

The Landings' Formative Years

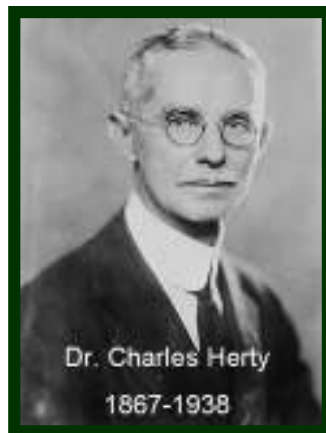
A Brief History From The Developer's Perspective

The history of The Landings could be told from many different perspectives: a golfer might see it differently than a tennis player or a boater; a builder would see it differently than a resident; and, certainly, people who were children back in the 1970's and grew up on the island, as my children did, would have their own special way of telling the story.



Richard Burke, Branigar
President: 1978-1986

But the unique perspective I believe I can offer is that of the Developer. While I was not here when The Landings started, I was recruited in 1976 to help deal with its faltering sales and I served as Branigar's President during the late 1970's and 80's, when the most formative development decisions were made and when the majority of Club facilities were built and Landings lots were sold.



The history of The Landings begins with a man who died 34 years before the first lot was platted. Dr. Charles Herty was a Georgia born scientist, professor and businessman, whose career was marked by daunting accomplishments. He was instrumental in establishing the National Institutes of Health and he was responsible for bringing Varsity football to UGA. (Herty Field in Athens is named after him as were the Science building at Savannah State and the WWII Liberty Ship "SS Charles H. Herty.") More relevant to my topic, in 1932 Dr. Herty invented a process for making pulp from southern pine trees.



“Sandy” Calder: 1886-1962

Three years later, Union Bag, as it was then known, broke ground on its Savannah Mill. Union Bag was already a leader in paper bag production, but its reliance on pulp imported from Sweden or made from expensive northern

Spruce trees put it at a cost disadvantage to its competitors. Building a new mill in Savannah and switching to pulp made from southern pine trees eliminated that disadvantage.

Then, as now, the Savannah mill relied on a stream of logs being trucked to its wood yard on a daily basis. World War II raised the possibility that rationing of gasoline could interrupt that critical log flow. To mitigate that risk Union Bag bought roughly 5,000 acres on Skidaway Island in 1941. Skidaway had both an ample supply of trees and a waterway that made it possible to barge pulp wood directly to the mill and logs were, indeed, barged from Skidaway up until 1953. The section of The Landings now known as Oakridge was, at that time, called “Log Landing.”

Consistent with its long history of growing through acquisition, Union Bag merged with Camp Manufacturing in 1956 to become Union Camp Corporation. This acquisition strategy continued during the 1960’s and was widened to include non-paper firms that Union Camp felt would complement its core activities. In 1964 they bought a company that specialized in resin based chemicals; in 1968 they bought a chain of hardware stores (“Moore Handley”) that could sell the plywood and lumber they were milling; and in 1969, they bought The Branigar Organization with the goal of developing those few portions of the 1.6 million acres of land they owned



Wall Street Journal, Sep. 17, 1969
 “Union Camp is developing a brand new product. Land.”

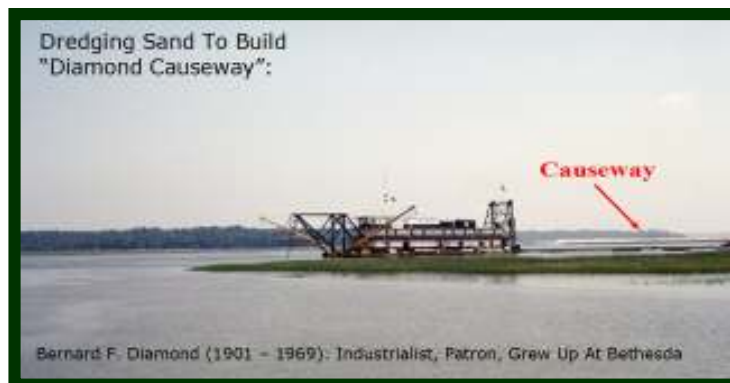
that had a higher and better use than growing trees.

While most know Branigar as the developer of The Landings, Skidaway was just one of many communities Branigar created. Founded by Harvey Branigar, Sr. in 1918, the company had successfully completed over 80 communities in the half-century before it was acquired by Union Camp. During my tenure as President, Branigar had seven active communities located in four different states (Illinois, Wisconsin, Florida and Georgia) and we employed 446 people, only 151 of whom were at The Landings.



Branigar's Galena Territory & Eagle Ridge Resort (Galena, IL)

It was this long and varied experience that made Branigar appealing to Union Camp. The two men who headed Union Camp at that time, Sox Calder, its CEO and Sam Kinney, its President, owned property in coastal golf communities and neither required someone to tell them Skidaway had development potential. Even before Union Camp's 1969 acquisition of Branigar, Union Camp's Resource Development Department was actively negotiating with Chatham County and the State on land donations for the State Park, the Oceanographic Institute and the island's road rights-of-way, and, of course, on practical ways of getting a causeway and bridge.





Union Camp had already hired Thomas & Hutton Engineering of Savannah, the land planning firm, Sasaki Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Hammer, Green, Silar, a market research firm out of Washington, D.C. to take a preliminary look at the development potential of Skidaway. What was still needed, however, was a reputable firm with a proven track record of creating quality communities to do the actual development work. Branigar had the experience and track record Union Camp was after.

Even so, Branigar faced a very steep learning curve on Skidaway. While Branigar had 80 communities under its belt, those communities tended to be smaller and less sophisticated than what was envisioned for Skidaway. Even more significant was the fact that virtually all Branigar's prior communities had been sold "locally" to prospects from a single market: Chicago. Most were primary housing communities in Chicago's suburbs and were easily accessible to prospects via car. Even the second home

communities they had built in Wisconsin and western Illinois were within a three-hour drive of Chicago's O'Hare Airport.



**Harvey Branigar, Jr. & Jim Reed, Branigar
President 1971-1978**

By contrast, the most promising prospects for Skidaway lived 800 or more miles from the island, they had little awareness of Savannah, they were under no time pressure to purchase and, when the time to buy did eventually come, they had a large and expanding array of sunbelt

communities from which to choose. Never before had Branigar faced a marketing challenge of this type or magnitude.

The acquisition of Branigar kicked off three years of intense planning. The development team was comprised of four firms: Branigar, working out of offices in Chicago and on River Street in Savannah; Sasaki Associates, arguably the best land planning firm in the world; Hammer, Green, Siler and Thomas & Hutton Engineering.

Rotating meetings among Savannah, Washington and Boston, the team had a myriad of issues with which to grapple:

- Who were the likely buyers and where were they located?
- Which existing communities could serve as valid “comparables” and how could we improve on the amenities and features those competitors were offering?
- Given that Chatham County had no public water and sewer utilities, how could these essential needs be met?
- What was the best way to deal with Skidaway's low elevations and the upland marshes, bogs and swales that were sprinkled all through its interior?
- What were the expected costs to develop the island; what prices could be reasonably charged; how big should the community ultimately be; and how long would it take to complete?

- Where on the 3,000 acres originally envisioned for The Landings should Phase I be located; how big should this first phase be; how much should be built to meet initial demand?
- And, of course, what was to be done about golf? Before the team settled on creating Marshwood as a “residents” private country club, Branigar was in active negotiations with the Savannah Golf Club, which was facing the need to completely rebuild its course. Negotiations centered on relocating both their golf course and their club to Skidaway. In the end, these negotiations fell through and Arnold Palmer was hired to design The Landings’ first course and to be on hand for its Grand Opening.

In addressing these seminal questions, a variety of “Master Plan Concepts” were considered - - some very different from the one finally selected: fewer golf courses; more condominium/multi-family dwelling units; multiple community entrances; and provision for hotels and a school site were all under consideration. At this time, the section of Skidaway that now comprises “Plantation” was not owned by Branigar or Union Camp, but was owned and under development by a competitive developer.



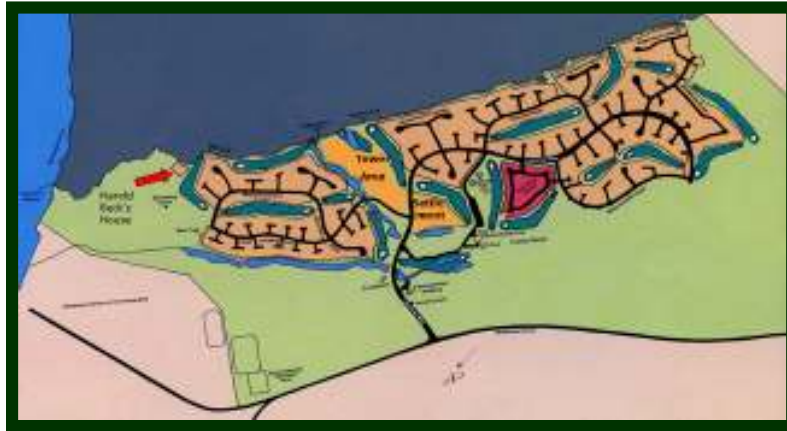
One of Several Concept Plans for The Landings

In the end, however, an embryonic version of what exists today opened as Phase I of The Landings in September of 1972. The main entrance was located at what is now the North Gate; Landings Way and Wiley Bottom Road formed a loop on the south end; and Priest Landing and Monastery Road formed a similar loop on the north end. The Tower and Settlement areas that are colored in light orange on the plan, below, had been sold as

raw land parcels to other developers. The area colored red is Village Green. While still owned by Branigar, it was under contract to an outside builder who had exclusive rights to build patio homes there, taking lots down one at a time. The orphan lot on the north side of the 14th tee, marked with a red arrow, was a single homesite custom platted for Harold Beck, a colorful and larger-than-life character who was The Landings' first project manager.



Harold Beck, Right



Phase I of The Landings Opened in Sept., 1972. Tower & Marshwood Clubhouse Under Construction; Temporary Sales Office in Modular Unit

Despite all the planning, a number of miscues doomed The Landings to a very rocky start. The market research firm incorrectly concluded that ocean resort communities like Sea Pines and Palmetto Dunes were good comparables for Skidaway; that Branigar could sell 2,000 lots to local Savannahians and another 4,700 to second-home resort buyers along the Eastern seaboard; that the market for condominiums on Skidaway was “*Excellent*,” and that only modest marketing effort would be required for high sales.

Lacking Georgia experience, Branigar relied on that advice. They focused on local markets for the first three years (Savannah, Atlanta, Augusta, and Macon); spent only modest amounts on marketing; and followed the Hilton Head concept of selling land pods to other developers.

Mistaken as this advice was, the problem was exponentially compounded by a major recession which began just as the community opened. One can debate whether that recession was as bad as the one in 2008-2011, but there is little debate about two facts: first, during the 1972-75 recession, mortgage rates went to 12.5%; and second, few can sell or buy a home when the cost of borrowing goes into double digits.

The impact on The Landings was devastating. After an initial burst of lot sales driven heavily by local investors, sales at The Landings dropped precipitously. Meanwhile, the Settlement Townhomes and the Tower Area fell into the hands of their lenders; patio home sales in Village Green came to a halt; and “For Sale” signs went up on investor lots all through the community.



Further dimensioning the extent of the problem, other coastal area communities like Moss Creek, Hilton Head Plantation, Amelia Island and Sawgrass all found themselves at the mercy of their lenders.



**Settlement Townhomes, Started by An Outside Developer,
Before Re-Acquisition & Rebuilding by Branigar**

If there was one unexpected benefit of this recession, it was the demise of “Skidaway Island Plantation,” the competitive development just getting started on the land that is today the Plantation section of The Landings. Solely attributable to Union Camp’s financial strength and commitment to success on Skidaway, Union Camp was suddenly able to acquire this property out of bankruptcy and, with property owner approval, we were able to add it to our community.

As the effects of the recession softened, Branigar began rethinking many of its original target buyer and marketing assumptions. At the urging of Union Camp, Branigar engaged the New York firm of Spencer, Stuart & Associates to conduct a national search for a VP-Marketing. Specifically sought was a candidate with consumer packaged goods marketing experience. As a former Brand Manager at Procter & Gamble, I met that criterion and became Branigar’s VP-Marketing in March of 1976.

In my first two months on the job, I assessed the market; concluded that the “pre-retirement” segment held the most promise for Skidaway; put together plans for testing that concept in Northeast and Midwest markets; and was dispatched to Union Camp Headquarters to sell Union Camp’s CEO, Sox Calder and its President, Sam Kinney on using the “R” word in Landings advertising and collateral material.

This was no small task. The vision that both Sox and Sam held was more like Sea Pines than Sun City and they were determined not to see three-wheel bicycles coursing The Landings' walking trails. To their credit, however, they bought the concept of appealing to young, active, golf-oriented pre-retirees and we got the go-ahead.

Given that approval, higher marketing spending was budgeted and test markets were launched in Chicago and Philadelphia. While P&G might have taken years to read test market results, Branigar needed it done in months. At the very first sign that the ads were working, the new plan was methodically expanded to more and more markets.

In the end, The Landings marketing plan was extended to eight states and

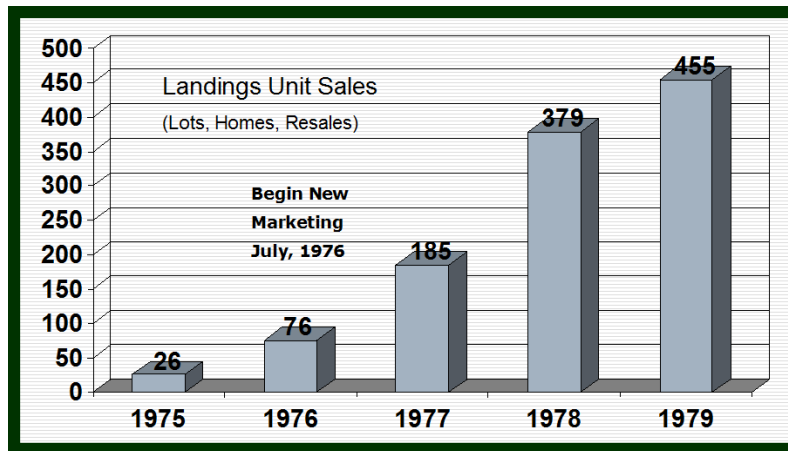


featured full-time sales agents in nine northern metropolitan areas. These agents would be given “leads” from their area that had been generated by print ads or direct mail solicitations; they would call those leads to arrange an in-home presentation on what The Landings had to offer; and they would encourage the prospect to visit through various incentives, which always included on-site lodging and golf and, for a time, reimbursement for half their airfare.

The Landings' First “Retirement” Ad; Variations Continued to Cost Efficiently Produce Prospect Leads for Nine Years

The plan worked. In effect for only a portion of 1976, lot sales jumped from 26 to

76. More importantly, this progression continued as the plan was rolled out to more northern markets. The Landings had 185 sales in 1977; reached 379 sales in 1978; and closed 455 sales in 1979.

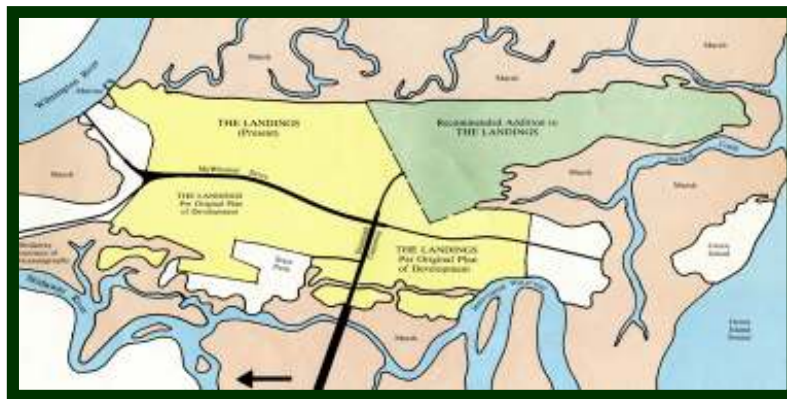


Bolstered by these encouraging results, Branigar took a series of major steps that had a profound impact on the community that exists today:

- We dropped the patio lot requirements to use a single builder and to choose from a limited set of housing plans. Patio lots were now sold like any other lot in the community - - albeit with unique covenants and architectural guidelines. Ultimately, patio lots accounted for roughly 20% of all Landings lot sales;
- We bought back the “Tower Area,” which had previously been sold to another developer who had, like Skidaway Island Plantation, lost it to its lender during the 1973 recession. That developer had envisioned the Tower area as a site for high density housing; we platted it for single family homes;
- We bought back the 53 Settlement Townhomes that had been abandoned while under construction, rebuilt them to higher standards, and reserved 14 for use in housing future sales prospects;



- Most significant of all, Union Camp bought the neighboring Skidaway Island Plantation, which had fallen into bankruptcy during the 1973 recession. That property, colored green on the map below, was owned by Harvey Lewis of Atlanta (no relation to Curtis Lewis of Savannah) at the time The Landings started and it could not be added to The Landings without a favorable vote from a “super majority” of existing property owners. That hurdle was easily surpassed in a referendum held on October 30, 1979, with results announced to a cheering crowd in the main dining room of the Marshwood Club.



Map Enclosed With Property Owner Voting Materials in 1979

With property owner approval in hand, we moved quickly to ready this new section for sale. Although Harvey Lewis had built the granite curbed “Square” as his main entrance and had completed one golf course on the south end of the island before running out of funds, neglect had taken a toll on both. The two-mile road leading to the course was unpaved, the golf irrigation system had been vandalized, the tees, greens and fairways were starved for attention, and it was clear we would have to completely rebuild the course. We hired golf architect Arthur Hills to undertake this task.

As for sales, they were kicked-off in what one property owner equated to the “*Great Oklahoma Land Rush of 1893.*” Although Landings owners and prospects were permitted to drive around the south end before the initiation of sales, the main road was blocked immediately prior to Grand Opening Day. That auspicious event comprised an all-day pork roast and picnic hosted by Branigar in the entry Square, a mid-morning lifting of the barricades, and a mad dash to the south end to stake claim to a particular lot of choice. By sunset we had completed a record setting day for Landings sales.



**Grand Opening Party; Tape Cut by Elbert & Helen Little,
Owners of The First Home Built At The Landings**

Although spec homes and custom homes quickly began appearing on the south end, these hearty pioneers were separated from their Marshwood neighbors by two miles of thick forests for more than two years. The northern portion of “Landings Way South” wasn’t completed and paved until 1984, so access to the south end of the island was achieved by driving a combination of what are now Tidewater Way, Brandenberry Road, Yam Gandy Road, and the loop formed by Delegal Road and the southern half of Landings Way South.



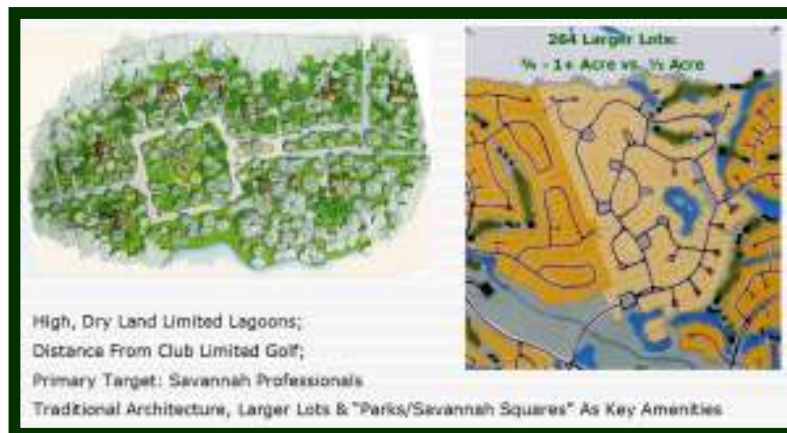
For a good part of those two years, the Post Office refused to make home deliveries and south end residents were forced to collect their mail from a cluster of boxes erected within the entry Square; the “Plantation Clubhouse” was a temporary pre-fabricated unit; and wild pigs still roamed the land!



Temporary Plantation Clubhouse

The gradual, but methodical expansion of the community into that empty two-mile wilderness precipitated the “invention” of Midpoint. This unique section of The Landings was created to solve both a land planning dilemma and a marketing problem.

One of the keys to the Landings success was the number of lots our planners creatively linked with a desirable amenity view: a lagoon, a golf hole, the marsh or some combination of these views. While Midpoint had a marsh edge, the land was too high to dig lagoons and it was too far from the club to string golf holes through its interior. Another type of amenity was needed or we would be faced with an unbroken track of interior lots.



At the same time, The Landings continued to have trouble attracting local Savannah professionals to the community. One impediment faced was The Landings’ prohibition against building large, traditional style homes, which many Savannahians wanted.

Midpoint addressed both these problems. In lieu of golf and lagoon views, Midpoint offered larger lots, the ambiance of Savannah's Squares, the freedom (and requirement) to build a traditional home, and the assurance that your immediate neighbors would be compelled to do the same.

Midpoint got off to a slow start and on many occasions had to be protected from sales staff petitions to convert all or portions of it to standard Landings lots. But its appeal increased as each new home was built and today it's a "must-see" for every houseguest being toured through the community.

The big news in 1985 was completion of the Plantation Club. Reflecting our growing confidence in where the community was headed, this facility far exceeded the original Marshwood Clubhouse in size, setting, interior appointments and versatility.

Over 3,000 guests attended the Grand Opening. The Savannah Symphony set-up in Tanglewood fashion on the practice fairway. Golf stars Hollis Stacy, Debbie Massey, Bob Goalby, and Sam Snead were on hand to mingle with the crowd and to play an exhibition round.



**Grand Opening of The Plantation Clubhouse: October 13, 1985
3,000 Attend; Hollis Stacy, Debbie Massie, Bob Goalby & Sam
Snead Play Exhibition Golf and Mingle with The Crowd**

It's fair to say that both the local Savannah community and the local media were highly impressed as were the increasing number of prospects visiting from the north.

Two years later, in the fall of 1987, another Grand Opening was celebrated, this time at the Village Center. This was a major undertaking for Branigar and had been in the design and construction stages for several years. While Branigar had always planned to build retail shopping facilities once there were enough homes to support them, the initial vision was for a strip center located along Diamond Causeway. We ultimately concluded that with a projected island-wide population of 10,000 or more, what Skidaway needed wasn't a strip center, but a town.

Having lived in Colonial Williamsburg during my first year in the Army, I was impressed with the "retail" section of Duke of Gloucester Street and wanted to approximate its ambiance on Skidaway. A group comprised of four from Branigar and two from Sasaki Associates flew to Williamsburg and took careful note of the characteristics all felt made that small section of the town so appealing. A concerted effort was then made to incorporate as many of those characteristics as practical in our own "Village."



Like Williamsburg's Duke of Gloucester Street, Skidaway Village Walk is tree-lined, framed by handsome buildings, offers limited street parking, and masks its spacious parking lots behind its buildings. And the original Village Market and Merrill Lynch Building on opposing ends of Skidaway Village Walk are credible stand-ins for the terminated vistas created by Williamsburg's Christopher Wren Building and House of Burgesses.

Putting aside for the moment Alfred Hitchcock's famously disparaging remark about the Oscars, winning the Urban Land Institute's "Award for Excellence" in 1986 was a very big deal. ULI is the preeminent organization for developers and for all the disciplines related to development. It has members in 95 countries, with thousands of individual members here in the US. (There were thousands of people in attendance at the ULI Convention in Chicago at which I accepted this award on behalf of The Landings.)



**Lester Gross (ULI), Richard Burke
(Branigar) Plantation Club,
December 1, 1986**

There are separate awards for different types of development, but only one development in each category can win. The Landings was up against a myriad of similar communities throughout North America and it came out on top - - publicly recognized as "One of the best planned, executed and managed large-scale residential communities in the nation."

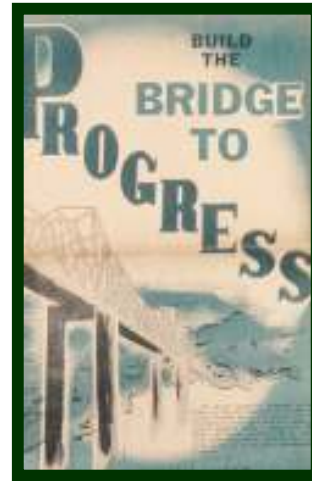
To win this award, a community must demonstrate three things:

- That it came up with unique solutions to development challenges;
- That it made a positive contribution to the surrounding community; and
- That it was economically viable for both the developer and the Property Owner Association.

With regard to the first criterion, that of finding unique solutions to difficult development challenges, we could quickly point to nine:

- **“PUD” Ordinance :** The development of large scale communities like The Landings depends upon the flexibility provided by a special type of zoning known as a Planned Unit Development Ordinance or “PUD” for short. At the time The Landings was being planned, neither Chatham County nor the City of Savannah had such a zoning ordinance and Branigar assisted them in drafting and adopting one.

- **Causeway & Bridge:** While hindsight is always 20/20, the benefits of issuing public bonds to finance Diamond Causeway and the Skidaway Narrows Bridge weren’t immediately obvious to the citizens of Chatham County back in 1967. It fell to Branigar and Union Camp to help prominent Savannah politicians, citizens and business leaders convince a skeptical public of the merits of putting themselves on the hook for the investment required – one that ultimately paid off handsomely.



1967 Savannah News Supplement

- **Water & Sewer Systems:** At the time The Landings started, there wasn’t a single public water and sewer facility in all of unincorporated Chatham County and getting one formed would inevitably lead to delays in the start of development. Branigar decisively addressed this challenge by bringing Utilities, Inc of Chicago down to run a private water and sewer utility on Skidaway.
- **Imaginative Drainage System:** There’s a reason why our section of the coast is called the “*Low Country*” - - elevations above sea level are minimal and large sections of land are characterized by swews and bogs and upland marshes. Skidaway Island fits this description, yet an imaginative network of man-made, interconnected lagoons with water levels controlled by tide gates has not only provided delightful views for all residents, but has kept our streets from flooding during summer downpours. Compare this with large sections of downtown and Southside Savannah and you’ll quickly see just how innovative our drainage system is.



Central Lagoon Drainage System, With Tide Gates

Protect Sensitive Marsh: The marsh is the most important and environmentally sensitive feature of our community. Numerous examples around Savannah provide evidence that absent strong covenants to protect its edge, Romerly Marsh would be scarred by countless piers and private docks extending hundreds of feet off shore in an effort to reach permanent deep water channels. To preclude this, Branigar innovatively created a permanent natural buffer varying from 50 to 100 feet in width down the entire face of the marsh.



50' to 100' Natural Buffer Along Marsh Edge

- **Protect Tree Cover:** Anyone who ever built a home at The Landings knows that part of the architectural review process entails submitting a “tree survey” of their lot which identifies all trees with a diameter of six inches or more. The goal is to position the home to save as many of those mature trees as practicable.

Not broadly known is that Branigar subjected itself to this same discipline when siting its clubhouses and laying out its roads and golf courses. While Branigar employed “celebrity” golf architects like Tom Fazio, Art Hills and Arnold Palmer, we did not follow the customary practice of letting them lay out their designs wherever it suited them. Rather, we laid out eighteen “golf corridors” in advance and held our golf architects to those boundaries unless a compelling case for altering them could be made. As much as possible - - consistent with building an excellent course - - these corridors were comprised of land with the least interesting tree cover.



Project Manager Don Ryder & Branigar Land Planning VP Dick Magnuson Review Selective Tree Clearing at Oakridge

- **Protect Historic Sites:** Recognizing that most coastal islands contain some sites of historic interest, Branigar financed archeological surveys in areas suspected to contain traces of earlier civilizations or meaningful remnants from historic events like the Civil War. Once identified, every effort was made to protect them

during development. Delegal's grave and the Avenue of Oaks in Plantation and the Civil War gun mounds at Landings Harbor are examples that come quickly to mind.

- **Provide Boat Access With Minimum Impact on Marsh:**

Among the greatest threats to marshlands are excavations and construction related to boating activities. Mindful of this, the size of the harbor basin at Priest Landing was sharply restricted, with the vast majority of storage capacity provided in the form of multi-tiered racks on dry land. Similarly, at Delegal, Branigar discarded the marsh-threatening approach of an "inner-harbor" that had been planned by the initial developer of Skidaway Island Plantation, adopting instead the more environmentally sensitive approach of extending connectors to docks permanently set in deep water well beyond the sensitive marsh edge.



- **Provide Convenient Shopping:**

I have already spoken about our Award Winning Village Center, but even back in the early days, Branigar took pains to assure that our pioneer residents had convenient access to at least the basics of everyday living without having to drive the eight miles to Southside Savannah. (The Kroger Shopping Plaza at Ferguson and Diamond Causeway had yet to be built) Directly opposite the



Sales Office at what is now the North Entrance, Branigar built its own version of an aesthetically attractive convenience store.

Equipped with gas pumps and stocked with necessities, this charming building featured low country architecture and ladder-backed rocking chairs on its shady porch. Sadly, it was ultimately destroyed by fire.

Turning to the second ULI criterion, that of making a positive contribution to the surrounding community, there were six clear ways in which we could demonstrate an extremely positive impact on both Savannah and Chatham County:

- **Donated Land:** Skidaway State Park started with 490 acres of land donated by Union Camp and is now visited by over 195,000 people a year. Union Camp also donated portions of the campus of the Skidaway Oceanographic Institute and all of the road rights-of-way for McWhorter Drive and those portions of Diamond Causeway on the island side.
- **Existence of High Quality Community Helped Recruit Industry:** The very fact that Savannah had a high quality, golf oriented community like The Landings was of significant benefit to the county and city in their attempts to bring new industry to the area. As noted by Dick Knowlton, President of the Savannah Ports Authority at the time of the ULI competition, *“The Landings is a unique asset in our community, used daily in our efforts to attract new capital investment to Savannah.”*
- **Enlarged Local Tax Base:** Had The Landings attracted buyers only from the local area, it would simply have moved an existing tax base from one corner of Chatham County to another. But The Landings had national appeal and 80% of its residents came from outside the state of Georgia, and those new residents were by definition above average in affluence. As a result, The Landings has increased tax revenues for both Chatham County and the State of Georgia by millions of dollars each and every year since 1972.
- **Created Jobs:** The Landings created a significant number of jobs for the area. I have already noted that Branigar, itself, employed 151 people at The Landings. In addition to these positions, it is estimated that 800 or more people from the surrounding area come to work at The Landings on a daily basis. Even at minimum wage, those 800 jobs translate to annual earnings of over \$16 million.

- **Local Purchases:** If you owned an appliance store, or a furniture store, or a lumber yard, or a carpet company or, indeed, any retail or service operation that was influenced by the construction of new homes or the simple expansion of a customer base, imagine the impact of gaining access to 10,000 affluent prospects in need of building and furnishing 4000 new homes. The Landings did precisely this for the local economy.
- **Resident Contributions:** Would there be a Jepson Center for the Arts without The Landings? Possibly, but in addition to Bob Jepson's and Dick Eckburg's infinitely generous financial contributions to Savannah, hundreds, if not thousands, of Landings residents have donated their time, talents and dollars to a wide spectrum of civic and charitable causes throughout Chatham County.

In exchange for all these benefits, the County was called upon to issue bonds for construction of the causeway and bridge that were needed to link Skidaway to the mainland. Principal and interest on these bonds totaled \$250,000 per year and they were paid off in full by 1990. Given the tangible and intangible contributions noted above, building that causeway and bridge must rank among the best investments ever made by Chatham County.



Original Draw Bridge Serving Skidaway: 1972-2014

With regard to the third criterion, that of being economically viable for both the developer and the Property Owner Association, The Landings does more than clear the bar. I can personally attest to the fact that The Landings generated an excellent rate-of-return for Branigar and Union Camp - - probably less than people imagine, but excellent none the less.

As for The Landings Association, a review of their audited financial statements for the year 2015, reveals an extremely positive financial picture. A full seventeen years out from Branigar's departure: POA revenues exceed expenditures by \$1.2 million; the Association has equity in excess of \$14.7 million; annual POA lot assessments are reasonable versus comparable communities; common properties throughout the community have consistently been maintained in a high state of repair; and never in its history has the Association needed to make a significant special assessment beyond the normal annual assessments.



**The Landings Association
Administrative Office**

In short, Branigar handily met this demanding ULI requirement.

With all this as historical perspective, let me offer my personal thoughts on the five things that I believe make The Landings so special.

First and foremost is Skidaway's natural beauty, in particular, its lush tree cover and magnificent marsh vistas. If you live on the marsh, as I have been fortunate to do for the past thirty-six years, you are ceaselessly fascinated by the rise and fall of the tides, by its changes in color by time of day and season of the year, and by the constant activity of the birds and raccoons and deer that feed along its edge. And even if you don't live on the marsh, simply crossing the causeway in either direction is inspirational.



View of Romerly Marsh at Morning

As for trees, few things in nature can surpass the beauty of a 300-year-old, moss-draped live oak.

Second, I would note the fact that the entire island, not just our community, was meticulously planned and enfolded in protective covenants. It is extremely rare for even the best developers to have control over the land outside their gates. But with Union Camp owning most if not all of Skidaway, the closest threat to our island paradise is five miles and two river crossings away.

Third is the fact that we have never been forced to compromise or deviate from our development vision despite the fact that we faced five economic recessions over a daunting twenty eight year development period. Credit for this goes entirely to Union Camp, who patiently held the land until it was needed; who moved aggressively to acquire the bankrupt Skidaway Island Plantation even before The Landings was prospering; and who stood by during the lean years so that regrettable development decisions weren't made out of economic necessity.

Fourth would be the unique blending of ages, incomes and interests that characterizes The Landings community. I don't think either Branigar or Union Camp can take credit for this; it's really all the doing of Landings property owners. But it's a rare and wonderful outcome that few other communities enjoy.

Finally, there is our proximity to charming and historic Savannah. I was born in New York and I've lived in both the Midwest and in San Francisco, but I can honestly say there is no other city in the country that I would choose over Savannah as a place to live or to have raised my family. The Landings was designed to provide many entertaining amenities to its residents, but it was left to General James Oglethorpe to plan its best.

This has been a personal perspective, but in reviewing the "evidence" I've provided, I hope you'll agree that ULI rightly described The Landings as one of the best residential communities in the entire nation.

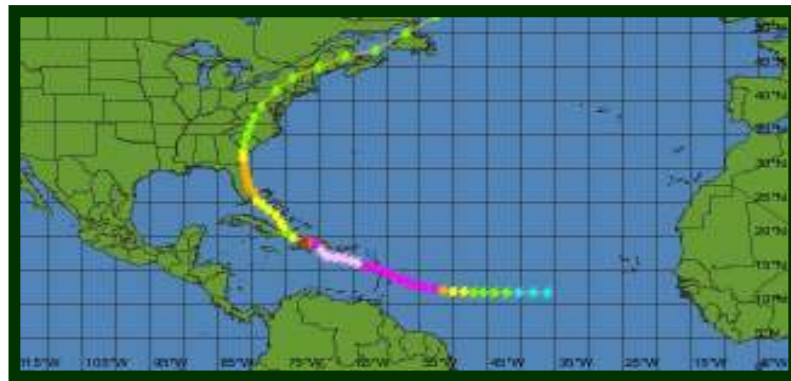
Richard Burke

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APPENDIX

Questions I Am Frequently Asked

1. **When was the last hurricane to hit Skidaway Island?**
Hurricane David: September 4, 1979. Winds: 80-90 MPH; storm tides + 3ft.; no flooding; no electricity for 3 days, but no interruption of water & sewer service thanks to stand-by generators on wells & sewage lift stations; token damage except at Landings Harbor. Skidaway was not alone in facing this storm: as seen in the map below, no one along the entire East Coast totally escaped its impact



Hurricane David: September 4, 1979

Extensive Damage to Landing Harbor Floating Docks; Trees Down Randomly Throughout the Community

2. Has it ever snowed at The Landings? The last measurable snowfall occurred on December 24, 1989. Accumulation, three inches; record low temperature of 12 degrees; snow melted within a day or so.



3. **Where did you get the name “Yam Gandy”?** From my wife! She read it in a popular coffee table book of the 1970’s titled: *“Guale, the Golden Coast of Georgia.”* An opening paragraph includes the line: *“Here flow the Ohoopies and the Canoochies, the Yam Gandy and the other streams notorious for barren lands, the haunt of deer, and for limped waters rich with fish.”* That line, in turn, comes from a 19th century chronicle by Absolem Chapell entitled *“Miscellanies of Georgia.”* The Ohoopie, Canoochie and Yam Gandy are located near Swainsboro, 90 miles west of Savannah.



Swainsboro, 90 Miles West of Savannah

4. **Did The Landings ever consider building mid-rise condominiums?** Branigar not only considered building a mid-rise at The Landings, we worked with an outside developer to design one and offered it for sale in November of 1980. Called “The Priory” and located on the marsh edge near Landings Harbor, it featured the same architectural style as the Priest Landing townhomes and would have provided a magnificent view of Romerly Marsh and the Wilmington River. The building was to be 7 stories tall; contain 38 units; and offer a choice of two-bedroom and two-bedroom plus den floor plans. Although several purchase reservations were taken, we failed to sell enough units to justify construction. Branigar made no subsequent attempt to build multi-storied housing.



5. **What did lots cost when The Landings started?** The average price of all lots sold during the first 12 months of sales (September, 1972 through August, 1973) was \$16,855 and for marsh front lots alone was \$28,000. On an inflation adjusted basis, these prices would equate to averages of \$90,468 for all lots and \$150,289 for marsh lots in 2015 dollars. Recognizing that the limited supply of vacant lots inevitably increases their value, listings during 2015 for all types of Landings lots greatly exceeded even the inflation adjusted prices originally charged.

6. **How did people get to Skidaway before the bridge was built?** Not surprisingly, by ferry or small boat. The historic map, below, positions the embarkation point for “Parker’s Ferry” at Isle of Hope and at last provides a logical explanation for why “Skidaway Road” goes to Isle of Hope and not to Diamond Causeway!



But there were two brief periods during which Skidaway was

connected to the mainland by a low wooden bridge which, like the ferry, began in Isle of Hope.

The first bridge was built in 1857 to make it easier for Plantation owners on Skidaway to move their crops to market. This bridge was intentionally burned by retreating Confederate forces during the Civil War to prevent its use by the pursuing Union Army. The Confederate Officer responsible for construction of defensive positions around Savannah - - including the Civil War gun mounds at Landings Harbor - - was Captain Cornelius Redding Hanleiter, whose name was inadvertently misspelled when it was used for the street called “Hasleiter’s Retreat” in the Oakridge section of The Landings.

The second “replacement” wooden bridge, also coming from Isle of Hope, was built in 1870. It lasted a very short time before it, too, went up in flames in an incident described in newspapers of the time as a “mysterious fire.”