

# *Sunken Plantations*

THE SANTEE COOPER PROJECT

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# POOSHEE PLANTATION

In 1688, the Lords Proprietors granted Pierre de St. Julien de Malacare one thousand acres in Carolina that formed Wantoot Plantation. In 1705, St. Julien was granted an additional one thousand acres, forming the property known as Poooshee Plantation. Poooshee, like Wampee and Wantoot, is named for an early Native American settlement.

St. Julien sold the Poooshee property to his brother-in-law Henry Le Noble, who, in turn, deeded the property to his son-in-law, Rene Louis Ravenel. It was Ravenel who built the first house at Poooshee in 1716, though little is known about it or what happened to it. Ravenel cultivated indigo and rice on his St. John's plantation.

A second house was built in 1804 by a descendant who was also named Rene Ravenel. The property passed to Dr. Henry Ravenel, who added a curious wing to the western side of the house. It was under Dr. Ravenel's management that the plantation earned a reputation as an efficient and profitable operation. Ravenel continued the rice cultivation started at Poooshee in the eighteenth century. He added Santee long-staple cotton, further enhancing the profitability of his plantation. The plantation was entirely self-sufficient, growing vegetables to feed the family and slaves and producing cotton and wool to produce clothes and blankets.

In July 1831, the *Southern Agriculturalist* noted that Poooshee was a model for other planters. J.D. Legare, the editor and author of the article, noted, "Under Dr. Ravenel's system, the productiveness of his lands had been doubled in the course of eleven years." Unlike other planters, Ravenel did not rotate his crops. Instead, he applied heavy applications of manure produced at Poooshee. In 1831 alone, he applied the equivalent of 4,448 carts of manure to his fields.

By the twentieth century, Poooshee Plantation had increased to four thousand acres. The oak allée to Poooshee is located only a few hundred yards from Black Oak Church and the original Santee Canal. In 1939, brothers P.R. and R.D. Porcher owned the plantation, though no one was living in the house. A large portion of the plantation was covered by the lake project, including the house site.

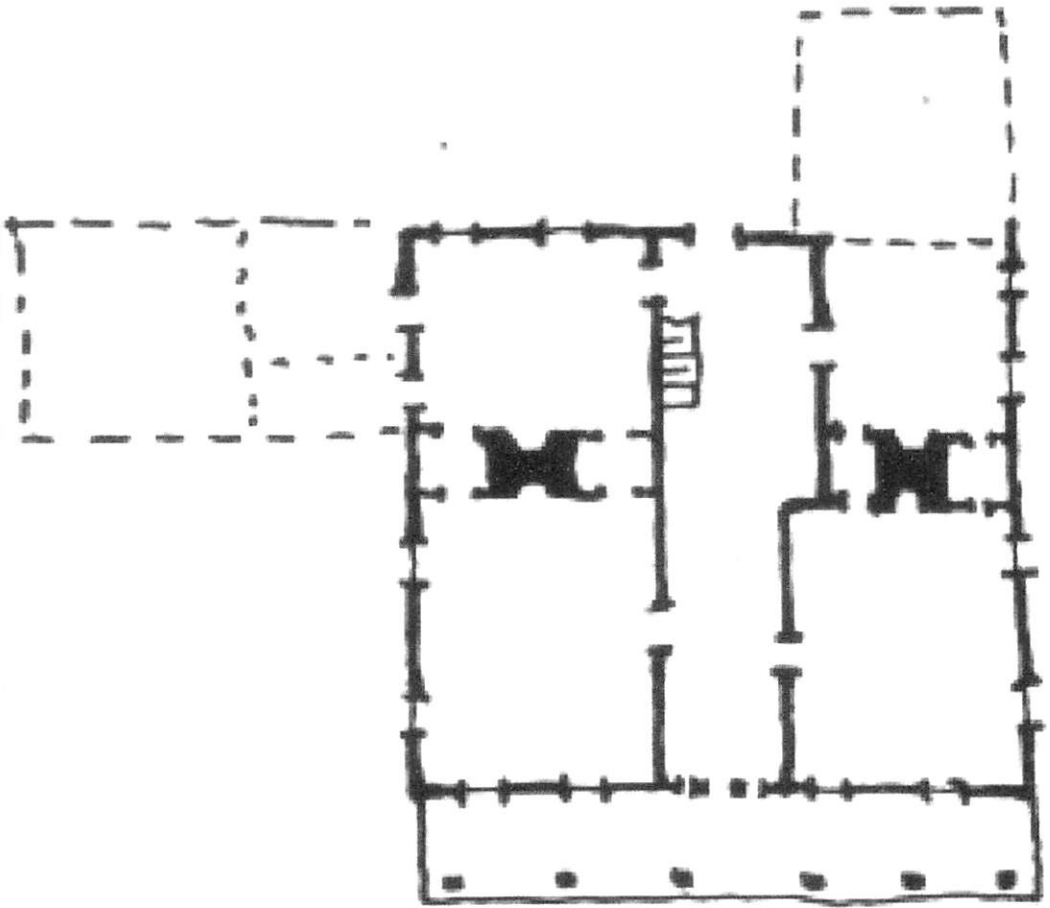
## SUNKEN PLANTATIONS



The 1939 Waterman report called Pooshee "the most forlorn ghost of a great past." By 1939, little would remind an observer of the great plantation that had been operated by Dr. Ravenel.



This portrait is of Susan, the daughter of Henry Le Noble and wife of Rene Louis Ravenel. She and her husband were the first to live at Pooshee.



Waterman referred to Pooshee as “the fullest development of the central-hall type.” The house was large in scale, with two full stories and a usable attic. By 1939, the house was damaged by fire and the interior trim was removed.