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WHITE-HALL'S CARVED FRIEZES IN PATH OF BERKELEY FLOOD
Front Door, Built for Slaves to Open, Until This Day Carries No Lock-
Live Oaks Shade Plantation Yard
By F.M. Kirk

Pinopolis. Aug. 31.-Special: White Hall, now the home of the heirs of the late Lewis Simons Lucas, like so many historic plantation of St. John's, Berkeley, lies in the Pinopolis basin of the Proposed Santee-Cooper development. Like Ophir, Northampton, Somerton, and other adjoining plantations it is destined to sink beneath the man-made lake of Santee waters.

The present magnificent residence, located five miles from Pinopolis, was built about 1824 by Thomas Porcher, of Ophir Plantation. Prior to that time the place was owned by a family of White, who kept a tavern about a mile northeast of the present house site.

In colonial days, when heavy stage coaches lumbered over the rough and muddy trail from Charleston to the Upcountry, taverns were spaced at convenient distances along the road to give travelers rest from their journey. Such a tavern was kept at White Hall on the Congaree Road, some six or eight miles from Old Moncks Corner and a similar distance from Forty-Five Mile House, where General Nathaniel Greene wrote in the Continental Congress his report of the Battle of Eutaw Springs.

HIS ART IN CAPITOL

It is not known who was the original grantee of White Hall, or when the tavern was established; but it was probably the birthplace of Blake Leay White, who was born in 1768. The First authentic date of the place 1774, at which time White made a return to the commissioners of high roads of eight slaves at White Hall.

Blake Leay White was later elected commissioner of high roads for St. John's Parish and played a prominent part in the affairs of the parish. His son, John Blake White, was a distinguished South Carolina artist of whose paintings hang in the senate lobby in Washington.

White Hall Plantation was purchased by Thomas Porcher, of Ophir, who built the house for his oldest son, Thomas, who married Catherine, daughter of Captain Peter Gaillard, of The Rocks, Upper St. John's. A daughter of this marriage, Elizabeth, married Dr. Charles Lucas, originally of Santee, but then of Charleston. It was through this marriage that White Hall came into the hands of the Lucas family.

DROWNED IN SURF

The only son of Thomas and Elizabeth Porcher, Thomas Francis, was drowned in 1861 in the surf at Sullivan's Island in an attempt to save his sister and a niece, who were in bathing. Hearing the alarm given for their assistance, he dashed from the house with heavy military boots on, headed into the surf. His body was never recovered.

The house is situated in the midst of an enormous yard dotted with wide-spreading liveoaks. A pond lies to one side of the building which during recent droughts went dry for the first time in the memory of any one connected with community.

In 1854 a wing was added. It was constructed by master carpenters, for so closely does it blend with the architecture of the main building, that not a break is apparent in the hand-carved frieze, under the eaves. Every room in the house is decorated with exquisite carving, every inch handmade.

NO LOCK ON DOOR

The front door to the older part of the house takes one's mind back to ante-bellum days. There is no lock. There has never been one. Front doors didn't need locks in those days. When, after an absence, the master returned to his home, no matter what the time, day or night, he expected his doorman to open the portal for him.

During the troublesome times of the War Between the States, with the men on the field of battle, defenceless women of St. John's often faced the serious problem of negroes, roused into rebellion by northern soldiers. Such an occasion occurred at White Hall. The following is taken from the diary kept at Pooshee Plantation by Miss Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel, which was published with the diary kept at Northampton by Miss Susan R. Jervey, by the St. John's Hunting Club in 1921.

"March 16, 1865, we received notes from White Hall and Sarazins and also a letter from Alice Palmer. Quite a treat. The White Hall negroes behaved shamefully; they rushed into the house, tore down the curtains, carried off the bedding and trunks, and are grumbling now that they have not enough. We hear that one man asked Cousin Marianne (Miss Marianne F. Porcher) to step out and take a dance, that they were all equal now."

Miss Jervey's diary confirms the incident.