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# Plantation Reminder Of Historic

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Charleston's surrounding Lowcountry area has been without so much history-investigation that it is difficult to investigate any portion of the local countryside and not stumble on some physical reminder of a person of importance, the scene of a conflict, or simply a landmark that is representative of a now long-forgotten time.

A reminder of an early figure in the state and nation's history and also of the once-extensive plantation culture that thrived along the waterways of the Lowcountry is the ruin of the great plantation house of the Thomas Lynches, one of whom was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The remains of the building are not only notable because of the family that built it and lived there through the Civil War years, but also because it shows the unusual size and quality of finish that was only infrequently achieved in plantation architecture.

Romantic notions concerning Deep South plantation dwellings have led many to believe that the majority of

these were large, lavishly built country houses when this was rarely the case, most planters being satisfied with a comfortable but mainly utilitarian home that was only used for part of the year.

The Lynch home at Peachtree on the south Santee was obviously a dwelling of considerable importance, not being too different in size and scale from Drayton Hall on the Ashley. Although its actual construction date is somewhat doubtful, it was probably built in the same period as the Drayton family seat or somewhat later, perhaps between 1740 and 1760.

The Lynch family had settled in Carolina by the end of the 17th century and early began to acquire large parcels of country property. In the third generation was Thomas Lynch, who was born in 1726, a son of Thomas Lynch and Sabina Vanderhorst Lynch.

He appears to have been very successful planter, and he chose as his wife Elizabeth Allston of that great planter family settled along the Santee and the Waccamaw rivers. They were married in 1745, apparently settling at Hopswee on the North

Santee as their chief residence.

It was at Hopswee that Thomas Lynch Jr. was born in Aug. 5, 1749. Perhaps not long after this date the father began construction of his large brick dwelling at Peachtree. It seems unlikely that the son would have been

## Do You Know Your Charleston?

born in the lesser dwelling if the house at Peachtree had already been completed by this date.

Since Hopswee was sold in 1752 to Robert Hume, we may guess that the main house at Peachtree was completed by that date, as the family then remained there.

Both father and son were to be important figures in the early Revolutionary period, both being delegates to the Continental Congress. The senior Lynch became sick, however, while in Philadelphia and did not attend on that day when the Declaration of Independence was signed. On the document, there remains a blank space

just below the signature of Edward Rutledge and above the signatures of Thomas Heyward Jr., Thomas Lynch Jr., and Arthur Middleton where the gentleman has in have written his name.

The country home that the senior Lynch built for himself at Peachtree stands approximately 100 yards in from the Santee, surrounded by miles of near-impenetrable forest alive with copperheads and moccasins. The ruins are complete enough to give the full dimensions and floor plan of the house.

Peachtree house is approximately 48 by 55 feet and rose up two full stories above a nine foot basement level. Both north and south entrances were elaborate, the former having a squared staircase of six stone steps and the latter a semi-circular one, with a porch paved in large unglazed red tiles about two inches thick and being nine inches by nine inches across.

The floor plan is unusual in that it appears to have had two hallways of different size and six rooms. To the north one would enter into a large room three bays wide with a room two bays wide to the

east. On the south, after a recessed entrance porch, was a hallway three bays wide flanked by two smaller rooms. A particularly narrow cabinet area on the interior west appears to have contained a service staircase.

The house is constructed of brick laid in English bond, headed by an oyster shell mortar, and then covered on both interior and exterior in stucco with scoring measuring about two-and-a-half feet by four feet.

The windows appear to have been unusually tall, being some six feet from sill to segmental arch. The walls of the house are nearly three feet in thickness at the basement level.

The Peachtree lands, which once boasted probably the largest oak in the state (formerly covering an acre, it was destroyed in a storm years ago), passed to a grandson of the signer, John Lynch Bauman, who later reversed his second and third names. By the 20th century it had passed to the Rev. J. B. Bannwell, FitzSimons and Galloway, descendants of the Lynch family.

On May 1, 1944, it was sold to Helen W. Stewart by

# Men, Way Of Life



LYNCH PLANTATION HOUSE NOW IN RUINS  
Peachtree among most substantial Santee dwellings. (Photo by Thomas)

Edward McCrady. A few years after this it was purchased by DeWitt W. King, its present owner.

Lynch descendants believe the house was burned after the Union forces entered the state toward the end of the Civil War, as there are recollections that it was still standing when the family refuged to the upstate area.

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