

DAUFUSKIE ISLAND HISTORY

Daufuskie Island, tucked between Savannah, Georgia, and Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, was inhabited by numerous native tribes until the early 1700's when they were driven away from their land by explorers, traders and settlers. While under British rule, plantations were developed, growing indigo and later Sea Island cotton. Slaves tilled the fields while plantation owners and their families spent much of the year away. The slaves' isolation provided the setting for the retention of their African culture.

Plantation owners and slaves fled the island at the start of the Civil War. Union troops then occupied the island. After the war, freed slaves (Gullah people) returned to the island, purchasing small plots of land or working for landowners. The boll weevil destroyed the cotton fields in the early 1900's. Logging and the Maggioni Oyster Canning Factory provided jobs for the predominately Gullah populated island at the turn of the 20th century. Oysters continued to be harvested and shucked on the island after the cannery closed and were shipped elsewhere for processing. Daufuskie Island oysters were sold world-wide. Life was hard, made more so by being cut off from the mainland. As a result, island residents created a caring, close-knit community, one crossing racial lines.

When pollution in the Savannah River closed the oyster beds in the 1950's, the island's economy declined. The Gullah began to leave the island for better opportunities. By the 1980's the population of the island decreased from a high of around 2,000 to less than 60. At that time developers came to the island, and Haig Point, Melrose, Oakridge and Bloody Point were subsequently built. The island's Historic District has retained its breathtaking natural beauty. The entire island is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The history of Daufuskie Island is rich, diverse and fascinating. The fact that the island has no bridge to the mainland has allowed it to retain its Lowcountry mystique. We hope you will enjoy your historic tour down the dusty roads of Daufuskie Island's history.

Robert T. Kennedy, Founding President of the Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation



Robert T. Kennedy was born in Hartford, Connecticut. Rob, a successful business man, and his wife Dottie lived in many places including Hong Kong, Calcutta, New York City, Seattle and Atlanta. They retired to Daufuskie Island in 1991. An avid history buff, Rob became a student of Daufuskie's

illustrious past. He served as island tour guide and became the first president of the Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation when it was established in 2001. Rob was a natural raconteur and shared Daufuskie stories with visitors and locals alike until shortly before his death in 2009.

Rob Kennedy enjoyed a good laugh, a martini and his many friends. His compassion and dignity, and the grace with which he lived, reside in our hearts. He was the finest of gentlemen. The Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation dedicates this trail to his

The Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation

The Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation was founded in 2001 to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of Daufuskie Island, South Carolina. To further public knowledge and appreciation of Daufuskie Island, the Foundation has acquired and restored historic buildings, established an island history museum, created a self-guided trail of historic island sites, and begun an island history archives. The Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation is a 501(C)3 charitable organization. Contributions may be sent to:



***Daufuskie* ISLAND**
HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

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Please review the Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation
and the Rob Kennedy Trail on [TripAdvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com) and [Yelp.com](https://www.yelp.com)

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