Once upon a time (the early 1980s to be exact), a skilled craftsman named Keith Jennings set out on a mission to leave his mark on St. Simons Island. With woodworking tools in hand, Keith meticulously carved intricate faces into several centuries-old live oak trees along St. Simons Island. Aptly named Tree Spirits, these faces are all unique and their stories are left to your interpretation.

Legend has it that these faces represent sailors lost at sea. “Not so,” says Jennings. He works with each tree’s soul. “The trees do it all,” Jennings said. “I don’t have that much to do with it. The wood speaks to you.” Perhaps one is the weathered face of a sailor returning to the island after a long journey at sea; another could be a loving grandmother forever immortalized into the tree, gazing peacefully at those who wander by.

Spend an afternoon searching for the tree spirits and come up with your own stories along the way.

There are more than 20 Tree Spirits engraved on St. Simons Island. Many are on private property; however there are seven in public areas waiting for you to find them.

Happy hunting!