house, and to Maggioni's Fish and Oyster Houses. The power shed was moved to Eddie Thorpe's yard for use by his daughter, Dora.
1941	Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 855 th Guard Squadron from Hunter Field assumed control over the CAA airfield at Harris Neck on December 7, 1941 and held it until March 2, 1943.
1942	The CAA airfield closed to the public. Civil Air Patrols began anti-submarine flights. Third Air Force selected locations for the rehabilitation and/or construction of new training bases and auxiliary fields. Harris Neck was one of the locations selected as a sub-base for Savannah's Chatham Field. The intermediate air field continued to be used by the 97 th and 118 th Reconnaissance Squadrons for training purposes until construction of the triangular airfield was completed in September 1943.
1942	Land acquisition and condemnation procedures initiated by the Department of War in order to acquire 1200 acres for two runways. The 3 rd Army Air Force added a third runway and initiated steps to acquire Livingston's 55.892 acres [Tract 143] and E.M. Thorpe's 13 acres [Tract 140B]. Rather than acquiring Tract 140B from Thorpe, the War Department elected to lease this tract for \$1/year.
1943	Nine Declarations of Taking and deposits of "estimated" fair compensation filed with District Court for the Southern District of Georgia [January 14 to July 19, 1943].
1943	Construction of Harris Neck Army Air Field started. In August 1943, the CAA transferred the Intermediate Air Field's skeletal steel beacon tower and the 24-inch rotating light to the Army Air Corps for their use.
1943	Harris Neck Army Air Field, Thomasville Army Air Field (Thomasville, GA), and Waycross Army Air Field (Waycross, GA) assigned to the Third Fighter Command. Personnel at Harris Neck assigned to Detachment No. 2, 42 nd BH & ABS, the 856 th Guard Squadron, the 903 rd QM Company, the 853 rd Signal Service Co., and the Medical Detachment of Dale Mabry Field. These units were combined to form the Harris Neck Base Detachment December 15, 1943.
1944	P-39 Bell Airacobora pursuit planes replaced by P-40 Curtiss Kittyhawk planes for instructional and training purposes.
1944	346 th Army Air Force Base Unit (CCTS F) de-activated and the field was transferred to Air Technical Service Command effective December 31, 1944. Prior to de-activation, the enlisted personnel were transferred to various Army Air Bases under III Fighter Command in Georgia and Florida.
1944	Passage of the Surplus Property Act of 1944. E.M. Thorpe sought to re-purchase from the federal government 550 acres that he previously owned. The 13.5-acre tract [Tract 140B], which was leased by the Department of War, returned to Thorpe.
October 25, 1946	U.S. War Assets Administration became accountable for Harris Neck Army Air Field.
1948	District Court issued final judgments that awarded specific sums to individual land owner in January and February,

	1948.
1948	The War Assets Administration transferred the air field to McIntosh County for its use as a county or municipal airport.
1949	The McIntosh County News reported that the Livingston House and military buildings, such as the hospital, boiler house, the theater, pumping stations, had been stripped of fixtures and equipment.
1949	Union Bag and Paper Corporation erected a barrier across a public dirt road that ran across their property from Harris Neck Road to Belvedere Island Landing. Gullah watermen, who engaged in commercial oystering, fishing, and crabbing, used the landing. McIntosh County Commissioners threatened legal action against the corporation if the barrier was not removed. The corporation subsequently removed the barrier.
1949	The Bertrams acquired a 0.31-acre parcel from E.M. Thorpe [part of Tract 140B] for use as a commercial fish camp and oyster house. The fish camp was in operation until 1970.
1957	Dr. John C. Hull acquired 5000 acres on the east side of Barbour Island River, including Pirate's Point, from Pearl Murphy (formerly Pearl B. Evans).
1958	Dr. Hull started construction of a bridge across Barbour Island River in order to access Pirate's Point.
1951 -1958	Sheriff Tom Poppell leased the Livingston House from McIntosh County in order to operate an exclusive club.
1961	The Federal Aviation Agency re-asserted its title to the former Army Air Field.
1962	General Services Administration conveyed the former air field to the U.S. Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife [now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service] in order to establish Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge.
1962	Hull died in a bridge construction accident; Mabel A. Hull acquired Pirate's Point and the other acreage via her husband's will.
1962	Woody and Goose ponds created by installation of water control structures, i.e. flashboard risers in concrete culverts.
1962-1963	The Livingston House sold as salvage for \$310 to Harry Widincamp of Townsend. The hangar was sold as salvage to Irvin Davis for \$50.
1963	A riser control structure was installed in a culvert under Taxi Strip No. 3 to create Greenhead Pond. A similar structure was installed in a culvert under Taxi Strip No. 4 to create Teal Pond. Snipe Pond was created by installation of flashboard risers in a culvert. Redear sunfish and catfish were introduced into Goose, Greenhead, and Snipe Ponds in an attempt to establish a freshwater fishery.
1976	Representative Bo Ginn introduces H.R. 15743, which died in committee.
1979	Edgar Timmons, Jr., Hercules Anderson, Chris McIntosh, Ted Clark and other members of "People Organized for Equal Rights [POER]" camped on the Refuge as part of an attempt to assert Timmons' claim to the land. A court order issued for the removal of the group; four individuals who defied the order were arrested.
1979	Hearing on the Harris Neck issue before the House of Representative's Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries at the request of Representative Bo Ginn. Ginn introduced HR 4018, which died in committee. Senator

	Herman Talmadge introduced S 2143, which died in committee.
1979	Perry's "Blacks Fight to Regain Land They Lost" appeared in <i>Jet's</i> May 24, 1979 issue; Smith's "Reclaiming the Land" appeared in <i>Black Enterprise's</i> August 1979 issue.
1980	Lawsuit filed by POER's representative Edgar Timmons, Jr., heard by the 7 th District Court in Savannah. Judge B. Avant Edenfield found no evidence to support POER's claim and ruled that the land belonged to the U.S. Government [U.S. v Edgar Timmons, Jr., et al., CV 279-50 (S.D.GA, August 25, 1980; U.S. v 1,200 acres of land in McIntosh County, Georgia, Civ. No. 56 (S.D.GA., 1981).
1980	"Georgia Blacks to Fight Ruling on Lands They Say is Theirs," article in <i>Jet's</i> July 17, 1980 issue.
1981	Ginn introduces HR 1044, which died in committee following receipt of comments from the U.S. Department of Justice.
1981	The Refuge replaced the three-strand barb wire fence around Gould Cemetery with a chain link fence.
1980-1983	The Hull property soled to Melvin N. Gordon/Bar-Boar Islands, Inc.
1982	POER's case appealed to the 11 th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta. The appellate court upheld the lower court's ruling [U.S. v Timmons, 672 F.2d1373 (11 th Cir. 1982)].
January 1982	Christopher McIntosh's McIntosh Crab Plant profiled in the January issue of <i>Black Enterprise</i> .
February 5, 1982	POER's representatives meet with Secretary of the Interior James Watt in Atlanta.
April 17, 1982	In a Savannah press conference, Timmons threatened a July 27 th occupation of the Refuge if meaningful dialogue was not established with the Reagan Administration. On July 1, Timmons cancelled the pending occupation following a meeting with Interior Department officials.
December 8, 1982	Mike Wallace and a "60 Minutes" film crew spent several hours filming on the Refuge, as well as conducting interviews with local residents and John Davis, Project Leader of the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex.
December 30, 1982	FWS's Southeast Regional Director James Pulliam responded to Timmons regarding their proposed action. Although he found Timmons' request incompatible with the laws governing refuge lands, Pulliam wrote that the FWS would construct a new crabbing dock and boat ramp at Barbour Island River Landing. The dock was for the exclusive use of the community's commercial watermen.
February 20, 1983	The "60 Minutes" segment on Harris Neck aired.
July 1983	Martin's "Harris Neck: Georgia Blacks Fight to Regain Ancestral Land" appeared in <i>Ebony</i> , Volume 38, No. 9.
1984	Pirate's Point Marina [2.77 acres] sold to The Nature Conservancy by Melvin Gordon/Bar-Boar Island, Inc. The Nature Conservancy leased the parcel to the FWS.
1984	Representative Lindsay Thomas, Senator Sam Nunn, and Senator Mack Mattingly requested the General Accounting Office investigate the circumstances of the federal government's land acquisition at Harris Neck. The GAO report was submitted in 1985.
1985	The GAO submits their report. Article about the report titled "Bad News Befalls Former Harris Neck Landowners as Feds Present Report" appeared in <i>The Darien News</i> , June 13, 1985.

1985	The FWS acquired title to the Pirate's Point Marina Parcel from The Nature Conservancy.
1985	A new dock, for the exclusive use of the Barbour River Waterman's Association, constructed. Permit holders included Ernest L. McIntosh, Sr., George S. Moran, and Edgar Timmons, Sr. The public boat ramp constructed.
September 29, 1985	The floating dock portion of the Crabbers Dock facilities was destroyed by fire just three months after it was opened. It was replaced with a new 100 foot concrete and steel floating dock (fire proof).
2006	Harris Neck Land Trust LLC (HNLT) formed to help the descendants of the former Harris Neck land owners to reclaim their original land.
2009	<i>American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009</i> project initiated to repair & refurbish the "Crabbers Dock".
January 2010	Congressional members and the FWS meet with the HNLT in Washington, D.C.
March 2010	Follow-up meeting with the HNLT and FWS held at Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex.
July 1, 2010	Dewan's "Black Landowners Fight to Reclaim Georgia Home" appeared in <i>The New York Times</i> , July 1, 2010, A-16.
December 15, 2011	Hearing before the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs on the Harris Neck issue at the request of Representative Jack Kingston.
May 23, 2012	Briefing Document opposing "Congressional action sought by the Harris Neck Land Trust, LLC, to obtain lands with the Harris National Wildlife Refuge" submitted to Representative Jack Kingston by the Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges, Blue Goose Alliance, Coastal Georgia Audubon Society, Georgia Ornithological Society, Ogeechee Audubon Society, and the Coastal Group of Georgia Sierra Club.
June 2012	The FWS replaces the fence around Gould Cemetery with input and approval from the Harris Neck First African Baptist Church. Kanaski begins formally mapping the cemetery.
January 25, 2013	Errata Sheet issued by U.S. Department of Interior with the following exception to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Corridor Management Plan: "Neither the inclusion of the Commission's position on the HNLT proposal in the Plan, nor the letter written by the Commission to the House Natural Resource Committee constitutes support or endorsement of the proposal by the Secretary of the Interior." (GGCHC website)
February 7, 2013	Kanaski, Regional Archaeologist for the FWS's Southeast Region, presents "The Gullah Geechee Community at Harris Neck, Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge" to the Executive Board of the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor Commission. Kimberly Hayes, Refuge Manager for Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and Jane Griess, Project Leader for Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex, answered questions regarding the Refuge's management, history and objectives.
May 31, 2013	Meeting with FWS staff, attorneys from the Regional Solicitor's Office, attorneys from Holland and Knight, and Representative Jack Kingston to discuss HLNT's request to build permanent residences on the Refuge and to explore other options.
August 26, 2013	Southeast Regional Director Cynthia Dohner, Refuge Chief David Viker, Deputy Refuge Chief Sanchez, attorney from Holland and Knight, and Refuge staff had dinner with members of the Harris Neck Gullah community at the Old School Diner. Meeting with the HNLT at First African Baptist Church the following day.

February 5, 2014	Harris Neck Symposium at Savannah State; co-sponsored by the HHLT and the University.
February 12, 2014	Lebos' "Returning to Harris Neck: Group Seeks to Preserve Gullah-Geechee Culture and Resume a "Green Way of Life"" appeared in Connect Savannah , February 12, 2014.
June 26, 2014	Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell visits Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge to announce the change of wood stork's status from endangered to threatened. Secretary Jewell and FWS staff meet with HHLT representatives.

Compiled by Richard S. Kanaski, Regional Archaeologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Southeast Region, with the assistance of Kimberly Hayes, Refuge Manager, Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Jim McMahon, and Mark Yeager , October 2014.