

GEORGIA TRAVELER 107- SOUTHERN RIVERS, NORTH
CAPTIONING SCRIPT

David Zelski VO:

Coming up on this week's Georgia Traveler, Ride the Rails through southwest Georgia, Explore the Springer Opera House and the National Civil War Naval Museum, Enjoy a scramble dog and discover Georgia's Official Barbeque contest in Vienna.

Music

On the road most every day, looking for a place where you can play, looking for the best place you can stay. From the mountains to the coast, looking for a trip you'll like the most, maybe even find a friendly ghost, we're Georgia Traveler. Well we're from Georgia and we travel, that's why we call it Georgia Traveler, and nothing rhymes with Georgia Traveler, but still we're called the Georgia Traveler.

Woman:

Georgia Traveler is made possible in part by the Georgia Tourism Foundation.

Woman:

We all have dreams.

Man:

To wear the green jacket.

Woman:

To see wild horses.

Kid:

To catch a major league ball.

Man:

To create memories with my family.

Woman:

Put your dreams in motion. Visit Georgia dot org.

Woman:

And by...

Woman:

People are drawn to this state for its unbelievable beauty. We're working hard to keep it that way. We're Georgia Power, proud sponsor of the programming that also enriches our lives.

Woman:

And by...

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Woman:

The Ray M. and Mary Elizabeth Lee Foundation, Inc.

Woman:

And by...

Woman:

Supporters of Georgia Public Broadcasting.

Woman:

Thank you.

David Zelski:

Hello and Welcome to Georgia Traveler, I'm your Tour guide David Zelski. And right behind me across the river is the Chattahoochee River Walk, in Columbus, Georgia, that's because this week we're taking a look at Georgia's Southern Rivers Region. We have a lot of great stories for you but first lets take a look at some of the sights and sounds you'll see when visiting this part of the state.

Music

David Zelski VO:

Thirty miles southeast of Columbus you'll find Americus, Georgia. Where you can step on board the SAM.

David Zelski VO:

All aboard this fantastic voyage. The SAM Shortline Excursion train takes you right through the heartland of Georgia.

David Zelski VO:

Train Conductor Ernest Fussell punches your card. Then take your seat and hold on because Brian the engineer is cranking up the big engine that could, beginning a day filled with history, sightseeing and hometown treats.

Ernest Fussell:

Stands for Savannah Americus and Montgomery, the SAM, to match up with the old railroad that was here a long time ago.

David Zelski VO:

There are six different rides you can take on Fridays, Saturdays, and some Mondays and Thursdays. I decided to take a trip called The Southwest Georgia Arrow, and brought a few of my best friends from college. Actually I'd never met them before but they felt like best friends by the time the trip was over.

Male Passenger:

I come down here to learn how to talk, came down here to learn how to talk.

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David Zelski VO:

We left around 9:30 so I had to get myself a little coffee from the VIP car.

David Zelski:

Something else that makes the SAM Shortline excursion train unique is that unlike any other train I know they have their own blend of coffee here. And it's called none other than the SAM Shortline Blend.

Ernest Fussell:

A company out of Americus buys coffee from overseas and they do their own grinding. And they make a special blend for the train. And it's good coffee. Anybody has not drank it they need to ride the SAM and drink some.

David Zelski VO:

One of our first stops was Leslie, Georgia, Home of the Georgia Rural Telephone Museum. Housed in an old cotton warehouse are some of the world's largest, oldest, and rarest examples of telecommunications dating from 1876 to present.

Kathy Odom:

It's a very unique experience for South Georgia. It's more telephones than anywhere else in the world and you also get to see the one that Jimmy Carter had. And that was their switchboard too while he was running for office and when he was here in Plains.

David Zelski VO:

But don't try to steal anything. Big Bubba is watching.

Bubba the Bear:

Hello this is Bubba the Bear thank you for visiting with us at the Georgia Rural Telephone Museum.

David Zelski VO:

I got back on the train and headed to Plains, a small Georgia town where Carter campaigned. President Carter was a peanut farmer, so it's no surprise that the sights around town are centered around the Carter family and, well, peanuts. You can come to the Plain Peanut in Plains Georgia and try some Peanut butter ice cream. mmmmmm, creamy, after Plains, it's off to Archery, Georgia. Jimmy Carter's boyhood home.

Jimmy Carter:

Well I grew up on a farm, kind of an isolated place in Archery, Georgia. I didn't have any White neighbors, all my neighbors were African American kids. And we played together. That early part of my life was one of the most delightful at least in retrospect that I ever recall.

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Kathy Odom:

It's a self guided tour and you go in to the farmhouse, you push a button and then it's President Carter telling you about his experience and how he felt when he was living as a young boy.

David Zelski VO:

This home was actually bought from an old Sears Roebuck catalog. Right by the house was the commissary, and in both places, President Carter's voice will walk you through the experience taking you back a few years.

Jimmy Carter VO:

They didn't have to worry about credit because they had great credit.

David Zelski VO:

These are not Jimmy's boyhood goats. Goats simply don't live that long, but it's assumed that his may have looked just like this. After Archery, I got back on the train and decided to talk with a few of the passengers.

Female Passenger:

Peanut butter ice cream is out of this world. And it melts in your mouth and just runs down so easily.

David Zelski VO:

What do you think you're going to remember most out of this train ride?

Male Passenger:

Well I came with my family and I think us all getting together and it's kind of like a mini reunion. And it was great, there was nine of us.

David Zelski VO:

Ruth Clark is 93 years old and the SAM Shortline was her first locomotive experience.

Ruth Clark:

It's been a great trip. I really enjoyed it. I said it's too bad I had to wait till I was 93 years old.

David Zelski VO:

It was then back to Americus where I called it a day. Bid the SAM Shortline adieu and reflected on my unique South Georgia experience.

Ernest Fussell:

All right thank you sir. Come again.

David Zelski:

All right. Thank you.

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Ernest Fussell:

Come again.

David Zelski:

All right.

David Zelski VO:

Sixty miles southeast of Columbus, you may find be inspired to dance a little jig in Vienna, A Big Pig Jig that is.

(Pig Call)

Music

Gerald Bryant:

If you happen to be driving up or down interstate 75 in early October near Vienna, Georgia, there's one place you've just got to see. Ladies and Gentleman, behold, the Big Pig Jig.

Music

Man:

Barbeque!

Kid:

Welcome to the Big Pig Jig

Woman:

Here in Vienna, barbeque is serious business.

Gerald Bryant VO:

Over the three day event, over 20,000 people come to Georgia's official barbeque contest.

Man:

Wild Turkey has the best ribs.

Gerald Bryant VO:

Now, where's that contest again?

People:

Vienna!

Gerald Bryant:

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There are 130 cooking teams and over 700 volunteers that make this event happen. Among those volunteers, there are more than 300 judges. During the competition, visitors wait on line to taste the barbeque, but teams roll out the red carpet for the judges sampling these delicious hogs. I would like to pause to ponder this pork puzzle. Why when we so malign our swine with phrases like, you eat like a pig, you're hogging the covers or your room looks like a pig sty, why are most pigs about to be consumed by us depicted as happy and smiling? Are they really that eager to sacrifice themselves for us and do you realize when a pig says, make me a sandwich they really mean make me a sandwich? You know, I'm kind of hungry. Some folks were engaged in the serious business of feeding judges, but Wild Bill and the Potbellies must have sensed my hunger because they welcomed me into their tent for ribs.

Potbelly:

Here's the potbelly and there's Bill and he's wild.

People:

Wild Bill!

Gerald Bryant VO:

And I even got an opinion on that smiling pig question.

Woman:

Gives me nightmares, I don't know. It doesn't make any sense to me, it's kind of freakish. Doesn't stop me from enjoying my ribs, no sir. Nothing stops me from enjoying these ribs.

Gerald Bryant VO:

Remember, that's a professional opinion. Actually, most people who participate in the Big Pig Jig aren't professionals- barbeque professionals that is.

Danny Cape:

I'm an engineering manager for new product development in Cochran, Georgia and just enjoy this as a hobby and something to do, get my family involved. My daughter and wife's here today. They helped also and it's just, it's family fun.

Larry Haynie:

Oh, probably 99% of the people here do it as a hobby. We all work full-time jobs, we all have real jobs, and this is just a way to play.

Man:

We're going to Disney World.

Gerald Bryant VO:

Some teams form for social reasons and some teams, like 8 B-M-B, formed from a civic group, the Professional Mens Club.

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Marcus Bowens:

It was started by my father and a lot of other friends in the early '60s to promote a lot of civic duties around the city and we just grew into it and we're a seven generation members, we're keeping the organization going. We decided in 1987 to enter the competition and we've been cooking competitively ever since.

Gerald Bryant VO:

But what about the name, 8 B-M-B?

Marcus Bowens:

It stands for Boss Man Barbeque. Everybody on our team thinks they know what they're doing, you can't tell anybody what to do, so we kind of collaborate over time and get it done.

Gerald Bryant VO:

All right, Who is the head boss man of this group?

All:

I am.

Music

Gerald Bryant VO:

Sponsored by the Dooly County Chamber of Commerce and the City of Vienna, the Big Pig Jig really is a celebration of the pig. There's even a livestock show. And what would the Big Pig Jig be without a hog calling contest? There are as many styles of calls as there are barbeque sauces.

Pig calls

Gerald Bryant VO:

I think those calls echoed over the 23 acres of the event grounds here. And on that note, the good folks in Vienna hope to sou-eee you soon at the next Big Pig Jig!

David Zelski:

When visiting Columbus, you should stop by the Columbus Museum for a comprehensive look at the history of the Chattahoochee River Valley. It houses over 14,000 artifacts that tell the story of this region. It's also a great resource for American art. But one thing the museum doesn't have are giant hotdogs.

Phil Proctor:

Hotdogs I heard you say hotdogs.

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David Zelski:

Yea hey Phil. Okay.

Phil Proctor:

I heard you say hotdogs.

David Zelski:

Yea.

Phil Proctor:

Have you heard of a scrambled dog?

David Zelski:

No.

Phil Proctor:

There's a place right here in Columbus that serves a scrambled dog.

David Zelski:

Ok.

Phil Proctor:

Are you interested?

David Zelski:

Sure.

Phil Proctor:

If you need a quick bite to eat and you're down here in the Columbus area, there's a place you have to stop by. It's the Dinglewood Pharmacy. Now the first thing you notice when you come into the pharmacy, there's a lunch counter. There's a gentleman standing behind that lunch counter that makes a dish called the scrambled dog. Now I wanted to get an idea of what the scrambled dog tastes like. How do you guys like the scrambled dog dish?

Men:

It's amazing. It's very very good.

Phil Proctor:

So when were you introduced to the scrambled dog?

Man:

Probably 1948, 47, there's not a hotdog like it anywhere else. It's good. We grew up on it. Little babies gnawed on these wieners.

Phil Proctor:

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I don't think you have a big enough spoon. I think you need a bigger spoon if you're going to...

Woman:

I think I need a bigger plate.

Phil Proctor:

A bigger plate. Now I understand the chili is supposed to be some sort of secret recipe which I am going to try to see if I can get him to tell me about it. Lieutenant Stevens, LT my buddy good to see you again.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Good to see you too.

Phil Proctor:

What is this scramble dog everybody's so crazy about?

Lieutenant Stevens:

Good old wiener in a bun with good old home made chili, oyster crackers.

Phil Proctor:

Home made chili means there's got to be some sort of secret recipe.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Right on, right on.

Phil Proctor:

Ok and I don't suppose you would be willing to give me the secret.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Nope

Phil Proctor:

How do you build the scrambled dog?

Lieutenant Stevens:

Ok take this, that's what we call a scrambled dog dish, but it's really a celery dish.

Phil Proctor:

Ok.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Take a bun.

Phil Proctor:

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Ok, open a bun.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Yea. Take the tongs and get a couple of wieners.

Phil Proctor:

Alright, a couple of wieners. You've got the red hotdogs.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Yea we like them and they like them red.

Phil Proctor:

Now here's what I've been trying to get my hands on is that chili. Look at the meat in that chili. Oh this is my kind of food.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Mustard first.

Phil Proctor:

Ok, got a little bit of mustard.

Lieutenant Stevens:

You want ketchup, put some pickles on there.

Phil Proctor:

Got some pickles.

Lieutenant Stevens:

And some onions.

Phil Proctor:

Alright, let me get a couple of things down here grab me a handful of oyster crackers and just spread them across the top.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Yes, uh huh. And get your spoon out of the tray. And you're in business.

Phil Proctor:

And that's it.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Yes that's it.

Phil Proctor:

That's the scrambled dog?

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Lieutenant Stevens:

That's it the scrambled dog.

Phil Proctor:

Are you sure you don't want to give me that recipe for that secret?

Lieutenant Stevens:

No, no that's the trade secret.

Phil Proctor:

That's the trade secret.

Lieutenant Stevens:

The trade secret.

Phil Proctor:

You started here at a very early age.

Lieutenant Stevens:

14 years old.

Phil Proctor:

You were 14 years old. LT how long have you been here?

Lieutenant Stevens:

58 years.

Phil Proctor:

58 years.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Yup, the only job I've ever had.

Phil Proctor:

So you've had time to perfect this recipe.

Lieutenant Stevens:

Almost, almost

Phil Proctor:

Oh you're still working on it.

Lieutenant Stevens:

I'm still working on it.

Phil Proctor:

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Ok, well I can't say that I haven't had enough to eat but this scrambled dog is fantastic. Once again it's Dinglewood Pharmacy, located here in Columbus, if you get a chance, stop by and see LT and all the good folks here. Have you a scrambled dog or two, or three or four, whatever it takes. Another fantastic food find, we'll see you next time.

David Zelski VO:

Now you can walk off that Scrambled dog about two miles westbound until you find the Springer Opera house, a beautiful historic landmark with a few interesting inhabitants.

Gerald Bryant:

We are here at the historic and beautiful Springer Opera House in Columbus, Georgia. We're going to find out about its rich history and also about some of its ghost stories, and to do that let's go to center stage to meet producing artistic director Paul Pierce and one of my favorite performers-me.

Gerald Bryant:

Paul, this is an absolutely beautiful facility. You've been here for quite a few years, so no one better to tell us about the history of the Springer.

Paul Pierce:

Well, the Springer Opera House was built in 1871 here on the banks of the Chattahoochee River in Columbus, GA. A grocer here, Francis Joseph Springer, and a group of other investors got together and built a European-style opera house.

Gerald Bryant:

And when you read the list of folks that appeared on this stage at the Springer it's a who's who of 19th and 20th century entertainers.

Paul Pierce:

Edwin Booth, the America's really greatest Shakespearean actor and of course the older brother of John Wilkes Booth. Ethel Barrymore has played here, Lily Langtry, Oscar Wilde. Of course President Roosevelt spoke here because Warm Springs is very nearby and so he came here from time to time.

Gerald Bryant:

Of course the name Booth became synonymous with presidential assassin in the 1860s and that was something he had to live down.

Paul Pierce:

Well that's right, and John Wilkes Booth himself was a quite well known actor and in fact, John Wilkes Booth had played in Columbus. Many people don't realize that the Booth family was really a first family of theater in America at the time and John Wilkes Booth's name was well known, but there was a hall that

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was in Columbus before the Springer was built called the Temperance Hall and the Booths came to Columbus quite a lot. In fact, two weeks before Lincoln was assassinated got into an argument with the stage manager at Temperance Hall, who got so angry with him he pulled a pistol and shot him, and John Wilkes Booth was taken to a local infirmary where the doctor decided it would be safer to leave the pistol ball in him. He stitched him up, he came back to Temperance Hall, he played at 12th night that night and two weeks later he shot Lincoln. So we like to say around here that John Wilkes Booth took a souvenir of Columbus, GA to his grave.

Gerald Bryant:

If that guy had been a better shot, history would have changed too.

Paul Pierce:

That's right, it's true.

Gerald Bryant:

Now, this theater flourished until well into the 20th century but then the Depression hit it pretty hard, didn't it?

Paul Pierce:

That's right, after the stock market crash of 1929, touring circuits all over America collapsed and it became very, very hard to bring the big name acts to theaters like the Springer,

Gerald Bryant:

It has, although a happy ending unlike some theaters, across the country, tell us what happened.

Paul Pierce:

A great happy ending. It wasn't so much like the Fox, the Fox's story it was more of a group of people in Columbus who realized literally at the last minute as the cranes with the wrecking balls were being erected outside that it would be a travesty to have this historic theater torn down and a group of people got together, purchased the building and decided to restore it.

Gerald Bryant:

Now, there is another ghost story associated with the Springer Opera House and that is that the Springer is haunted by the ghost of Edwin Booth, older brother of John Wilkes Booth. He played Hamlet here and supposedly still haunts the theater more than a hundred years later. But I don't believe that's very likely. But then I've been wrong before. Ed? Is that you Ed?

Paul Pierce:

I ended up about 1993 having an experience of my own that was quite startling. I became aware that someone was walking right next to me, about six feet to my

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left, and I turned my head and I saw very clearly, very distinctly, a youngish man with a sort of wispy beard and moustache and he was smiling at me. He was looking directly into my face and I became aware very quickly that he was mocking me. He was mocking the way I was walking. He was mocking me and he was really enjoying himself

Gerald Bryant:

Paul, you're obviously very passionate about the Springer Opera House, we thank you for the time you spent with us. Now, I would mention this fact that although I'm not a big believer in ghosts either, during the course of the interview our monitor fell over. Now, it could be a coincidence or it could be that we're not alone.

Paul Pierce:

Gerald, this happens all the time at the Springer. Just relax, we'll take care of you.

Gerald Bryant:

I could be a believer.

Music

David Zelski VO:

Now let's follow the Chattahoochee River North for another two miles to Port Columbus.

Soldiers:

Ready. Fire.

Gerald Bryant VO:

A rare firing of a seven inch Brooke rifle, one of the largest canons used in the civil war. This canon and several like it were mounted on iron clad ships. It's now part of a unique collection of naval artifacts and located at one of the most unique museums in the United States, the National Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, Georgia. And just why may you ask is a naval museum in Columbus, Georgia. Columbus sits on the Chatahoochie River which flows into the Gulf of Mexico making it a Port City.

Jeffery Seymour:

What a lot of people don't realize is Columbus was the second most important industrial site in the entire south behind Richmond, Virginia. They produced weapons, uniforms, shoes, just about name it, they produced it here. They even had a naval yard.

Gerald Bryant VO:

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Here in this naval yard the confederate iron clad, the C.S.S Jackson was built. Today its hull and thousands of other artifacts are on display in the museum, the only one of its kind dedicated to telling the civil war's naval history.

Ameila Valencic:

One of our goals is to present a balanced picture. There were two sides to the civil war and two huge and wonderful navy's, very powerful, that fought each other. We talk about both sides, their lives, their sailors, their boats, their battles that they had. And what they did internationally as well.

Gerald Bryant VO:

The museum center pieces are the hull of the C.S.S Jackson and a vast collection of civil war naval flags. Along with other naval artifacts and artwork, the Civil War Naval story comes to life as visitors walk the displays. For some ghosts of the past are still present.

Jeffery Seymour:

Every time I got in that room, when I look down on the Jackson it gives me chill bumps. To look at it and you get that smell that just hits you and it sends a tingle down your spine. Sometimes you come in and there's a strong burnt smell. Sometimes you come in and there's a real strong pungent river odor. But it seems like the vessel itself has moods.

Gerald Bryant VO:

The naval flags on display have stories of their own.

Jeffery Seymour:

We also have a first national flag of the Confederacy. And we have a real brother versus brother story here. It flew over Fort Walker which protected Port Royal Sound. In November of 1861, the federal navy attacked Port Royal Sound, Fort Walker commanded by Brigadier Thomas Drayton, his brother Percival Drayton was a commander in the federal navy. So they shot at one another.

Gerald Bryant VO:

Each March the Museum celebrates its anniversary with an event called River Blast.

Ameila Valencic:

It's a set of activities that surround the river, surround the navy and what happened with sailors to show kind of sailor life and what they went through. This year we decided to do a theme called finding your sea legs and train sailors and show them what sailor life was like.

Gerald Bryant VO:

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River Blast is especially a hit with kids. They have to enlist in the navy. Conduct a musket drill. Engage an opponent in a cutlass drill. Learn about life on a naval vessel. And fire cannons.

Participant:

My favorite one was the sword fighting where we fought each other and my least favorite was the rifle because that thing was heavy.

Gerald Bryant VO:

In the past few years news of other civil war era ships being found have created an interest in the often disregarded naval campaigns of the war. That interest has turned to places like this museum.

Jerry Franklin:

People all over the world are trying to get the word out that we're here. We've got this big national civil war naval museum. And no one else is telling a story like we are.

David Zelski:

We conclude our visit to Georgia's Southern Rivers region with a trip to the Wild Animal Safari in Pine Mountain, Georgia. In this 500 acre park has some of the world's most exotic animals roaming the landscape and as you can see you may even get a chance to have a hands-on experience. A hands on experience from within the cars. Here you go. Well at least you get a hands of experience with most of the animals. Perhaps some binaca? Tic-tac? This is just one of several attractions you'll see when visiting Georgia's Southern Rivers region. Now let's take a sneak peak at what's coming up on the next Georgia Traveler.

David Zelski VO:

Pony up for mule day in Calvary Georgia, celebrate something known as Swamp Gravy in Colquitt, fill up on a fancy food find with Phil and enjoy the mysterious beauty of the legendary Okefenokee Swamp.

Woman:

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Man:

Located 16 miles east of downtown Atlanta on 3200 acres of natural beauty, Stone Mountain Park features a wide variety of entertainment and recreation for every member of the family. The sky ride offers up close views of the memorial carving. Guests can take a five mile train ride or a paddle wheel river boat cruise. And the crossroads area offers the chance to interact with demonstration crafters. The park also features ride the duck tours and the laser show spectacular. More information is available at stonemountainpark dot com.

Woman:

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And by...

Woman:

People are drawn to this state for its unbelievable beauty. We're working hard to keep it that way. We're Georgia Power, proud sponsor of the programming that also enriches our lives.

Woman:

And by the Ray M. and Mary Elizabeth Lee Foundation. And by supporters of Georgia Public Broadcasting. Thank you.

Music

Credits

Man:

This has been a production of Georgia Public Broadcasting.