

Sunken Plantations

THE SANTEE COOPER PROJECT

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WAMPEE PLANTATION

In 1696, John Stewart received a grant from the Lords Proprietors for 804 acres known as Wampee, west of the Biggin Swamp. Part of this grant would later become lands for Somerset and Somerton Plantations.

In 1698, Reverend William Screven, a Baptist minister, acquired the Wampee tract from Stewart and by 1700 added a three-hundred-acre tract adjoining the property. Screven made Somerton Plantation his home.

Most residents of St. John's attended the Anglican Church and were wary of Screven's attempts to create a Baptist settlement. In 1703, Judge Nicholas Trott wrote the archbishop of Canterbury asking for Anglican literature, stating, "We are here very much infested with the sect of Anabaptists." Screven's ambition to create a Baptist settlement was not realized and he sold his property to Rene Ravenel.

By 1749, Gabriel Guignard had acquired Wampee, planting indigo and rice on the plantation. Over the next forty years the plantation passed through several families until Charles Johnson purchased it in 1790. The plantation passed to his daughter, who married James Macbeth. Their son Charles would later become the mayor of Charleston during the War Between the States.

James Macbeth died in 1822 and Charles built the current Wampee home for his mother in that same year, the third house built at Wampee. Charles's daughter later acquired the Wampee property and through marriage the plantation was passed to the Cain family.

Santee Cooper acquired the Wampee property through eminent domain. After the flood, the waters of Lake Moultrie covered the Wampee lands and left the house dry on the bank of the lake. Santee Cooper renovated the house to host visiting dignitaries.

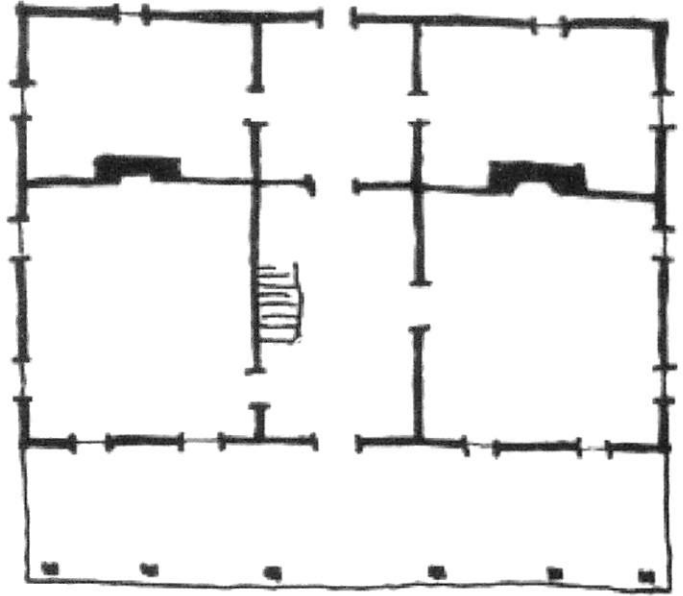
The Cain family, angry that they were forced to sell Wampee but the house survived, filed a lawsuit against Santee Cooper pointing out that the acquisition of the Wampee house was not critical to the hydroelectric project. In 1945, the South Carolina Supreme Court agreed and returned the Wampee house to the Cain family.

SUNKEN PLANTATIONS

Santee Cooper, determined to make use of Wampee, made an extremely lucrative offer to the family and, this time, bought the house and remaining land with the cooperation of the Cain family.



The Wampee house, located one mile from Pinopolis, is the only plantation house in middle St. John's Parish still standing on its original site of construction. Waterman noted that the house was reminiscent of houses in the British West Indies.



Right: The floor plan reflects the style common to the houses in the Pinopolis region, utilizing a central hall and four rooms on two levels. The house did feature a large piazza across the front of the house.

Below: In 1988, Santee Cooper established Wampee as a conference center overlooking Lake Moultrie. The Wampee site was home to several Native American burial mounds.

