Gene Austin Visits Dauphin Island

This is the story of a guy who traded his singing tomatoes for fame and fortune.

You have heard a lot of operatic stories but none just like this. Here is the sweet smell of success, a true story that reeks of glamour, riches, the big American dream.

And it all happened to Gene Austin, the legendary monster.

The Story: The Talented One

Gene Austin was a monster talent, who retired for twenty years but is now back in the entertainment business. He took his story to newsmen on Dauphin Island a few days ago. Along with his life story, he had the highest praise for Dauphin Island and said he had long wanted to see this resort center.

As a kid, Gene "meant around" with a beat-up old upright piano at home in Greenville, Miss. He was forbidden to play the piano. "I still can't read music, I can't read chords and he started singing a little."

As a teenager he was juggling around pausing the piano in Texas and Louisiana to sing blues and singing the blues. Then came World War I and Gene joined up. Almost overnight, he came into manhood, new voice and all. When the war was over, he had his troubles with the new voice. He had to stick to piano playing and that didn't quite do the job.

One day he developed throat trouble. The doctor said the tomatoes had to go. After they went, Gene tried out his singing voice again. When he opened his mouth, he heard a beautiful sound. It was hard to believe that it was his own voice. He had discovered he had also developed a great range — from full octaves.

That's how it all started. The intangible Gene Austin style, the smooth, pleasant voice, a great personality soon had the singer on his way."

Capacity Crowd Seen For Rodeo

25th Anniversary Marks Milestone Of This Year's Event

In about ten days from the publication of this issue of the Dauphin Island News, many of our readers will be taking part in the 1957 Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo.

This Silver Anniversary event should be a real humdinger and thousands of sportmen (and their wives and families) are expected for the three-day sports event that opens at 8 a.m. on Friday, July 28th.

Tickets are available at restaurants and shops on Dauphin Island and to participate in this event sponsored by the Mobile Junior Chamber of Commerce, it will be necessary to have a ten dollar entry. But believe us, it is worth every cent you pay.

The big entrance prize this year will be a $2,750 Scott-Aaltwater outboard motor, the finest you can buy for the money. This has been donated by Croswell, Co. in Mobile.

There also will be $10,000 in prizes and trophies. The prize display is up in the lobby of the National Bank and the trophy display can be seen in one of the windows of the Merchants Bank.

The Rodeo judge again this year will be Roy H. Martin, world-famous fishing expert from Passman City.

Dauphin Island housing facilities will be jam-packed and it might be a good idea for those in the hotel and motel business to take a good, hard look at Dauphin Island as a site for more facilities of this kind. It certainly would be a sound business investment.

(Continued on back page)

Record Rodeo Catches

1929 Through 1956

Tarpon, Tom Twitty, weight 120 lbs. 1930; Capt. C. K. Jones, 225 lbs. 1930; Capt. H. D. Andrews, 86 lbs. 1951; Red Fish, Billy Hone, 93 lbs. 1946; King Mackerel, G. M. Beranger, 46 lbs. 1944; Black Fish, Novello V. Chambers, 25 lbs. 1946; Bonita, W. H. March, Jr., 21 lbs. 1938; Blue Fish, B. G. Brandwein, 3 lbs. and Billy Parker, 3 lbs. 1961.

Stickleback Trout, Dwight Stee, 7 lbs. 4 ozs. 1954; Devilfish, Albert Gill, 500-550 lbs. 1937; Flounder, C. M. Cleveland, 5 lbs. 1946; Shark, S. R. Powers, 35 lbs. 1956; Flounder, F. D. Sanford, 7 lbs. 1954; Spanish Mackerel, Dr. C. W. Gatson, 16 lbs. 1947; Dolphin, C. M. Cleveland, 13 lbs. 1946; Red Snapper, John S Truyền, 8 lbs. 1965; Sheephead, H. M. McPeaples, 8 lbs. 1954; Pompano, A. A. White, 2 lbs. 3 ozs. 1954; Grouper, L. J. Richard, 10 lbs. 1954; and Embroidery, Roy Wilson, 3 lbs. 1954.

Sportsmen who stop by the fishing wharf of Willis T. Claytor of a late afternoon are apt to run into an old acquaintance. And they are quick to remember the Ave Maria, a shrimp boat that prior to construction of the Gordon Passou Overseas Highway served as the ferry for the couples attending the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo. The Ave Maria no longer goes this annual respite from the shrimp trade and to the Rodeo participant of past years it seems a sad lot for a craft that was so much a part of Rodeo fishing past in years. Claytor says he owns the boat for about nine years and for six seasons it performed its ferrying chores. Despite memories of the past, old days it is one of the most convenient of the present mode of transportation to and from the Rodeo is more convenient.
EDITORIAL

Dauphin Island has been pioneered by a group of bold and faithful men: those individuals who staked their resources on the future at a time when personal hopes, largely, were their only encouragement.

The faith of this group, the nucleus of the Island’s commercial activity, is being more clearly rewarded now as each new home is completed and current traffic figures indicate the growing popularity of the Island as a resort playground.

Even as evidence of the development is manifested however, the face of commercial enterprise is expanding and changing and in the future months the pioneers will be forgotten as such.

An accounting is therefore in order, to trace the early steps in the Island’s development and to bring credit for faith and patience to those deserving.

The following, then, is an approximate chronology of the early steps of private commercial investment.

In the early days of settlement, the village was being supplied practically its every need by the land-mark buildings housing the Patrons Store and Ladnier’s Store. Family institutions, these stores had or could get every necessity of life in addition to being common grocery stores. General stores were they, and in the best tradition.

Additionally, in that era, rounding out the demands of an emotionally well-rounded society, were Collier’s Store and Houston’s Place. This excellent establishment on the Hwy marina facilities catering to the lighter side of life’s need. They were for week-end get-togethers and the hubs of village social activity.

During this time Chappie Mallin continued to operate his oyster house out of the shell house in Aloe Bay, sorting and selling the local catch to mainland marketers.

Completion of the bridge brought traffic to the Island and the business scene began to expand.

Later, a local entrepreneur, had leased the Fort Gaines Club and opened its restaurant and cocktail lounge to the first flow of traffic. In addition, Bayview started a snack bar on Pelican Point at the end of the island.

E. A. Linscott became the concessions in the old temporary bath-house and on the fishing pier and provided food and drinks to the thousands of visitors to the beach.

Audrey Bishop was quick to recognize the need for motel accommodations and began construction of the Muscle Grove, overlooking the surf beach.

Jesse Acree and Skip Clark set up a concrete batching plant which has played a vital role in the subsequent construction on the Island. The plant now owned by Dixon Meyers, followed, being built near the Casino and providing efficiency apartments.

Ben Buerger opened Ship and Shore Sport Supplies to provide all nature of fishing tackle, boating equipment and practically anything else needed by the boating community and waterfront activity.

Vice President of Island’s only resident restaurateur, Hugh Story built an attractive apartment-unit guest house in the trees, overlooking the Channel.

Frank Jones opened an ice cream and snack bar near the casino to serve the traffic on heavily travelled Bienville Boulevard. Test Collier, moving over from Cedar Point, built on the waterfront at Aloe Bay to handle shrimp and oysters, ice, soda, etc.

Recently Tom Moore opened a boat rental and bait business on the waterfront at Aloe Bay. Aloe Bay remained in attention as Manila Houston and Chippie Mallin erected new buildings along the seawall.

That these men invested their money on the Island shortly after the bridge opened did not however serve to insure an overwhelming and immediate success in business. For, though the Island has been well received by the general public during even these early days, there were some hard times and lean days.

But that these men DID invest, is the point. With an eye to the future, blessed with courage and patience they have shown the way others WILL follow. For this service, a measure of credit and a debt of appreciation to each of them.
Above caught 4th of July 15 miles Southeast of Sand Island lighthouse, Joe Lynn, 3905 fluffy Drive, Ray Fayeard, 6 South Florida, and Joe Pearson proudly display a 48 pound Corvalla they caught while fishing off Paul Rosso Jr.'s boat "Lyric", captained by C. Jockey Morris. The fish caught on number 7 spoon took 30 minutes to bring to gaff after being hooked about 6 A.M.

With a little squeezing we can get one more in said Mr. R. W. Nelson as he sailed around the Marina slip. A member of the Southern Yacht Club of New Orleans, Mr. Nelson and his son had sailed over from New Orleans for a week's vacation at Dauphin Island. This is not the boat they sailed over in.

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WEATHER...OR NOT

Dauphin Island’s unique position at the northern limit of the Maritime Tropical Air Mass which largely influences all spring and summer weather in the area, means that regardless of mainland weather, Dauphin Island weather will often be clear and comfortable. The prevailing off shore winds tend to retard thunderstorm formation until over the inland areas of the mainland.

This means, of course, that Dauphin Island may be enjoying sunshine and breezes while the mainland is soaking in a shower. It is entirely possible that isolated thundershowers may occur in the vicinity of Dauphin Island, but these have a marked tendency to be of extremely short duration.

Mainlanders, Dauphin Island property owners, and visitors are advised to keep some rain gear available, just in case. The outlook is for pretty fair weather and the weather outlook is for Dauphin Island.

JUBILEE... (Continued from page 10)

meditated together and there was definitely some manifestation of God in their gathering. He said a man came away marked profoundly by the deepening experience of his life. And I remember Pete de Graze, a Canadian Indian. He had a wife, Red Rock. Red Rock was the most beautiful Indian girl in North America. She was utterly lovely, she was like a flower in a man’s voice. She was from the Ojibway people.

The full strength of Indian character was in Pete de Graze. He was clean. Both he and his wife told me that what Blue Cloud had said was true; there actually was some tremendous potency in all that, with some profundity in the gatherings of the Indians.

I wish we knew more about that temple on Dauphin Island and its remarkable effects. But we don’t, and we can do little to say that an old legend has brought us so much insight into the first people to know our island.

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