

Transcribed from Manuscript on Back of James Island belonging to Wm. G. Hinson. Map and History done by Robert E. Mellichamp, 1888

Sketch of James Island, South Carolina.

James Island, situated on Charleston Harbour, represented by the map appended, was once called Boone's Island (J. Oldmixon Vol. I., p. 513.): it was probably called by its present name (James Island) by the Dutch settlers, who located there from New York, after the proprietor of that province, James, Duke of York, who afterwards mounted the throne as James II, the other side of Ashley River being named after his brother, Charles II, King of England. The island is incidentally mentioned by some of the writers on Carolina, viz, Hewat Vol. I. p. 73 & 4 also on page 142 burying of the dead on J. Isld. from the Scotch ship 'Rising Sun' of the famous Darien expedition, page 158- Cotton planting, p. 179 Fort Johnson was built, and 182, 3 & 5 French landed on James Island and built burnt houses; Capt. Drake was in command of the J.I. company. p. 6. Archdale mentioned James Island being devastated. p. 40, 41 W. Rivers' "Topics" locates James town* on south side of Stone Creek. Mills' Statistics appendix mentions 'Casor' granted by Indian chief; James I. may be in the grant (?) -- also 230, 1.- in 1776 fortification of Fort Johnson. 91 Garden's anecdotes. 243 Ramsey Vol. I., 270 do. do., 309 do. do. 1779, 321 do. do. 1780, 326 do. Vol. II., 15 Vol. I. Drayton's M., 37 same, 53 & 294 same., 56 & 7 Drayton's View of S.C., 5 Tarlton's Campaigns, 11 Tarlton's Campaigns, 245 Simms' Hist. of S.C., 339 Dalcho. chapel 1733, &c &c.

James Island is about nine (9) miles long from Minott's ferry on Wappoo Creek to Fort Johnson, and is about three or four broad. It is intersected with small salt water creeks that run some distance into the highland, ending in bays or galls that spring fresh water and thus a sort of natural drainage went on and makes it although mostly sandy, a very fertile place. The original forests some of which still remained before 1861 were of the finest growth of pine, (not long leaf) oak, hickory and dogwood, the first being used for fuel and rails for worm fencing, the latter for shafts &c., while beech and poplar beautified the woods, which in the denser parts ~~was peopled with~~ wild turkey and wood-cock, ^{not found} no deer were known in the recollection of the writer which extends back to 1840.)

The remains of the aborigines can now (1888) be found all along the south and east shore, where the oyster clam conch and periwinkle shells show what their principal food was. The only work of theirs of a notable character is to be found on Dr. Thomas Legare's place now owned by Mr. Robert Bee, not thirty yards from the upper waters of a shallow creek that runs between Batteries Cheves and Haskell and within three hundred yards of the Three trees Y Y Y two miles from Fort Johnson; Drayton describes it, also, Tuomey. It is somewhat circular and is as D. says, 240 paces in circumference. The shells above mentioned compose it entirely, interspersed with deer bones and horns mixed with quantities of ashes and fragments of broken clay pottery. Arrow-heads are found in the adjacent fields, and once a tomahawk now in the Charleston museum, a neck ornament of shell circular in form, with two small holes neatly drilled through it, was found near, and is now in the collection of Col. C.C. Jones of Augusta Ga.

* After the abandonment of James Island by the Dutch from New York, the name James was retained for the Island. James Island.
Stone creek mentioned by Rivers was probably Wappoo creek that flows into Stone River.

The cassina grows in great abundance and seems to love the nearness of the salt water, it is from this shrub that the Indians made their youpon tea or Black Drink (see Lawson) and it yet may be made a substitute for Chinese tea, as it resembles it in both taste and smell. *Very remarkable that the note or 'Paraguay tea' used so largely in South America should be also in this or Holly.*

Indigo was planted years ago as the beds of that plant once grown over with large pines testify, now cheared by the devastating hand of the war of 1861.

The black seed or long staple cotton became profitable and sold in the early part of the century for (\$1.00) one dollar per lb. of lint, some 20 or 30 years after it went down to 17cts. and rose till in 1860 it fetched 30 to 60 cents according to quality, after the war of 1865 it sold for ~~\$2.00 two dollars~~ per pound on account of its scarcity and now in 1888 it ranges from 23 to 40 cents. *(11.50) (6.12)*

Prior to 1860 every planter lived on his plantation during the winter, ^{about} on the 20th of every May he moved to Fort Johnson or Secessionville for health and returned on the 10th Nov. when it was considered safe from fever: before 1825 Cole's Island at the mouth of Stone River was used as a summer resort, but after about that date it was discontinued and Fort Johnson was settled by them.

In 1851 a few of the planters, some five or six in number, started a new summer settlement at Stent's Point owned by ~~Tom~~ B. Seabrook Esq., so as to be nearer their plantations and called it Secessionville, the political agitations of the day (1851) suggesting the name. It was there that a battle was fought in the summer of 1862 and it is hoped that a monument will yet be erected to the memory of the brave defenders of their country who fell there for Southern Liberty, a cause now unhappily extinguished.

There were some twenty five houses of Fort Johnson and five at Secessionville, all of the former were destroyed by the confederate engineers, being in the way of their fortifications, and the latter were much injured by the shells from the United States batteries on Lawton's Long Island. There were also fully thirty (30) dwelling houses on the plantations, besides gin houses, barns and negro houses with which all were provided, (Mr. W.B. Seabrook had a steam ginning mill) all of which were destroyed during the war by the confederate soldiers in sheer wantonness, except six (6) which are designated on the map by green dots, viz.; Messers Wm.W. McLeod, Edward Freer's (Sr.); ~~R. Swinton's~~; W.W. Lawton's known as Cuthbert's E.M. Clark's and Mrs. M.S.H. Godber's now owned by W.G. Hinson Esq. and known as Stile's Point; three houses were saved in a damaged condition at Secessionville, viz., belonging to Ed. Freer Sr., Esq. and W.B. Seabrook Esq.

The following were most of the residents of the Island prior to or about 1860, viz., Dr. E.M. Burch, J.B. Hinson Esq. Captain E. M. Clark, Dr. R. Leiby, Rev. Jno. Douglas, Presbyterian minister, Mrs. M.S.H. Godber, Dr. T. Legaré, Winborn Lawton Esq., W.W. Lawton Esq., James M. Lawton Esq, B.F. Minott Esq. Rev. Stiles Mellichamp, Rector of St. James Church (Protestant Episcopal); Joseph M. Mikell Esq., Dr. ~~Aeneas~~ Mikell, W.W. Leod Esq. Josiah McLeod Esq. Jno. McLeod Esq., ~~Cross Keys~~ Royall Esq., Captain ~~Rollins~~ Rivers, Capt. ^{Beaulieu} Jno. Rivers, Elijah Rivers Esq., Constant Rivers Esq., Boyner Taylor Esq, James Witter Esq., Josiah Taylor Esq. Capt. Francis Rivers Esq., the above lived in summer at Fort Johnson; the following at Secessionville.- Ed. Hearnes Freer Jr., Edward Freer Sr., Thomas Grinball, G.W. Hills, Horace Rivers, and Wm. B. Seabrook Esqrs. The following lived in "town" (Charleston) T.S. Heyward, Sol. Legaré, James Holmes, Esqrs., Hon. W.J. Grayson.

In addition to the planters' residences at Fort Johnson in 1860 the United States had a garrison barrack and magazine there, all very substantially built of brick also a Martillo Tower* about a quarter of a mile to the south, all taken down or destroyed during the war of 1861 to 65. (*Built after 1827, page 476 Charleston Year Book, 1863.)

On the plantations many fine houses had been erected. They were almost all of wood except a few old ones, Mr. James M. Lawton's on Stono River, Rev. Mr. Millichamp's and Mr. J. B. Hinsons Orange Grove Place and at Harvey's, also Jas. M. Mikell.

Besides Long staple or black seed cotton produced prior to 1860 there was what is now called garden truck, consisting of water and Musk Melons, Tomatoes, Ocja, ground nuts, Irish potatoes, green peas, beans, squashes, cabbages and turnips which with sweet potatoes were raised for the Charleston market as well as for home consumption. Besides these, Clay peas and Indian flint corn (Maize) were produced, as the principal food supply for the negro slaves as well as for stock and was used also by the owners. No fodder from grass to speak of was cured, but the blades of Indian corn when dried made an excellent substitute for hay. Mules were seldom or never reared but all of the planters attended to the breeding of horses, which was much improved by that fine stallion "Duroc" owned by Mr. Horace Rivers. These horses were not as large as the Kentucky horses but being thoroughly acclimated were tougher than the imported animals. It is regretted that none of that fine stock remains today, war being such a destroyer. It may be well to mention that all also reared that admirable little beast the "tackey" in numbers, but the two must not be confounded as the last was much smaller and was too weak for the cart or the plow. Sheep were not generally attended to but a few did have them.

The labors of the planters in the fields were diversified at slack seasons of the year by sport; partridges, doves as well as woodcock and wild turkeys were to be found in more or less numbers. The chasing of the fox and wild cat were also favorite amusements during the winter, while in the summer after laying by of the crop in July or August a maroon or picknick was usually made up to go to Bird Key at the mouth of Stono River where fishing in the surf for young bass and black drum was enjoyed, while those not so robust preferred fishing for whiting and sheepshead from a boat. Sometimes these fishing parties were added to by the attendance of the ladies. Whenever that was the case, a house on Morris Island was chosen where dancing made it more enjoyable. (There was a village of five or six houses there owned by Charlestonians).

James Island in those days was truly a happy place, there were no jars or feuds of any consequence, as are so common in small communities, to distract and divide the place. All were on a social equality and were as one family as it was observed once by a visitor. They were a simple people in their tastes and customs but gentle in their manners and virtuous withal. The present generation does not recall a duel to have been fought by a resident of the Island—a custom common in many parts of the country at that time.

All of the planters of the Island owned canoes built of two or three pieces of cypress. Some few built them themselves with their own carpenters (negro slaves) and used them as market and fishing boats. They were boyant and lasting and fast when once under way; sails were seldom used, oars being depended on for propulsion, of which the boat often carried ten to fifteen. Capt. E. M. Clark was very expert and built several very fine race boats that took part in the regattas near Charleston, about the year 1854.

Mr. Wm. B. Seabrook, a gentleman of a wonderful mechanical turn built several, but they were of a more substantial kind; Mr. Edward Hime Freer Jr. also built boats. At the races the negro slaves were the oarsmen and took as much delight as their masters in this exciting sport as well as in fishing, so well described by the Hon. W. J. Grayson once a resident and landowner on the Island in the 'Hibeling and the Slave' as well as by William Elliott in his 'Carolina Sports':

So much has been written pro and con on the slavery that it may be well to say nothing on that subject, but our experience was that with some few exceptions, the slaves were happy, far happier than they are now, being so unfitted by their former education to compete on an equality with a far more aggressive, energetic and wily race. Be all this as it may, it is to be hoped that when the world recovers from its "insanity" on the subject of African Slavery that an impartial posterity will adjudge it fairly and correctly and the old slave-holders will not be slandered and abused as it is the fashion now-a-days to do.

To the produce of the plantation was added the produce of the ocean and creek which made the coast a place of bounty and happiness, and now helps many to live comfortably. The cookery of the old South was justly celebrated we think and no where were dishes better prepared than here. The roast turkey of Xmas, the noted brickoven - yams besides shrimps, oysters, conchs salt water and yellow-bellied footers (terrapins) and palmetto cabbage were delicacies peculiar to our coast regions, prepared by our African cook, were good enough to rival the dishes described so well by W. Gilmore Simms of that famous epicure and gourmand, Porgy. The particulars of preparation &c given by Miss Pinckny in her admirable work "The Carolina House Wife" treats of all these dishes as special to our section, which are "hieroglyphics to any one but a Sea Islander".

The churches on James Island were both destroyed by fire during the war of 1865. A Virginia regiment (probably of Wise's brigade P.A.C.S.) were encamped just south west of the Presbyterian church (Rev. Jno. Douglas of Chester, S.C. Pastor) in a clump of pines that stood there and being ordered to march, with the recklessness ~~in in-difference~~ of all soldiers, they set fire to the small board or log houses in which they had been living. The fire soon communicated to the trees and from them to the roof of the church; it was then that the writer who was at the Artillery Cross Road about half a mile to the east, first saw it, not larger than a few feet in diameter, it soon spread and the building was consumed, without any effort being made by the soldiers (as far as was seen) to ~~avert~~ ^{arrest} the flames. This was in 1864 as well as can be recollected. This church was partially built and was not completed until 1846, 8 or 9. It was a wooden building and was a fine structure with a Doric portico fronting the road, was finely finished, the John's Island Presbyterian Church (it is said) having been used as a model. Besides this church there was another a few feet to the west*, much more modest and said to be very old which was taken down when the other was finished. The present church ^(built 1700?) the third (3rd.) that we know to have been built on the spot was erected in 1867 or 8. The grave yard adjacent dates back to 1763 and was only used for white people.

St. James Church, Protestant Episcopal, of which Rev. Stiles Mellichamp was rector was also burnt during the war of 1861. The Rev. W. H. Campbell of St. Paul's Ch. Charleston S.C. told the writer that he was an officer in the confederate army and being encamped on James Island he observed that the church was in danger from fire directed some soldiers to protect it. They returned and reported it safe. That night the fire breaking out afresh it was burned

down. This was probably in 1864. 5

It was wooden tastefully built in the gothic style in about the year 1853 or 54. It was at this very time that the old church or chapel was pulled down, it stood but a few yards to the north of the one that was burned in the war; it was surrounded by a splendid grove of live oaks festooned with gray moss that swept the grave yard and gave to the whole a fine effect. The burial ground dates back to 1769 and was only used for white people, negroes have been and are still buried adjacent, just beyond the hedge to the north. No church has been erected on the spot up to the present time 1888 A.D. but the corporation possesses a fund and it may yet be done. The site of the old church is on the camp road not much beyond a quarter of a mile from the "Cut Bridge", (more probably New Town Cut Bridge).

In old times some of the white people had their family grave yards on their own plantations, most of them very near their dwellings, (Why?). For instance the old Scott burial ground at Orange Grove owned formerly by Mr. Joseph B. Hinson; also the Stiles grave yd. at Stiles's Point owned by his son Mr. Wm. J. Hinson; another is the Harvey Burial ground on the place owned formerly by Rev. Stiles Mellichamp; another is the Simpson g.yard on Mr. ~~Cross Keys~~ Royall's place*

The negroes always buried their dead on the plantations of their masters but in a separate enclosure, they are still permitted to do so by the white men in 1888 A.D.

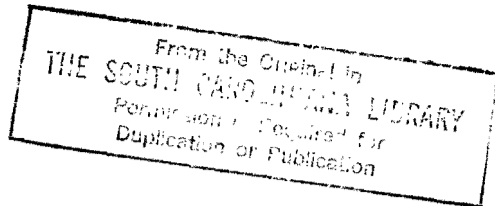
Some of the planters employed clergymen to preach to their slaves on the plantations, but many of them worshiped with their masters at the churches, there being then no separate churches for the black. Since the war they have built five churches of their own of different denominations have their own ministers and seldom or never attend their former masters' churches.

It may be well to mention that before the war of 1861 that in addition to the churches up in the Island, the Presbyterians had a church at Fort Johnson and the Episcopalians a chapel at the same place, where worship was held during the summer months for themselves as well as their negro slaves.

The whites all belonged to an Agricultural Society which tended to advance that art on their plantations. There was a public library situated near the free School Home for white children, but it was destroyed in the war 1865. The free School for white children was prosperously kept by Mr. Baldwin and afterwards by John Edward Rivers Esq. who became a lawyer at the Charleston bar. Rev. Stiles Mellichamp took it from 1845 to 1851. Then the Rev. Thos. C. Girardeau, who was succeeded by Mr. Joseph Lee of Edisto Island. Since the war it has been under the direction of Miss Jacobs and Miss Preer.* There are now (1883 A.D.) three (3) free schools for blacks, one at the three Trees * * *, another at Society Corner and a third at New Town Cut Bridge.

During the early summer of 1862 the James Islanders were ordered by Gen'l. Pemberton or Gen'l. Beauregard, who ever was the confederate commander at that time, to vacate their plantations and find homes in the up country, for the negro slaves were known to go to the enemy (The United States Fleet) at the bar and carry news to our detriment. All were compelled to go and carry their slaves with them; some went to Orangeburg Dist. others to Barnwell District and to Williston and Chester District. The Island was put under martial law and thousands of Confederate soldiers garrisoned it doing great damage to buildings and other property in the most wanton manner; only six plantations houses were left

(School
restored in
1864)



after the war and ~~three~~ at Secessionville as has been already stated. All public buildings too, churches, Club houses, Free School for whites and the public library, all had disappeared under the ruthless hand of war, at Fort Johnson not a vestige of a house was to be seen, but this last was done by the Confederate Engineers to make room for the fire of guns.

All of the young men enlisted on the side of Southern Liberty in the war of 1861, with but a few exceptions who remained inactive. As far as can be remembered the following are the names of those who joined the Provisional Army of the Confederate States, necessarily incomplete.

W. Rivers, Co. I. 2nd Regt. So. Ca. vols., served in Virginia, C.H. Rivers, Benbow's Regt. S. C. V.

W.A. Clark, Signal corps.

Stiles M. Hinson, 7th. S.C. Cavalry, killed in Virginia.

Wm. Hinson
 Thos. Hinson, 7th. S.C. cavalry, promoted to Leut.

Campbell Holmes,

killed in Va.

Stirling Lebby, Capt. of the Privateer Sally and Blockade Runner Hattie.

Dr. Rob't. Lebby Surg. Gen. Tallioferro's staff.

Hinson-

Walker Lebby, drowned in Blockade runner Cicile, married Sarah

Paul Lockwood,

killed in Va. married Sarah

Edward Legaré, signal corps.

John C. Minott, 1st. regular infantry Leut. wounded in Bentonville, NC.

W.W. McLeod, Charleston St. Dragoons, died in service.

Dr. J.H. Mellichamp, Surg. on Gen. Drayton's staff at battle of Port Royal.

E.H. Mellichamp, Engineer corps, captured at Ft. McAllister, Ga.

died in prison at Almira N.Y. while prisoner of war

Jos. M. Mellichamp, 25th. S.C. infantry, captured at Ft. Fisher,

died in prison at Point Lookout, while prisoner of war.

W.S. Mellichamp, 27th. S.C. Infantry, died in hospital in Charleston

S.C. from exposure on the walls of Ft. Sumter.

St. Lo. E. Mellichamp, Washington Artillery, served on the coast of SC.

Stiles Mellichamp, signal corps, served at Battery Wagner, married S. R.

R.E. Mellichamp, St. S.C. Seige Train, Co. "B."

J. M. Holmes, Georgia Regt.

W. Lawton Mikell, 7th., S.C. Cavalry.

J. P. Lawton, W. I. 2d, S.C.

James Peronnean Royal, 2nd. S.C. Inftry. killed in Va. B. M. Lebby, Surgeon P. C. S.

Rawlin Rollins Rivers, 2nd. S.C. Infantry, killed in the west.

Elias Rivers, promoted to captain. Constant Rivers, 1st. Reg. Inftry, 6

Wm. B. Seabrook, Benbow's Reg't., Evan's Brigade.

W. B. Mellichamp } Engineer
 S. R. Mellichamp } Chaplain

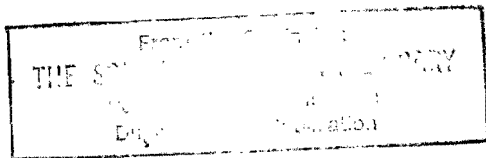
J.C. ~~Saml~~ Seabrook, 2nd. S.C. Infantry, killed in Va. *Rev. J. S. Girardeau, Chaplain C.S.A.*

After the war of 1861 closed and slavery was abolished, the ill effects of which will show itself for generations to come, a few brave spirits came back to the Island amid the turbulent negroes and started the planting of Sea Island Cotton, prominent among them may be named Wm. J. Hinson, Esq., Capt. E. L. Rivers, Capt. E. M. Clark, Mr.

W. A. Clark, Wm. B. Seabrook Esq., W. W. Lawton Esq., Mr. J. W. Hill & others.

Mr. Jos. B. Hinson the next year, until all who had not disposed of

their land had returned. At first they realized great profit but later they had varied success. At the present time they have learned to make their own hay from crab grass and raise grain (oats & corn) as well as lard, milk &c. which puts them in comfort.



7.

The future looks uncertain. Trade and farming depressed, politics degraded and the war of races imminent.

It is to be hoped that Providence will dispell these clouds, imaginary or otherwise, and that a permanent prosperity and perfect confidence will come to the Garden spot of the South, the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia.

Amen.

~~Mark of R.E.M.~~ 1887.8

Notes.

*Only a few bags at that price in 1865 and 69.—W.S.H.

*Stent's Point was occupied as a camp of instruction in 1812 by the Ancient Battalion of Charleston Artillery, that served in the war of the Revolution 1776. page 206. Johnson's Reminiscences, &c.

*At McLeod's also.

This sketch was not intended to be reproduced ~~at~~ was only done to file away time, and is not claimed to be perfectly accurate.

Note, -

Although this history has been copied to gratify his own interest in the historic region described, the undersigned hopes that the mimeograph reprints may reach those former members of the confederate army (some of them also present or past residents of James Island) who so courteously and effectively facilitated his topographic inquiries March 9-12th., 1895.

Should this be read by any who were engaged in the action at River's causeway on James Island, at daybreak, July 2, 1864, when true courage was abundantly displayed on both sides under unexpected and trying conditions, they will confer a favor by communicating with Burt G. Wilder, M.D., formerly Surgeon of the 55th. Mass. Vol. Infantry.

Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

June 12, 1895.