

Sunken Plantations

THE SANTEE COOPER PROJECT

Douglas W. Bostick



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LAWSON'S POND PLANTATION

After the Revolutionary War, land in St. John's became highly desirable as planters sought fertile land conducive to growing cotton. Philip Porcher purchased Lawson's Pond in the early nineteenth century for just that purpose.

The plantation gets its name from a large pond found on the southwest side of the Congaree River Road (also known as the old Cherokee Path) near the point where the road intersects the Nelson's Ferry Road. The Lawson's Pond Plantation house was built just in front of the pond.

The date of the house is in dispute, but every account places the original construction between 1816 and 1823; it was thought to be built by Charles Cordes Porcher. Porcher built the house in anticipation of his pending marriage to Rebecca, the daughter of Francis (Dwight) Marion of Mount Pleasant Plantation. Unfortunately, Rebecca died in 1827, soon followed by the premature death of their infant child.

Charles Porcher died intestate in 1878 and his estate was indebted to a trustee for a marriage settlement between Peter J. Couturier and Elizabeth Sumter McKelvey. Dr. Joseph Palmer, administrator for the estate of Charles Porcher, sold the extensive furnishings and personal property to pay the trustee. Peter and Elizabeth Couturier took possession of the plantation in 1880. The plantation remained in the Couturier family through the twentieth century.

Santee Cooper only acquired a portion of the plantation property. The plantation house and some of the property was on high ground and would not be reached by the waters of the lake.

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Left: The house is a large two-story structure sitting atop brick pillars. Underneath, massive hand-hewn logs held in place with pegs form the foundation.

Below: Waterman reported in 1939 that Lawson's Pond is perhaps the only house in the region that is as architecturally important as the stunning house at the Rocks.

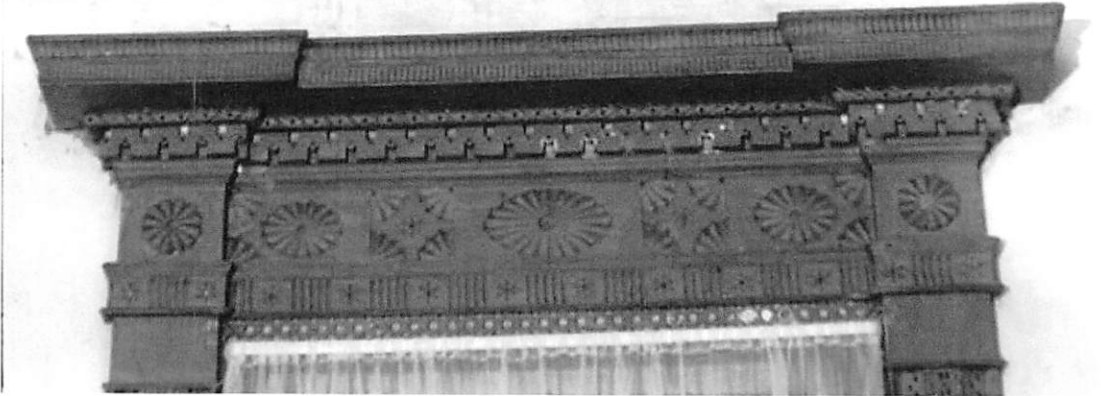
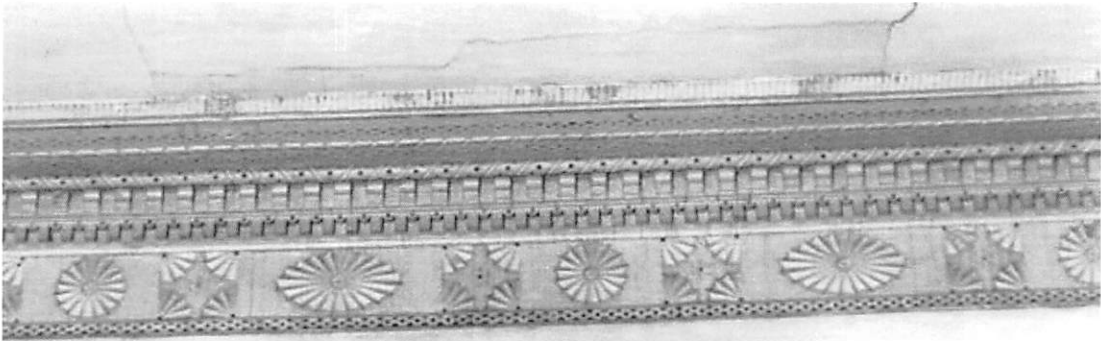
Opposite above: The rear of the house has a single entrance opening to a small portico, though this portico is not original to the house.

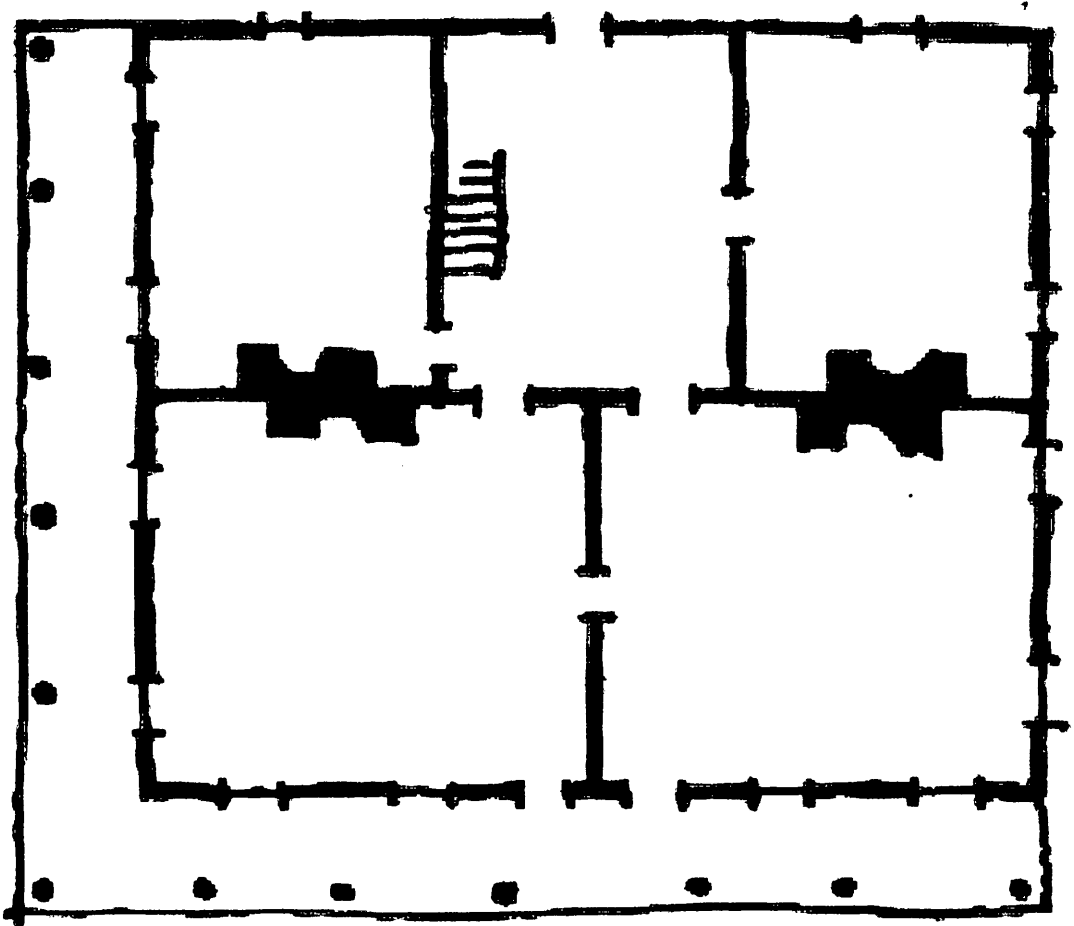
Opposite below: The house features two front doors, each opening to one of the front parlors, a design typical of many St. John's homes.





SUNKEN PLANTATIONS





Sitting on high ground, the house was saved and has been restored. In 1977, the Lawson's Pond Plantation house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Opposite above: The floor plan offers four rooms, each on two levels. This picture features the northwest front parlor on the main floor. *Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Opposite below: The main floor house interior has extensive hand-carved trim work and mantels, as seen here in the window entablature and room cornice. The second floor, interestingly enough, lacked this great woodwork and attention to detail. *Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*