

Sunken Plantations

THE SANTEE COOPER PROJECT

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Published by The History Press
Charleston, SC 29403
www.historypress.net

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Cover design by Marshall Hudson.
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First published 2008
Second printing 2010
Third printing 2013

Manufactured in the United States

ISBN 978.1.59629.469.1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bostick, Douglas W.
Sunken plantations : the Santee Cooper project / Douglas W. Bostick.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-59629-469-1

1. Plantations--South Carolina--History. 2. Plantations--South Carolina--History--Pictorial works. 3. Historic sites--South Carolina. 4. Historic sites--South Carolina--Pictorial works. 5. Berkeley County (S.C.)--History, Local. 6. Orangeburg County (S.C.)--History, Local. 7. Berkeley County (S.C.)--History, Local--Pictorial works. 8. Orangeburg County (S.C.)--History, Local--Pictorial works. 9. Santee Canal (S.C.)--History. 10. South Carolina Public Service Authority--History. I. Title.

F270.B67 2008

975.70022'2--dc22

2008006554

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POND BLUFF PLANTATION

Pond Bluff earned its name from a pond located on the property, which is set on a bluff on the Santee Swamp. Located four miles east of Eutaw Springs, the property was first granted to James Flud in 1758. After several subsequent transfers, the plantation was sold to Francis Marion in 1773, who built the first home on the property.

Marion served as a captain in the Second South Carolina Regiment under William Moultrie at the Battle of Fort Sullivan. In 1776, he was commissioned as a lieutenant colonel in the Continental army. He later was appointed to the rank of brigadier general in the South Carolina militia. In the Southern campaign, Marion is credited with the effective use of guerilla tactics to deter and defeat the British army, which was clearly a superior force in numbers.

Pond Bluff adjoined lands owned by Marion's cousin and future wife, Miss Mary Videau. Marion and Miss Videau married late in their lives after the Revolutionary War. Both Marion and his wife adopted an heir. Marion adopted his grandnephew, Francis Marion Dwight, as his son and Mary adopted her husband's grandniece, Videau Ashby, as her daughter.

Marion died in 1795, leaving Pond Bluff to his wife with the provision that on her death Pond Bluff would pass to Francis Marion Dwight on the condition that he drop his surname and become the namesake of the general. Marion's will, though, was not properly executed and was therefore invalid. Mary Marion bought out the heirs of her husband to take sole title to Pond Bluff.

She died in 1815 and in her will divided the interest in the plantation between the daughter of her adopted heir and Colonel Keating Lewis Simons, a longtime friend and attorney. The Pond Bluff house burned and was destroyed in 1816.

Between 1825 and 1830, another house was built at Pond Bluff for Annie Cleland Simons, the widow of Colonel Simons. In 1939, Pond Bluff was home to her descendants, Joseph Palmer Simons and his sister, Miss Julia Simons.

Joseph Simons refused to willingly sell Pond Bluff to Santee Cooper. Santee Cooper moved to seize the property, employing "eminent domain," but Simons fought the condemnation process. At every stage the courts ruled against the defendant, leaving Simons despondent with

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his legal options exhausted. True to his word that he would never leave Pond Bluff, Simons entered his home for the last time on July 7, 1939, placed a handgun against his temple and ended his life. He was one of the last bodies to be interred at the Rocks cemetery, now an island in the middle of Lake Marion.

An old Native American village was originally located on the Pond Bluff property. When clearing the plantation property in preparation of flooding Lake Marion, a large burial urn was found at the site. This historic artifact was donated to the George Heye Foundation, now part of the National Museum of the American Indian.



In his survey of St. John's homes, Waterman noted that Pond Bluff, newly painted and shaded by a massive live oak, was the smallest but perhaps the most attractive of the plantation homes in the region.



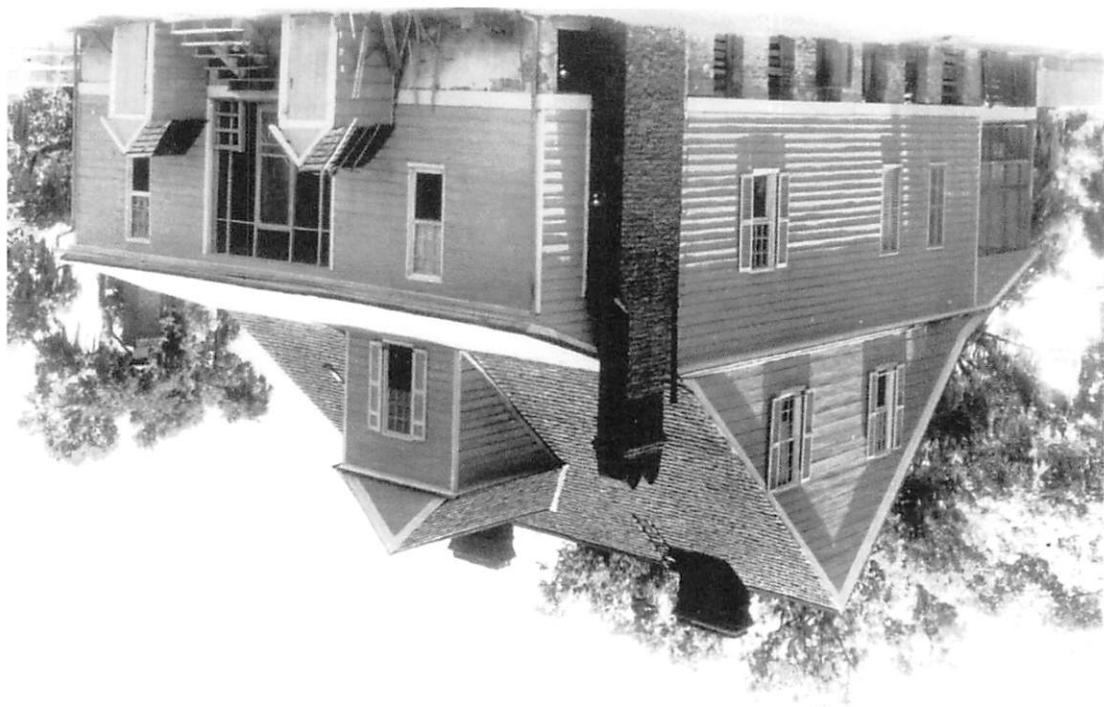
Francis Marion earned the moniker the "Swamp Fox" through his guerilla tactics, effectively harassing and frustrating the British army and Loyalists in the Southern campaign. *Author's collection.*

The interior of the Pond Bluff house was simple, though tastefully decorated. It did, however, lack the ornate carved cornices and woodwork common to St. John's Parish.



The Pond Bluff house was a one-story building, but the effective use of windows and dormers in the attic allowed for use of this level as well.

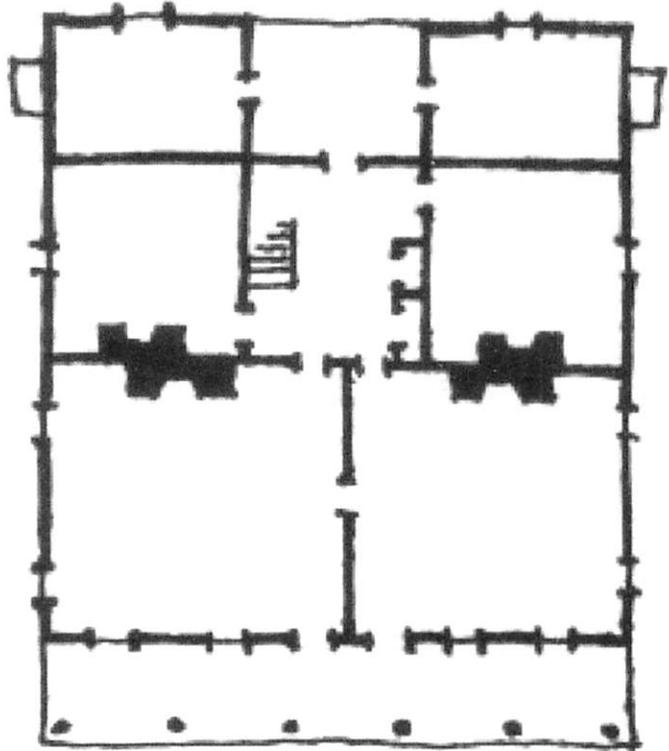




Left: The Pond Bluff house featured double front doors opening to two front rooms. Joseph and Julia Simons maintained an attractive home, as noted in this photograph.

Below: Pond Bluff was destroyed to make way for the lake. This property, once home to the great Swamp Fox, now sits below Lake Marion.





Right: The Pond Bluff floor plan was typical of the Santee homes. The house featured a covered porch at the end of the rear hall, flanked by two small rooms.

Below: Pictured are the smokehouse and kitchen for Pond Bluff Plantation. Note the interesting diagonally sheathed door. The door's hardware indicated a construction dating to Marion's occupation of the property.



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In 1939, Pond Bluff Plantation was still in full operation and the fields were all cultivated. Pictured here are the farm buildings supporting the plantation.