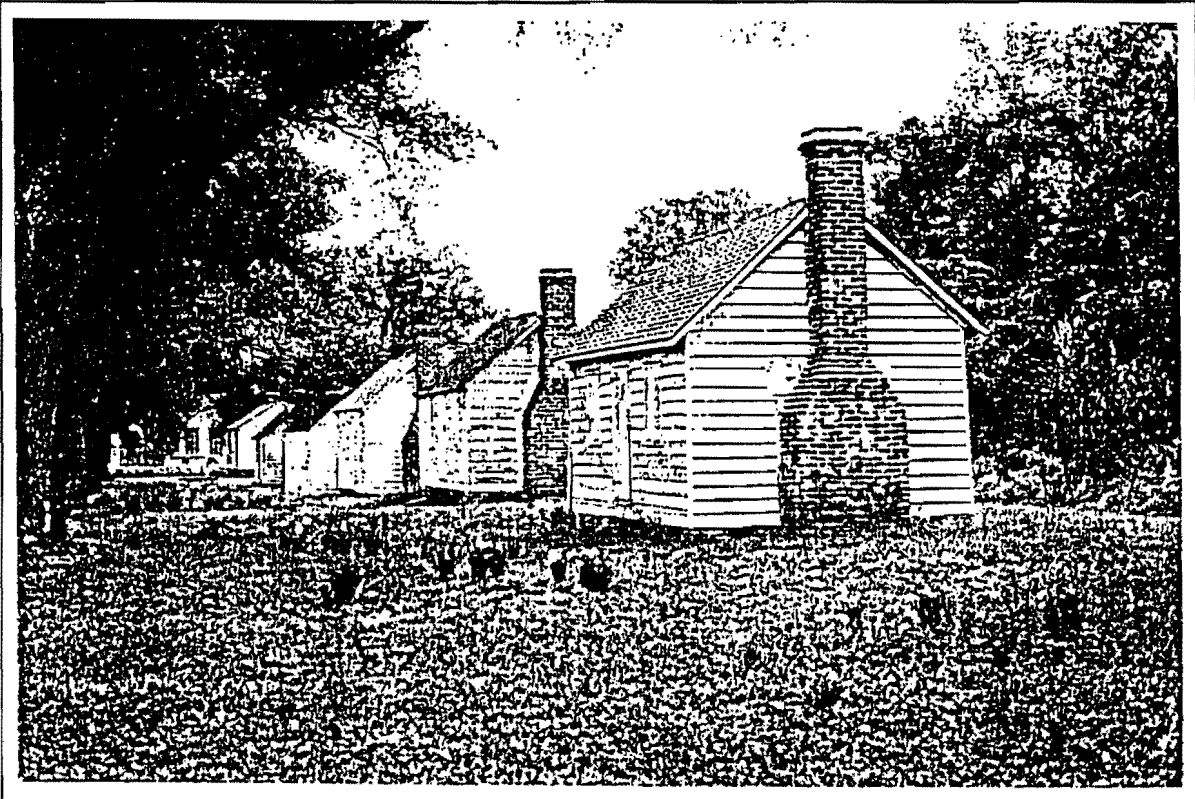


HISTORIC SUMMARY
FOR
McLEOD PLANTATION
JAMES ISLAND SC



McLEOD PLANTATION

Submitted By
Fillmore G. Wilson
Meadors Construction Corporation
April 16, 1993

OWNERSHIP CHAIN

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MCLEOD PLANTATION

Thornton-Morden map,
South Carolina
Historical Society,
Charleston, S.C.;
James P. Hayes,
James and Related
Sea Islands,
(Charleston: Walker
Evans & Cogswell
Company, 1978), 7.

The Thornton-Morden map of 1695 shows the property on which the McLeod Plantation would be situated as belonging to Morris. The Morris on the map is probably Morgan Morris who came to James Island from Virginia in December, 1671.

Royal Grants # 0002-
005-0038-02, South
Carolina Archives

In 1703 Captain Davis received a grant from the Lords Proprietors for a plot of land on James island containing 617 acres. The land was bounded generally by :

- N: Wappoo Creek and the marsh of the Ashley River
- S: Partly by New Town Creek and partly by the land laid out to Richard Simpson.
- W: Lands of M. Shabishere
- E: The marsh of New Town Creek

Charleston Deeds
#0007-001-00S0-
00435-00, 1737-1739,
South Carolina
Department of
Archives and
History, Columbia,
S.C.

In 1706 Captain Davis and his wife Ann sold their land to William Wilkins. William Wilkins sold the land several times and repurchased it each time until 1741.

Charleston Deeds,
Vol. V, page 323-
324, 1740-1741,
South Carolina
Archives

On April 14, 1741, William Wilkins and his wife Sarah sold 617 acres of land to Samuel Perronneau. The land was bounded generally by:

N: Wappo Creek and the marsh of the Ashley River.

S: Partly on New Town Creek and partly by lands formerly of Richard Simpson deceased, now of Gregory Sisson.

W: Lands formerly of Robert Gibbs deceased, and heretofore in the possession of Mr. Shabishere deceased, and now of Beltelhazer Lambright.

E: The marsh of New Town Creek and the Ashley River.

Will Book Vol. 7,
page 431, South
Carolina Archives

In a will dated February 26, 1750, Samuel Perronneau bequeathed his Plantation on James Island to be worked until his oldest child was twenty-one years of age or was married. The plantation was then to be sold and the money divided equally among his children. The plat of the property left in the bequest was recorded February 5, 1756.

Will Book Vol. 12
page 439, South
Carolina Department
of Archives and
History, Columbia,
S.C.

In a will dated February 20, 1767, Samuel Perronneau, Jr. left his estate to his sisters Sarah Perronneau (later Sarah Scott) and Elizabeth Perronneau (later Elizabeth Lightwood). According to the will, the property was left to his sisters because his wife had eloped with another man. The executors of the estate were Henry Perronneau, John Parker, and Arthur Perronneau. The will was proved October 12, 1768.

Elizabeth Perronneau, sister to Samuel Perronneau Jr. married Edward Lightwood II on January 1, 1770.

A map dated 1771 shows 250 acres, of what appears to be part of the original 617 sold to Samuel Perronneau, as belonging to Edward Lightwood.

1787 Plan of the Siege of Charlestown in South Carolina, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, S.C.

Another map dated 1787 and showing "The Plan of the Siege of Charlestown" shows the Lightwood property in the same location as the 1771 map and also shows the location of a main house and outbuildings in the area of present day McLeod.

Edward and Elizabeth Lightwood's daughter Sarah married William McKenzie Parker II in 1796.

Will of Edward Lightwood II, Will Book volume 27, page 689, 1793-1800, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

In 1798 Edward Lightwood II died and in his will dated April 2, 1788 he left his estate equally to his wife and their issue.

Elizabeth Lightwood continued to operate the plantation with her son-in-law William Parker until her death.

Will of Elizabeth Lightwood, Will Book volume 37, 1826-1818, page 250, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

Elizabeth Perronneau Lightwood's will was proved on July 7, 1826.

Deed Book volume Y 9, pp. 221-223, R.M.C. Charleston, South Carolina; Plat Book C page 63, R.M.C., Charleston, South Carolina.

In 1829, the property on James Island was purchased from the estate of Elizabeth Lightwood by her son-in-law William McKenzie Parker II. The plantation had increased to 769 1/2 acres. The land was bounded generally by:

N: Wappo Creek
E: The Ashley River
S: New Town Creek and the lands of Buckner, Mrs. S. Rodgers, and Anne McCant
W: Lands of B. F. Minott

Deed Book 12 page
340, R. M. C.
Charleston, South
Carolina

On January 20, 1851, William McKenzie
Parker and Edward Parker sold to William
W. McLeod 914 1/2 acres of land and 779
acres of marsh on James Island. The land
was bounded generally by:

N: Wappo Creek
E: The Ashley River
S: New Town Creek
W: Lands of John B. F. Minott and
Mrs. M. Taylor and Sarah
Rodgers.

Will Book Vol. 50
page 374, R.M.C.
Charleston, South
Carolina

In a Will dated August 27, 1861, William
W. McLeod bequeathed that the "Plantation
upon which I now reside shall remain as
property of some member of the family
namely son William Wallace McLeod II."
The will stated that the plantation was
purchased by William W. McLeod from
William McKenzie Parker and Edward
Parker. The Executors were Joseph T.
Dill and Richard H. Colcok.

Deed Book L-17, page
440
Plat Book D, page
22, R. M. C.
Charleston, South
Carolina

William W. McLeod died in the service
during the war of 1861/65. His 1861 will
was not probated because of the war. The
heirs, including William Wallace McLeod
II, Anna Mikell Frampton, and Regina L.
McLeod applied to the South Carolina
State Court of Equity in 1866 to settle
the estate and partition the land. The
Court stated that the partition plan was
not practical, and the heirs were
enjoined from selling any of the
property. On February 25, 1879 the issue
was finally settled with the heirs
settling the partition problem among
themselves.

Plat Book B, page
12, R. M. C.
Charleston, South
Carolina

William Wallace McLeod II received 277.92
Acres and the main house bounded
generally by:

N: Wappo Creek
E: The Ashley River
S: The lands of Anna W. Frampton
W: The lands of H. W. Kinsman

Plat Book B, page
8 5 , R . M . C .
Charleston, South
Carolina

Anna Mikell Frampton received 178.45
acres of land bounded generally by:

N: The lands of Regina L. McLeod
E: The Ashley river and James
Island Cut
S: James Island Cut and the lands
of Regina L. McLeod
W: The lands of Regina L. McLeod

Plat Book B, page
8 5 , R . M . C .
Charleston,
South Carolina

Regina L. McLeod received 573.23 acres of
land bounded generally by:

N: The lands of W. W. McLeod and
Anna M. Frampton
E: The lands of W. W. McLeod and
Anna Frampton and partly by
James Island Cut
S: The lands of Solomon Legare and
H. W. Kinsman
W: —

Deed Book K-20 page
3 7 2 , R . M . C .
Charleston, South
Carolina

In a will dated January 22, 1887, William
Wallace McLeod II left a life time
interest in the tract of land totaling
449 acres on James Island known as the
McLeod Plantation to his wife Hattie
Ellis McLeod and upon her death the land
was to go to their children.

Real Property
Record, T. M. 424-
00-00-03, County Tax
Office, Charleston,
South Carolina

The three children of William Wallace
McLeod and Hattie Ellis McLeod that were
left an interest in the McLeod Plantation
were William Ellis McLeod, Rose McLeod
Barnwell, and Wilhelmina W. McLeod

Will File 851-32,
Charleston County
Probate Court
Records Office,
North Charleston,
South Carolina

Wilhelmina McLeod died on January 29,
1952 and left Rose Barnwell and William
E. McLeod a life interest in her interest
in the property. Upon their deaths,
Wilhelmina's interest was to be
distributed among several organizations.

Will File 83ES10-
00030, Charleston
County Probate Court
Records Office,
North Charleston,
South Carolina

Rose Barnwell died on December 19, 1982.
She left her interest in the McLeod
Plantation to several organizations and
charitable institutions.

Will File 90ES10-
00134, Charleston
County Probate Court
Records Office,
North Charleston,
South Carolina

On January 19, 1990, William Ellis McLeod died. In his will dated July 11, 1985, he left his interest in the McLeod Plantation which included the property upon which his house was situated to the Historic Charleston Foundation, 51 Meeting Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29401.

HISTORIC SUMMARY

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF THE MCLEOD PLANTATION

This brief history of the property on James Island, South Carolina known as the McLeod Plantation will attempt to show the importance of the property to the history of the Sea Islands of South Carolina and particularly James Island. The plantation has been part of the island since the late seventeenth century and has participated in many aspects of the island's history from agriculture development, to military encounters during the Revolutionary and Civil wars, to emancipation and reconstruction, to the changing patterns of race relations, and suburbanization of the rural landscape in the twentieth century.

This essay, while not ignoring all these facets, looks more to the part the property played in telling the story of James Island's African-American residents. The story of James Island is, in truth, largely a story of black colonists and white planters, slavery, emancipation, and freedmen as citizens of their community. The McLeod Plantation, while a property owned by whites since before 1695, is the only extant complex on James Island which can help tell this story through its particular history.

Early History of the Area:

The first permanent settlement in South Carolina occurred in 1670 at Charles Town at a site on the Ashley River north of James Island. In 1671 the Council of the Province ordered a town to be established on James Island. The town was settled somewhere on New Town Creek. By the mid 1670's James Island had scattered settlements located along the navigable waterways. The 1695 Thornton-Morden map showed plantations on the Stono River and Wappoo Creek at the site of the present day McLeod property.

People who received grants for lands on the island also received lots in Charles Town. Many planters were absentee land owners who engaged in agricultural activities on the island but lived in town.

This practice of dual residency, which survived for over two hundred years, was influenced by a fear of "country fever" (malaria) as well as a desire for the social amenities of town.¹

The eighteenth and nineteenth century history of James Island and its people is a history of agriculture and slavery. During the colonial period, and well into the twentieth century, most of the population of James Island was black. Almost all of South Carolina's black colonists were slaves, and the majority of them were agricultural workers whose homelands in West Africa were the Windward Coast (Ghana and Sierra Leone), the Senegal-Gambia region, and the Congo-Angola region.² In 1737 a new arrival from Switzerland, Samuel Dyssli, stated that the colony "looks more like a negro country than like a country settled by white people."³ Population figures from 1720 show that in St. Andrew's Parish, of which James Island was a part, there were 210 white taxpayers and 2,493 slaves.⁴

African slaves brought their own customs and language to the sea islands. Gullah, the language of the black Sea Islanders, is a language which combines West African languages with English. Because of the isolation, many of these customs and the Gullah language survived on the islands into the twentieth century. Such customs as the dirt yard which was swept often to prevent the growth of grass can still be observed today. West Africans also brought skills to James Island. Knowledge of cattle raising and rice cultivation were valuable assets to slave owners. Skills as boatmen were also highly prized, as water was the main means of transportation for people and goods to and from the island. Occupation as a boatman afforded a maximum of independence to island slaves.⁵

During the early colonial period the raising of livestock for beef and pork was the main activity on the islands. This meat was salted and shipped to the West Indies. In 1692, one James Island plantation was appraised as having 134 head of cattle and one negro man.⁶

Historian Peter Wood stated that the term "cowboy" was used during this period to refer to the men who were stationed at cow pens to tend the cattle. Many of these cowboys were black slaves who, as early as the 1670's, were given much responsibility and freedom to develop the herds for absentee land owners.⁷ The islands lent themselves to open grazing of cattle, something the Europeans had little practice in. Their African slaves, however, especially those from the Gambia River region, were expert horsemen and cattle herders. Herding and dairy processing practices on the Sea Islands followed the practices brought by the African slaves who oversaw the herds.⁸ Slavery and agriculture on the island thus dated from the late seventeenth century.

The major cash crop from the early colonial period was indigo, valued by England as a source of blue dye. South Carolina was the major source of the plant, and it was widely grown on the Sea Islands. In 1748 England put a six pence per pound bounty on indigo, thus increasing its profitability.⁹ Cultivation of the crop was largely developed by African slaves, and they supplied the labor to make it profitable. There is evidence that the McLeod property saw the cultivation of indigo, but it is undetermined at what period and under who's ownership this occurred.

McLeod and the Colonial Period:

Little is known of the McLeod property from this early colonial period, but it was owned and apparently worked by 1695. The Thornton-Morden map of that year shows the property on which the McLeod Plantation would be situated as belonging to Morris. The Morris on the map is probably Morgan Morris who came to James Island from Virginia in December, 1671.¹⁰

Six hundred seventeen acres of land in the area owned by Mr. Morris was laid out by James Witter in 1701 and became a Royal Grant to Captain David Davis in 1703.¹¹ In 1706, Captain Davis sold this land to William Wilkins.¹² William Wilkins sold the land several times and repurchased it each time until 1741. It appears that

Davis and Wilkins may have engaged more in land speculation than in agriculture. In 1741, Wilkins sold the property to Samuel Perronneau. The parcel still contained 617 acres and the description of the boundaries was the same as Captain Davis' 1703 Royal Grant.¹³ The property appears to have remained intact through thirty-eight years of transactions.

Samuel Perronneau is the first person whose actual cultivation of the property can be documented. Perronneau owned land on James and Edisto Islands and appears to have cultivated his land on both. He actively bought and sold slaves for labor in these agricultural endeavors. Perronneau also had real estate holdings in the city of Charleston, and it is doubtful that he ever lived at the James Island plantation.¹⁴ In his will dated February 21, 1753, he left instructions that his executors were to purchase out of his estate "such a number of slaves as to enable them to settle plant and occupy my plantation and lands at James Island."¹⁵ It is unknown if Samuel Perronneau's widow or his son ever lived on the James Island property, but the slaves that worked it surely did.

Samuel Perronneau's daughter Elizabeth married Edward Lightwood II on January 1, 1770.¹⁶ Part of the James Island property thus passed into the Lightwood family. A map dated 1771 shows 250 acres, of what appears to be part of the original 617 sold to Samuel Perronneau, as belonging to Edward Lightwood.¹⁷ Another map dated 1787 and showing "The Plan of the Siege of Charlestown" shows the Lightwood property in the same location as the 1771 map and also shows the location of a main house and outbuildings in the area of present day McLeod. The map further shows that the house was approached from the south by a tree lined allee that extended on northward to Wappoo Creek. There is another road which runs east-west (in the same area as the present east-west allee) from the house towards the Stono River. This configuration is much like the pattern which existed on the property during the nineteenth century McLeod occupation, and the foundation of the Lightwood house is near the present plantation house.¹⁸

The 1790 Federal Census showed that Edward Lightwood owned fifty-three slaves who lived in St. Andrew Parish, and as the Lightwoods seem to have owned no other agricultural property in the parish but the James Island site, these slaves most likely resided at and worked on this property.¹⁹ Slavery was nothing new to Edward Lightwood. He owned ships and was involved in the slave trade with Thomas Everleigh from 1762 until 1774 as an owner in the firm of Lightwood and Everleigh.²⁰

A Sea Island Cotton Plantation and Slavery:

By the 1790's another cash crop had become popular on the Sea Islands. This crop was long staple Sea Island cotton. First grown as a cash crop in 1791, the long staple cotton brought a price up to six times as high as upland cotton. The crop brought prosperity to the white land owners of James Island. It also made land on the Sea Islands the most valuable in the state. Raising the crop, however, was labor intensive, and this increased the need for slave labor.²¹

The Lightwoods cultivated long staple cotton with slave labor but apparently were less successful than some of their neighbors. By the time the McLeods acquired the plantation it had gained a reputation of being unprofitable to farm. It was called a "pickpocket place" because previous owners had lost money cultivating it. The problem was drainage, a problem that would be addressed by the McLeods.²²

Edward and Elizabeth Lightwood's daughter Sarah married William McKenzie Parker II in 1796. The Parker family was from the Hayes Plantation on Goose Creek. The Parkers were part of the early settlement in South Carolina which centered around Goose Creek in the 1670's.²³ These "Goose Creek Men" were notorious for their opposition to the Lord Proprietors and for their dealings in the Indian and African slave trade. William McKenzie Parker II was active in this nefarious enterprise and owned several vessels that traded out of Charleston.

In 1829, after the death of Elizabeth Perronneau Lightwood, the property on James Island was purchased from her estate by her son-in-law William McKenzie Parker II.²⁴ The Parker family worked the plantation with slave labor growing predominately long staple cotton until 1851. In that year they sold it to William Wallace McLeod. The property had increased to 914 1/2 acres of land and 779 acres of marsh.²⁵ The McLeods built the extant plantation house between 1854 and 1856, the Lightwood/Parker house being either already destroyed or pulled down to make room for the new structure.

William Wallace McLeod came from a family which traced its roots in the low country to the early 1700's. He had been a long staple cotton planter on Edisto Island before acquiring the James Island plantation and continued this endeavor at the new property. The demand for labor to cultivate the cotton was high, and the McLeods owned as many as one hundred slaves. The 1860 South Carolina census shows seventy-four black slaves and twenty-three slave cabins associated with the property.²⁶ It is possible that more than the remaining six cabins once were situated close by the main house. Some family recollections place a second row of cabins on the south side of the east-west oak allee, and other cabins may have existed between the existing cabins and the kitchen house. Other cabins could have been situated remote from the house and closer to the fields. Five of the six extant slave cabins and the dairy and kitchen buildings are believed to date from the Lightwood/Parker period.

The McLeod property was typical of antebellum low country and James Island plantations. It was situated on a river and originally had two water accesses, one on the Stono River and a second on Wappoo Creek. This water access allowed convenient movement of plantation production to market and movement of supplies to the plantation. The Wappoo landing appears to have been the main avenue of ingress and egress to the plantation. The trip to Charleston from McLeod was still commonly accomplished by water at the end of the nineteenth century.

The layout of the property with its oak allees and slave street close to the main house was common to larger low country plantations. The landing at Wappoo Creek had a general store which originally catered to the white population of the island, but after the Civil War was frequented by freedmen, usually buying on credit up to the limit of their weekly pay. The plantation owner often kept the newly freed workers indebted to him through the use of credit at the store. The McLeod landing store survived well into the twentieth century.

William Wallace McLeod took the "pickpocket place" and made it more profitable by installing drainage systems in the fields around the house. This not only improved cotton production but also made the property healthier for its human inhabitants.²⁷ Later, after the turn of the twentieth century, tile drainage systems were installed.²⁸

The Civil War and Reconstruction:

The McLeod Plantation was, like all of James Island, inextricably caught up in the Civil War. In 1861 William Wallace McLeod joined the Charleston Light Dragoons and died in 1864 while in the service of the Confederacy. The occupation of Folly Island, located seaward of James Island, by Federal forces in 1861 forced the evacuation of many planters and their families from James Island.²⁹ William McLeod moved his family from James Island to Greenwood South Carolina where he felt they would be safer. McLeod then left a slave, Steven Forrest, in charge of the plantation and the other slaves.³⁰

James Island and the McLeod Plantation saw much action during the war. In order to protect the approaches to Charleston, the Confederates constructed defenses across James Island. Battery Means was constructed on the McLeod Plantation as part of this defense system.³¹ The plantation house was used, as late as April 30, 1863 as the headquarters for General Grist's Brigade, and remained a Confederate unit headquarters, commissary, and field

hospital until the island fell to the Federals. After Union occupation of the Island, the house was used as a Federal officers quarters and a hospital. The 55th Massachusetts Volunteers, a black unit with white officers, was stationed at the McLeod property. The main house was used as unit headquarters and as a field hospital. In 1930, a retired surgeon with the 55th, Dr. Bert J. Wilder, returned to the plantation and informed Mr. W. E. McLeod that the drawing room had been his operating room.³² The graveyard on the property is said to hold the remains of war casualties who died at the property when it was used as a hospital.³³

Most structures on James Island were destroyed during the war. William E. McLeod stated that there were only six houses standing on the island at the war's end. One of these six was the McLeod house.³⁴

After the war the McLeod property continued to figure prominently in the history of the island and its black inhabitants. The house was used as the headquarters of the Freedmen's Bureau.³⁵ At one time there were said to have been hundreds of freed slaves camped in the field to the south of the main house. The location put the newly freed slaves close to the source of food and help provided by the Freedmen's Bureau. Archeological artifacts have been found which date to this freedmen's encampment.³⁶ The house also served as home to several black families and as headquarters for a white school teacher who came south after the war to educate the freed slaves of James Island. The teacher died of malaria in the 1870's and is reported to be buried in the slave cemetery on the property.

This cemetery, located on the property near the Wappoo Creek landing, was a traditional burial ground for the slaves and freedmen of McLeod and also for the black inhabitants of surrounding properties. Island blacks used the site from at least the Lightwood period until the 1930's.

With emancipation and the end of the war the labor system on the islands had to be altered. The work force was now free but still

dependant on white landowners for work and wages. The Freedmen's Bureau helped to negotiate work contracts between groups of wage-earning freedmen and planters. On the islands, however, the freedmen preferred to work individually for wages and soon rejected the group contract system. The group system too closely resembled the work gangs of slavery.

By 1870 an alternative system had been developed. Under this system, known as tenant farming, the landowners rented land to black farmers for a cash payment. This system, unlike share cropping, allowed the black farmer to earn cash for his crop and control what and how he planted. On the Sea Islands, unlike most of the state and the south in general, tenancy was preferred to share cropping because it gave black farmers freedom from white supervision and the hope of accumulating capital to purchase their own land.³⁷ Some were successful, and during the 1880's about ten percent of the island was owned by black farmers.³⁸ By 1900 in Charleston County, 42.8% of all black farmers owned their land, as opposed to 22.4% statewide.³⁹

The Mcleod Plantation, after its time associated with the freedmen, came back into the hands of its previous owners. In 1879, William Wallace McLeod II gained possession of the land on which the main house and outbuildings were situated.⁴⁰

After its return to the McLeods, the plantation followed a course similar to the rest of the islands' farms. The land was farmed by paid black labor and tenants. Long staple cotton was the crop of choice and the McLeods were successful at its cultivation for some time. The slave cabins on the property were rented to freed slaves who worked the land.

The McLeods were active in the James Island Agricultural Society which was formed in 1871. The society was organized to coordinate labor policy between planters and freedmen. The society also worked to improve long staple cotton in the face of competition from improving cheaper short staple upland cotton. The society

often met at the McLeod house and its social events and picnics were generally held at the plantation.⁴¹

The property, was also associated with the white military organizations which grew up after the war to counter the military organizations of the freedmen. The blacks of James Island formed the Hunter Volunteers, a militia unit under the command of Captain Isaac Ferguson. The Haskell Rifles was a corresponding white calvary unit which kept an armory and drill field on Fort Johnson Road. The drill and tilt contest and associated parties organized by the Haskell Rifles were generally held at McLeod. The largest, with over four hundred people in attendance, was held on the property in April, 1883.⁴²

The Twentieth Century:

Sea Island cotton continued to prove profitable until about 1917. In that year the boll weevil, which had spread eastward from the Rio Grand since 1892, reached James Island. Within a few years, recalled Herbert Ravenel Sass, "Sea Island cotton vanished as though some evil magician had waved his wand and conjured it out of existence." ⁴³

The McLeod Plantation, at that time under its last McLeod owner, William Ellis McLeod, planted its last cotton crop in 1918. The boll weevil had killed long staple cotton. Like the rest of the Sea Island planters, McLeod turned to crops less susceptible to the boll weevil. Truck farming was growing on the island. The small farms owned by black farmers were especially suited to this undertaking. With the demise of cotton, these small truck farms coexisted with large commercially managed truck farms, run by whites and worked by black wage laborers. At McLeod the land was planted in potatoes, asparagus, and cucumbers. Dairy cattle were also raised, but none of these endeavors proved as profitable as cotton had been.⁴⁴

In addition to the boll weevil, another factor was affecting the

course of agriculture. The Black population of James Island was declining. Blacks were leaving the rural areas for urban centers, and many were traveling north seeking better wages and living conditions. This migration caused a labor shortage. In 1919, St. John Alison Lawton of Lawton Plantation on James Island, a cousin of William McLeod, wrote in a letter:

My plantation has been used by me years past as a cotton and truck plantation...Owing to the boll weevil, the cotton will be abandoned, and because of the shortage of negro labor, we are moving out of the truck business.⁴⁵

In 1940, William E. McLeod decided to give up farming altogether. He continued to rent land to black tenants and other white farmers. The old slave cabins were occupied by black tenants and migrant farm workers until 1990 when Mr. McLeod died just short of his 105th birthday.

The changes that the McLeod Plantation underwent in the last half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century are typical of the Sea Islands in general. Writing in 1944 W. E. McLeod stated that:

Up until 1914, James Island was a real country community of approximately one hundred and fifty white people and four thousand negroes; now the white population has been doubled many times by an influx of suburban residents, while a considerable number of the colored population have moved away.⁴⁶

The McLeod property, now reduced to about fifty acres, is the only extant antebellum plantation complex left on the island. It represents the history of James Island and its people, both European and African, from the founding of the area in the late 1600's to the present day. It is a living record of agriculture development, slavery, war, emancipation, race relations, and suburbanization. This record should not be lost.

ENDNOTES

1. Preservation Consultants, Inc. Survey Report, James and Johns Island Historical and Architectural Inventory, Prepared for the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, the City of Charleston, and Charleston County, (Summer 1989), 8.
2. Peter Wood, Black Majority; Negroes in Colonial South Carolina From 1670 through the Stono Rebellion (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 43-49.
3. Ibid., 132.
4. Ibid., 146.
5. Preservation Consultants, Inc., Survey Report, James and Johns Island, 14.
6. Wood, Black Majority, 30-33.
7. Ibid., 28-31.
8. Ibid., 30-31.
9. Preservation Consultants, Inc. Survey Report, James and Johns Island, 11.
10. James P. Hayes, James and Related Sea Islands (Charleston: Walker Evans & Cogswell Company, 1978), 7; Michael O. Hartley, The Ashley River: A Survey of Seventeenth Century Sites (Columbia, South Carolina: Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, 1984), 46-47.
11. Royal Grants #0002-005-0038-02, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.
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13. Charleston Deeds #0007-001-00V0-00323-00, 1740-1741, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.
14. Charleston Deeds, #0007-001, Transactions for Perronneau, passim, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.
15. Will of Samuel Perronneau, Will Book volume 7, 1752-1756, page 435, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

16. Jaeger/Pyburn, Inc., Conservation and Development Plan McLeod Plantation James Island, South Carolina, Prepared for the Historic Charleston Foundation, (October, 1991), 6.
17. Ibid., 5.
18. 1787 Plan of the Siege of Charlestown in South Carolina, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
19. Jaeger/Pyburn, Conservation and Development Plan McLeod, 3.
20. Ibid.
21. Preservation Consultants, Inc., Survey Report, James and Johns Island, 18.
22. William E. McLeod, "Planter Last Survivor," an interview by Thomas R. Waring, Charleston News & Courier, 25 October, 1981, 2E.
23. Parker Family History, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
24. Deed Book volume Y 9, pp. 221-223, R.M.C. Charleston, South Carolina; Plat Book C page 63, R.M.C., Charleston, South Carolina.
25. Deed Book 12 page 340, R.M.C., Charleston, South Carolina.
26. South Carolina Census, Slave Inhabitants in Saint Andrew in the County of Charleston, June 1860, Schedule 2, by C. H. Rivers, Assistant Marshal.
27. William E. McLeod, "Planter Last Survivor."
28. Jaeger/Pyburn, Inc., Conservation and Development Plan McLeod, 60.
29. Preservation Consultants, Inc., Survey Report, James and Johns Island, 23.
30. "Creighton Frampton an interview," interviewer unknown, 19 January, 1993, McLeod Plantation file, Historic Charleston Foundation, Charleston, South Carolina.
31. Preservation Consultants, Inc., Survey Report, James and Johns Island, 25.
32. Frampton Interview; Jaeger/Pyburn, Inc., Conservation and Development Plan McLeod, 13.
33. Frampton Interview; Interview with Ms. Pope, caretaker of the McLeod property and housekeeper to Mr. William E. McLeod, (Charleston, South Carolina, March, 1993).

34. W. E. McLeod, "An Outline of the History of James Island, S.C.," in James Island Exchange Club, Program Dedicating the Roll of Honor Erected by the Exchange Club of James Island in Honor of James Islanders Serving in the Armed Forces, (Charleston, 1944).
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38. Hayes, James and Related Sea Islands, 131.
39. Preservation Consultants, Inc., "Historical Overview," Historical And Architectural Survey Charleston County, South Carolina (Charleston: August 1992), 39.
40. Deed Book L-17, p.440, R.M.C. Charleston, S.C.; Plat Book D, p.22, R.M.C. Charleston, S.C.
41. Hayes, James and Related Sea Islands, 84-89; Jaeger/Pyburn, 14.
42. Hayes, James and Related Sea Islands, 86-87; Preservation Consultants, Inc., Survey Report, James and Johns Island, 27.
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44. Preservation Consultants, Inc., Survey Report, James and Johns Island, 28; Thomas R. Waring, "Planter Last Survivor."
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MCLEOD PLANTATION

Plantation complex 1854-1858 James Island

McLeod Plantation on James Island is an excellent example of Lowcountry plantation architecture and development. Noted for its extensive collection of auxiliary buildings which illustrate the division of labor, social hierarchy, and Southern agricultural development, the site is also important for its role during the War Between the States and Post-war Reconstruction. Southern agricultural history and the effects of sub urbanization on the rural landscape are two significant factors in the evolving history of the site.

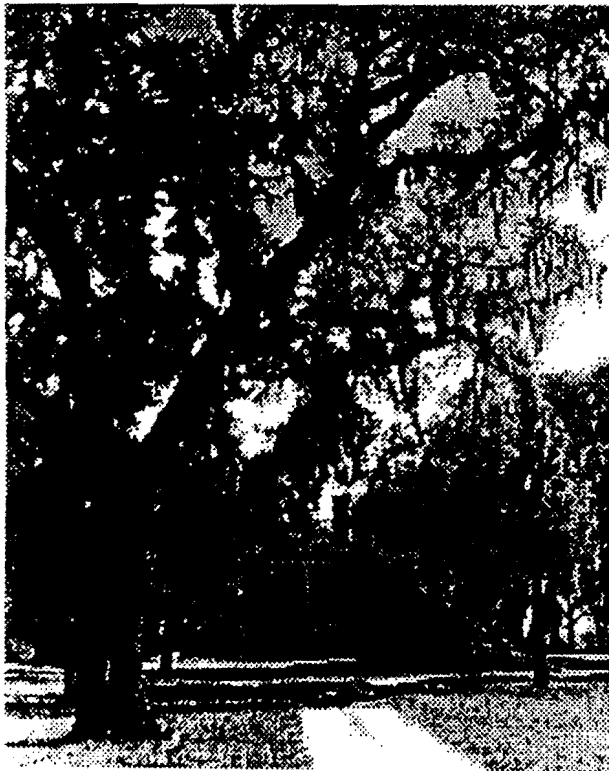
Established as a plantation in the late seventeenth century, the site would serve from the 1670s until the 1860s as one of seventeen large plantation holding on James Island. English settlement is recorded on a 1695 map which identifies a 617 acre plantation along the Wappoo and Stono rivers belonging to "Morris." This Morris is believed to be Morgan Morris who came to James Island in 1671 from Virginia. In 1703, the land was deeded as a Royal Grant to Captain David Davis.

In 1741, William Wilkins, who purchased the plantation from Captain Davis, sold the property to Samuel Perroneau. Perroneau is the first person whose cultivation of the land can be documented. Upon his death in 1753, the land passed to his wife and son but by 1771, a portion of the land had passed into the Lightwood family through the marriage of Perroneau's daughter Elizabeth to Edward Lightwood II.

Edward Lightwood, besides being a painter, was involved in the slave trade with Thomas Everleigh in their firm Lightwood and Everleigh. According to the 1790 census figures, Lightwood owned fifty-three slaves in St. Andrews Parish. Since no other property in the parish is known to have belonged to him, it is believed all fifty-three slaves lived on the James Island property. In 1796, Sarah Lightwood, Edward and Elizabeth's daughter, married William McKenzie Parker II, of Goose



Map from nineteenth century Charleston Yearbook showing proximity of McLeod to the Charleston peninsula, Charleston Library Society



View of the main house at McLeod Plantation, HCF



View of the McLeod Slave Quarters , Photo by Willie Graham, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Creek. Parker purchased the Sea Island cotton, a highly profitable long staple cotton which was introduced to the islands in the 1790s. Poor drainage and the effects of cotton cultivation quickly depleted the soil and the property became known as a "pickpocket place" due to its low profitability. In 1851, Parker sold the plantation, which had increased in size to 914 1/2 acres of land and 779 acres of marsh, to William Wallace McLeod, whose name it now bears. The plantation would remain in the McLeod family for the next 139 years.

William Wallace McLeod was a cotton planter on Edisto Island before purchasing the James Island plantation. He quickly began making improvements to the land and building complex. In 1854, the present house was raised but it is unclear whether the Lightwood-Parker house existed at this time. According to the South Carolina census of 1860, seventy-four slaves and twenty-six slave dwellings were on the property. Within a few short years of the McLeod purchase, the Civil War consumed James Island. Federal forces occupied many of the barrier islands which prompted William Wallace McLeod to move his family to Greenwood, South Carolina, for safety leaving Steven Forrest, one of slaves in charge of the plantation. McLeod joined the Charleston Light Dragoons in 1861 and was mortally wounded in 1864 while in the service of the Confederacy.

Confederate forces immediately began to fortify James Island, erecting breastworks to protect Charleston Harbor. Battery Means was erected near the confluence of Wappoo Creek and the Ashley River. The main house served as the headquarters for General Grist's Brigade as late as April 30, 1863 and later served as Confederate unit headquarters, a commissary, and field hospital until the island fell to the invading Federal army in the spring of 1865. A hand-sketched sign denoting the Confederate Adjutant's Office is still visible on the second floor.

After the evacuation of Charleston, Union forces used the plantation as a field hospital and officer's quarters. The 54th and 55th Massachusetts Volunteers, 54th New York, as well as African American Union regiments were camped on the property. George Smothers, of Farmland, Indiana, a soldier with the 55th Massachusetts, which was headquartered at McLeod, signed his name on the chimney mass where it rises through the third floor of the house. In 1930, Dr. Bert J. Wilder, a former surgeon with the Federal forces, returned to James Island and to McLeod where he identified the front parlor as a wartime surgical theater. Many of Union and confederate dead were buried at Battery Means and in the slave cemetery.

After the Civil War, McLeod became headquarters for the Freedman's Bureau for the James Island district.

Freedmen camped by the hundreds in the fields awaiting food, work, and land grants from the government. Abolitionists were assigned to McLeod and some are believed to be buried in the river front graveyard. With the emancipation of the slaves resulting in a free work force, the Freedman's Bureau served a crucial role as an arbitrator between African-American workers and white landowners to establish fair contracts and wages for the freedmen. Through their efforts, the agricultural economy was successfully transformed from a slave based economy to that of wage based labor.

By the mid-1870s, many freedmen were dissatisfied with the group contract system, developed by the Freedmen's Bureau, due to its resemblance to old gang system of slave labor, and began to directly negotiate land rental (tenant) contracts with landowners. This differed from sharecropping, where a portion of harvest was given as rent, because tenants rented the land and cultivated it as they desired independent of the landowner, and they kept all profits. The system was beneficial to the freedmen and by 1880, ten percent (10%) of James Island was owned by African-Americans. By 1900, 42.8% of blacks in Charleston County owned their own land compared to 22.4% statewide.

In 1879, William Wallace McLeod II regained the plantation property. He became active in the Agricultural Society which had been established eight years earlier to negotiate contracts between landowners and workers and also develop improved methods for Sea Island cotton cultivation which was being threatened by Upland cotton production. Sea Island cotton continued to be planted but profits dropped sharply bringing a record low of fifty cents per pound in 1910. Society events were often held at McLeod including picnics and demonstration projects. The most notable of these projects was in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture in 1911 to install tile drainage systems in the fields to improve the lands productivity. In 1917, the boll weevil decimated the cotton crop and production ceased shortly thereafter.

In 1918, William Ellis McLeod, the last of the McLeod family owners, took possession of the property. Irish potatoes, asparagus, cucumbers, and dairy cattle were raised as alternatives to cotton but none proved as successful. In 1925, a large tract of the plantation along the Wappoo Creek and Ashley River marshes was sold to the Country Club of Charleston where they planned to relocate. This process of subdivision which continued through the 1970s proved to be one of the last profitable ventures for McLeod. In 1940, William Ellis McLeod retired from farming choosing to rent his land to other farmers. The plantation continued to be cultivated until his death in 1990 just short of his 105th birthday. Mr. McLeod left his 1/3 interest in the property to Historic Charleston Foundation which purchased the remaining two-thirds of the estate from various beneficiaries.

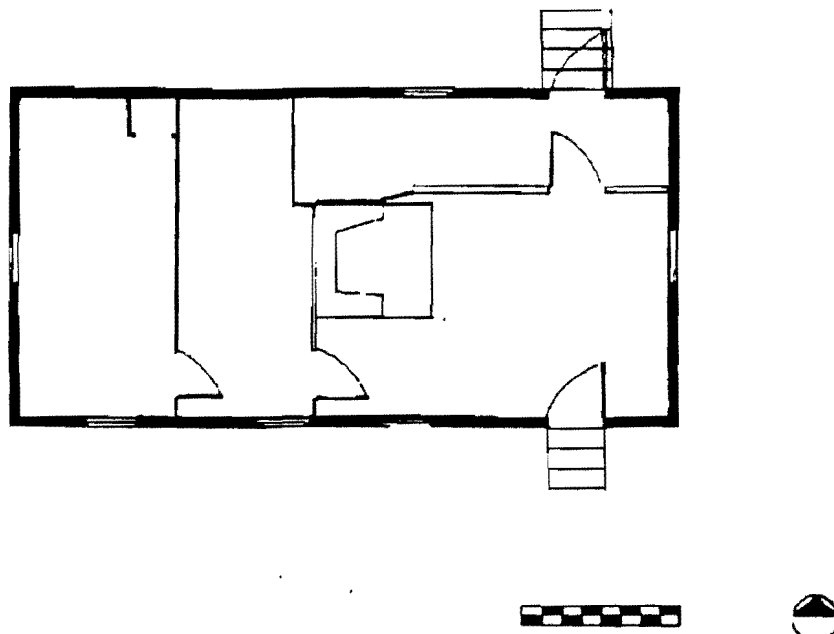
Historical views of McLeod Plantation look very similar to the contemporary building and landscape configurations. The 1787 map entitled "The Siege of Charleston," shows that the main house was approached from the south by an oak allee which extended northward to Wappoo Creek. An east-west oak allee approached from the Stono River. Both were located on or near the present oak allees. The slave dwellings (5), Kitchen, dairy, and storage shed are the earliest buildings on the property dating from the mid-nineteenth century. The cabins, which measure approximately 20' x 12', are of wood-frame construction on raised masonry pier foundations with end-gable roofs and an exterior, end chimney. One double dwelling, of uncertain date, is located at the eastern terminus of the row but was moved to the site when the land across Folly Road was subdivided and sold.

The dairy building, also of frame construction with a gable roof, is unique because the eastern half of the building is on piers while the western half has an enclosed roof cellar, which was used for storage for dairy products. The roof of the dairy has been recently restored by Historic Charleston Foundation's Preservation Building Crafts Training Program using white cypress shingles with a comb along the roof ridge. The kitchen building features a central chimney which divides the building into two rooms with fireplaces in each. A small passageway to the rear allows access between the two rooms. It has been speculated that one side may have been the laundry while the other was used for cooking. The kitchen building is unique from the other outbuildings around it in that the roof has a closed, pedimented gable. The storage building on the eastern side of the main house is of a similar construction method to the kitchen. It is uncertain what purpose this building served. In the second quarter of the twentieth century, shed additions were placed on either end of the building.

Two other buildings complete the plantation complex. The barn is wood-frame construction with a end-gabled roof, possibly dating from the late nineteenth century. The gin house, a two-story masonry and wood building, has several stages of building evolution present. The eastern half is believed to date to the nine-

teenth century and has a masonry column lower level with a wood-frame second floor. The western half of the building has a poured cement slab floor which dates to the early 1930s. A flat-roof shed addition located on the south side, upon which cotton was loaded before ginning, has been removed. When viewed as a unit, the entire auxiliary building complex richly displays the evolution and development of Southern agricultural history and rural social history from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century.

The main house of McLeod was constructed by William Walleye McLeod and completed in 1856. The three-story, wood-frame house has a double pile floor plan with central stair hall and two interior chimneys. Originally oriented to the south with a one story raised porch supported by square columns, the principle facade was redesigned to be the rear or northern side of the house in 1925. This renovation, in the Southern Colonial Revival style, included the addition of a projecting portico with a fan light supported by four fluted, Doric columns on a raised concrete porch base. A single story two room kitchen addition was also constructed on the eastern side of the house during the renovation.



Floor plan of double slave quarter, Measured and drawn by MWC