

Sunken Plantations

THE SANTEE COOPER PROJECT

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EUTAW PLANTATION

James Sinkler, of Old Santee in St. James Parish, acquired a grant prior to the Revolutionary War that included tracts of land that would later divide into Belvidere and Eutaw Plantations. The name "Eutaw" is derived from nearby Eutaw Creek, which flows from the Eutaw Springs.

As whites settled the area in the late seventeenth century, they encountered a Native American tribe named Eutaw that hunted along the creek. The Eutaws, also known as Etiwans, were part of the Cusabo linguistic group.

In 1808, a fine house was built on the Eutaw property for James's son William on the occasion of his marriage. The tract of land divided for William was on a bluff of the Eutaw Creek approximately one mile west of the Eutaw Springs battlefield.

William Sinkler, like others in his family, was an avid horseman and breeder. When he moved to Eutaw he built a one-mile track to the east of the oak allée leading to his house. Hercules, a slave owned by Sinkler, was an expert trainer, preparing horses owned by Sinkler and others for racing. Hercules, or "Old Hark" as he was known, had earned a national reputation for the great race horses he trained.

Albine was foaled in 1856, owned by Peter G. Stoney. Stoney sent the filly to Bullfield Plantation in Virginia to be trained by the stables of Major Thomas Doswell. Doswell, responsible for training many national champions, returned the young filly to Stoney noting that the horse would never succeed as a competitive racer.

Stoney sold the horse to John Cantey in 1859. That same year Colonel James Ferguson and Cantey hired Hercules to train Albine. By December of that year, Albine won a one-mile race for three-year-olds in Camden. Hercules continued to train Albine, running her occasionally at the Pineville racetrack.

Hercules suggested Albine was ready for Charleston Race Week in February 1860. Albine shocked the Charleston race community by winning the two-mile "Jockey Club" race. Throughout 1860, Hercules continued training the filly, winning two races in Camden, each time defeating a horse owned by Major Doswell of Virginia.

Doswell, looking for revenge, entered his national champion, Planet, to race against Albine in the upcoming Charleston Jockey Club race in February 1861, a four-mile match race. Shocking all in attendance, Albine not only defeated Planet, but in doing so set a national record at seven minutes, thirty-six and a half seconds. This record still stands in the annals of

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thoroughbred racing. For the remainder of his life, Hercules could never buy his own food and drink whenever he came to Charleston.

In February 1865, Union General Hartwell conducted raids throughout St. John's Parish and established Eutaw Plantation as his headquarters. The women of the Sinkler family were relegated to the second-floor living quarters, while Hartwell and his staff made use of the main floor. The Sinklers had buried thirty-four chests of clothes, china and silver on the grounds. The Union soldiers located the valuables buried near the blacksmith shop and stole the family possessions.



Eutaw Plantation never passed out of the Sinkler family until Santee Cooper acquired it. The house, built in 1808, was a large, roomy house built high off the ground.



Above: The house featured a wide piazza that wrapped around three sides. The piazza columns were made of solid cypress. Cypress weatherboards covered the house.

Right: When entering the plantation, visitors traveled a long, impressive oak allée to reach the house. The gardens at Eutaw were famous throughout the state. One of the Sinklers' gardeners was reputed to be the grandson of an African king.
Courtesy of Mrs. Sarah Spruill.



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Left: The interior woodwork was simple compared to other St. John's homes, but dignified in appearance. The hand-carved mantel was thought to have been purchased and brought in from out of state.

Below: The low spreading roof and huge piazza were reminiscent of the Carolina-Caribbean home style, popular in lower St. John's Parish. The large home was destroyed after Santee Cooper acquired the property.

