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HISTORIC POOSHEE PLANTATION WILL BE SWALLOWED BY SANTEE
Home of St. Julians and Ravenels Century ago was Called Model for
Planters. Thousands of Dollars Made Annually
By F.M. Kirk

Pinopolis. Aug. 10.-Special: Like another Atlantis, Berkeley apparently is destined to yield a part of its most historic section to the waters. The lake to be formed by the Santee River under the proposed Santee dam project will cover an area in Berkeley and Orangeburg counties rich in history and tradition.

Here in the lake basins, particularly the Pinopolis basin, lie dozens of plantations that played important parts in Colonial and Revolutionary history. Many of these plantations have been long been abandoned. Others have passed into other hands. Some are still in possession of descendants of the original families.

The section was, at one time, a highly developed and prosperous community. The late Professor Frederick A. Porcher in a memoir of Upper St. John's Berkeley county (that section between Pinopolis and Eutawville), published in 1868, lists sixty-six plantations. In his "Reminiscences of St. Stephen's Parish" the late Samuel DuBose lists fifty-three plantations.

LEADERS OF COLONY

Not all these plantations will be covered. A large number, however, of those in St. John's will be submerged and probably some of those in St. Stephen's parish.

In or near the Pinopolis basin are Pooshee, Somerton, Somerset, Wantoot, Northampton, Wampee, Ophir, Woodlawn, Hanover, Chapel Hill, and many others. As one travels farther on to Eutawville are the Rocks, Walnut Grove, Springfield, Eutaw, Belvidere, Loch Dhu, Pond Bluff and others. On these plantations lived the men who gave their names to many families scattered throughout South Carolina. There lived the Ravenels, Porchers, St. Julians, Marions, Sinklers, Couturier and others.

There also lived the artist John Blake White, And there lived the soldiers of Marion and Moultrie. There those eminent botanists, Thomas Walter, Francis Peyre Porcher and Dr. Henry W. Ravenel, experimented. And from there came such students as Professor Frederick A. Porcher.

PROPRIETARY GIFTS

The section is one of the oldest in South Carolina, was settled only a few years after Charlestown was moved to Oyster Point. The settlers in the Pinopolis area were chiefly French Huguenots.

Apparently there was no difficulty in securing ample lands from the Lords Proprietors. Thus 1688 the Lords Proprietors granted Wantoot with 1,000 acres to Pierre de St. Julien de Malarcare. In 1705 their Lordships granted Poooshee, also to St. Julien with 1,000 acres.

Poooshee is particularly interesting in that the present day, almost two hundred and fifty years after its grant to the emigrant St. Julien, it is owned by direct descendants of the original owner. Only for a brief thime has it been out the hands of the family, and even for that period the family had a pecuniary interest in it. It is now owned by the two brothers, P.R. and R.D. Porcher, descendants of those two emigrants who had such an important part to play in their community's development: Pierre de St. Julien and Rene Ravenel. A large portion of the place, including the house site, will be covered with water from the Santee project.

GIVEN INDIAN NAMES

Indians were numerous in the section at the time of its settlement, which probally accounts for the name. The same is probally true of Wampee and Wantoot.

St. Julien sold Poooshee to his brother-in-law, Henry Le Noble, who deeded it in 1714 to his son-in-law, Rene Lewis Ravenel, son of the emigrant Rene Ravenel. A house was built in 1716.

No record is known of what happened to the original structure, but the present house was built in 1804 by another Rene Ravenel. The western wing was not added until 1852 when Dr. Henry Ravenel, father of the noted botanist, Dr. Henry W. Ravenel built it for reasons, apparently, utilitarian rather than architectural.

Under careful management Poooshee flourished. In the prosperous period of nullification, Dr. Henry Ravenel possessed plantations above and below Poooshee along the public road for a distance of fourteen miles, except for a break of a few hundred yards, where the lands of Wantoot plantation touched the Black Oak Road. Dr. Ravenel attempted to close this break by offering \$48,000 for Wantoot with its slaves. The offer was refused by Charles Macbeth who it is said netted in five years \$100,000 on the place.

SPRING FORMS CLEAR POOL

Today the Poooshee tract consists of some four thousand acres.

Leading from the road from Bonneau to Black Oak Church, the avenue is only a few hundred yards from the church and the locks of the old Santee Canal. Touched by one Santee Canal, it will be flooded by another.

Though uninhabited for many years, the house is still in a fair state of preservation. A spring of icy water flows from a hillside a few yards from the house, and forms a pool, transparent as glass. In former days the spring was bricked in, and part of the wall still remains.

Recently a dam has been thrown across an old rice field canal, and as a result a lake of some hundred odd acres has been formed.

The rice lands of Pooshee have seen the rise and fall of three great staple crops of South Carolina, indigo, rice and cotton.

PLACE SELF-SUFFICIENT

Under the management of Dr. Ravenel the place was almost self-sufficient. All food was raised to maintain a large force of slaves. Flocks of sheep were kept, and from them and from cotton, cloth for slaves as well as blankets were manufactured at home.

The following is from H. E. Ravenel's "Ravenel Records," published in 1898:

"The Southern Agriculturist" for July 1831, has a detailed account of the management of Pooshee, written by the editor, Mr. J. D. Legare. He regarded the various operations there carried on as a model for planters. He showed that under Dr. Ravenel's system the productiveness of his lands had been doubled in the course of eleven years A peculiarity of his system was that he did not rotate crops on Pooshee but increased the fertility by heavy applications of manure, produced at home, so that in the year 1831 there were hauled out and spread upon the fields of the plantation an amount of stable manure equal to 4,448 single horse carts . . . Other interesting features of Dr. Ravenel's system are given.

Following the custom of many St. John's plantations the family cemetery is situated only a short distance from the house. Here lie the remains of many of the St. Juliens and Ravenels.