

**GEORGIA TRAVELER 211  
CAPTION SCRIPT**

**Music**

**David:**

On this episode of Georgia Traveler, we're driving GA 40 from St. Mary's to Folkston looking for some Family Fun...

**Keely:**

A Place to Eat, a Place to Sleep, and an Outdoor Activity...

**Phil:**

And don't forget, a Local Legend. We're here at the Georgia Visitor Information Center to find out where to begin.

**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, we may 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.

**Music**

**Woman VO:**

Georgia Traveler is made possible in part by...

**Music**

**Man VO:**

Few places on earth match Georgia for natural beauty, and we plan to keep it that way. We're Georgia Power, a proud sponsor of public broadcasting. We're on, so you can be. Georgia Power, a Southern Company.

**Music**

**Woman VO:**

And by supporters of Georgia Public Broadcasting. Thank you.

**Music**

**David:**

Hello.

**Leslie:**

Hi

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**David:**  
How are you?

**Leslie:**  
Hi.

**David:**  
I'm David.

**Leslie:**  
Hi David, I'm Leslie.

**David:**  
Well we are about as far south on the Georgia coast as we can get. And today we wanted to travel on GA 40 from St. Mary's over to Folkston. Where should we start?

**Leslie:**  
You should absolutely start with Cumberland Island National Seashore. Beautiful beach; wild horses; beautiful island.

**David:**  
Well, thank-you, Leslie, we'll get started.

**Leslie:**  
Have fun.

**David:**  
Alright.

**Music**

**Keely VO:**  
St. Mary's is a great starting point to explore Georgia's coastal area. I met up with Tom, owner of up Up the Creek Expeditions, to take a sea kayaking trip from the mainland to Cumberland, Georgia's largest barrier island.

**Music**

**Keely:**  
Alright, warmed up; ready to go! Do I keep that elbow straight, or more like that?

**Tom:**  
You always keep a bend in it, but you keep the same amount of bend. There you go.

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**Keely:**

Do I do the pinky, or not? Here I go!

**Music**

**Keely:**

And we're off!

**Tom:**

To Cumberland Island!

**Keely:**

Ha, ha! Last one there's a rotten egg!

**Music**

**Tom:**

Well now we've been out a few minutes, and you're starting to get comfortable and seeing what the kayaks can do...

**Keely:**

Yeah, little bit.

**Tom:**

...and you see that it's not a lot of effort; it's not like you have to muscle it.

**Keely:**

No you're not, you're just, kinda going with the flow, really. I never expected kayaking we'd see topography like this, along a bluff. I expected marsh.

**Tom:**

As we come along the point of these bluffs, we start transitioning into the marsh area. And like most of coastal Georgia, St. Mary's area has tons of marsh. The chance to get out into the marshes is always a great chance for solitude. It's just a place of so many surprises. And with the cuts through the marsh, they're always meandering. It's never the same. We do this trip about every other week. We have to run it with the tides, because we want a tide that's going out in the morning and a tide that's coming back in in the afternoon. One week it works out that way and one week it doesn't. So we never want to put anybody where they have to fight the tide. 'Cause the tide gives you a nice little ride to the island, as you can see here. It's pretty easy paddling.

**Keely:**

It is. Very.

**Tom:**

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You do kayak year-round. You get out here, and one of the great things about here is you don't have to get too far offshore and you're all alone, as you can see we are right here. And a lot of our destinations like Cumberland Island, we hardly ever see any people, so...You know, year-round you can get out here and really just enjoy nature. That is one of the great things about kayaks, is you can get right up on things. You don't advertise your approach. Wildlife is less intimidated. You see the dolphins, you see a lot of birds. You know, egrets, herons, ibis, shore birds, the turns and gulls. Now look there! Up there ahead we can see Cumberland Island in the distance!

**Keely:**

That's Cumberland?

**Tom:**

That's Cumberland!

**Keely:**

Woo-hoo!

**Tom:**

There we go, keep you feet nice and dry!

**Keely:**

Awesome

**Tom:D**

Alright, well, let's break, get out, get your sea legs going, and then we'll start our island time.

**Keely:**

Yeah, I want to check out those plum orchards!

**Tom:**

Exactly, let's look forward to it.

**Keely:**

Sounds awesome. Alright, show me the way.

**Keely VO:**

Built in 1898 by the Carnegie family, this classical Revival style mansion, is one of the treasures that makes Cumberland Island so special. Measuring over 22,000 square feet, the home was donated to the National Park Service in 1992. And after a multi-million dollar renovation is complete it will be reopened for the public to explore. After a fun day out on the water, it's time to head back to the

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mainland, and while my adventure is coming to an end, David is just beginning his voyage to Cumberland to visit another famous mansion, Greyfield.

**Music**

**David VO:**

Keely told me about all of the great sites of Cumberland Island, so I figured it was time to check it out for myself. I found out there are no bridges or causeways leading to Cumberland, so the next thing I know; I'm on a boat with a bunch of friendly strangers.

**David:**

So where are we heading?

**David VO:**

And I did hear about this one spot on the island outside of a campsite where the public can come and spend the night. So I searched around the island across fields of wild horses and dense forests of palms and found my destination.

**David:**

Behold the Greyfield Inn!

**Music**

**Mary Ferguson:**

We have 16 rooms. The main house, 10 bedrooms and then we have two cottages with six rooms, and yes the only other alternative is camping with the National Park Service. It's such a beautiful place to get away to where you just can hike, or bicycle, or go kayaking. There's so much to explore without having your own vehicle here. You really don't need it.

**David VO:**

This massive home was built in 1901 and has operated as an inn since the 1960s. It's a family operation, and one you may have heard of...

**Fred Whitehead:**

These were Tom Carnegie's descendents. Tom Carnegie was the younger brother of Andrew Carnegie and Tom and Andrew started making steel in this country on a large scale. The family occupied the island during a time we call the Carnegie Era. From 1881 all the way up until the 1960s, when they sold most of it to the federal government.

**David VO:**

Fred Whitehead is one of the two naturalists that Greyfield employs to give guests a tour of the island. Fred will show you the natural beauty of the island and take you around some of the historical sites, like the ruins of Dungeness

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### **Fred Whitehead:**

There was a mansion here built in 1800 by Katherine Green, the widow of General Nathaniel Green, and by the time the Carnegies got here in the 1880s, it was in ruins, so the Carnegie family, when they came, they removed the old Green mansion and they built this house on that site. This was completed in 1885. The Carnegie family used it until Lucy Carnegie died in 1916. The building sat vacant for decades until it burned from they think an arson fire in 1959.

### **David VO:**

One of the most amazing things to see here on Cumberland Island are the wild horses. They've been on this island for over 500 years. You may see them running along the coastline, and you may find them deep in the woods.

### **Fred Whitehead:**

There's a history of horses on this island that goes back to the 1500s when the Spaniards first brought them into North America. The horses that are out here now however are not the Spanish horses. They were taken off during the 1800s during the plantation era, landowners wanted to get them out of their fields. The Carnegie family brought half a dozen different breeds of horses back over here however, and the horses that you see out here now are descendents of those animals. They started to free-range them out here in the early 1900s.

### **Mary Ferguson:**

They live in different herds along the island, and we have a herd that lives here. They hang out in the front lawn or in the back, and they wander around everyday. They go to the beach and the marsh, but you can definitely watch them from the porch.

### **David VO:**

David Childs and Karen Johnson got engaged during their visit to Greyfield.

### **David Childs:**

The landscape is awesome. It's the live oaks; it's like a canopy going through the trails to the either to the beach or to the ruins, the Dungeness ruins, or even riding in the truck on the tours to the north end of the island. It's like a scene from a movie where you walk to the beach right out of the jungle.

### **Mary Ferguson:**

We have guests who come and just wanna and stay out on the porch for the weekend. And there's over 300 different species of birds that come through the island throughout the year. We lately have had a great family of turkeys that've been out there. They come at cocktail hour and go up in the trees, and so that's fun. The guests can sit right there and watch it all.

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**David:**

After hiking, biking, and kayaking around Georgia's biggest island, I sure worked up an appetite, so now it's time for some hors d'oeuvres.

**Dinner bell rings.**

**Peter:**

Good evening, everyone, welcome to Greyfield's dinner, my name's Peter. I'll be your server tonight, along with Eric and Kirkly. Just gonna give you a quick dinner announcement on what we'll be having.

**Mary Ferguson:**

We really focus a lot on the food. We have three chefs. We basically prepare everything from scratch, and so that's really nice I think it makes a big difference in what the guests are eating. They really enjoy fresh, good food.

**David:**

It's just been wonderful. The service is awesome, too. They really pamper you here.

**Mary Ferguson:**

Well I hope they leave feeling rejuvenated and inspired, like they've had just a wonderful kind of retreat from the crazy world out there.

**Music**

**David:**

You know, down on the waterfront of St. Mary's, there's a name that's synonymous with seafood.

**Music**

**Phil:**

Hey, that's right Z, I'm down in St. Mary's, right on the St. Mary's river. You know, I think about river, I think about water, and that always makes me think about seafood. I'm here at the Lang's Marina Restaurant. C'mon in, lets go check 'em out.

**Music**

**Phil VO:**

The Lang family has been in the seafood business for over a hundred years in St. Mary's, but the restaurant has only been in operation for about a decade.

**Matt Fulford:**

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We started out as a seafood market, and we would cook rock shrimp “po’ boys,” and that’s where we got the idea to have the restaurant. And this, before it was a seafood market, was actually a scallop plant.

**Phil VO:**

From humble beginnings to a thriving business, Lang’s has some loyal customers.

**Customer 1:**

I would drive from Savannah to come down here for dinner.

**Customer 2:**

We always come to Lang’s...because they have the best shrimp anywhere.

**Music**

**Matt Fulford:**

The thing that most people know us for is our shrimp, and we catch all the shrimp ourselves on our own shrimp boat. And it’s all fresh shrimp. No pond raised shrimp like a lot of restaurants use. It’s fresh shrimp that we catch ourselves. We get the best of the best in Camden County every year.

**Kevin Lang:**

Great fried shrimp. It really is.

**Phil:**

You know, you almost got me convinced.

**Kevin Lang:**

Well your fixin’ to have one. Try it out, Phil.

**Phil:**

Oh no, I wouldn’t think of it, not right now...

**Kevin Lang:**

And look at the size of these shrimp!

**Phil:**

No, now see...now see I told you I wasn’t gonna have one, but you keep forcing things on me.

**Kevin Lang:**

You can have part of it. I’ll...I’ll split it with you.

**Phil:**



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Oh you gonna split, now see, you can't go anywhere and get a friend that you just meet to split that... look how large that... alright I'm gonna reach over.

**Kevin Lang:**

Which one?

**Phil:**

You...I'll...I'll take that one. Ok...

**Kevin Lang:**

Now dip it a little bit in the sauce.

**Phil:**

Is that the ketchup?

**Kevin Lang:**

No, no, this is the cocktail sauce.

**Phil:**

Oh, that's...Okay, let me see what we got. That was a very large piece of shrimp.

**Phil VO:**

You know, catching shrimp and serving seafood aren't the only businesses the Lang family operates in these coastal waters.

**Matt Fulford:**

The ferry boat service, and we're the official concessionaires for Cumberland Island, and it's a national park, no paved roads over there. And we also do a small charter, where you can bring your bicycles over. You can't bring your bicycles on the ferry boat. And we also do private charters at night. We own the two marinas in town, so you know so, when you want to keep your boat in the water just come see us.

**Phil VO:**

And the Langs are also good folks to see for a good meal, but plan ahead.

**Matt Fulford:**

The weekdays it's open for lunch, Tuesday through Fridays. We're open Wednesday night through Saturday night. And we're closed all day Sunday, all day Monday. We don't do the reservations because of the all-you-can-eat specials we run every night. Nobody should leave here hungry.

**Tiffany:**

There you go Phil. Enjoy!

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**Phil**

Oooh. Thank-you. Man, look at the rock shrimp. You know I've had a great time here at Lang's Marina Restaurant in St. Mary's. You get a chance, come on down here and check 'em out. The rock shrimp is incredible! You know, I do one thing better than everybody else, and that's eat. Take care.

**Music**

**Keely:**

Not far from the Visitor's Information Center here in Kingsland there's an annual Catfish Festival every Labor Day weekend.

**Music**

**Phil:**

Hey, Dave, look! The sign says exactly what I would say, "Welcome to Kingsland, the City of Royal Treatment!"

**David:**

We're in Kingsland! You know what they have here every Labor Day?

**Phil:**

What?

**David:**

A catfish festival!

**Phil:**

Food! I love food!

**David:**

Let's eat!

**Music**

**Group:**

Catfish!

**Kenneth E. Smith:**

This festival is all about enjoyment ending the summer, and having folks come out and enjoy some southern hospitality. In southeast Georgia, catfish is the main cuisine. Catfish, and I see your mouth watering, so you'll get a chance to do that a little later.

**Phil VO:**

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Mayor Smith had me pegged...I was hungry for catfish, but first, David and I wanted to figure out why this festival has been so popular for 25 years.

**Kathy Dixon:**

We have hundreds of arts and crafts booths, food booths. And we have a parade on Monday. We have entertainment that is free to everyone and it's usually nationally and regionally acclaimed artists.

**David:**

Why the catfish?

**Kathy Dixon:**

Well we wanted to come up with a theme and at that point in time food seemed to be a good theme. We have a little creek down the road called Little Catfish Creek and we wanted to make it a seafood event because it was coastal and we are coastal. So catfish became king here in Kingsland at that point in time.

**Fry Cook:**

We got four dinners coming up.

**Phil:**

So Kingsley, I looked at all the food, I am so hungry...

**David:**

Phil, Phil look what I found! Cecil the Catfish, the official mascot of the Kingsland Catfish Festival!

**Phil:**

Okay, David, that might be just a little big impressive, but I'm here with Kingsley! He is the king of the festival, the official mascot of Kingsland, Georgia!

**David:**

Well, look at the crown on this! I think I have the top mascot!

**Phil:**

Well, you know, David, you might have the top mascot, but let's talk about the tailfin! Where is it?

**David:**

D'oh!

**David VO:**

Now there's a lot of ways to cook catfish and run a catfish kitchen, but if you want it done right, you have got to call on the brave men and women of the Naval Submarine base at King's Bay.

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**Woman:**

The catfish and the Navy mens!

**Sailors:**

We're Navy, we're Navy, we're Navy all the way! Cheese fries! Whose fries? Cheese fries! Whose fries? Cheese fries? All together...

**David:**

Man, Phil, this King's Bay Catfish is gonna be good!

**Phil:**

You know, I've been looking forward to this all day, day, day, day! Whoa, whoa, hey, hold up, hold up! There's a problem.

**David:**

Yeah, I got a lot more than you.

**Phil:**

Yeah, you sure did!

**David:**

Alright, chow down!

**Phil:**

Hey, there go your boy, Cecil! What's up!

**David VO:**

Well, since Phil ate all of my food, I decided to go up for seconds...And this time the Kings Bay cooks rounded up some catfish nuggets!

**Sailors:**

Two combos! Two combos up!

**David**

Alright! Thank-you, sir!

**Sailor:**

Enjoy.

**David VO:**

And just in case Cecil the catfish convinces you to eat something other than catfish while you're in Kingland...

**Phil:**

Greg what's on the grill baby, what you got?

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**Greg:**

You name it baby. We've got ribs, chicken, turkey, whole chicken, half chickens. We've got turkey legs, Boston butt, baked beans, potato salad, sausages, just about everything you can name of, we've got it out here to offer you. We've got something to please you.

**Phil:**

Hang on, man, hang on! You know how it is when you hear something like that!

**Phil VO:**

So once you are filled up on Catfish and Bar-BQ...You know it's time for the main event...and that's music. This year's headliner was country star Tracy Lawrence.

**Music**

**Phil VO:**

Tracy sure was fun, but I gotta say, the opening act stole the show!

**Woman singing off-key:**

And we're from Georgia, and we travel! That's why we're called Georgia Traveler!

**David VO:**

So year after year, Cecil the catfish flops into the Kingsland spotlight...

**Phil VO:**

...Graciously sharing the stage with Kingsley the lion at the one and only Kingsland Catfish festival!

**Music**

**Phil:**

You know, Leslie, when I was growing up, I had a bunch of different train sets 'cause I really loved trains. I understand there's somewhere around here, trains for big kids.

**Leslie:**

Absolutely. About 22 miles west of here in Folkston, Georgia, there's the south end of the CSX. Hundreds of trains pass through there everyday, and people come from all over just to see those trains. I've got information right here.

**Phil:**

Well, alright, you ready to go?

**Leslie:**

Let's go.

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**Phil:**

All aboard! Woo woo!

**Music**

**Train whistle blows.**

**Music**

**Keely VO:**

The city of Folkston's history has always been tied to trains. Built as a railroad town in the late 1800s, the city has come to be known as the train watchers' paradise. To find out why, I met up with local historian and train fanatic, Cookie Williams.

**Keely:**

Hey, Cookie! I'm Keely!

**Cookie Williams:**

Good morning, I'm Cookie Williams.

**Keely:**

Nice to meet you!

**Cookie Williams:**

Welcome, nice to see you!

**Keely:**

You're gonna show me how to train watch?

**Cookie Williams:**

We certainly gon' do it! We're gon' watch some trains.

**Keely:**

And this is the Folkston Funnel?

**Cookie Williams:**

This is the Folkston Funnel, yes it is!

**Keely VO:**

Because of its location on the railroad lines, Folkston has a large amount of train traffic on a daily basis, which gives these fans a chance to view their beloved boxcars again and again.

**Cookie Williams:**

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The reason for that is we're situated between two major yards, Rice Yard in Waycross, which originates trains, and Moncrief and Baldwin in the Jacksonville area which originate trains.

**Keely VO:**

On an average day up to 60 trains pass by the location, a phenomenon that was sure to catch the attention of many people.

**Cookie Williams:**

Word got around and the more people came, more and more word spread, word of mouth, until it got to be quite a lot of people coming here watching trains. The city decided to do something for the train watchers that come to town. So they built what we are now sitting on, the Folkston Funnel. In our log book up here, it's amazing. We've got people from all 50 states, and probably 12 to 15 foreign countries.

**Man:**

When Cookie suggested a train watching platform, I said he needs to be committed. But it has fooled me completely, and I begin to see more and more people come.

**Keely:**

When the gates go down, you get excited?

**Cookie Williams:**

Oh, yeah. The gate's a warning! This is what we like!

**Train whistles blow**

**Keely:**

What was that called? Having two trains on the tracks?

**Cookie Williams:**

Going side by side like that? We always talk about it as being a kind of a drag race.

**Keely:**

A drag race?

**Cookie Williams:**

Yes.

**Man:**

What we don't want is a cornfield meet!

**Cookie Williams:**

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That's correct!

**Keely:**

What's a cornfield meet?

**Man:**

That's when two trains hit!

**Keely:**

Oh, no, no, no, no! We don't want that! What are we listening to? Is it a radio frequency?

**Man:**

It's the radio frequency, the railroad frequency.

**Keely:**

Are those the conductors talking?

**Man:**

Yeah, the trains have to call out their signals to the dispatcher. They pass the signal at this mile post, or sometimes they'll say Folkston or at the town. They have to call the signals out to the dispatcher. They also talk to the other trains and say, your train looks good. Your markers are flashing and all that, and let the other train know everything's good.

**Keely VO:**

Over the years, train watching has gone high tech as well.

What we're looking at is actually a track plan that runs from Waycross to Jacksonville, and from Nahunta down through Folkston, to Jacksonville and to Baldwin. And basically what it is, it's basically what the dispatchers see, we see the same thing. The only thing we don't see is what trains are actually, what the trains are. We see where they are, we don't see what they are. But it gives us a good idea of where something is, what train might be coming. What train's coming north, what train's coming south. It just adds a little extra edge to the rail fanning. 'Cause before, you wouldn't know when something was coming. This just kinda gives you a little extra edge, it's a little fun technology, you know.

**Keely VO:**

Even though trains come through the town at a pretty steady pace, there is the inevitable lull between crossings. This affords the gang an opportunity to engage in some lively debate over their favorite subject.

**Man:**

The coolest of all the trains that runs through here is the circus train.



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**Keely:**

How does the giraffe fit in the train?

**Man 1:**

I don't know. That's over my pay grade!

**Man 2:**

I'll let you in on a secret, the lions and tigers don't travel on the circus train.

**Man 1:**

Well, the tigers, yes, sir, oh they carry cages!

**Man 2:**

Nope, nope, they're exotic animals. They've got them off the trains now!

**Man 1:**

I've seen them on the circus train. No, sir! I have seen the tiger cages...

**Man 3:**

Not getting in that debate!

**Man 1:**

If you watch even the mixed freights going through a lot of them will have molten sulfur cars. And I don't know why they carry the sulfur in a molten state.

**Man 2:**

That's how it comes out of the ground

**Man 1:**

I haven't gotten an answer to that.

**Man 2:**

It comes out of Hot Sulfur Springs in Canada!

**Man 1:**

Again I disagree with you, it comes...

**Keely VO:**

Regardless of how the conversation is going, it will always be put on pause, once they hear the whistle blow.

**Whistle blows.**

**Keely VO:**

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So whether you are an avid locomotive enthusiast, or just enjoy small town charm and good company, the Folkston Funnel is a great way to spend some time train spotting.

**Cookie Williams:**

Get you a cup of tea or a cup of coffee or something, and come back and pull up a chair and relax. Turn the fans on if it's too warm, turn the scanner on so you can begin to hear the train traffic, and just sit back and enjoy the hospitality and usually there's a lot of people around, so the fellowship is great and you just share train stories and friendships and so forth and so on. But the main thing is to just come prepared to relax and enjoy the train.

**Whistle blows.**

**David:**

And that concludes this episode of Georgia Traveler. So we'd like to thank Leslie, Jenny, and all our friends here at the visitor information center.

**Phil:**

We hope you'll join us for our next episode of Georgia Traveler, but until then, I'm Phil Proctor...

**David:**

I'm David Zelski...

**Keely:**

And I'm Keely Muse, wishing you pleasant journeys.

**Music**

**Woman VO:**

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**Man VO:**

Few places on earth match Georgia for natural beauty, and we plan to keep it that way. We're Georgia Power, a proud sponsor of public broadcasting. We're on, so you can be. Georgia Power, a Southern Company.

**Music**

**Woman VO:**

And by supporters of Georgia Public Broadcasting. Thank you.

**Music**

**Man VO:**

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Georgia Traveler is produced in partnership with the Georgia Department of Economic Development and the Georgia Tourism Foundation.

**Music**

**Man VO:**

This has been a production of Georgia Public Broadcasting.