

## *PETIT GUAVE ISLAND*

(also known as Pettiegua, Petitguave,<sup>1</sup> or Raccoon Island)

Section 2 of Petit Guave Island presently assigned the Property  
Identification Number 20664-02001

GEORGE the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the faith, and so forth, To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting. Know ye that we of our Special Grace, certain Knowledge, and meer Motion have Given and Granted and by these Presents for us our Heirs and Successors Do Give and Grant unto Philip Delegal Esquire, his Heirs and assigns, All that Tract of Land containing One hundred and three Acres and an half, **being a Small Island & Seven Humacks Scattered on a large Island of Salt Marsh** in the Parish of Christ Church in our Province of Georgia **bounded North East and East on Vernon River, West & South West on a Creek, and South East on the Conflux of Great and Little Ogechee Rivers,** Having such Shape, Form and Marks as appears by a Plat thereof hereunto annexed together with all woods, underwoods, timber and timber trees, lakes, ponds, fishings, water, water courses, profits, Commodities, Hereditaments, and Appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining, together also with Privilege of Hunting, Hawking, and fowling in and upon the same & all mines and minerals—whatsoever saving and Reserving nevertheless to us, our Heirs and Successors all white pine trees if any should be found growing thereon, And also saving and Reserving to Our Heirs and Successors One Tenth Part of Mines of Silver and Gold only, To have and to hold the said Tract of One hundred & three Acres and an half of Land and all and singular other the Premises hereby Granted with the Appurtenances unto the said Philip Delegal, his Heirs & Assigns forever in free and common Soccage, he the said Philip Delegal, his Heirs or Assigns yielding & Paying therefore unto us Our Heirs and Successors or to our Receiver General for the time being or to his Deputy or Deputies for the time being yearly & every year on the Twenty fifth day of March at the Rate of Two Shillings Sterling for every hundred Acres and so in Proportion according to the Quantity of acres contained herein, the same to Commence at the end and Expiration of Two years from the date hereof, Provided always and this Present Grant is upon condition nevertheless That he the said Philip Delegal, his Heirs or Assigns shall and do within three years after the Date hereof for every fifty Acres of plantable Land hereby granted, clear and work three Acres at least in that part thereof as he or they shall judge most Convenient and Advantageous or else do clear and drain three acre of Swamp or Sunken Grounds **or Drain three Acres of Marsh if any such contained herein** and shall and do within the time aforesaid put and keep upon every fifty Acres thereof accounted barren three neat Cattle or Six Sheep or Goats & continue the same thereon until three Acres for every

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<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with Petit Gove or Gauve, which with Grand Gove or Gauve, are locations in Santo Domingo. Petit Gove was often mentioned in the late 1790's and early 1800's in Savannah newspapers in regards to French privateers and the slave insurrections.



fifty Acres be fully cleared & improved, or otherwise if any part of the said Tract shall be Stony or rocky ground and not fit for Planting or Pasture shall and do within three years as aforesaid begin to employ thereon & so continue to work for three years then next ensuing in digging any Stone Quarry or Coal or other Mine one good and able hand for every hundred Acres, it shall be accounted a sufficient Cultivation and Improvement, Provided also That every three Acres which shall be cleared & worked or Cleared and drained as aforesaid shall be accounted a sufficient Cultivation & Improvement to save forever from forfeiture fifty Acres of Land in any part of the Tract hereby granted and the said Philip Delegal, his Heirs and Assigns, shall be at Liberty to withdraw his or their stock or to forbear working in any Quarry or Mines in Proportion to such Cultivation and Improvements as shall be made upon the Plantable Lands, Swamps, Sunken Grounds **or Marshes herein contained.** And if the said Rent hereby Reserved shall happen to be in Arrear and unpaid for the Space of One Year from the time it shall become Due and no Distress Can be found on the said Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments hereby Granted that then and in such case the said Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments hereby Granted and every part and parcel thereof shall revert to our Heirs and Successors as fully & absolutely as if the same had never been granted. Provided also if this Grant shall not be duly Registered in the Registers office of our sd Province within Six Months from the date hereof and a Docquet thereof also entered in the Auditors Office of the same that then this Grant shall be void any Thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding. Given under the Great Seal of our Province of Georgia. WITNESS our Trusty & Well beloved James Wright, Esquire, our Captain General and Governor in Chief of our said Province the first day of May in the Year of Our Lord 1764 and in the fourth year of Our Reign.

s/James Wright

Signed by his Excellency the Governor in Council  
Chs. Watson, C.C.

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The Delegal Family

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“THE ONCE UPON A TIME OF SKIDAWAY ISLAND,  
AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE ‘ONCE UPON A TIME.’<sup>2</sup>

When the aged Indian Mico, Tomochichee, granted the English settlers in Georgia ‘lands upon the continent as far as the tide flowed and two hours walk above it,’ he also granted the Islands of Tybee, Warsaw, Skidaway, Wilmington, St. Simons, and others south of the St. Johns River. These islands, belonging to the coastal chain romantically called ‘The Golden Isles of Georgia’ were destined to play their part in the history of the colony. In our family two of them are of sentimental interest, St. Simons, close to the southern coast of Georgia, and Skidaway in the lower reaches of the Savannah River.

The story of the two Philip Delegals, father and son, who were army officers under Oglethorpe, can be written in large letters in the annals of St. Simons when the infant colony shuddered with fear at propaganda from Spanish Florida, which in time ceased to be propaganda and became the grim reality of invasion.

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“STATE OF GEORGIA.<sup>3</sup>

Savannah, June 21, 1785

NOTICE is hereby given, That the SALES OF CONFISCATED ESTATES will commence on Monday the 22d day of August next, at the Vendue House in the Town of Savannah, between the hours of ten in the forenoon and three in the afternoon, viz.

...103½ acres, late Philip Delegal’s, in Chatham county, being a small island and seven hammocks scattered on a large island of salt marsh, bounded north-east and east on Vernon river, south-west on a creek, and south-east on the conflux of Great and Little Ogeechee.”

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<sup>2</sup> From the History of the Delegal Family (transcription not completed).

<sup>3</sup> *The (Savannah) Gazette Of The State Of Georgia*, 30 June 1785 (advertisement).



**WILLIAM STEADMAN**  
(died c1800)

William Steadman (or Stedman) (died c1800) published the following advertisement in the (*Savannah Georgia Gazette*, 29 December 1791, p. 2, col. 1:

‘FOR SALE,  
The ISLAND of Pettiguave,  
containing 103½ acres by the survey. Likewise, Fifty Acres of Land on  
the north end of the Island of Little Wassaw, and One Fourth Part of Pine  
Island. The whole will be sold a great bargain. For particulars apply at  
May Island to

WILLIAM STEDMAN.”

\* \* \* \* \*

**JOSEPH STILES**  
(d. 1838)

Joseph Stiles (d. 1838), son of CPT Samuel Stiles (died 19 November 1808 at the age of 71) of the island of Bermuda and Bryan County, Georgia, was survived by a widow and ten living children. His first wife was Catherine (“Kitty”) Clay, by whom he had five children.<sup>4</sup> He married second Margaret Vernon Adams, by whom he had five more children. He died testate in Chatham County in the middle of December 1838.<sup>5</sup> An 1839 appraisal of his real estate holdings lists Vale Royal Plantation, Springfield Plantation, 500-acre Green Island, several large tracts on the Ogeechee River, tracts in other sections of Georgia, and numerous lots in Savannah.<sup>6</sup>

On 12 September 1922, W.H. Wade, as administrator c.t.a. of the last will and testament of Florence Vernon Woodbridge, and other heirs of Joseph Stiles, filed a petition in the Superior Court of Chatham County for sale and division of Green Island and Petit Guave Island, part of the estate of Joseph Stiles. Because of the numerous parties, all being descendants of Joseph Stiles, Judge Peter W. Meldrim of the Superior Court determined that it would be impracticable to partition the properties among the heirs and would devalue it, as well. He appointed three “discreet persons” as commissioners, Carl Mendel, C.J. Hunter, and Leigh M. White, to sell the property of the estate and distribute the proceeds.<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 11 of the petition describes Petit Guave Island as follows:

“That Petit Guave Island is bounded, as follows:—on the North by Vernon River, on the South and East by Green Island Sound, and on the West by Crooked Creek, and contains about one hundred acres of high land and about two hundred acres of marsh land.”

Judge Meldrim signed the order of appointment on 22 January 1922. The property was advertised for sale in the *Savannah Evening Press*, *Atlanta Constitution*, and the *New York Times*. For various reasons, including the death of a bidder, the property was re-advertised. It was sold on 9 April 1925.

<sup>4</sup> Married in December of 1793. Marriage announcement in (*Savannah Georgia Gazette*, 5 December 1793.

<sup>5</sup> Funeral invitation for Joseph Stiles in (*Savannah Daily Georgian*, Monday, 17 December 1838, p. 2, col. 7 [the funeral was held from Stiles’ residence on Farm (Fahm) Street]. Chatham County Probate Court, Also see Will Book G, p. 363.

<sup>6</sup> *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 27 (1)(Athens, GA: March 1943):103–5.

<sup>7</sup> *W.H. Wade, administrator c.t.a. of the l/w&t of Florence V. Woodbridge, et al. vs. W.H. Stiles et al.*, Chatham County Superior Court, October Term 1922; Judgment No. 25724 (1925). The original case, one for interpretation of Florence V. Woodbridge’s last will and testament, went to judgment as *Florence V. Woodbridge et al. vs. Samuel W. Stiles et al.*, Judgment No. 22717, in the Chatham County Superior Court (1921–1922). Also see brief account of the history of the title to Green Island in “Historic Isle Changes Hands,” *Savannah Morning News*, 8 December 1958.

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Deed from Carl Mendel, D.J. Hunter, and Leigh M. White, as Commissioners appointed under an order of the Superior Court of Chatham County, Georgia, 22 January 1925, in the cause of W.H. Wade, administrator, c.t.a. of Florence V. Woodbridge et al. vs. William H. Stiles et al., as party of the first part, to Livingston McLaws as party of the second part, dated 14 April 1925, filed 20/21 April 1925, recorded in Deed Book 20-C, p.378, regarding Green Island and Petit Guave Island, and partition of the estate of Joseph Stiles, deceased.<sup>8</sup> Petit Guave Island was sold at public sale to McLaws for \$1,010.00.

(See original estate file for Joseph Stiles in Probate Court records.)

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<sup>8</sup> Chatham County Probate Court, Estate No. S-229 (will, 1839).



**GORDON B. SMITH**

Attorney at Law  
126 A West Taylor Street  
Post Office Box 10041  
Savannah, Georgia 31412  
TEL: (912) 233-8003  
FAX: (912) 233-2543  
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*(Draft Legal Opinion)*

John P. McQuigg, Esq.  
Attorney at Law  
2225 Gloucester Street  
Brunswick, Georgia 31520

RE: Property of James Gowen  
Known as Petit Guave Island, Chatham County, Georgia

Dear Sir:

At your request I have made an examination of the title to Petit Guave Island, also known as Pettiegua, Petitguave, or Racoon Island, a small island and seven hammocks on a larger island of salt marsh, bounded generally on the north by Vernon River, South and East by Green Island Sound, and West by Crooked Creek, in Chatham County, Georgia.

This land was originally granted by Sir James Wright, governor of the Colony of Georgia, in the name of King George III, to Philip Delegal on May 1, 1764. This grant was recorded in Colonial Grant Book E (1764-1766), folio 2. A transcription of this grant is attached hereto and made a part hereof.

The Patriot government confiscated Petit Guave Island from Philip Delegal at the end of the Revolutionary War and sold it at public sale. It went into the possession of William Steadman, subsequently Joseph Stiles. The latter died testate in 1838. Pursuant to court order, the island was sold in 1925 out of the Stiles estate to Livingston McLaws, and thence through successive purchasers to SunTrust Bank, N.A., as Custodian for James F. Gowen, M.D., IRA, in 1999.

Based on my examination of the original Crown grant and the title thereto, it is my legal opinion first that the Crown granted both the high land of the island and hammocks and also the surrounding marsh island to Philip Delegal. It is my second legal opinion that the present title holder of the fee to this property, SunTrust Bank, N.A., as Custodian for James F. Gowen, M.D., IRA, holds it to the exclusion of all others, including the state of Georgia.

Sincerely yours,

GORDON B. SMITH

ENC.