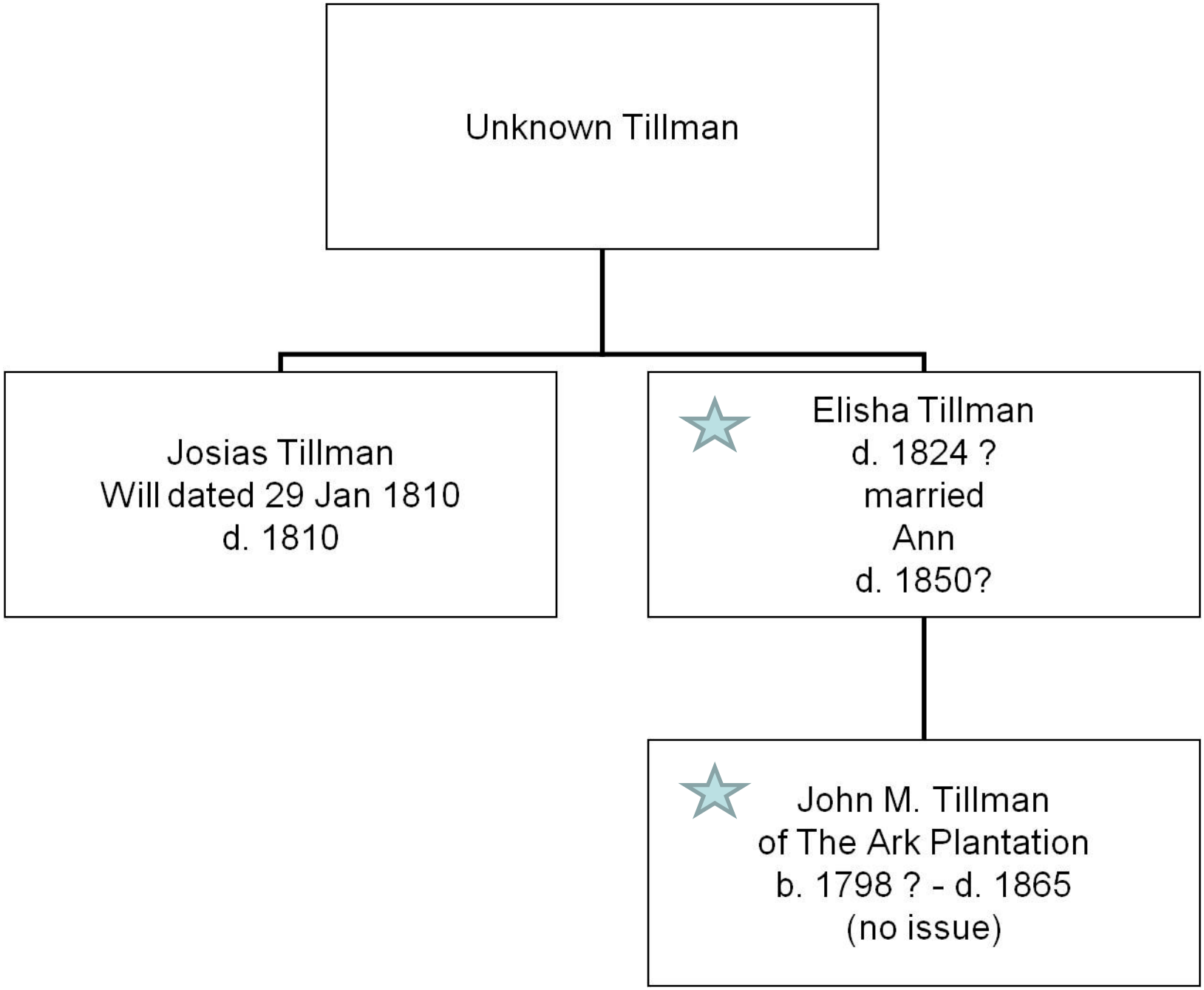
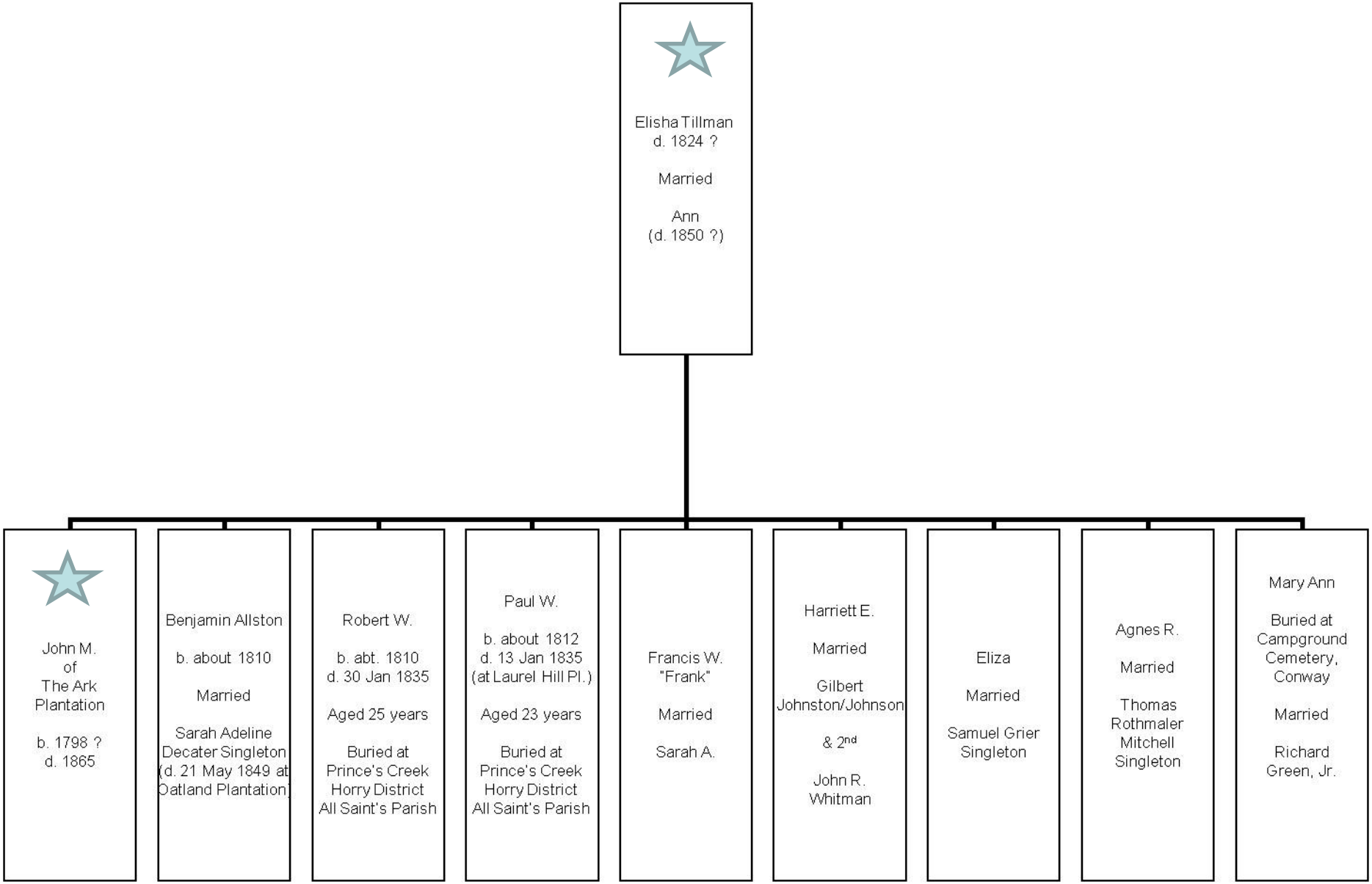
Surfside Beach, S. C.
“The Ark”

# The Ark Plantation - (Surfside Beach)

**Location –** Surfside Beach area of Horry County.
**Original name –** The Ark Plantation (possibly originally owned by a Mr. Aark).
**Other names –** The Ark, Roach's Beach, Floral Beach, Surfside Beach.
**Current status –** Developed.
**Comments –** Early records refer to it as a "large indigo plantation". John M. Tillman's name appears on the Robert Mills Atlas of 1820. There is also a survey of John Tillman's plantation recorded in Horry County which is marked a resurvey of an 1838 map. There is an old cemetery on the property. No buildings are extant.
**Number of acres –** 3,194 in 1838
**Primary crop/crops –** Indigo, rice, Indian corn, peas, sweet potatoes, cattle, sheep, pigs.
**Owners –** Henry Aark (?), Stephen Peak (?), Elisha Tillman, John M. Tillman, a Mr. Roach, George J. Holliday, the Caldwell Co. of Columbia, S.C. and then in 1952 a group of investors, mostly from Horry County.
**Slaves –** 57 are listed in 1850 and 63 are listed in 1860.
**Buildings –** An old plat shows the main house near the ocean front and several slave cabins just north of the main house along the ocean. People sought shelter in the house during the great hurricane of 1893. Holes were chopped in the floor to let water run out and the house survived the storm. The main house was eventually converted into an inn and later it was used to house beach lifeguards. It was demolished in the 1960s.
**References –** 1800 Horry Census, 1850 Slave Schedules for Horry District. 1860 Slave Schedules for Horry District. 1860 Agricultural Survey for Horry District.


Unknown Tillman
Josias Tillman
Will dated 29 Jan 1810
d. 1810
Elisha Tillman
d. 1824 ?
married
Ann
d. 1850?
John M. Tillman
of The Ark Plantation
b. 1798 ? - d. 1865
(no issue)


Elisha Tillman
d. 1824 ?
Married
Ann
(d. 1850 ?)
John M.
of
The Ark
Plantation
b. 1798 ?
d. 1865
Benjamin Allston
b. about 1810
Married
Sarah Adeline
Decater Singleton
(d. 21 May 1849 at
Oatland Plantation)
Robert W.
b. abt. 1810
d. 30 Jan 1835
Aged 25 years
Buried at
Prince's Creek
Horry District
All Saint's Parish
Paul W.
b. about 1812
d. 13 Jan 1835
(at Laurel Hill Pl.)
Aged 23 years
Buried at
Prince's Creek
Horry District
All Saint's Parish
Francis W.
"Frank"
Married
Sarah A.
Harriett E.
Married
Gilbert
Johnston/Johnson
& 2nd
John R.
Whitman
Eliza
Married
Samuel Grier
Singleton
Agnes R.
Married
Thomas
Rothmaler
Mitchell
Singleton
Mary Ann
Buried at
Campground
Cemetery,
Conway
Married
Richard
Green, Jr.

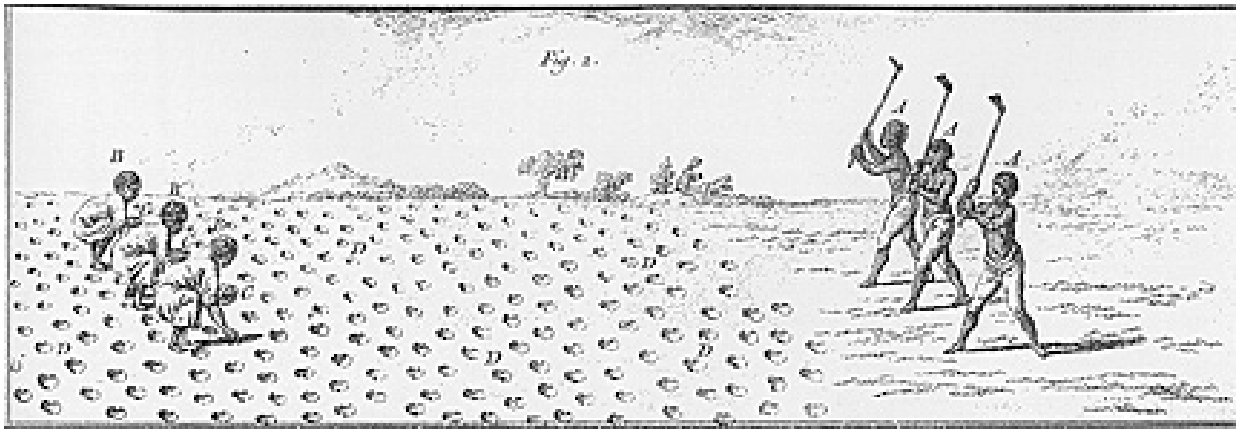
# Indigo

## “False Guatemala” or “True Bahama”

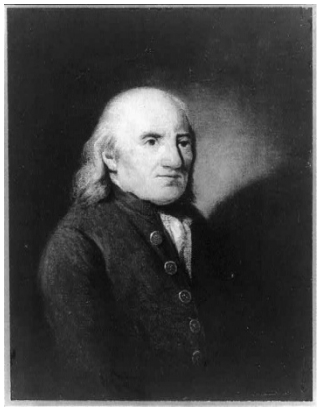
# Indigo Cultivation

**Preparing the field for planting**

**Planting**



**Harvesting the Indigo**



**Diary of a Journey through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida**
**July 1, 1765, to April 10, 1766**

# John Bartram – Botanist

**(father of William Bartram - Naturalist)**

but what engaged my notice most was ye great quantities of great rocks [later known locally as "Hurl Rocks", 21st Ave. S., Myrtle Beach, SC] wholy composed of sea shels of ye same kinds with those that ye surf heaved up on shore[,] & placed in every direction and of all [deferent?] magnitudes[,] ye one as ye other with broken shels[,] some of which was ground to course sand & all forced into ye cavities of ye greater shels[,] ye same in appearance with those vast masses up toward ye heads of our great rivers: & ye fisher men say that these rocks of shels extends many leagues into ye sea & to seven fathom water[;] how much more thay have not tried[.] here in ye swamps near ye shore ye great magnolia begins & continueth to ye southward[.] lodged at Peaks [probably Stephen Peak's, in the Surfside Beach area][.]

# Diary of a Journey through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida
# July 1, 1765, to April 10, 1766

## John Bartram (Botanist)

**July 18, 1765**….. set out over much savanna ground & some piney dry sandy soil to monks ferry on black river [possibly Gadsen's Ferry/Charing Cross, now called Pringle's Ferry at Black Bank Plantation][,] 6 pence[;] then over pede [Great Peedee River, possibly at Wragg's Ferry which would have taken him over to the ricefields][,] 6 pence[;] then Wocama [Waccamaw River][,] 1 shilling[,] half A mile broad[;] then very poor sandy soil & some savannas[.] dined at Joseph Allens [on Waccamaw Neck, the husband of Susanna Pawley, daughter of Joseph Pawley (1680-1717) and niece of Percival Pawley (b. 1670)][.] thermometer 91[.] Saw A large chinkapin[,] 13 paces diameter in ye branches & 4 ½ [inches] diameter in ye bole[.] **lodged at Pikes** [probably Stephen Peak's] **on ye west end of long bay[.]** [Surfside Beach area] **lightned all night[.]**

**[July] 19**[.] thermo. 81[.] cleared up in ye morning[.] travailed along ye bay [Myrtle Beach area][,] ye banks of which is A red soil[,] which I suppose reacheth into ye sea under ye fluctuateing sand[,] insomuch that all ye adjacent shells is tinged with A deep orange color[.] butt ye object that engaged my attention most was A solid rock of concreet shels & gravel [later known locally as "Hurl Rocks", they have now been covered with sand by the beach renourishment projects. It is located adjacent to Hurl Rock Park at 21st Ave. S., Myrtle Beach, SC.] whose summit Just appeared even with ye fluctuating sand[,] but to what depth it decended I cant say[.] it was so soft as with A sharp pointed knife to cut A little hole into it[.] its appearance was Just such as is common in ye back parts of ye countrey[.] ye shells common on this sh[ore?] was ye Cockle & clam[.] **dined at ye east end of long bay at A very kind gentlemans house[.]** [probably Jeremiah Vereen who owned an indigo plantation at that site] thence very poor sandy soil to little river[.] **lodged at one Rust** [or Ross] **at ye boundary house[.]**

# William Bartram (Naturalist)
# April 20 1739 – July 22, 1823

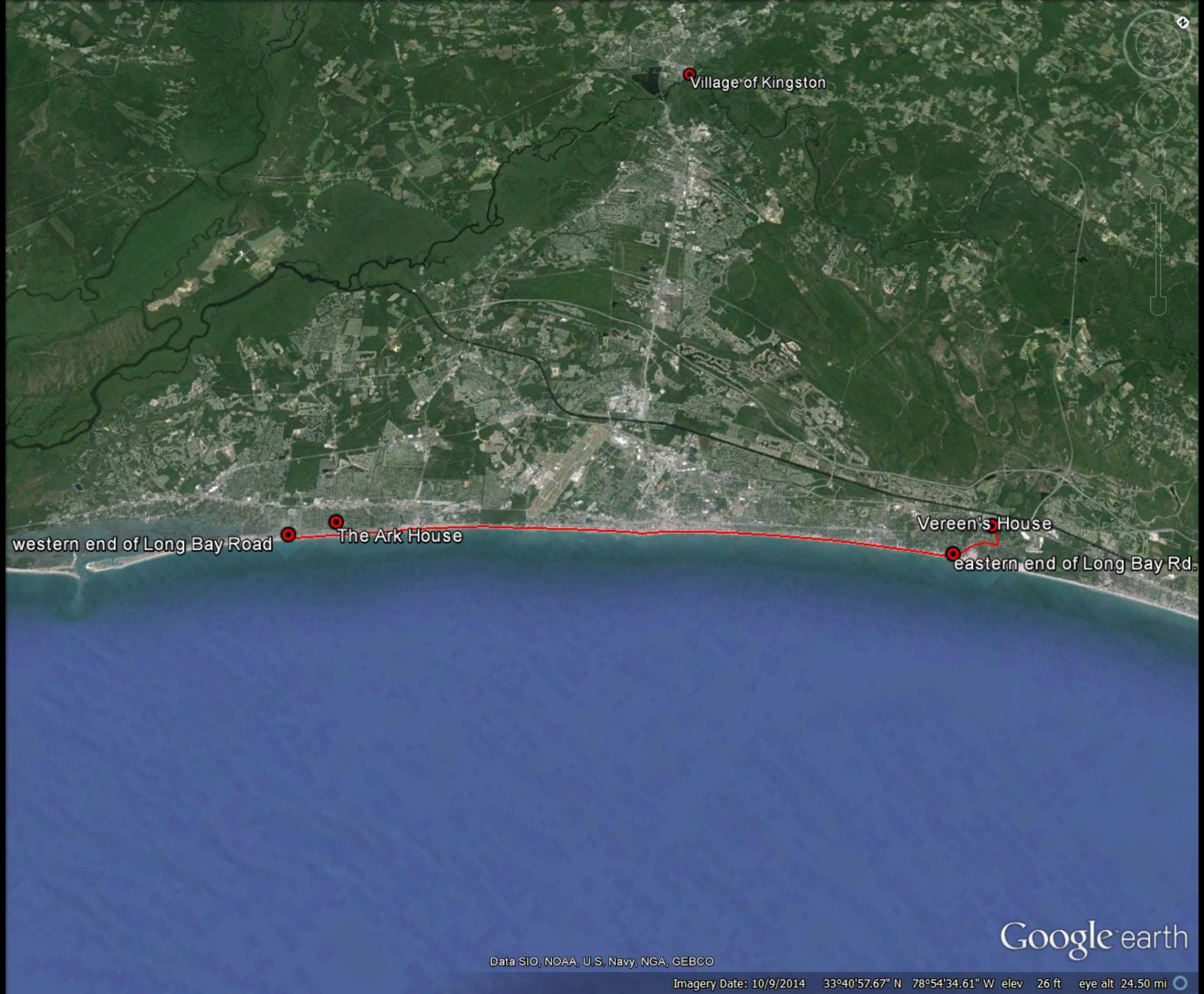
**1773**

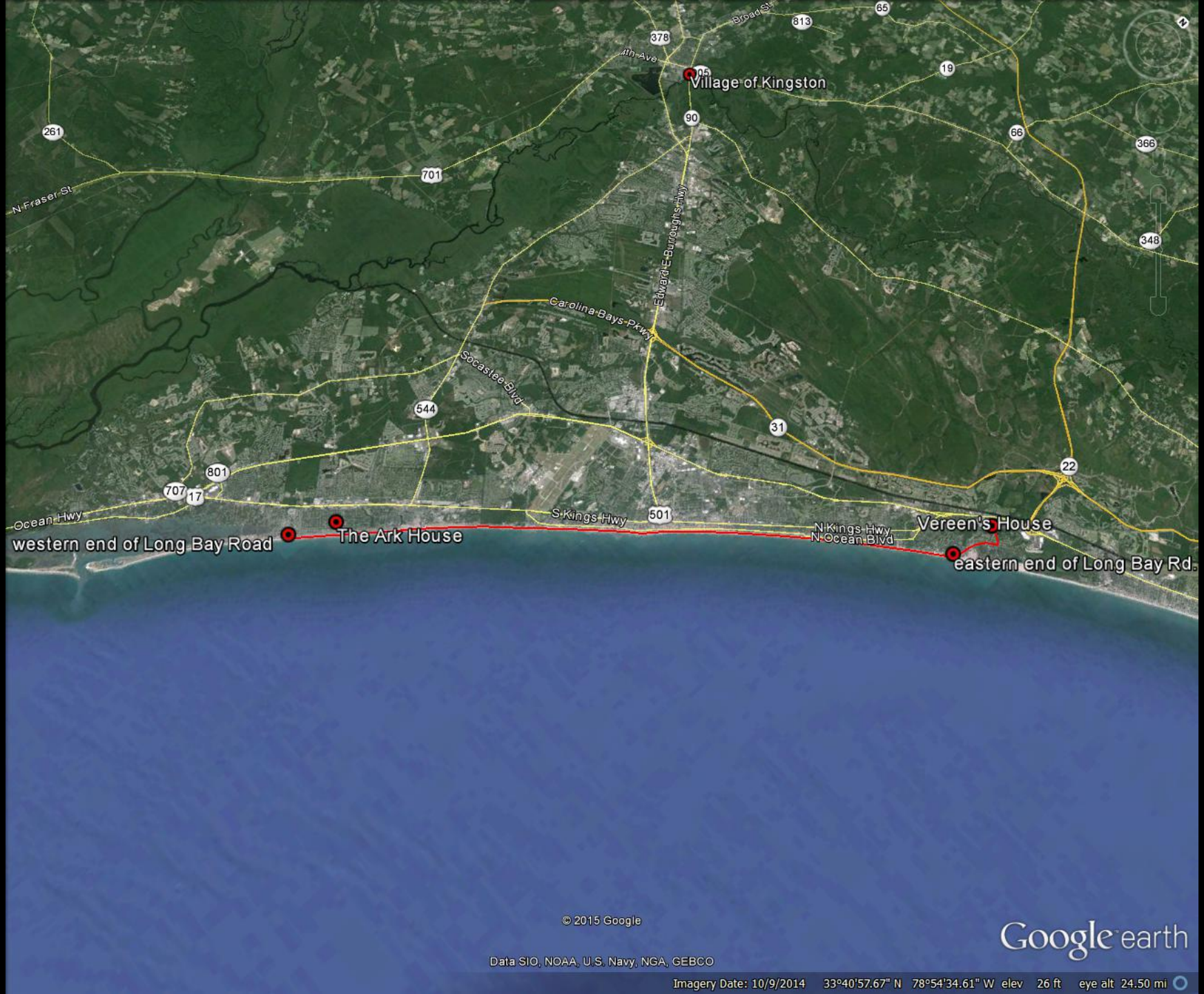
AFTER a few days residence in Charleston, I sat off on my return to my native land, crossed Cowper [Cooper] river, about nine miles above the city, where the water was a mile wide, and the ferry-house being on the opposite shore, I hoisted my travelling blanket on a pole for a signal, which being white, the people soon came to me and carried me safe over. In three days more easy travelling**, I crossed Winyaw bay, just below Georgetown, and in two days more, got to the West end of Long bay [Surfside Beach area], <u>where I lodged at a large Indigo plantation</u>. <u>Sat off early next morning, and after crossing over the sand ridges</u>,** which afford little else but Quercus pumila, Myrica cerifera, Cassine, Sideroxilon and Andromeda entangled with various species of Smilax, **<u>got on the bay, which is a hard sand beach</u>, exposed for the distance of fifteen miles to the continual lash of the Atlantic ocean; at about low water mark, are cliffs of rocks [Hurl Rocks section of Myrtle Beach]** of the helmintholithus, being a very firm concrete or petrifaction, consisting of various kinds of seashells, fine sand and pulverized shells; there is a reef of these rocks, thirty or forty yards farther out than low water mark, which lift their rugged backs above water, and brave the continual strokes of the waves, which, however, assisted by the constant friction of the sands, make continual inroads upon them, bore them into holes and cavities, when tempestuous seas rend them to pieces, scattering the fragments over the sandy shore. It is pleasant riding on this clean hard sand, paved with shells of various colours.

After noon, I crossed the swash at the east end of the bay [Singleton Swash], and in the evening got to good quarters. Next morning early I sat off again, and soon crossed Little River at the boundary [Boundary House]; which is on the line that separates North and South Carolina; in an old field, on the banks of this river, a little distance from the public house [Boundary House], stands a single tree of the Magnolia grandiflora, which is said to be the most northern settlement of that tree. Passed this day over expansive savannas, charmingly decorated with late autumnal flowers, as Helianthus, Rudbeckia, Silphium, Solidago, Helenium, Serratula, Cacalia, Aster, Lillium Martagon, Gentiana caerulia, Chironia, Gentiana saponaria, Asclepias coccinea, Hypericum, Rhexea pulcherima, &c. &c.

*"Thursday 28th. Mr. Vareen piloted us across the Swash (which at high water is impassable, & at times, by the shifting of the Sands is dangerous) on to the long Beach of the Ocean; and it being at a proper time of the tide we passed along it with ease and celerity to the place of quitting it which is estimated 16 miles. Five Miles farther we got dinner & fed our horses at a Mr. Pauleys [sic] [Pawley's] a private house, no public one being on the road; and being met on the Road, & kindly invited by a Docter flagg to his house, we lodged there; it being about 10 miles from Pauleys & 33 from Vareens."*

*George Washington, April 28, 1791*


Village of Kingston
western end of Long Bay Road
The Ark House
Vereen's House
eastern end of Long Bay Rd.
Google earth
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Imagery Date: 10/9/2014 33°40'57.67" N 78°54'34.61" W elev 26 ft eye alt 24.50 mi


Village of Kingston
Broad St
4th Ave
N Fraser St
Edward E Burroughs Hwy
Carolina Bays Pkwy
Socastee Blvd
Ocean Hwy
S Kings Hwy
N Kings Hwy
N Ocean Blvd
western end of Long Bay Road
The Ark House
Vereen's House
eastern end of Long Bay Rd.
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Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Google earth
Imagery Date: 10/9/2014 33°40'57.67" N 78°54'34.61" W elev 26 ft eye alt 24.50 mi

# The Ark Plantation

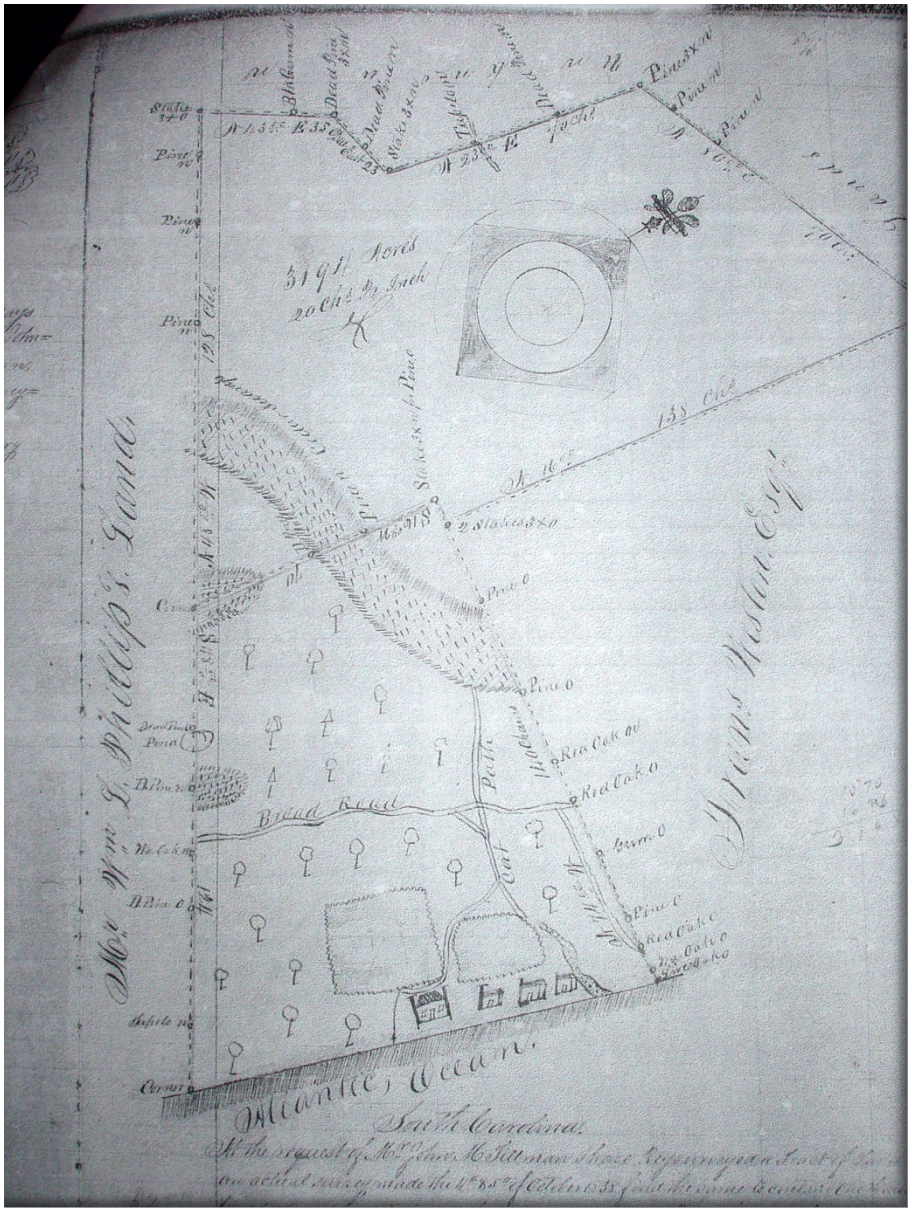
The Ark had approximately 1.3 miles of oceanfront.
The main house was approximately .2 mile back from the beach.

Was 3rd Ave. S. the path from the main house to the ocean? William Bartram seems to indicate that was his path after staying the night at the Ark and then heading north.

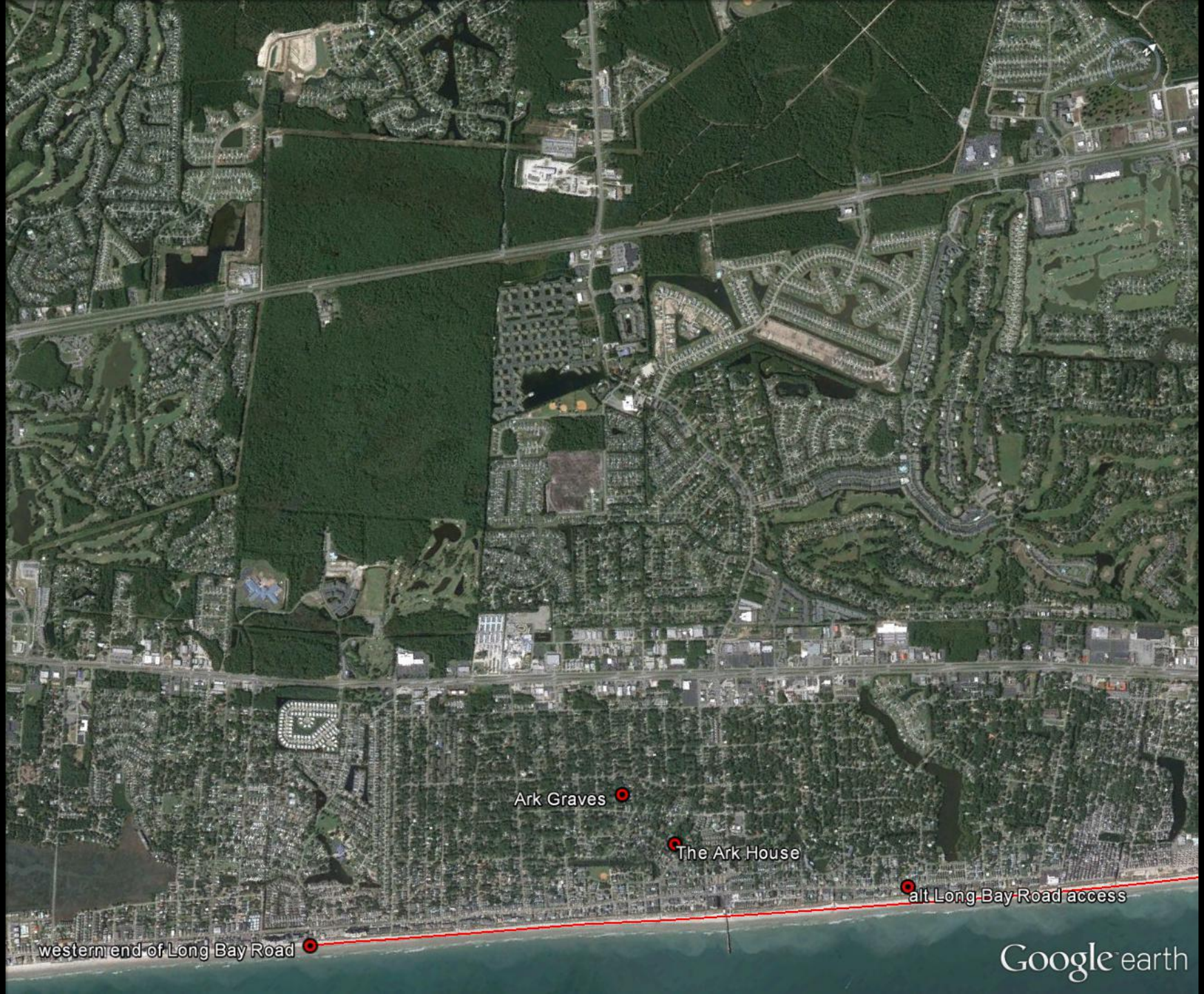
At low tide the strand (Long Bay Road) served as the best route for travel and it became the main highway. However, at high tide it was necessary to use the Broad Road which was slightly inland.

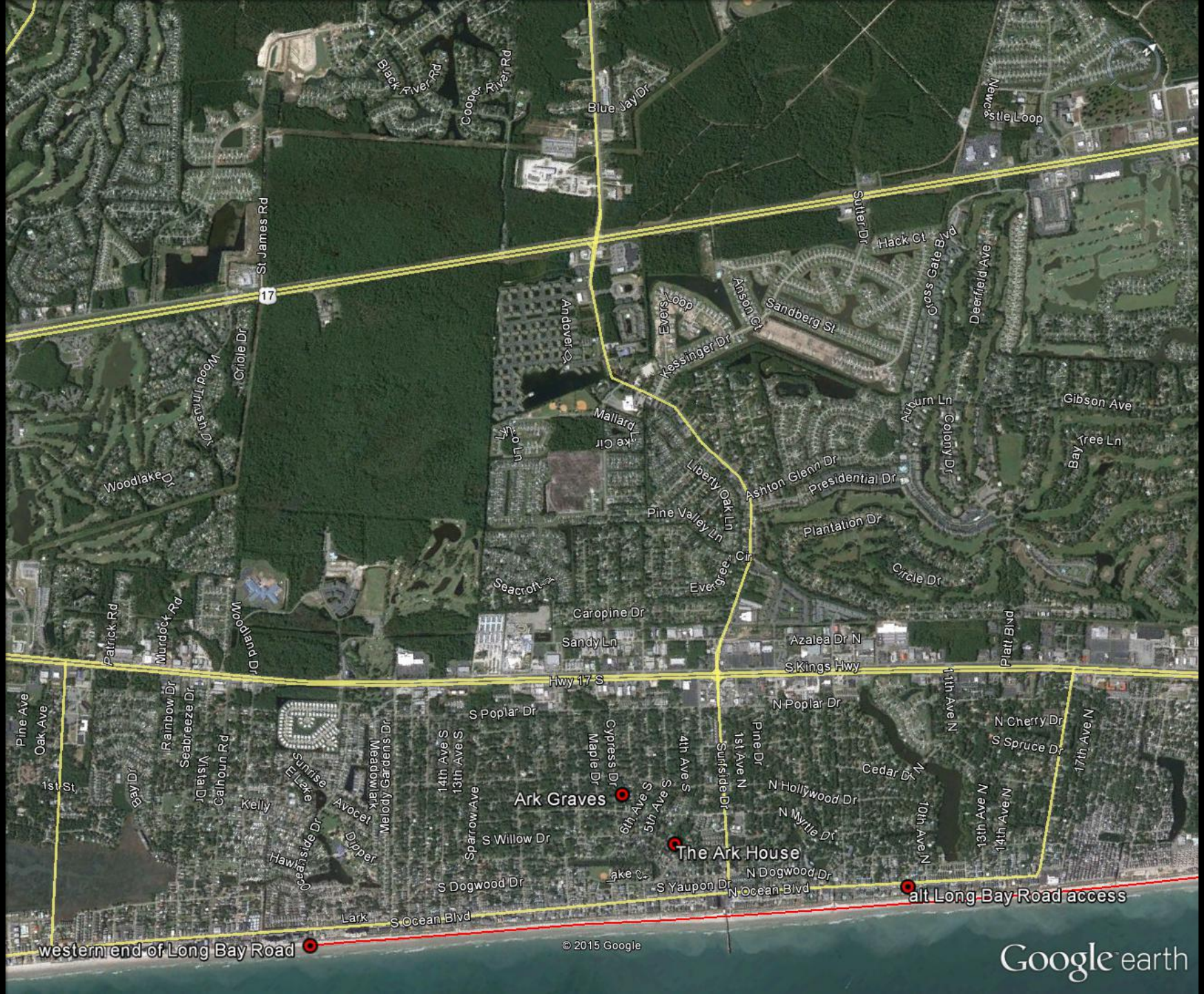
If headed south, the Long Bay Road seems to have left the beach just before you get to the northern tip of Murrell's Inlet (15 or 16 miles south of Singleton Swash). Two miles north of there, (about 9th Ave. N., Surfside Beach) and about 4 blocks inland, another connecting path would have linked up with the main Broad Road. This can be seen on a 1838 Plat of The Ark Plantation.

According to city records, the Ark Plantation Cemetery is located between S. Hollywood Dr., Juniper Dr., 6th Avenue South and Cypress Dr. (Blocks 21 & 22). Although the cemetery dates back to pre-civil war years, burials were as recent as the 1950s and the names of many African Americans who were buried there are known. It is possible that both the early plantation's owners, their families and slaves are all buried there.




Plat of The Ark Plantation – Oct. 4 & 5, 1838


Ark Graves
The Ark House
alt Long Bay Road access
western end of Long Bay Road
Google earth



Black River Rd
Cooper River Rd
Blue Jay Dr
Newcastle Loop
St James Rd
17
Sutter Dr
Hack Ct
Cross Gate Blvd
Deerfield Ave
Anson Ct
Sandberg St
Evers Loop
Kessinger Dr
Andover Dr
Criole Dr
Wood Thrush Dr
Mallard Lake Cir
Auburn Ln
Colony Dr
Gibson Ave
Bay Tree Ln
Woodlake Dr
Liberty Oak Ln
Ashton Glenn Dr
Presidential Dr
Pine Valley Ln
Plantation Dr
Circle Dr
Evergreen Cir
Seacroft
Caropine Dr
Sandy Ln
Azalea Dr N
Platt Blvd
Patrick Rd
Murdock Rd
Woodland Dr
S Kings Hwy
Hwy 17 S
Pine Ave
Oak Ave
Rainbow Dr
Seabreeze Dr
Vista Dr
Calhoun Rd
S Poplar Dr
N Poplar Dr
11th Ave N
N Cherry Dr
S Spruce Dr
17th Ave N
Cypress Dr
Maple Dr
4th Ave S
1st Ave N
Pine Dr
Surfside Dr
Cedar Dr N
1st St
Bay Dr
Sunrise
E Lake
Meadowlark
Melody Gardens Dr
14th Ave S
13th Ave S
Sparrow Ave
Ark Graves
6th Ave S
5th Ave S
N Hollywood Dr
N Myrtle Dr
10th Ave N
13th Ave N
14th Ave N
Kelly
Avocet
Dipper
Oceanside Dr
Hawk
S Willow Dr
The Ark House
N Dogwood Dr
S Dogwood Dr
S Yaupon Dr
N Ocean Blvd
alt Long Bay Road access
Lark
S Ocean Blvd
western end of Long Bay Road
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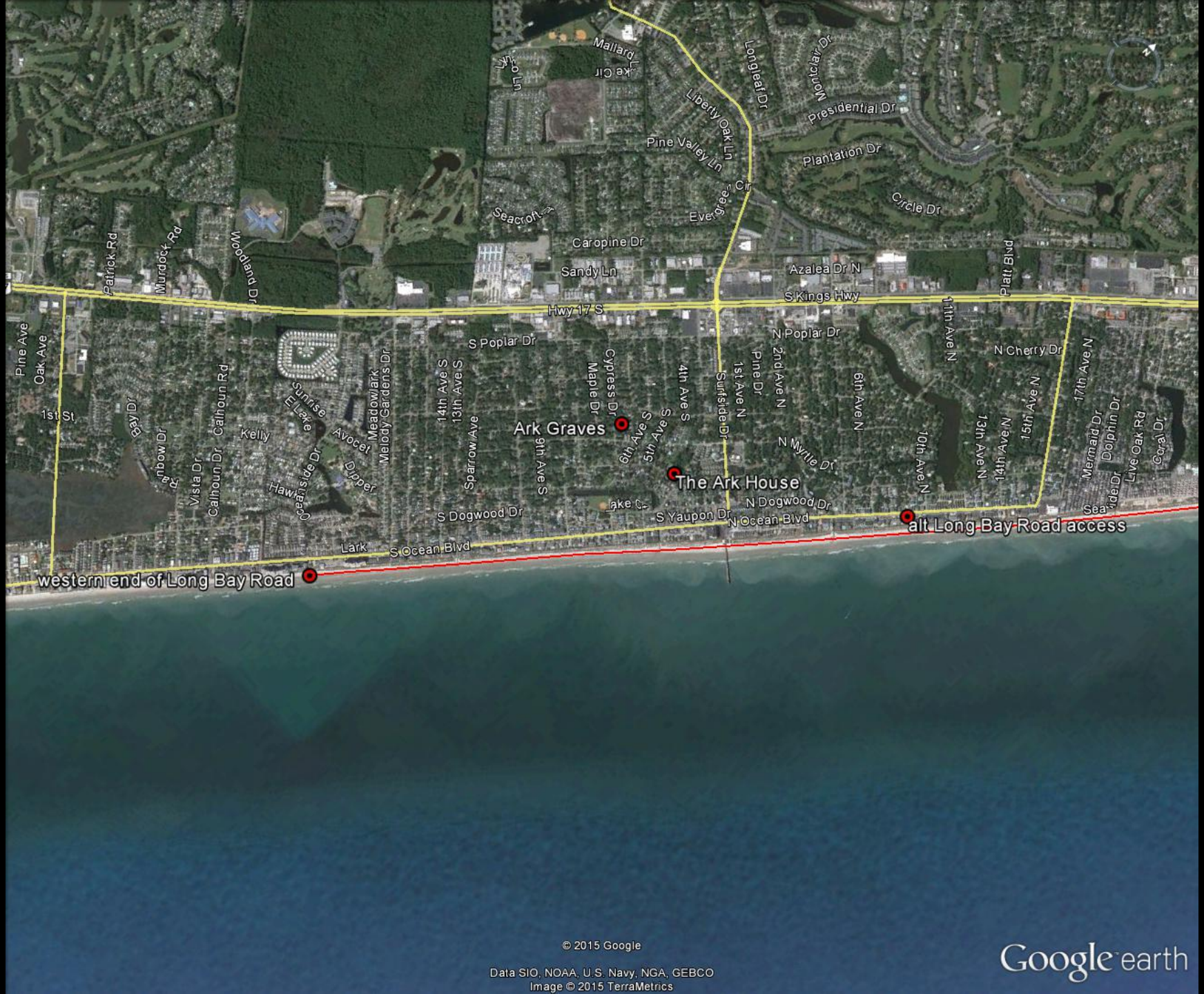
Google earth



Mallard Lake Cir
Longleaf Dr
Montclair Dr
Presidential Dr
Liberty Oak Ln
Pine Valley Ln
Plantation Dr
Circle Dr
Evergreen Cir
Seacroft
Caropine Dr
Sandy Ln
Azalea Dr N
S Kings Hwy
Hwy 17 S
Platt Blvd
Patrick Rd
Murdock Rd
Woodland Dr
Pine Ave
Oak Ave
1st St
S Poplar Dr
N Poplar Dr
N Cherry Dr
11th Ave N
17th Ave N
Bay Dr
Calhoun Rd
Kelly
Sunrise
E Lake
Avocet
Meadowlark
Melody Gardens Dr
14th Ave S
13th Ave S
Sparrow Ave
9th Ave S
Maple Dr
Cypress Dr
6th Ave S
5th Ave S
4th Ave S
Surfside Dr
1st Ave N
Pine Dr
2nd Ave N
6th Ave N
10th Ave N
13th Ave N
14th Ave N
15th Ave N
Mermaid Dr
Dolphin Dr
Live Oak Rd
Coral Dr
Ranbow Dr
Vista Dr
Calhoun Dr
Hawkinside Dr
Dipper
Ark Graves
The Ark House
N Myrtle Dr
N Dogwood Dr
S Dogwood Dr
S Yaupon Dr
N Ocean Blvd
alt Long Bay Road access
Lark
S Ocean Blvd
western end of Long Bay Road
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Image © 2015 TerraMetrics
Google earth

**Site of The Ark Plantation main house**
**Located on the corner of Willow Drive S. and 3rd Ave. S. in Surfside Beach**

3rd Ave. South

this is the Hotel.

05/03/2013

05/03/2

3rd Ave. S.

WILLOW DR S
STOP

Two marked graves at the Ark Plantation Cemetery.

Sabe Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge is one of many known to be buried at the Ark Cemetery in Surfside Beach.  His grave is no longer marked.

Sabe Rutledge was born at the Ark prior to 1860.  After freedom, in 1865, he continued to live in the area and let it be known that his wish was to be buried at the old Ark Plantation Cemetery upon his death.

COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

For more information on local history:

http://ww2.coastal.edu/ben