

FALLING TO PIECES: THE PRESERVATION OF RUINS IN COASTAL GEORGIA

by

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(Under the Direction of John C. Waters)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to research and evaluate ruins of former buildings managed by five different agencies in Georgia in order to determine the best approach and methods for the stabilization and preservation of ruins.

INDEX WORDS: Georgia coast, ruins, Wormsloe, Savannah, Dungeness, Stafford Chimneys, Cumberland Island, Jekyll Island, Horton House, Chichota, Carpentry Shop, Retreat Plantation, Fort Frederica, St. Simons Island, historic preservation

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis was inspired by an article detailing a man's walk through a site of ruins in what seemed the middle of nowhere. In it, the author describes walking on a road and seeing the ruins around him. He is swept away by the beauty and tranquility of the ruins that he stumbles upon. He writes several pages on his experience of being in the surroundings of the ruin. The author conveys such a descriptive journey that any reader would want to be in his shoes in that exact moment. It is this feeling of tranquility among ruins as well as the heritage they symbolize that warrants preservation.

Preserving ruins is not always easy; sometimes development or new construction is just around the corner. At other times, it is just not safe to have an unstable chimney wavering in the air. Not everyone understands the importance of preserving and stabilizing the remnants of a significant building, but sometimes making people understand the significance of preserving cultural resources is just half the battle.

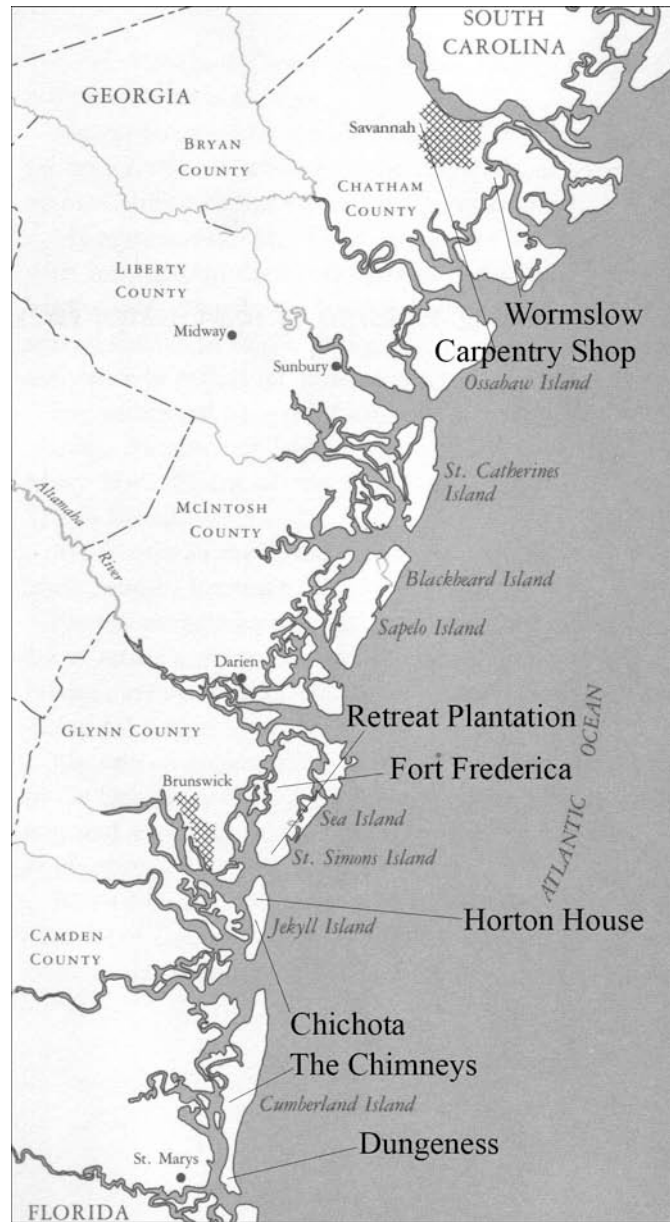
In essence, ruins of former buildings serve no other purpose than to remind us or make us wonder what used to be. In many ways, ruins of buildings tell us about the history of the site and therefore serve as an educational tool. Others would agree that one could find respite and tranquility in the surroundings of ruins. Whatever the reason, ruins are an important tool for not only learning about the past but also as a reminder to us that nothing is permanent and that we should enjoy and preserve the cultural resources we have right now.

The purpose of this thesis is to research different management strategies of significant ruins located in coastal Georgia and to evaluate how each organization's different methods affect the preservation and longevity of them. There are many ruins found along the Georgia coast, and

the focus of this thesis is not to document each one but to evaluate the ruin that best represents the organization that manages it: federal, state, state partnership, city, and private. After evaluating the present conditions and treatments of the ruins, the thesis will compare and make conclusions as to which combination of methods seem to work best and recommendations for conserving and prolonging the longevity of each ruin.

The first chapter gives a brief overview of the preservation and protection of ruins in other parts of the world as well as the preservation issues surrounding them. Following this overview is an analysis of eight different ruins found in coastal Georgia. The ruins were chosen based on the agency that manages them. If a managing agency oversaw more than one ruin in coastal Georgia, then the most threatened ruin was chosen and detailed, as was the case with the National Park Service, which manages both Dungeness on Cumberland Island and Fort Frederica on St. Simons Island. A more detailed analysis of Dungeness is given to represent the management practices of the National Park Service. Each of the following ruins represents a different type of preservation management, allowing for the evaluation of how each agency's stewardship of ruins differs. Jekyll Island is owned by the state of Georgia, but the Jekyll Island Authority leases the island from the state and acts as steward of the properties on the island. The National Park Service, with the exception of a few parcels still retained by private residents, owns Cumberland Island. Like Jekyll Island, Wormsloe, with the exception of a few privately-held acres, is owned by the State of Georgia but managed by the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division under the Department of Natural Resources. The former Central of Georgia Railway is owned by the City of Savannah and managed by the Coastal Heritage Society. Located on St. Simons Island, Retreat Plantation is privately owned by the Sea Island Golf Course, and Fort Frederica is owned by the National Park Service. Each chapter briefly

chronicles the history of the property before and after its ruinous state and evaluates the current condition and treatment of each.



**Figure 1-1. Map Showing the Locations of Ruins Discussed in this Document** (Source: Vanstory 1, with names of ruins inserted by author).

The methodology used for research included site visits, personal interviews, and archival and library research. Site visits proved to be the best method in evaluating each ruin's current condition. Because a ruined building's foundation is now visible, site visits also give a perspective into each former building's destruction as well as construction.

Whenever possible, personal interviews were conducted to understand the agency's current treatments and future plans for the site; otherwise, judgments were made based on observations of the current condition of the ruin. Personal communication with the personnel responsible for managing and maintaining each site afforded the opportunity to hear the issues and dilemmas the agencies encounter while trying to preserve the ruins.

Historical backgrounds of the ruins were documented using library and archival research. Appearances of the former buildings were found in books, archived collections, and records from the managing agencies. The Jekyll Island Authority permitted perusal of their vast collection of photographs and letters in order to obtain information about the problems that each building incurred before descending into their ruinous states, documentation that books could not afford. Books proved useful in obtaining detailed descriptions of the buildings' former appearances; various people wrote detailed analyses of interior and exterior features at different points in time.

Finally, the last chapter compares the strategies used by the different managing agencies, based on the condition of their respective ruin. It also discusses the success or failure of their preservation and stabilization efforts of these former buildings. The document concludes with a final evaluation of each ruin along with suggested improvements or alternative preservation methods that will most likely prolong the longevity of the surviving remnants.

While preserving any resource mandates funding, it is not the focus of this document to provide suggestions for procuring financial support. The intention of this document is to

evaluate and compare different preservation methods, and when seen fit, recommend alternative treatments for the preservation of the ruins discussed in the following chapters.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PRESERVATION OF RUINS

The Dictionary of Architectural Preservation defines a ruin as “the remains of something destroyed or demolished that was once habitable.”<sup>1</sup> The preservation of ruins is not a new concept. Other countries have been practicing preservation and stabilization of ruins for centuries, conserving foundations and frameworks of previous buildings. Even the United States, whose history is rather short, has had early preservation movements.

#### **Ruins of Ancient Greece**

The monuments of the Acropolis were built between 447 and 420 B.C. A great fire occurred in the Parthenon in 227 A.D.; the building was repaired a hundred years later. Since that time, the monuments have suffered from devastating effects of war, natural disasters, and man, including air pollution and acid rain. Parts of the buildings were pillaged for valuable resources and materials to reuse in other buildings. It was not until 1835 that the Acropolis started receiving restoration work and archaeological studies. The people of Greece saw the importance of saving these significant structures. Early preservation methods of the ruins proved harmful in later years, and in 1975, restoration work began to reverse the damaging effects of these early attempts of preservation. Sculptures were removed and placed in a museum to protect them from further damaging effects of air pollution and acid rain. Today the ruins are stabilized and preserved in their ruinous states for the interpretation of Ancient Greek architecture and culture.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Burden, *Illustrated Dictionary of Architectural Preservation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 220.

<sup>2</sup> *Conservation and Restoration Work on the Athenian Acropolis*, (accessed); available from <http://ysma.culture.gr/english/sintomi/main.htm>.

## **Casa Grande**

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument is located in Arizona and is the ruins of a collection of structures that were built by the Hohokam people who lived in the area from 500 to 1400 A.D. The ruins have been protected and viewed as a significant historic resource since 1892 and designated as a national monument in 1918. Casa Grande represents early ruin preservation efforts by the National Park Service.

In 1903, a protective roof made of redwood timbers and corrugated iron was built to shelter and hinder deterioration of the ruins. In the mid-1920's, this roof started to deteriorate, and another roof was designed in large part by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. It consisted of a metal-hipped roof, four leaning posts, and concrete foundations. Olmsted's roof was not built until 1932 because of funding, a problem not foreign to the National Park Service. This roof still stands today and will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>3</sup>

Since the National Park Service's management of Casa Grande, there have been four periods of stabilization work on the ruins. Each time efforts are made to make the mud structure stronger. Currently, the National Park Service (NPS) is testing chemical applications in order to harden the ruin from eroding.<sup>4</sup>

A recent issue that has been raised is that the ruins of Casa Grande not only lie only in the National Monument area, but also in neighboring areas where development is threatening the remaining foundations and ruins of the Hohokam culture. The National Park Service is looking into acquiring more land in order to protect the ruins from development, expanding the

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<sup>3</sup> National Park Service NPS, *Casa Grande Ruins: Administrative History*(accessed); available from <http://www.nps.gov/archive/cagr/adhi>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.(accessed).

boundaries of the National Monument area. Wal-Mart has already donated thirteen acres, and the city and state governments are working with the NPS to acquire more land.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Colosseum**

The Roman Colosseum was built between 70 and 80 A.D. as an amphitheater for the city of Rome. Years later, it was abandoned, used as a fortress, and finally pillaged for building materials. The amphitheater once held seating for 50,000 spectators on three levels. The classic structure follows the three orders of architecture: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian.

In recent years, Romans have recognized the importance of saving this massive elliptical structure and has become a major tourist attraction for many visitors.<sup>6</sup>

### **Benjamin Franklin House**

The ruins of the Benjamin Franklin House provide an example of a radical yet effective method of preserving ruins; the structure has won many awards for its interpretation of the site. The former home of Benjamin Franklin was demolished long before a memorial was built on top of the foundation in 1976. A “ghost” framework was erected on top of the existing foundation to outline the original house. Ports were installed to allow visitors to view the remaining foundation below. Five historic houses that faced Market Street were reconstructed to exhibit archaeological items, create office space, and house a gift shop.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> National Park Service NPS, *Casa Grande Ruins National Monument Resource Protection Study*(accessed); available from [http://www.nps.gov/cagr/Resource%20Management/RPS/RPS\\_Ex\\_Sumamry.htm](http://www.nps.gov/cagr/Resource%20Management/RPS/RPS_Ex_Sumamry.htm).

<sup>6</sup> *Engineering of Roman Colosseum*, (accessed); available from <http://www.engineering.com/content/ContentDisplay?contentId=41007009>.

<sup>7</sup> *Franklin Court*, (accessed); available from [http://www.vsba.com/projects/fla\\_archive/90.html](http://www.vsba.com/projects/fla_archive/90.html).

## **Preservation Issues**

Ruin preservation is not a new concept as seen from the examples above, nor is it only a regional concern. The preservation of ruins is a worldwide movement that sees the history of the manmade environment as a significant part of mankind's heritage that warrants preservation.

One of the main issues of ruin preservation is the limited amount of funding available for the protection and maintenance of them. Sites managed by government agencies struggle to maintain the site, much less stabilize and preserve them. Another problem facing the longevity of ruins is the threat of development and new construction. Many times, these sites are razed and new houses are erected on top of the foundations.

Making sure ruins are preserved for future generations is of utmost importance in educating people about the past. Ruins serve as a reminder of building practices used by previous generations. Not only do they serve as picturesque landscapes but as educational tools. Once a building is gone, the next best thing is the ruin that is left behind.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **HORTON HOUSE AND CHICHOTA: JEKYLL ISLAND Managed by the Jekyll Island Authority Since 1950**

Jekyll Island is an island on the southern coast of Georgia that measures ten miles in length and three miles across. Owned by the state of Georgia since 1947, it is designated as a state park, but unlike other state parks, is managed by an overseeing agency: the Jekyll Island Authority, which is a self-maintained independent agency that has been leasing the island from the state since 1950. It was agreed that 65% of the island remain undeveloped, leaving 35% open to both residential and commercial development. The Jekyll Island Authority includes the Jekyll Island Museum whose staff includes people with backgrounds in museum studies, historic preservation, and archaeology. It also includes a maintenance staff that is sensitive to the hands-on preservation work of the historic resources.

#### **HORTON HOUSE**

##### **Historical Background**

##### ***William Horton's Ownership***

Known as one of the “Golden Isles of Georgia,” Jekyll Island has experienced a long and sometimes tumultuous past that started with the founding of Georgia in 1733. James Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia, named the island for Sir Joseph Jekyll, a benefactor from England. Jekyll Island was settled as a military outpost to protect Frederica, an early settlement on St. Simons Island, from attack by the Spanish in Florida (see Chapter 7). Oglethorpe’s top military aide, William Horton, settled on Jekyll Island in 1736, becoming Jekyll Island’s first English

settler. He built a house for himself and his family and cultivated part of his granted five hundred acres.<sup>8</sup>

As a dedicated soldier under James Oglethorpe, Horton became one of the most important military men in Georgia's early days as a young colony. He received a land grant of five hundred acres, which had to be cultivated in a matter of a few years in order to keep the land as specified by the Board of Trustees. As Horton proved to be a hardworking and dedicated soldier, he soon reached the status of Oglethorpe's top military aide and overseer of Frederica on St. Simons Island during Oglethorpe's absence. By the end of 1736, Horton had built a 2-story wood frame house at the north end of Jekyll Island, right across the river from St. Simons Island.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 3-1. Conjectural Drawing of Horton House (Source: Fauber 124).**

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<sup>8</sup> June Hall McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-15.

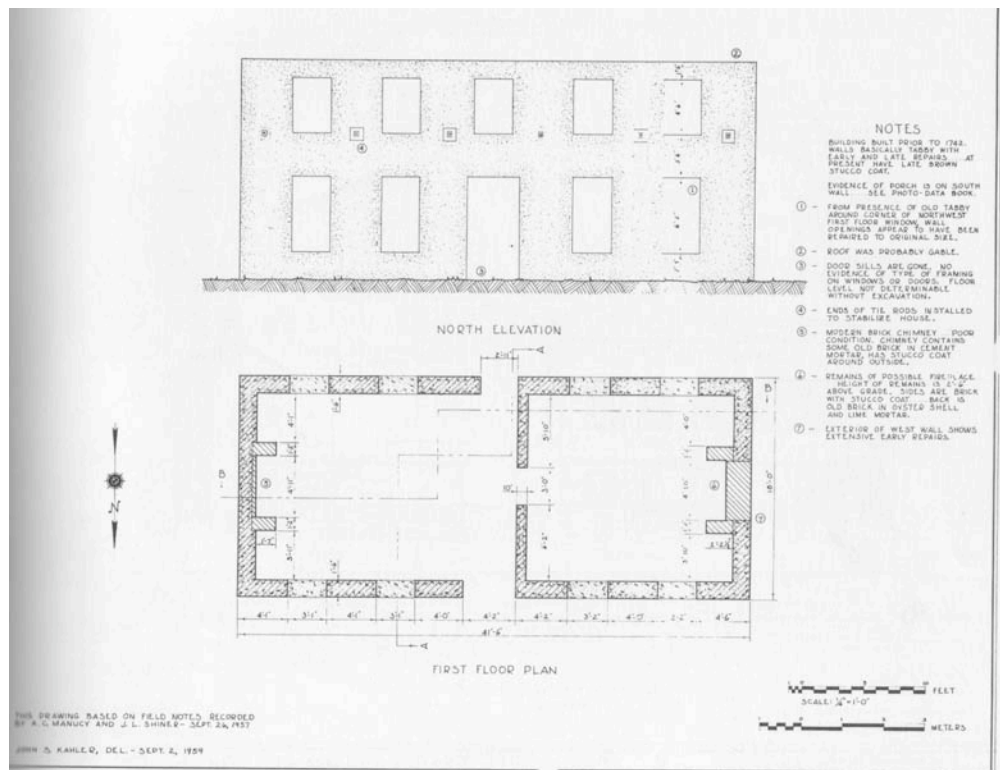


**Figure 3-2. Horton House in 1958** (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS GA,64-JEKL,1-1, photo by Jack E. Boucher).



**Figure 3-3. Horton House after 2004 Preservation Work** (photo by author).

During Georgia's early colonial days, there were many battles with the Spanish. In fact, Frederica's purpose was to serve as a fortified community to buffer between the rest of Georgia and Florida. The Spanish from St. Augustine were always a threat to Frederica. In 1742, there was a battle between the Spanish and the Americans near Frederica, and Horton's home was burned by the Spaniards on their way back to St. Augustine. Horton rebuilt his home on Jekyll, but this time he built it of tabby, a local building material consisting of oyster shell, sand, lime and water. To make tabby, oyster shells are burned until lime is produced. Then the lime is mixed with sand, water, and more oyster shells as aggregate to make a concrete-like compound called tabby. The tabby is then poured into molds and dried; the process is repeated until the desired height of the building is reached. It is the ruins of Horton's 1742 house that still stand on Jekyll Island today. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



**Figure 3-4. Historic American Buildings Survey Drawing of the Horton House Ruins**  
(Source: Linley 23)



The following is a description of the house:

Like the first house, the new one had chimneys at both ends; the downstairs had a tabby floor and was divided into two rooms by a tabby wall. Upstairs were two bedrooms, one for William and Rebecca and one for their sons.<sup>10</sup>

The two-story house, with a red-hipped roof and a back verandah that opened out from both floors...The almost fifteen hundred square feet of living space was divided into two rooms downstairs and sleeping accommodations on the second floor. Dominating the kitchen on the ground floor was a large cooking hearth, but the parlor across the hall had more formality. As in the kitchen, a fireplace was the focal point of the room. A wooden wainscot, however, lent to the room a touch of refinement missing from the plain plastered walls of the kitchen...a two-story verandah that caught the spring and summer breezes opened up onto the rear garden.<sup>11</sup>

### ***The DuBignons' Ownership***

After Horton died, his family moved away, and the property was bought and sold several times before the DuBignon family, fleeing from the French Revolution, bought most of Jekyll Island and lived in Horton House for almost a century.<sup>12</sup> During the DuBignon years, the Horton House was “remodeled and occupied...with a wing added here and there over the years...for the most part the DuBignon changes were additions rather than alterations.”<sup>13</sup>

It is not known for sure how the Horton House became a ruin, but it is speculated that the building was burned and never rebuilt. One report states that during the Civil War, “a free-booting buccaneer landed (on the island) and sacked and burned the DuBignon property.”<sup>14</sup> A journal entry from a Union soldier in 1862 depicts the Horton House as already being in a

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<sup>10</sup> June Hall McCash, *Jekyll Island's Early Years: From Prehistory to Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 65.

<sup>11</sup> Martha L. Keber, *Seas of Gold, Seas of Cotton: Christophe Poulain Dubignon of Jekyll Island* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 193.

<sup>12</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 15-24.

<sup>13</sup> J. Everette Fauber Jr., *A Comprehensive Report and a Proposal for the Restoration of Captain Horton's House on Jekyll Island, Georgia* (Lynchburg, 1967), 27-28.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

ruinous state, “We rested awhile, and then followed a road which within a few hundred yards brought us to an old ruin, formerly the family mansion of the DuBignons the owners of the island.”<sup>15</sup> The theory that the house was burned seems to hold true as charcoal fragments were found in and around the ruin during an archeological investigation performed in 1966-1967.<sup>16</sup> A specific date of its destruction cannot be found, but it can be surmised that the house was burned after 1852, when Henri DuBignon and his bride left the island, but before the aforementioned Union soldier’s arrival in 1862.<sup>17</sup> Records show the DuBignon family never recovered after the war.<sup>18</sup>

In 1886, one of the DuBignon family members and his brother-in-law decided to sell Jekyll Island to a group of wealthy industrialists and capitalists from the North, and thus, the Jekyll Island Club Era began.

## CHICHOTA

### **Historical Background**

The Jekyll Island Club consisted of one hundred original members, each owning two shares of the club.<sup>19</sup> This club was different from other social clubs; it accepted women and was founded on the basis of fostering a rustic, relaxing, and simple lifestyle on the island. Among the activities promoted were hunting, riding, and carriage driving; a list later expanded to include bicycling, golf, and tennis.<sup>20</sup> The club season started in January and ended in the spring. Because the club environment welcomed members’ wives and children, some of the members

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<sup>15</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 24.

<sup>16</sup> Fauber 29.

<sup>17</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Fauber Jr., 29.

<sup>19</sup> William Barton McCash and June Hall McCash, *The Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America's Millionaires* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 9.

<sup>20</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 1-2.

opted to build their own cottages around the clubhouse to ensure enough space for their families. One such member was David H. King, Jr.

### ***David H. King, Jr.'s Ownership***

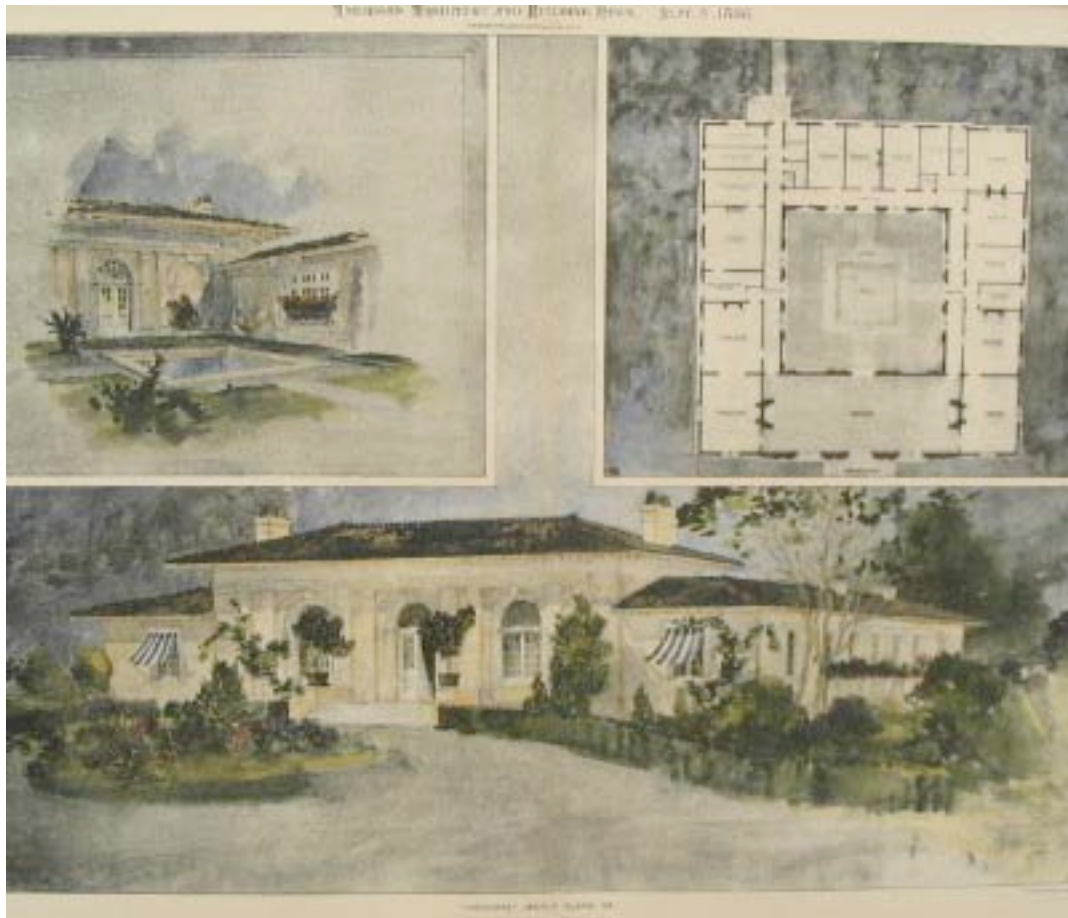
David H. King, Jr. was a contractor from New York. His chief projects included constructing the base of the Statue of Liberty, designed by Richard Morris Hunt, and also erecting the statue itself. He also built Madison Square Garden and the Washington Memorial Arch in New York, both designed by Stanford White of McKim, Mead, and White.<sup>21</sup> King became a member of the Jekyll Island Club in 1889 even though his first visit to Jekyll Island was not until 1892, a visit that included Stanford White as his guest. After a few years of being in the club, King bought lots 33 and 34 in early 1897 and started building his own cottage to accommodate his needs. King's cottage, Chichota, designed by Howard and Cauldwell,<sup>22</sup> was finished by December 1897, and landscaping began the next month. Orange trees and fruit trees were planted behind the cottage, and palms, California privet, and eventually, flowerbeds were planted around the property.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 157-158.

<sup>22</sup> *American Architect and Building News* (September 3, 1898).

<sup>23</sup> J. A. Falk to King, September 15, 1898 and September 19, 1898, Grob Letter Book. Located in the Jekyll Island Museum.



**Figure 3-5. Architectural Rendering of Chichota** (Source: American Architect and Building News, September 3, 1898)

Chichota was the only one-story cottage among the club residences and enclosed the only in-ground swimming pool in the cottage colony and perhaps the first in the state of Georgia.

King contracted for the drilling of an artesian well on the property to supply water to the pool.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> McCash, June Hall, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 158.  
 Richard Jay Hutto, *Their Gilded Cage: The Jekyll Island Club Members* (Macon: Henchard Press Ltd., 2006).



**Figure 3-6. Chichota Cottage** (Source: Jekyll Island Museum Archives).



**Figure 3-7. Chichota Entrance** (Source: Jekyll Island Museum Archives).

Accustomed to constructing buildings in the North, King did not build Chichota to withstand the hot and humid conditions of the southern coast. This, coupled with the disastrous effects of the hurricane that hit the island in October of 1898, did not help. Not even a year after Chichota was built, the cottage was already having structural problems both inside and out. Along with the orchard being destroyed and the palms being “twisted,” the hurricane caused plaster to fall down from two bedroom ceilings, and the exterior gutter leaked. The cellar was full of water, but this was common after every rain.<sup>25</sup> Six months later, the pool sprung a leak and was soon after fixed by a mason.<sup>26</sup> By September of 1899, almost two years after Chichota had been built, the window and door casings expanded tremendously making it impossible for

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<sup>25</sup> Falk to King, October 3, 1898, Grob Letter Book.

<sup>26</sup> E. G. Grob to King, April 24, 1899, Grob Letter Book.

the locks to hold them. At the same time, leaks were reported in the north and east portions of the roof.<sup>27</sup>

With King's cottage needing so many repairs and his recent disagreement with the club president over the location and design of the new club stables, it was no surprise that King's presence on the island diminished, and in late 1899 King started making arrangements to sell Chichota.<sup>28</sup> Window and door casings were fixed, interior woodwork was wiped clean, the floor was cleaned, and fallen plaster was repaired.<sup>29</sup> He offered Chichota for sale fully furnished for \$35,000.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Edwin Gould's Ownership***

Edwin Gould, railroad executive, financier and second son of Jay Gould, bought Chichota from David King, Jr. in December of 1900, just in time for the 1901 club season.<sup>31</sup> Upon purchase, Gould immediately started making renovations and getting Chichota ready for his family. Gould spared no expense in preparing the cottage for his family; he added gas piping and hanging fixtures, and prepared his house for electricity, as the Club was planning to build an electric plant the next year.<sup>32</sup> Not only were there changes to the cottage, but over the years there would be additions to the property as well, including a private wharf, boathouse, bowling alley, greenhouse, private stable, and covered tennis court.<sup>33 34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Grob to King, September 21, 1899, Grob Letter Book.

<sup>28</sup> Grob to King, October 17, 1899, Grob Letter Book.

<sup>29</sup> Grob to King, October 25, 1899, Grob Letter Book.

<sup>30</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 164.

<sup>31</sup> Hutto, 64.

<sup>32</sup> Grob to Edwin Gould, December 20, 1900, Grob Letter Book.

<sup>33</sup> Hutto, *Their Gilded Cage*, 64.

McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 171.

<sup>34</sup> McCash and McCash, *The Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America's Millionaires*, 109.

Gould valued time with his family at Chichota and spent many winters there, also convincing his parents-in-law to build a cottage of their own on Jekyll.<sup>35</sup> Gould's youngest son would also build his own cottage on the island years later.<sup>36</sup> However, the family's great love of the island could not replace the devastating loss they experienced on February 24, 1917. The eldest of Edwin Gould's two sons, Edwin Jr., or Eddie as he was known, was killed in a hunting accident on a small neighboring island.<sup>37</sup> His mother, Sally Gould, was in New York at the time, and never came back to Jekyll Island again. His father, Edwin Gould, came back only a few times between Eddie's death and his own death in 1933. The Goulds' youngest son, Frank Miller Gould, was the only member who continued to visit Jekyll regularly and built his own cottage on the island in 1928.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 209-210.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-178.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.





**Figure 3-8. Kids Swimming in Chichota Pool** (Source: McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 168, from John J. Albright).

Chichota remained empty and was left to decay from disuse and neglect. The pool was later used as a reservoir during the state’s ownership but now stands empty.<sup>39</sup> The club demolished Chichota in 1941, hiring George Cowman, Sr., a building contractor, to head the demolition. Cowman used pieces of it to build his own home on Fancy Bluff, an area located nearby on the mainland.<sup>40</sup>

### **PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT AND POLICY**

Jekyll Island’s management plan states “the historic structures on Jekyll Island are stabilized, restored and maintained as functioning, living landmarks, appropriately reflecting their unique past and providing resources for their support, in order to conserve important

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<sup>39</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 177-178.

<sup>40</sup> Tyler E. Bagwell and Jekyll Island Museum, *Images of America: The Jekyll Island Club* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), 42.

historic links, to enhance visitor experience and education, and to provide viable economic amenities.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Horton House**

The first preservation efforts on the ruins of Horton House occurred during the Jekyll Island Club era in 1899 when a few of the club members “fearing the total collapse of the old house, undertook its preservation by having the walls strengthened and covered with a thin layer of cement.”<sup>42</sup> Club member Charles Stewart Maurice and his wife, Charlotte, led these first efforts by collecting donations from the other club members.<sup>43</sup>

Club Superintendent, Ernest Grob, wrote to the Maurices after the preservation work was finished: “Tomorrow will finish up the ‘tabby house’...all the walls are up, and around the entire top has been put a layer of concrete, filling up the spaces which were broken out above the windows, the middle wall has been brought up one and a half story[,] brace it, and lastly a coat of cement over the entire outside. To my mind the picturesqueness has now been taken from the ruin, and it looks like a modern house. However it will last many years now.”<sup>44</sup>

In 2004, the Horton House received a \$250,000 grant for preservation work through the Save America’s Treasures program. The building was stabilized, and a new stucco coat was applied to the exterior, which is how tabby buildings were originally built, with the stucco layer being a protective sacrificial coating. Colors of the stucco layer were chosen to match as closely as possible to what would have been there originally. The concrete coping or “cap,” as the Jekyll Island Authority calls it, installed during the club era was left on the top of the ruins because it

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<sup>41</sup> Jekyll Island Authority JIA, *Jekyll Island Authority Strategic Goals*(accessed); available from [http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/organization/strategic\\_goals.htm](http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/organization/strategic_goals.htm).

<sup>42</sup> Fauber 31.

<sup>43</sup> McCash, *The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, 99, 123.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

was serving its purpose of keeping water from infiltrating from above.<sup>45</sup> Removing the “cap” would have caused more damage than good. The date of 1738 that the club members affixed to the top of the door was removed.

Archaeological research on the site of the Horton House was also done at that time. Many artifacts were found and are important to the interpretation of the property. Future plans for the site include a designated parking area, an interpretive center, and an expanded interpretive plan to include new interpretive panels.<sup>46</sup> There has also been discussion about rerouting the road that runs between Horton House and DuBignon Cemetery (Riverview Road) and redeveloping the original historic road (Old Plantation Road) that runs behind the ruins. Currently, Riverview Road separates the ruins and cemetery.

### **Chichota**

The ruins of Chichota are located within the Jekyll Island Club National Historic Landmark District. All that remains of Chichota are the empty tiled swimming pool and two weathered marble lions sitting on each side of the entrance steps. The foundation can be seen elevated above the ground and covered by soil and plants, such as creeping fig and sago palms, which according to Cliff Gawron, Landscape Superintendent, are not invasive to the existing foundation. The sago palms and creeping fig are pruned once a year and periodically throughout the year if needed.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, many of the sago palms were there when Chichota was still standing; therefore, they are not doing any damage to the underlying foundation and empty in-

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<sup>45</sup> Personal communication with Amy Galovic, Jekyll Island Authority, October, 20, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> Personal communication with Cliff Gawron, Jekyll Island Authority, October 19, 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Personal communication with Cliff Gawron, October 19, 2005.

ground swimming pool.<sup>48</sup> By keeping the original sago palms, the historic landscape is being preserved.

Maintenance of the site comes primarily from Gawron's landscaping crew consisting of 30-40 employees who cut grass around the island, all of whom are trained for sensitive work around the buildings in the historic district. Efforts are made to keep large mechanized equipment away from the foundation as much as possible. Herbicides are sprayed six inches away from the foundation, and a string trimmer is used to cut the surrounding grassy area.<sup>49</sup>

Other than cutting the grass and trimming the plants if needed, there is no set maintenance plan for Chichota. While the landscape department is responsible for the site, the ruins are in the hands of the museum. According to former Superintendent of Historic Resources, Brian Robinson, Chichota is left in a "Ruskinesque" state, with no cleaning of the area, only grass cutting round the ruins. In other words, there is minimal maintenance done on the actual ruins leaving the foundation to remain in its current state.<sup>50</sup> The Jekyll Island Authority's budget is very small and is used for high-priority maintenance projects. Since there is no real threat to Chichota and because the Jekyll Island Authority has little funding, there is not a maintenance plan for Chichota. Posts have been installed to outline the approximate footprint of the building, based on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

Despite the lack of maintenance of Chichota, it is in remarkably good condition considering that the site was bulldozed over sixty years ago. The natural covering of soil provides some protection to the foundation, as exposure to rain over time, would only accelerate

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<sup>48</sup> Personal communication with Cliff Gawron, October 19, 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Personal communication with Cliff Gawron, October 19, 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Personal communication with Brian Robinson, February 21, 2006.

its deterioration. Future plans for the site include thinning out the view shed in front of the ruins and researching and restoring the historic circular shell driveway.



**Figure 3-9. Chichota Pool** (photo by author).



**Figure 3-10. Close-up View of Vegetation Growing on Foundation (photo by author).**



**Figure 3-11. Frontal View of Chichota Ruins (photo by author).**



**Figure 3-12. Aerial View of Chichota** (photo by author).

## EVALUATION

The Jekyll Island Authority (JIA) has been managing the island and its historic resources since 1950. Most of the historic cottages in the Millionaires' Village have been restored and maintained since that time. The JIA's biggest challenge is working with a small budget for the large number of historic resources they maintain. Preservation treatments are given to properties based on their level of priority.

With the help of the Save America's Treasures program, the JIA was able to restore the ruins of the Horton House as well as perform an archaeological study before work began. The Horton House is a great example of a preserved ruin. More outside funding sources could provide the JIA with additional aid in restoring the remaining cottages and maintaining the others.

Building an interpretive center would detract from the natural setting of the Horton House. The JIA should consider limiting intrusion of the site to interpretive panels instead of an interpretive center. Currently, visitors park along the street to view the Horton House. Recommendations include keeping the area natural and moving the proposed designated parking spaces away from the site.

The Chichota site has remained virtually untouched since the state acquired it in 1947. The Jekyll Island Museum has an extensive collection of measured drawings and obtaining one for Chichota before it was demolished would be a beneficial addition. A current measured drawing detailing its ruinous state would also serve to record the site should its appearance change in the future.

No formal archaeological study has been done on the site and hardly any architectural records exist. To extend their records of the site, an archaeological study could be done to serve two objectives: to uncover and study cultural materials related to the site and to expose the foundation in order to get more accurate measured drawings of what remains of Chichota. The site would be filled back to its modern grade after the study was completed.

A few oral histories have been conducted with people that worked for the club and friends that would visit Jekyll during the Club Era, some giving descriptions of the historic landscape, including the historic circular shell driveway. Leaving the ruins untouched and restoring the historic landscape would not only be aesthetically pleasing but also give a contemporary interpretation of the present (ruins) and the past (landscape) elements of the Chichota site.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### **DUNGENESS AND THE CHIMNEYS: CUMBERLAND ISLAND Managed by the National Park Service Since 1972**

Cumberland Island is Georgia's southernmost barrier island and lies on the border of Georgia and Florida. The island measures sixteen miles in length and three miles in width at its broadest point. It covers more land area than Manhattan Island; but unlike Manhattan, Cumberland Island has been left in its natural state of wilderness and wildlife with access by ferry only. Since 1972, Cumberland Island has been owned by the National Park Service and is designated as a National Seashore. The National Park Service allows only three hundred visitors to the island per day, many of whom make reservations months in advance. With the exception of a few mansions left by the Carnegie family and others, Cumberland Island has remained undeveloped with no utility lines, commercial establishments, or even paved roads to diminish its natural beauty.



**Figure 4-1. Wild Horses Grazing on Cumberland Island (photo by author).**

Along with its natural beauty, Cumberland Island is also known for its significant and colorful history. Previously inhabited by Indians, the island was also the site of an early Spanish mission, two of James Oglethorpe's forts, and most recently the secret wedding site of the late John F. Kennedy, Jr. and Carolyn Bissette.

Many visitors come to the island to see not only the natural beauty of the island but the historic cultural resources left behind by its former inhabitants, primarily the Carnegie family. Along with the houses that are still standing, remnants of some of the significant buildings also remain. The most impressive ruins on the island are of the Carnegie mansion, Dungeness. Also located on the island are the remains of the slave cabins at Stafford Plantation; the ruins are now simply referred to as The Chimneys. Both Dungeness and The Chimneys are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **DUNGENESS**

### **Historical Background**

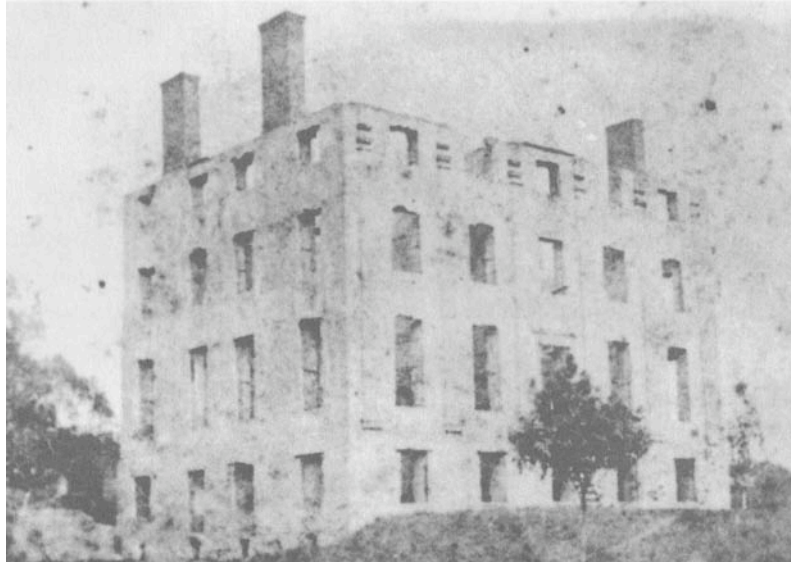
#### ***Nathanael and Catherine Greene's Ownership***

The first European owners of Cumberland Island were Thomas Lynch and Alexander Rose.<sup>51</sup> Alexander Rose sold half of his interest in the island, and it changed hands several times before Revolutionary War hero, Nathanael Greene, bought it. During the Revolutionary War, Greene paid, out of his own pocket, for many of the supplies for his soldiers when they were running low on goods. After the war, Greene had accumulated a great amount of personal debt to help fund the Revolutionary War. For his heroic efforts during the war, the state of Georgia awarded Greene a plantation located north of Savannah called Mulberry Grove. To help pay off some of his debt, Greene sold his house in Rhode Island and moved his family to Mulberry

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<sup>51</sup> Lary M. Dilsaver, *Cumberland Island National Seashore: A History of Conservation Conflict* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 24.

Grove. While living there, Greene bought Cumberland Island as an investment, in hopes of making money by selling timber and several parcels of his interest of the island. It is at this time that he started building Dungeness, a four-story tabby mansion, located on the south end of Cumberland Island. Before the construction of Dungeness was complete, Greene died, and his wife Catherine (or Caty as she was called), was left to oversee the completion of the home.<sup>52</sup>



**Figure 4-2. Ruins of Nathanael Greene's Dungeness**  
(Source: Dilsaver 28, from U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Archives).

Left alone with their children and more debt, Caty was forced to sell Mulberry Grove; thus, making Cumberland Island her permanent residence. Later she married Greene's personal secretary and her children's tutor, Phineas Miller. After their deaths, the Millers' youngest daughter, Louisa Miller Shaw, inherited the estate. Financial stability was not in the cards for the Greene-Miller family. Years later, Dungeness was burned during Reconstruction, and in 1870, the heir to the Millers' estate lost the land to creditors.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Thomas and Lucy Carnegie's Ownership***

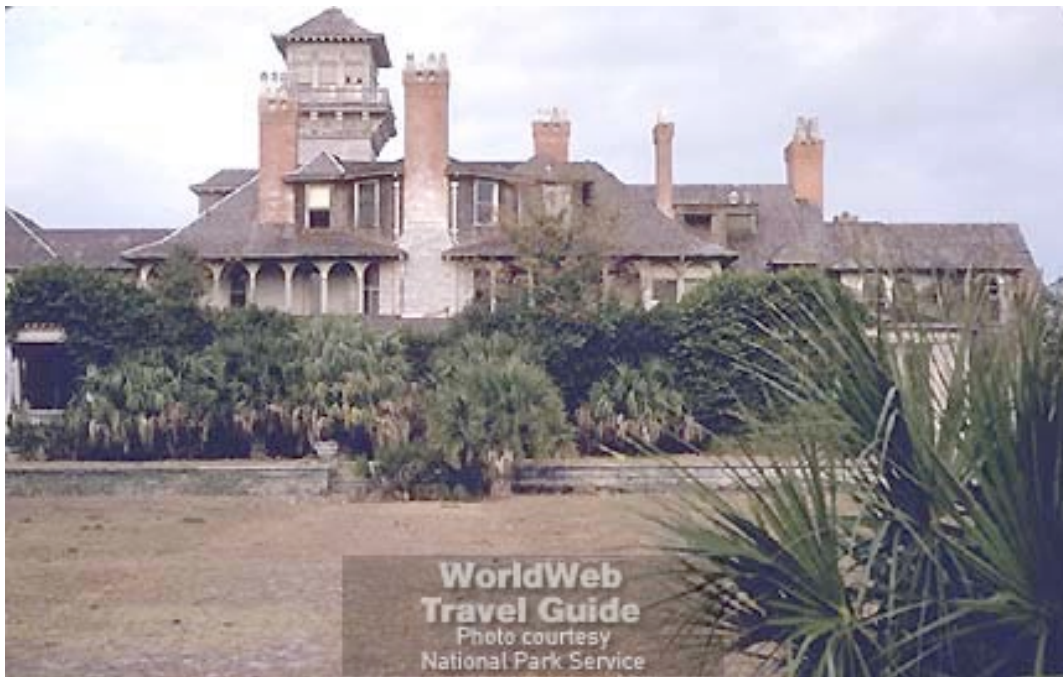
In 1880, W.G.M Davis, a former Confederate General purchased the land from Miller's creditors, and a year later, steel magnate, Thomas Carnegie, and his wife, Lucy, made inquiries

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>53</sup> Dilsaver 25-29.

into purchasing Davis' holdings on Cumberland Island. Still loyal to the Confederate cause, Davis refused to sell his Cumberland Island property to a "Yankee," but after the accidental death of his grandson on the island, the bitter memory of the mishap led him to sell the land for \$35,000.<sup>54</sup>



**Figure 4-3. Dungeness Before 1959 Fire** (Source: National Park Service).

Thomas and Lucy Carnegie laid out plans to build a new mansion on the old foundation of Dungeness in 1884, but just like Nathanael Greene, Thomas Carnegie died before the house was completed in 1886.<sup>55</sup> Carnegie's wife, Lucy, presided over the completion of the house and went on to accumulate more land on the island, building several other mansions for her children, including Greyfield and Plum Orchard.

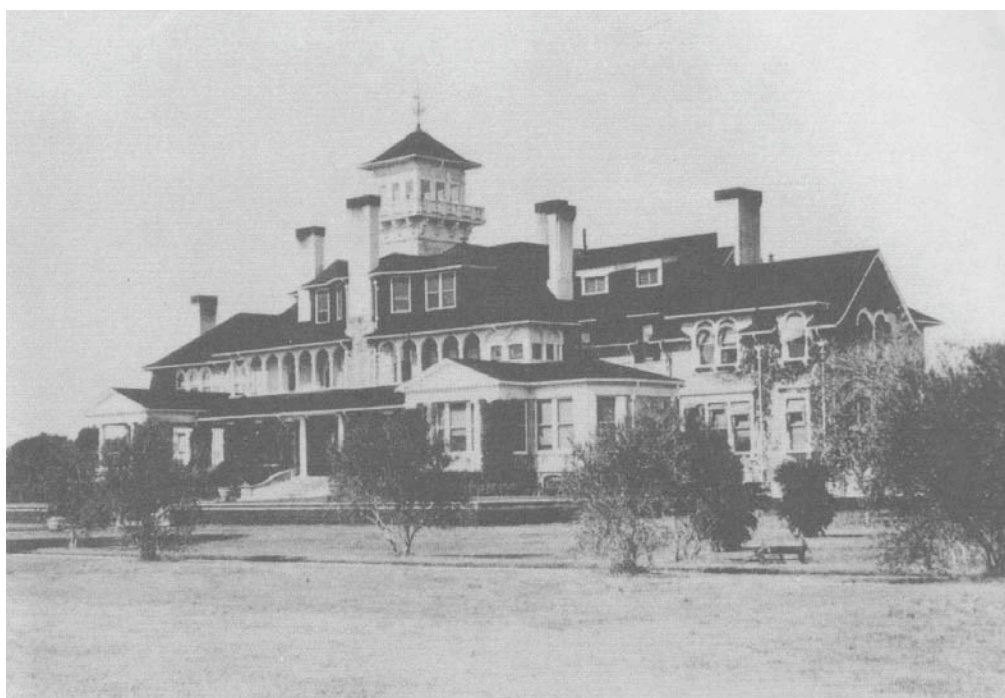
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<sup>54</sup> Dilsaver 38.

<sup>55</sup> John Linley, *The Georgia Catalog: Historic American Buildings Survey* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982).



**Figure 4-4. Proposed Plan for Dungeness Before Construction** (Source: Bullard 162).



**Figure 4-5. Dungeness Mansion During Lucy Carnegie's Residency** (Source: Dilsaver 39, from U.S. Department of Interior, NPS).

## Historical Appearance

John Linley described the Carnegie mansion as “eclectic...Rambling and nonsymmetrical, it was built of stone and featured an off-center tower, a prominent three- or four-story bay window, an arcaded loggia, gracefully sloping roofs with flared eaves, and innumerable dormers, arches, windows, and chimneys.”<sup>56</sup> Dungeness was also described as “a relatively modest structure for a very wealthy man...about 120 by 56 feet, two stories high with an attic, and built in the Queen Anne and Stick styles. A tower at the east end was 90 feet high. The outer walls consisted of a light-colored granite and the roof was covered with Vermont slate.”<sup>57</sup> From 1899 through 1905, the Boston architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns was hired to design additions to the Dungeness house as well as a complex of recreational and service buildings around the site.<sup>58</sup> The additions to Dungeness resulted in a “massive structure of 250 by 150 feet in an elegant Italianate style. It contained more than fifty rooms.”<sup>59</sup>

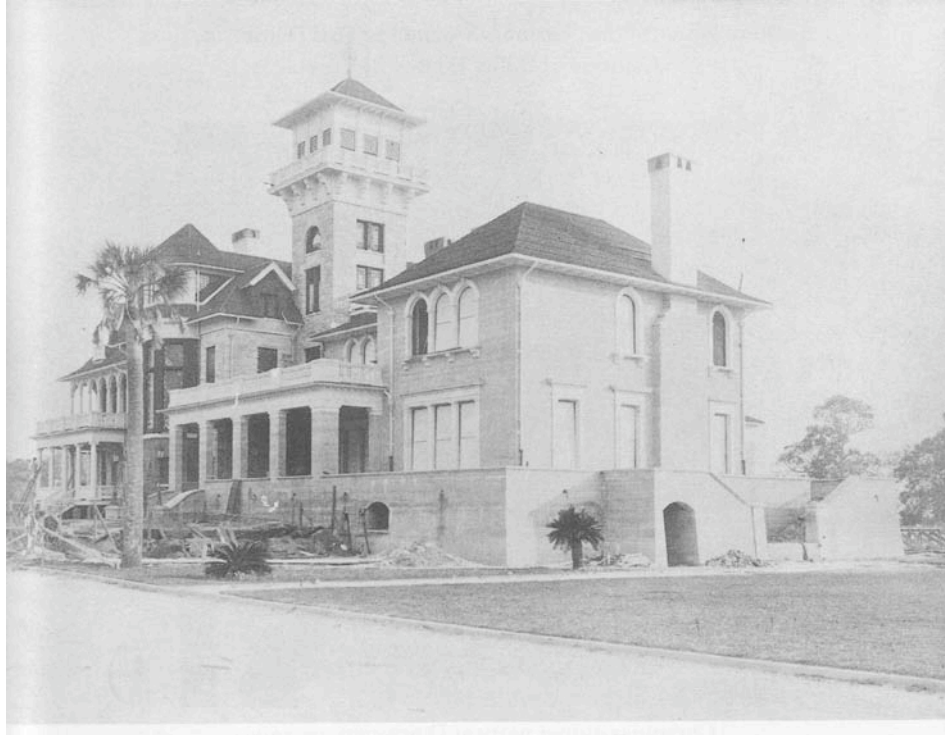
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<sup>56</sup> Linley 204-205.

<sup>57</sup> Dilsaver, 38-39.

<sup>58</sup> Mary R. Bullard, *Cumberland Island: A History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 203-205.

<sup>59</sup> Dilsaver, 38-39.



**Figure 4-6. Dungeness During 1905 Expansion** (Source: Bullard 162).

### *Carnegie Descendants' Ownership*

Lucy Carnegie died in 1916, and in 1959, a great fire destroyed much of the mansion. All that remains are the impressive ruins of Dungeness: ivy-covered tabby and brick walls, ghosts of windows and doors, and chimneys that rise into the clouds. The burning of Dungeness marked the end of a significant period in Cumberland Island's history.



**Figure 4-7. Dungeness in 1958** (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS GA,20-CUMBI,1-6, photo by Philip E. Gardner).



**Figure 4-8. Dungeness Fire, 1959** (Source: Bullard 259, photo by Homer Hail).

In her will, Lucy Carnegie left a trust that stated that the ninety percent of the island owned by her family could not be sold while any of her nine children were still living. Lucy's



last child, Florence Carnegie Perkins, died in 1962, which marked a significant time period in Cumberland Island's history for its future was in the air. Six years after Lucy's last child died, Tom, Andrew, and Henry Carnegie, (descendants of Thomas and Lucy Carnegie) sold their share of 3,000 acres on the north end of the island to Charles Frazer for a price of one and a half million dollars. The other Carnegie descendants were furious that the three brothers had sold their share of the island. Charles Frazer was the force that spearheaded the development of Hilton Head Island. Frazer owned twenty percent of Cumberland Island and envisioned an island resort complete with airplane landing strip. Frazer had already begun clearing land for his landing strip, but before his grandiose plans for Cumberland came to fruition, remaining descendants of the Carnegie family and the federal government worked together to protect the island they had come to know and love; in 1972, Cumberland Island was designated as a National Seashore and the National Park Service took control over most of the island. In exchange for the land, the Carnegie descendants who still lived on small parcels of the island made contractual agreements with the National Park Service that included retained ownership of the family estates for up to three generations.

## **THE CHIMNEYS**

### **Historical Background**

The Chimneys are ruins of former slave cabins found on Stafford Plantation located at the approximate midpoint of the island. Robert Stafford, Jr. was a successful plantation owner before the Civil War, growing primarily Sea Island cotton, a fine and silky lint that prospered along the southern coast.<sup>60</sup> After the Civil War, the economy of Cumberland Island was destroyed; however, Stafford continued to live on his plantation while he was left with no slaves to work the

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<sup>60</sup> Dilsaver 30.

fields.<sup>61</sup> There is speculation that Stafford burned his slaves' cabins because they were now freedmen. Because his former slaves would not work for him but continued living in the slave cabins, it is alleged that Stafford retaliated by burning their cabins, leaving the chimneys smoldering in the ashes; however, an archaeological study has determined that "no known Civil War activity can account for the lack of structural remains of the cabins...they may have been cannibalized through time, but it is doubtful that Stafford had them burned after emancipation."<sup>62</sup> All that remain are three parallel rows of chimneys located in the woods. Of the original twenty-six chimneys, only nineteen remain.<sup>63</sup>



**Figure 4-9. NPS Survey Crew at the Chimneys** (Source: Dilsaver 85, from NPS).

### **PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT AND POLICY**

The National Park Service (NPS) has owned and managed the majority of the island since 1972. Since that time, there has been a constant battle between conserving the natural

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<sup>61</sup> Dilsaver 31.

<sup>62</sup> National Park Service NPS, *History and Archeology at the Robert Stafford Plantation, Cumberland Island*(accessed); available from <http://www.cr.nps.gov/seac/archy79.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Dilsaver 186-188.

environment and preserving the historic buildings located in that area. There has been much controversy as to how the NPS treats the cultural resources on the island. In the first several years of the NPS's management of the island, the historic cultural resources took a backseat to natural resources. Buildings constructed before 1800 were not seen as historically significant; therefore, no funds were allocated to the preservation of them, including Plum Orchard, Georgia's largest historic house. Many outbuildings were left to deteriorate or were razed.<sup>64</sup>



**Figure 4-10. Historic Front Entrance of Dungeness Ruins** (photo by author).

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<sup>64</sup> Dilsaver 177-187.



**Figure 4-11. Three-Quarter View of Dungeness in 1958** (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS GA,20-CUMBI,1-4, photo by Philip E. Gardner).



**Figure 4-12. Current Three-Quarter View of Dungeness Ruins** (photo by author).



**Figure 4-13. View from Main Road Entrance in 1958** (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS GA,20-CUMBI,1-2, photo by Philip E. Gardner).



**Figure 4-14. Current View from Main Road Entrance** (photo by author).



**Figure 4-15. Close-up View of Dungeness Ruins** (photo by author).

In more recent years, the NPS has worked to preserve the cultural resources, doing Environmental Assessments (EA) of the areas before any work is done, in efforts to make sure there is no harm done to the natural environment while preservation work is being done.

The NPS classifies ruins as “historic structures” and preserves them according to the priority-classification system they have in place.<sup>65</sup> Fortunately, Dungeness and the Chimneys are classified as nationally significant structures that warrant preservation. The General Management Plan (GMP) for Cumberland Island National Seashore states that “Preservable ruins (primarily foundations) in the Dungeness area will receive preservation treatment. Non-preservable ruins are the frame portions of structures whose foundations will be preserved.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> National Park Service NPS, *Appendices to General Management Plan* (Cumberland Island National Seashore: National Park Service, 1984), 113.

<sup>66</sup> National Park Service NPS, *General Management Plan* (Cumberland Island National Seashore: National Park Service, 1984), 8.

The NPS reports in their 1984 GMP that the Carnegie mansion had been preserved in 1972 and stabilization of the Chimneys had been taken place from 1979-1984.<sup>67</sup>

Stabilization and archaeological research are part of the NPS' policy regarding the treatment of ruins. Before any preservation work is done to ruins, a thorough research is done on the site. Special care is taken to protect the natural resources during stabilization and preservation work to the ruins.<sup>68</sup>

### **Dungeness**

According to Facility Manager, David Casey, the Dungeness site is treated as a landscape; most of the maintenance work is done on the grounds around the ruins, keeping the interpretive walks clear and the vegetation cut back. The biggest threats to the ruins are vegetation and water.<sup>69</sup> Both contribute to the deterioration of the ruins. Because there is a limited amount of funding, the maintenance crew is constrained as to how much work they can do on the Dungeness site; current efforts include cutting back vegetation and applying herbicides around the ruins. Even though Casey would like to remove vegetation from Dungeness at least once a year, this is sometimes not possible because of funding. Casey's maintenance crew consists of only ten people for the entire island: two carpenters, one electrician, and seven general maintenance personnel.<sup>70</sup> Currently, most of the preservation efforts are going towards stabilizing the interior of Plum Orchard, Georgia's largest historic house that has been long awaiting preservation work.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>68</sup> National Park Service NPS, *2001 NPS Management Policies*(accessed); available from <http://www.nps.gov/policy/mp/chapter5.htm>.

<sup>69</sup> Personal communication with David Casey, June 28, 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Personal communication with David Casey, June 28, 2006.

The task of removing vegetation from the ruins can be dangerous for Casey's crew as the walls and chimneys are unstable. It is also a slow task, as they have to be very careful when pulling vegetation away from the building; careless tugging can result in more harm than good.

The last major preservation work done on Dungeness was in 1981-1982, when the chimneys and wall were stabilized and missing and loose bricks were replaced. Since then, the only maintenance Dungeness receives is to its grounds. Future stabilization work will be done in 2006-2007 at a cost of a little over a million dollars; however, discussions and plans for the stabilization work began ten years ago.<sup>71</sup> This extensive and slow process included consulting with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), formulating plans and proposals, meeting with outside contractors, and most importantly, procuring funds.<sup>72</sup> Stabilization of the Dungeness Ruins will include extensive repairs to masonry, woods, metals, site cleanup, and thermal and moisture protection.<sup>73</sup>

In 1995, the National Park Service hired Surber Barber Choate & Hertlein Architects to design a stabilization plan for Dungeness. The firm surveyed and assessed the conditions of the interior and exterior. Extensive visual surveys and hand sketches of the interior and exterior conditions were done and later converted into computer files. The firm found steel lintels encased in tabby concrete, which is unusual according to Architect Tom Little. As the steel lintels corroded and expanded, the tabby concrete broke – a condition called iron oxide jacking.

Initially, the design allowed public access through raised platforms into the interior of the ruins, but because of safety concerns and limited funding, stabilization plans were tabled. In 2004, new funding was allocated towards the stabilization, and the design plan was revisited, but

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<sup>71</sup> Personal communication with David Casey, June 28, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Personal communication with David Casey, June 28, 2006.

<sup>73</sup> National Park Service NPS, *Stabilization of the Dungeness Ruins*(accessed); available from <http://www.nps.gov/applications/parks/cuis/ppdocuments/ACFC93.doc>.



this time there would be no public access into the ruins. With assistance from a structural engineer, the firm came up with a design that stabilizes the ruins and allows visitors to view the exterior. In the stabilization plan, deteriorated mortar will be repointed and steel lintels will be repaired or replaced according to their conditions. The same will be done with bricks and stone used in the original construction. Any new building materials will be compatible but distinguishable from the original fabric, as stated in the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation. The chimneys that were stabilized in the 1980's are in better condition than originally estimated; however, they will need additional bracing also. All of the structural repairs in the stabilization plan will be located inside the ruin as not to detract from the exterior view. The interior will remain off-limits to guests. Barriers will be placed at key points to keep visitors out of the ruins. The goal of the design is to slow deterioration of the ruins while at the same time making the area safer for interpretation.<sup>74</sup>

### **The Chimneys**

As for The Chimneys at Stafford Plantation, there is currently discussion about stabilizing the chimneys. As of the date of my conversation with Casey, one of the chimneys had recently fallen within the past week because it was unstable. The greatest obstacle of stabilizing The Chimneys is that the former slave cabins had no foundations. Another problem is that The Chimneys were made with tabby mortar, which has deteriorated over time. In 2004, approval was granted for the stabilization of The Chimneys to include lateral bracing and

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<sup>74</sup> Personal communication with Tom Little, Architect, Surber Barber Choate & Hertlein Architects, Inc., October 20, 2006.

masonry repairs: pouring concrete footings, installing front shaft supports, and filling holes and cracks in the masonry.<sup>7576</sup>

The Chimneys are located on “retained rights” property, which means they are still under private ownership until the owner’s lease runs out and falls into the hands of the NPS. Until then, the NPS can make efforts to stabilize the ruins because the property will eventually transfer to the NPS. At one point, the lessee of Stafford Plantation threatened to remove the ruins of the Chimneys, but the NPS stepped in and stopped him.<sup>77</sup> According to Casey, there have not been any issues between the owner and the NPS.

When the National Park Service performs preservation work on the island, it takes measures to make sure the work is as historically accurate as possible. Their biggest success is restoring the tabby on the gardener’s house, pergola, and water wheel at the Dungeness Complex on the south end of the island. The NPS used a mixture of lime, shell, and sand that closely matched the original material and poured it into a form that would have been historically used to make the tabby walls.<sup>78</sup>

## EVALUATION

The biggest challenge facing the National Park Service is funding. Finding additional funds to do restoration work in addition to the already accumulating maintenance work is difficult. In the case of the stabilization plan for Dungeness, it took ten years for the process of paperwork and procuring funds before any extensive preservation work was approved. Although

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<sup>75</sup> National Park Service NPS, *Finding of No Significant Impact: Stabilization Treatments for Historic Slave Community Chimneys Cumberland Island National Seashore*(accessed); available from <http://www.nps.gov/cuis/pphtml/documents.html>.

<sup>76</sup> National Park Service NPS, *Stabilization Treatments for Historic Slave Community Chimneys: Cumberland Island National Seashore*(accessed); available from <http://www.nps.gov/cuis/pphtml/documents.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Dilsaver 187.

<sup>78</sup> Personal communication with David Casey, June 28, 2006.

sensitive to environmental factors, a more timely process of preservation planning should be sought. The National Park Service protects and manages a growing list of sites, with no additional funding. It is impossible to maintain the historic sites to their fullest need without any outside help.

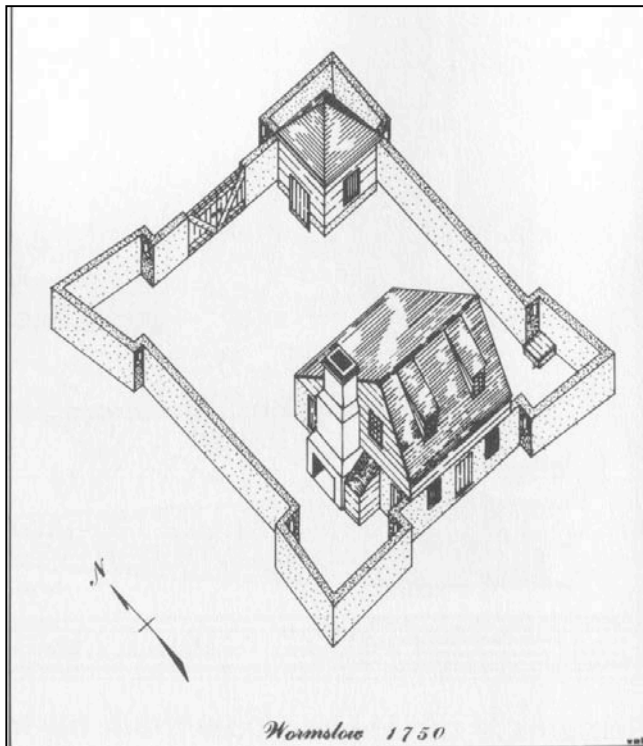
Since the National Park Service allows leasing of their properties, an alternative approach is to let outside organizations oversee the preservation of the Dungeness ruins and The Chimneys, acting as stewards of the site. An interested organization, or “friends society,” would be responsible for procuring funding and doing the necessary preservation work to maintain the site. All plans would be submitted to the National Park Service for approval before any work was done, and the interested organization would benefit in the fact that the ruins were being saved.

In 1958, a crew from the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) visited and surveyed several buildings on Cumberland Island, including Dungeness. A year after the HABS survey, Dungeness was destroyed by fire. Recommendations include procuring another HABS survey to document the current state of the house in a ruinous state as well as working with the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) to record the landscape.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **WORMSLOE: ISLE OF HOPE** **Managed by Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites** **(Georgia Department of Natural Resources) Since 1978**

Wormsloe is an historic property located ten miles southeast of Savannah on a peninsula on the southern end of Isle of Hope with vistas of the river, saltwater marsh, and a nearby boys'



**Figure 5-1. Conjectural Plan of Wormsloe**  
(Source: Linley 14).

home. Originally consisting of five hundred acres from the original land grant, it has grown to include an additional three hundred acres.<sup>79</sup> It is now owned by the State of Georgia and operates as a state park under the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division. The main attraction of Wormsloe State Historic Site is the tabby ruins of the fortress and house that were built in the early eighteenth century by the property's original owner, Noble Jones. The property also includes an interpretive center, interpretive trail, and the Jones Family Cemetery. The

descendants of Noble Jones still privately own a small section of Wormsloe, where the family resides in a house built in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>79</sup> William M. Kelso, *Captain Jones's Wormsloe* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1979), 3.

## **Historical Background**

### ***Noble Jones' Ownership***

Noble Jones was the original owner of Wormslow (original spelling of the property) Plantation and the patriarch of the Jones and DeRenne families. One of the original colonists of Georgia, Noble Jones and his wife, son, and daughter, along with two servants, arrived in Savannah in 1733 aboard the ship, Anne. Jones immediately applied to the Trustees of Georgia for five hundred acres in the country along the Skidaway Narrows. He built his fortified home around 1738, which became known as Wormslow Plantation. Jones was truly a renaissance man. Listed as a carpenter on the ship roster of the “Anne,” Jones worked as a surveyor, ranger, military captain, self-taught doctor, and friend and correspondent to General James Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia, while living on his Wormslow Plantation outside of Savannah. Many denounced the work of Jones and did not hold good feelings towards him. Some say he took on too many responsibilities and did not do a good job on the many duties he accumulated.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 6-10.



**Figure 5-2. Wormslow Ruins in 1934** (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS GA,26-ILHO,1-2, photo by Branan Sanders).



**Figure 5-3. Contextual View of Wormslow (photo by author).**

### **Historical Appearance**

While Jones may not have held the confidence of his fellow colonists outside the plantation, his gardens on Wormslow seemed to catch the attention of others. On the plantation, there was evidence that Jones did have a garden in 1765, as John Bartram indirectly wrote about it during his travels in the area. After visiting Bethesda, an orphanage across the river from Wormslow, Bartram wrote that he “then rode to a gentleman’s house which was delightfully situated on a large tide salt creek where ye oysters is as thich as they can be within a stone cast of his house.” Although Bartram does not explicitly name the gentleman or his house, Wormslow was located nearby and fits Bartram’s description perfectly. Bartram goes on to describe the piazzas on the houses in the area, stating that “[the people] generally builds piazzas [on] one or more sides of thair houses which is commodious in these hot climates, they screen [off] ye

scorching sunshine & draws ye breese finely & it must be extreme hot indeed if one cant sit or walk comfortably in these when out of employ & much conversation both setting & walking is held in these.” Bartram would not have thought about the discomforts of houses with no piazzas if he had not just finished visiting one that did not have any. Bethesda, the orphanage he had just visited, had a piazza on all sides of the building. Wormslow would have been the house he referenced that had only one piazza, and also the location where he would have conversed.<sup>81</sup>

John Linley describes Wormslow:

“Fort Wimberly (ca. 1740-44) was a fortified house; both house and fortifications were tabby. Fortifications were in the form of a small (approximately 70 feet by 80 feet) rectangular fort with bastions at the corners. Part of the south wall doubled as a wall for the house, which was likewise rectangular (24 feet by 36 feet). The downstairs consisted of one large corner room with a fireplace, and four smaller ones. According to conjectural drawings, the house was a story and a half high, and had shed-type dormer windows.”<sup>82</sup>

### ***Mary Jones’ Ownership***

Noble Jones died in 1775 at the age of 73, leaving Wormslow to his unmarried daughter, Mary Jones. She also owned a house in Savannah, so records do not indicate whether or not she lived at Wormslow or even spent much time there; however, there is evidence that it was not a working plantation during her tenure in 1780, which supports the hypothesis that she did not frequent the property.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Noble Wimberly Jones’ Ownership***

After twenty years of ownership of Wormslow, Mary Jones died in 1795, leaving Wormslow to her brother, Noble Wimberly Jones, per their father’s will. Noble Wimberly Jones probably did not make Wormslow his home either as he owned Lambeth Plantation on the Little

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>82</sup> Linley, 15.

<sup>83</sup> Kelso, 12.



Ogeechee River and several houses in Savannah. The only time that Noble Wimberly Jones spent at Wormslow was during the fall of 1796 when he was recovering from an illness and thought “a change of air” would do him some good. Jones did not own Wormslow for very long because he deeded it to his son nine years later in 1804.<sup>84</sup>

### ***George Jones’ Ownership***

Noble Wimberly Jones’ son, George Jones, was deeded Wormslow by his father in 1804, after finishing his education. Like his predecessors before him, George Jones rarely spent any time at Wormslow as he had two plantations (one working plantation and the other his home) and several houses in Savannah. Records indicate that he leased the land to a farmer who grew cotton on the property, and the Wormslow house was rented to a widow. In 1825, George Jones’ primary home burned to the ground, and it is at this time that one of Noble Jones’ descendants presided at Wormslow again. Because George Jones decided to make Wormslow his permanent home, he decided not to live at his grandfather’s tabby house but build a new house further north on the property, the site of the present Wormsloe (present spelling) house. (To differentiate between the ruins and the present family house, “Wormslow” will refer to the ruins, and “Wormsloe” will refer to the current home of the DeRenne family.) The “two story Timber and shingled building at Wormsloe...40’ X 20’...on a basement of tabby or brick” was built in 1828. It is this house that became the primary residence of the direct descendants of the Jones and DeRenne families and left the first Wormslow house to deteriorate into ruin.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 13-15.



**Figure 5-4. Three-Quarter View Into the Ruins** (photo by author).

### ***George Wymberley Jones DeRenne's Ownership***

George Wymberley Jones DeRenne is probably the most complicated member of the Jones/DeRenne family. He is the one responsible for the legal name change from “Jones” to “DeRenne,” a derivative of his maternal grandmother’s name, “Van Deren.” He also changed the spelling of “Wimberley” to “Wymberley”. Born as George Frederick Tilghman Jones, he ultimately changed his name to George Wymberley Jones DeRenne after playing with several different combinations of his name over a twenty-year period, signing his name as G.W.J. DeRenne. Not only did DeRenne change his family name but also the spelling of the plantation from its original “Wormslow” to present-day “Wormsloe.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> E. Merton Coulter, *Wormsloe: Two Centuries of a Georgia Family* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1955), 213-215.

George Wymberley Jones (G.W.J.) DeRenne was the first descendant in a long line of family members who loved Wormsloe just as much as its original owner, Noble Jones, did and was interested in making Wormsloe its best. G.W.J. DeRenne is the one responsible for planting the famous avenue of oaks that lead from the house to the gate, as we know it today. He also planted “cedars of Lebanon, deodars, Irish yew, and in his latter years he enlarged the gardens, planted some camellias.” G. W. J. DeRenne is also responsible for enlarging the Wormsloe Plantation from its original 500 acreage to over 800 acres as it is today.<sup>87</sup>

When he died, G.W.J. DeRenne left a peculiar and complicated will, stating that Wormsloe would be left to this wife, and after his wife, his daughter. Thereafter, it would become the property of a separate entity, the Pennsylvania Company, until his grandchildren became of age to actually divide the property. This arrangement would prevent his other children from ever owning Wormsloe.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Wymberley Jones DeRenne’s Ownership***

Per G.W.J. DeRenne’s will, his wife became owner of Wormsloe after his death. His daughter, Letitia, followed her mother in ownership. After Letitia’s death, DeRenne’s oldest son, Wymberley Jones DeRenne, became Wormsloe’s next tenant through an arrangement with the Pennsylvania Company, as he could never become an outright owner of Wormsloe, as his father’s will stipulated.

Like his father before him, Wymberley took pride in Wormsloe and took efforts to beautify it by adding “plants and shrubs, and running walkways here and there.” Because the oak avenue that his father had planted had deteriorated from disuse, DeRenne planted an entirely new one with a stone arch at the entrance. Wymberley also added features to the house, making

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 238-240.

it reflect a Queen Anne style.<sup>89</sup> Wymberley Jones DeRenne died in 1916, leaving three children as G.W.J. DeRenne's only grandchildren, meaning that they were now the new owners of Wormsloe.<sup>90</sup>



**Figure 5-5. Wormsloe Entrance and Oak Avenue (photo by author).**

### ***Wymberley Wormsloe DeRenne's Ownership***

After Wymberley Jones DeRenne's death in 1916, the Wormsloe estate was divided between his three grandchildren, Elfrida, Audrey, and Wymberley Wormsloe DeRenne, all of them being the children of Wymberley Jones DeRenne.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 253.

It was decided among the three siblings that Wymberley Wormsloe DeRenne would live in the Wormsloe house, and his sisters' interests in the property would be transferred to him.<sup>91</sup>

In 1917, the new master of Wormsloe set off to fight the war in Europe. In 1918 while at home on leave visiting his family, he met Augusta Gallie Floyd, and after a seven-week courtship, they became engaged to be married. Because Wymberley Wormsloe DeRenne was heading back to Europe to fight the war, they were married soon after they were engaged, in a small wedding at Christ Church in Savannah.<sup>92</sup>

After coming back from the war, Wymberley had heard numerous reports that many veterans from the war would be coming to Savannah looking for places to live, so he decided to enlarge two apartment buildings in downtown Savannah that his father had built in 1906 and get them ready for the supposed influx of people looking for places to live. Wymberley spent over \$142,000 enlarging the apartments, renovating them, and making them grander than ever. These apartments still exist today and are called DeRenne Apartments as they were named when they were built. The expense of these apartments would lead to the financial downfall of the DeRenne family at Wormsloe.<sup>93</sup>

Wymberley wasn't the only one that was planning to accommodate the veterans. Other people had also heard that the soldiers were coming to look for places to live in Savannah, and therefore, other apartment buildings and houses started going up. This led to a surplus of housing and Wymberley lost a substantial amount of money. So much money, in fact, that he had mortgaged Wormsloe, and was in danger of losing it until his sister, Elfrida, stepped in to help him. To help ends meet, Wymberley and his wife, Augusta, opened their gardens to the

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<sup>91</sup> William Harris Bragg, *Derenne: Three Generations of a Georgia Family* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 316.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

public on a daily basis in 1927. The Wormsloe Gardens would make the Wormsloe estate known throughout the Southeast.<sup>94</sup>

The Wormsloe Gardens were open to the public for eleven years and closed in 1938, when Wymberley and Augusta were forced to move out of the Wormsloe house due to financial difficulties, caused by the expense of the DeRenne Apartments. Under unpleasant circumstances, Wymberley's sister, Elfrida, took control of Wormsloe and moved into the family homestead.

### ***Elfrida DeRenne Barrow's Ownership***

After Wymberley's unpleasant departure from Wormsloe, his sister, Elfrida, and her family moved into the DeRenne family home. She lived there until her death in October 1970<sup>95</sup>; however, proceedings by the Chatham County authorities had already begun to remove tax exemption from the property that had been placed on the site in 1961, when Elfrida Barrow had given the Wormsloe Foundation, a non-profit organization, a bulk of the Wormsloe estate with the exception of the Wormsloe House and the surrounding forty-eight acres.<sup>96</sup> The property given to the Wormsloe Foundation was opened to the public for educational purposes. The Wormsloe Foundation also headed an archaeological investigation in 1968 and 1969 at the site of the tabby ruins, with the results printed in 1979 in a book titled *Captain Jones' Wormsloe*.<sup>97</sup>

The main objective of the archaeological excavation in 1968-1969 was to learn about the tabby architecture of the ruins in order to preserve them; the tabby remains were left in situ and undisturbed.<sup>98</sup> At the end of the dig, the site was filled back to the previous modern grade with

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>95</sup> Bragg, 396.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 435.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 392-393.

<sup>98</sup> Kelso, 17.

the exception of the southeast corner, which was left uncovered for future stabilization. From evidence found on the site, it is surmised that the last years of occupation were around 1820, when partial dismantling and removal of the tabby structure took place. It was previously mentioned above that George Jones moved to Wormslow when his plantation home burned in 1825. He immediately started building the current homestead, Wormsloe. It is possible that he tore down the tabby structures, including some tabby outbuildings, and reused some of the materials in building the current house, which was described above as being built “on a basement of tabby or brick.” This would account for the evidence of partial dismantling of the tabby structures found during the excavation.<sup>99</sup>

Another discovery made during the archaeological study was a series of trenches cut across the site, apparently made during the 1920’s. Evidence shows that the excavators of the 1920’s were trying to salvage cultural material, because there was only a small amount of artifacts found in these areas compared to undisturbed areas of the site.<sup>100</sup> It was mentioned before that Wymberley Wormsloe DeRenne’s family was having financial problems at the time of their residency in the 1920’s and 1930’s. It is surmised that Augusta DeRenne’s brother made these trenches in 1928.<sup>101</sup> Efforts to recover the artifacts excavated in the 1920’s have failed.<sup>102</sup>

The case of removing tax exemption status from Wormsloe went to the Georgia Court of Appeals where it was speculated that the Barrow family was saving money through the tax exemption in order to sell the Wormsloe property to developers for a considerable profit. This suspicion came from the fact that the foundation had sold Poplar Grove, another DeRenne

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 50-52.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 52.

property, earlier in the 1950's.<sup>103</sup> After a long battle, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled against the Wormsloe Foundation and took away the tax exemption status from the Wormsloe property in 1972. Chatham County charged the foundation for taxes dating back to 1965, and future taxes were going to be extremely expensive, in fact too much for the foundation to keep and sustain the property; therefore, in late 1972, the Wormsloe property (minus the Wormsloe house and forty-eight surrounding acres) was conveyed to the Nature Conservancy to hold for the state of Georgia. In August 1973, Georgia acquired the land from the Nature Conservancy, and Wormsloe became state property. It was agreed between the state and the foundation that the property would be “forever known as Wormsloe” and “held for the general public as an historical and ecological nature preserve for scientific, historic, educational, and aesthetic purposes.”<sup>104</sup> The Barrow family agreed to “preserve in its present state” the Wormsloe house and surrounding acreage. In 1979, Wormsloe State Historic Site opened to the public. A museum and visitors' center were constructed and interpretation of the site focused mainly on the tabby ruins and the Jones family cemetery.<sup>105</sup>

### **Preservation Management and Policy**

Wormsloe Historic Site is managed by the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division (PRHSD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to “protect our state’s natural beauty and historic integrity while providing opportunities for public enjoyment and education.” Written in 2004 with help from the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the PRHSD’s strategic plan is fairly new and does not go into great detail about each site. Instead it is a general plan for the organization that will “preserve,

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<sup>103</sup> Bragg, 435.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 437.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 435-437.



conserve, protect, manage the natural, cultural and recreational resources” within the park system. The PRHSD also states in its strategic plan that a comprehensive Resource Management Plan for each PRHSD property will be created, including a “resource management template, division timeline, and priority listing for our resource planning efforts.”<sup>106</sup>

Physical management of the ruins is minimal. The ruins of the original Wormslow are set back in the woods near the salt marsh. There is a small wood fence surrounding the ruins in order to keep visitors out of the site area. This is to ensure the safety of the visitors as well as the protection of the ruins. The topmost stucco layer that prolongs the life of the tabby is almost completely gone, eroded from rain and natural elements. Historically, the stucco layer of tabby was the protective sacrificial material that was to be reapplied after time, much like mortar in brick masonry.

Between the archaeological excavation of 1968-1969 and the state’s ownership in 1978, preservation work was done on the tabby ruins of Wormslow.<sup>107</sup> A tar-like substance was applied to the top of the tabby to keep water from infiltrating into the tabby, much like the concrete coping works on the Horton House ruins. The preservation project was stopped midpoint through the process though. The planned application included putting a wire mesh on the top edges of the tabby, followed by a layer of what appears to be a tar-like roofing substance. Then a masonry coping was to be applied; however, the preservation work stopped after the layer of tar was applied and did not continue with the masonry coping.<sup>108</sup> Instead of helping the Wormslow ruins, the tar-like covering is actually harming it; water gets into the tabby walls and is not allowed to escape from the top, causing the lime to deteriorate and expose the shells in the

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<sup>106</sup> *Strategic Plan for a New Day, New Way* (Atlanta: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division, 2004).

<sup>107</sup> Personal communication with Joe Thompson, Historic Site Manager, June 29, 2006.

<sup>108</sup> Personal communication with Joe Thompson, June 29, 2006.

structure at a faster rate. Removing the tar would cause further damage; the ruins' first preservation efforts, though in good will, have worsened the effect.



**Figure 5-6. Close-up View of Tar Covering Tabby** (photo by author).

Historic Site Manager, Joe Thompson, has been responsible for the maintenance of Wormsloe since 1981. Once determined as a terminal site that could not be saved, the ruins of Wormsloe have been protected and preserved under Thompson's care. He is dedicated to the preservation of the ruins and is very knowledgeable of the many ruins in the coastal region of the southeastern U.S. He has also done much research on the preservation work done at other sites.



**Figure 5-7. View of Tabby Wall** (photo by author).

Under his supervision and tutelage, Thompson's maintenance staff understands the importance of treating the ruins with utmost sensitivity. When cutting grass around the ruins, members of his maintenance staff hold a piece of plywood in front of the ruins to use as a guard while a string trimmer is used to cut the grass.<sup>109</sup> The plywood serves as the sacrificial material instead of the historic and fragile tabby.

Periodically, the ruins are measured and documented to determine the rate of deterioration,<sup>110</sup> but no preservation work has been done.

### **Evaluation**

Historic Site Manager, Joe Thompson, is very interested and knowledgeable in preservation techniques of tabby, but without adequate funding, there is not a way to efficiently

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<sup>109</sup> Personal communication with Joe Thompson, June 29, 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Personal communication with Joe Thompson, June 29, 2006.

preserve the ruins. An alternative method would be to hold weeklong preservation workshops at Wormsloe, as the National Trust held in Louisiana and Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina, where people would register to spend a week learning hands-on historic building techniques. Registrants would pay a fee as well as their own accommodations. At Wormsloe, people could learn the historic process of applying stucco to the tabby undercoat. This would not only prolong the tabby's life, but would also give people in the field a chance to learn historic building methods. The registration fees would pay for the materials as well as an onsite professional experienced in tabby restoration, who would oversee the project.

Another alternative involves historic preservation students gaining experience in historic building methods. The Savannah College of Art and Design is located in Savannah and has a historic preservation program for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students could gain experience in historic building techniques, and the tabby structure would be preserved. Preserving the tabby ruins would be an ongoing project for the students, with a professor knowledgeable in tabby construction overseeing the coursework.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY CARPENTRY SHOP: SAVANNAH Managed by the Coastal Heritage Society Since 1989**

Savannah, Georgia is located on the northernmost portion of the Georgia coast. Founded in 1733 by James Oglethorpe, it is Georgia's first city and still encompasses much of its historic fabric, including Oglethorpe's town plan of squares and parks. Savannah was also a major antebellum railroad hub; it was the headquarters of the former Central of Georgia Railway. The former property of the Central of Georgia Railway is now the Roundhouse Railroad Museum, where interpretation of the site focuses on the history of the former railway and its complex of buildings.

The Roundhouse Railroad Museum is owned by the City of Savannah and managed by the Coastal Heritage Society, a not-for-profit agency that also manages two other properties for the city of Savannah: the Savannah Visitors Center and Old Fort Jackson. All of these sites are tourist attractions and bring in revenue for both the city and the Coastal Heritage Society. The City of Savannah has owned these properties since 1971, and the Coastal Heritage Society has acted as steward of the sites since 1989, doing preservation work on all three.

#### **Historical Background**

As a new colonial town, Savannah started out as a fortified city with redoubts spread out at certain points along a fortified wall. One of the former redoubts, Spring Hill Redoubt, was located at the corner of current-day Liberty and Louisville Roads, later the site of the Central of Georgia Railway. After the Revolutionary War, allies were said to have immediately buried their dead in a mass grave on the site of the Spring Hill Redoubt. The remains of those bodies were found during the construction of the Central of Georgia Railway Depot a hundred years

later. Military relics were found among the remains. In 1893, the former Treasurer of the Central of Georgia Railway wrote a letter to the Georgia Historical Society reporting that at the time construction of the railroad depot was taking place, workers found “thirty skeletons buried side-by-side under about three feet of sand.” Newspapers do not cite any mention of this finding nor does the Georgia Historical Society have any records from the former Central of Georgia Treasurer; however, the society does hold a collection of military relics reputed to be from the Spring Hill Redoubt.<sup>111</sup>

### ***The Central of Georgia Railway Company***

The site of the Spring Hill Redoubt was again fortified during the War of 1812. As late as 1850, Revolutionary War entrenchments as deep as five feet were still visible in some areas, but Spring Hill Redoubt had already been leveled in 1820.<sup>112</sup> In 1833, a group of citizens from Savannah formed the Central Railroad and Canal Company, the City of Savannah being the largest stockholder, and acquired the site of the former redoubt. The idea of the canal was later dropped and the company was ultimately reformed as the Central of Georgia Railway Company. Construction of the line between Macon and Savannah began in 1835; building of the Central of Georgia Railway repair shops complex began in 1855.<sup>113</sup>

The Central of Georgia Railway prospered with the export of cotton from the antebellum plantations of Georgia. In 1864, Sherman’s infamous march to the sea left the railway severely damaged; 139 miles of track were destroyed, bridges were demolished, and the whole line was confiscated by the Union Army when they arrived in Savannah. The railway suffered a greater loss in the accounting books; the Confederate securities as well as the value of slaves had to be

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<sup>111</sup> Edward S. Rutsch and Brian H. Morrell, *Archeological Survey of the Savannah Revolutionary Battlefield Park* (Newton: Historic Conservation & Interpretation, Inc., 1981), 23.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-30.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-75.

written off, a total of four million dollars. Another million dollars was used to repair the physical damage to the railway lines that were destroyed by Sherman's march. It was 1866 before trains could run on the lines again.<sup>114</sup>

The Central of Georgia Railway continued to expand its lines after the war; however, the company collapsed in 1892 due to mismanagement and over-speculation by northerners who wanted immediate returns on their investments. The company was reorganized in 1895, but the Great Depression dealt a second blow to the company in 1932. During this time, cotton mills in the North closed and relocated to the South, where the need to ship cotton decreased. Federal regulation of railroad profits was also becoming stricter. These factors led to the company falling into receivership in 1932. The railway once again reorganized in 1948, and in 1963, became a subsidiary of the Southern Railway System.<sup>115</sup>

### ***Central of Georgia Railway Repair Shops Complex***

The former Central of Georgia repair shops complex is located within the Central of Georgia Railroad Savannah Shops and Terminal Facilities National Historic Landmark District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes one of the oldest remaining railroad complexes in the United States, containing sixteen buildings, each built to house different specialties for the maintenance and repair of the former railway including a roundhouse, boiler house, smokestack, tender frame shop, compressor house, and carpentry shop.

The Central of Georgia Railway's repair shops complex was built in 1855 to accommodate the growing railway company; it became one of the first planned railroad complexes in the country. The state-of-the-art complex of repair shops is described by Colburn

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 77.

in an article in the *New York Railroad Advocate* and reprinted in the *Savannah Daily Morning News*, July 17, 1855:

To say that Savannah, Georgia, is likely to have the most complete and elegant railroad in the country (besides it also being one of the largest), may be a matter of some surprise to northern and western railroad men. But looking, even with northern eyes, upon the station of the Georgia Central road, we believe its superior capacity, convenience and elegance must be admitted. We look upon it as a whole, not regarding merely the architectural details of any one part, or the mechanical adaptation of any particular buildings to the purpose of the road... What is remembered is that all the buildings described are new, and of fine architecture and arrangement, well lighted, well ventilated, and every way well arranged, the roofs of iron and when it is considered that they have not been put by piecemeal, but that they form collectively a complete and symmetrical whole we doubt candidly if any other station can be found in this country which can equal this.<sup>116</sup>

After two years of only repairing cars and engines, the repair shops started building their own cars and locomotives while also maintaining their existing rolling stock, making the Central of Georgia a full service railway, not relying on any outside contractors.<sup>117</sup>

Before the Civil War, the Central of Georgia boasted 58 locomotives and 708 cars. During the war, most of their rolling stock had been stolen, damaged, and scattered throughout six states; 49 of the locomotives had been found, but only 14 were operable. Only 537 of the 708 cars were found. This proved to a crucial time for the Central of Georgia repair shops for they were responsible for getting the cars and locomotives back on the tracks. The mechanics at the Central of Georgia's repair shops were busy for the next two years, managing to repair all but two of the company's engines and repairing all the cars by the end of 1867.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 92-96.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 101-105.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 106-107.



Once the Central of Georgia Railway was restored after the damaging effects of the Civil War, the line prospered again, so much in fact that the repair shops in Savannah were seen as too outdated to maintain the rolling stock that the company had accumulated over the years. Therefore, additional buildings were constructed in the 1920's to include a paint shop, coach shop, and warehouse.<sup>119</sup>

During the Great Depression, the Central of Georgia Railway was sent into receivership and most of the repair shops closed. Dieselization in the 1940's spelled the beginning of the end for the repair shops, as the complex was outfitted for only steam locomotives. By 1952, the line was no longer using steam locomotives, making the Savannah repair shops obsolete; the heavy machinery was moved to the Macon facilities. In 1963, the Southern Railway Company took over the Central of Georgia Railway and immediately closed the repair shops complex. After closing the complex, the Southern Railway Company started demolishing some of the repair shop buildings; however, the most significant portions of the complex still survive in large part due to a group of concerned citizens who recognized the significance of the complex and called for its preservation. In 1971, the Southern Railway donated 5.59 acres, encompassing the repair shops complex, to the City of Savannah. A few years later in 1975, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) photographed and documented the repair shops complex, making it the first HAER survey performed in Georgia. In 1978, the complex was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>120</sup> The City of Savannah stabilized the sixteen remaining buildings on the site. In 1989, the city appointed the Coastal Heritage Society, a not-for-profit agency, to act as stewards of the site to preserve

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 111-112.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 117-120.

and maintain the complex. Since that time, the Coastal Heritage Society has done restoration work on the buildings in the complex, now the Roundhouse Railroad Museum, as well as the former depot across the street that currently serves as the Savannah Visitors Center.

### ***The Central of Georgia Railway Carpentry Shop***

Built in 1855, the Carpentry Shop was one of the original buildings in the railroad repair shops complex. The building formed the eastern leg of a U-shaped complex called the Car Shops, where cars were constructed, outfitted, and painted. Employees of the Central of Georgia Railway built all of their wood furnishings for the buildings and railcars inside the Carpentry Shop. The one-story building included the planing mill, where wood chips and shavings

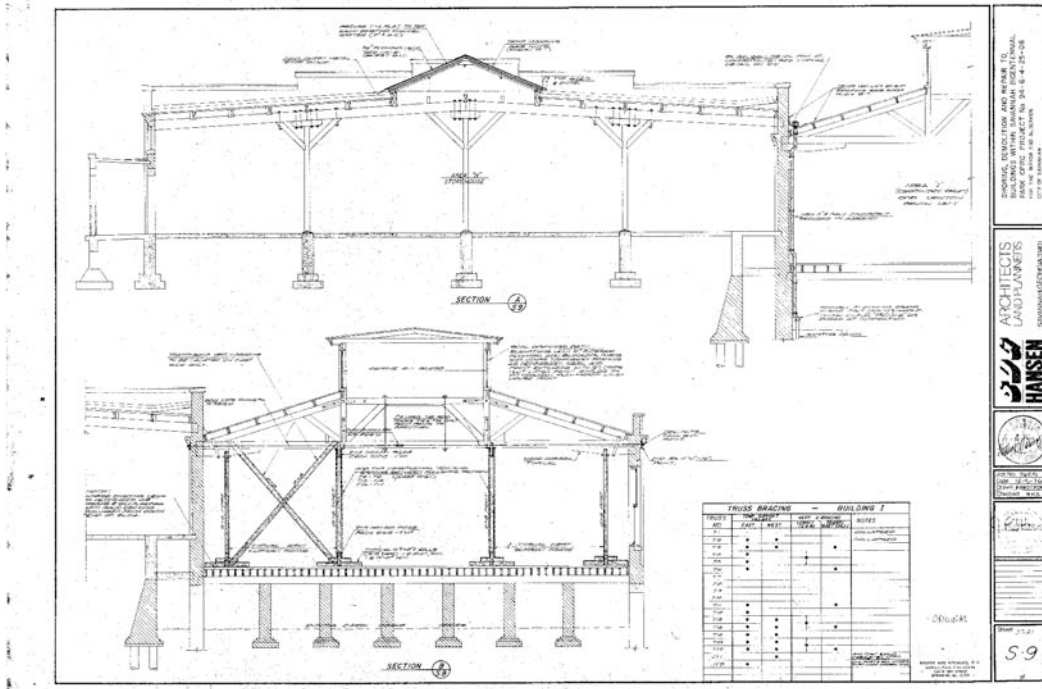


Figure 6-1. Measured Drawing of Carpentry Shop (Source: Coastal Heritage Society, drawing by Hansen Architects).

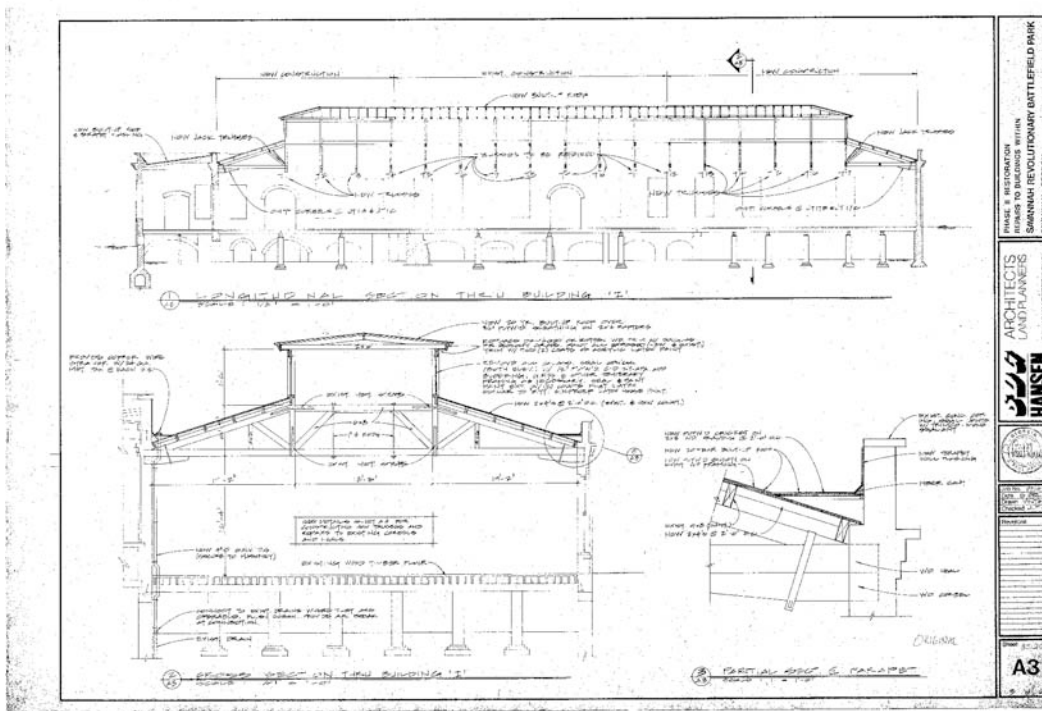


Figure 6-2. Measured Drawing of Carpentry Shop (Source: Coastal Heritage Society, drawing by Hansen Architects).

were blown into the boiler house to fire the boiler. The Carpentry Shop measured 211 feet by 60 feet, with a basement comprised of arcades along the walls and across the center of the building; much of which is still visible today. On November 16, 1923, a devastating fire started in the Coach Shop that destroyed most of the western and northern legs of the U-shaped complex that held the Carpentry Shop. The Carpentry Shop was damaged but not destroyed, and was quickly rebuilt and repaired as a completely separate building.<sup>121122</sup> The Carpentry Shop continued to serve as such until the repair shops complex closed in 1963, keeping much of its 1925 appearance until Hansen Architects did stabilization work on the structure in 1976 and 1978. Rustch gives a description of the Carpentry Shop as it appeared in 1981:

The facades of the carpentry shop carry brick corbelling near the top of the exterior walls. This decorative work is surmounted by a parapet which was added at the time of the shops' repair following the 1923 fire.

The western façade of the shop contains 14 large windows, each with double-hung sash and 20 over 20 lights. Concrete lintels and sills were perhaps part of the post-fire reconstruction.

Three double, arched doorways in the west wall of the carpentry shop lead into the adjacent railyard. Partially intact sliding wooden doors remain at the openings.

The south façade of the carpentry shop faces Jones Street...Five double-hung windows with 12 over 12 lights pierce the wall.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>122</sup> Coastal Heritage Society CHS, *Save America's Treasures Grant Application* (Savannah, 2004).

<sup>123</sup> Rutsch and Morrell, 211-213.



**Figure 6-3. North Façade in 1978** (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Historic American Engineering Record, HAER GA,26-SAV,55J-1, photo by Jack E. Boucher).

Although the Carpentry Shop escaped detrimental effects from the 1923 fire, it was completely destroyed by a second fire in 1987, when homeless squatters inadvertently set fire to the building;<sup>124</sup> all that remains is a shell.

### **Preservation Management and Policy**

“It is the mission of the Coastal Heritage Society to preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the coastal area and provide a sense of awareness and pride in that heritage through programs of active public involvement.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> CHS.

<sup>125</sup> Coastal Heritage Society CHS, *Coastal Heritage Society Mission Statement*(accessed); available from <http://www.chsgeorgia.org/roundhouse/preservation.cfm>.

Since the Coastal Heritage Society (CHS) became stewards of the site in 1989, restoration work has been done on many of the buildings in the repair shops complex, most notably in the last five years. With a matching grant of \$298,000 from the Save America's Treasures Program, CHS plans to reconstruct the Carpentry Shop back to its 1925 appearance, using it as exhibit space for the Georgia State Railroad Museum. It will be built with historical accuracy and climate controlled museum space.<sup>126</sup>

Phase I work on the ruins of the Carpentry Shop began in 2004. First, the CHS Preservation Team, consisting mostly of historic preservation and architecture students from the Savannah

College of Art and Design, cleared the debris and documented and surveyed what remained of the building. They also researched the doors, windows, and hinges from the remnants they found. The asbestos roof and wood floor in the old Pattern Room of the Carpentry Shop were badly deteriorated and unsafe, and after documenting them, the Preservation Team demolished these unsalvageable parts of the building. The original iron door hinges were rusting and



**Figure 6-4. CHS Preservation Team Repoints East Wall of the Carpentry Shop (photo by author).**

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<sup>126</sup> CHS, *Save America's Treasures Grant Application*.

spalling, so the team cast and reinserted new ones that the CHS Metals Team forged, which was not an easy task for there were five different kinds of hinges on the building. Lastly, repointing of the whole shell of the building is currently taking place, a process that is nearly finished.<sup>127</sup>

Phase II will involve the reconstruction of the Carpentry Shop. Discussions are currently taking place regarding retrofitting the building for seismic activity, as Savannah is near a major fault line that runs through Charleston; the last earthquake occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the last earthquake, tie-rods, that are still visible today, were immediately placed in buildings to prepare for future seismic activity. New buildings in the historic district are constructed for seismic activity, but the historic buildings still rely on the tie-rods that were installed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Retrofitting the Carpentry Shop would change the historic accuracy of the building, as non-historic steel columns would be placed throughout the building.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Personal communication with Becki Harkness, Project Manager, and Travis Brown, Historic Masonry Foreman, April 2006.

<sup>128</sup> Personal communication with Becki Harkness, June 30, 2006.



**Figure 6-5. Ruins of Carpentry Shop Before Being Cleared For Preservation Work**  
(Source: Coastal Heritage Society).



**Figure 6-6. Ruins of Carpentry Shop After Clearing** (Source: Coastal Heritage Society).



## **Evaluation**

The Coastal Heritage Society has done a great job restoring the historic buildings in the repair shops complex. Their most recent project was the rehabilitation of the Tender Frame Shop into office space for the growing preservation staff. Historic building methods are researched, repaired, and if needed, replaced in kind.

Using the Savannah College of Art and Design as their resource for employees, the Coastal Heritage Society hires students in preservation and architecture to do the much needed restoration work on site. The students learn historic building techniques, and the buildings receive preservation work. It's a system that continues to work.

The site provides a perfect opportunity for the community to see preservation at work as it already operates as the Roundhouse Railroad Museum. While touring the former railway complex, guests see employees working on the historic buildings on site. Promoting hardhat tours of the site, along with the railroad aspect, would help educate the public about historic preservation and its importance to Savannah's heritage.

Reconstruction of a building is the most radical treatment of historic preservation; making sure the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Reconstruction are applied and adhered to will ensure that the building is reconstructed in kind. The reconstruction of the Carpentry Shop, although historically accurate, raises a question. Is a reconstructed building still considered historic if it is built around the foundation of its former self? A reconstruction allows for the interpretation of the former building, as long as visitors are made aware that the building is in fact a reproduction and not the original building. Conversely, the building left in a ruinous state also lends itself for interpretation through its foundation and framework.

Plans have already been made for reconstruction. Fortunately, historic preservationists employed by the Coastal Heritage Society are heading the reconstruction. To maintain the historic integrity of the building, CHS should consider forgoing the steel columns that are being proposed for possible seismic activity in the area. The non-historic steel columns would detract from the building's 1925 appearance. A final suggestion is opening the basement to visitors for interpretation of the original framework and historic building techniques. Visitors would gain an appreciation for historic buildings, if they didn't already.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **RETREAT PLANTATION AND FORT FREDERICA: ST. SIMONS ISLAND Retreat Plantation – Privately Owned by the Sea Island Golf Course Since 1926 Fort Frederica – Managed by the National Park Service Since 1945**

St. Simons Island is located north of Jekyll Island on the Georgia coast. Over the years, it has become a growing commercialized tourist resort. Housing prices have soared and new construction is prevalent. Little of the historic fabric is left of this island that was once filled with antebellum plantations that prospered with the cultivation of Sea Island cotton. Some ruins from those former plantations still exist, but most have been razed to make room for new housing developments. One plantation that has been spared is Retreat Plantation, found on the southwestern tip of the island. It is currently owned by the Sea Island Company and operates as the Sea Island Golf Course.

Another set of ruins found on St. Simons Island can be found at Fort Frederica. Once a colonial town, Frederica was a community whose main purpose was to act as a defensive military buffer between the English in Georgia and the Spanish in Florida. The remains of this community are now owned by the National Park Service and provide visitors with an interpretation of a colonial fort and town.

### **RETREAT PLANTATION**

#### **Historical Background**

The land that the ruins of Retreat Plantation now stand on was first occupied in 1736 by John Humble, who was appointed by James Oglethorpe to look over the harbor there. Later, Humble sold the property to John Clubb, who then sold it to Thomas Spalding in 1786.<sup>129</sup> The

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<sup>129</sup> Margaret Davis Cate, *Early Days of Coastal Georgia* (St. Simons Island: Fort Frederica Association, 1955), 69.

Spaldings then purchased Sapelo Island and sold Spalding Plantation (Retreat Plantation's original name) to Major William Page in 1802. Major Page had been visiting his friend, Major Pierce Butler, at a neighboring plantation on St. Simons Island when Page and his wife decided to make St. Simons Island their future home.<sup>130</sup> Initially, the Pages leased Spalding Plantation, but after buying the property in 1802, renamed the property Retreat, and lived in the house that Spalding built. It is said that the Retreat Plantation house was a replica of James Oglethorpe's house in Frederica, Orange Hall, "a roomy eighteenth-century English-style cottage sturdily built to stand the West Indian gales that sometimes blew in from the sea."<sup>131</sup> "Retreat was solidly built of hewn liveoak (sic) timbers and weather boards of white pine. The window blinds and doors were of native cedar. The barns, servants' quarters and hospital for the slaves were built of tabby."<sup>132</sup> The Pages planned on building a bigger house, but the years escaped them, and they remained in their simple house.<sup>133</sup>

The grounds at Retreat Plantation were planned and landscaped; Mrs. Page paid careful attention to the details of her gardens. Mrs. Page had a multitude of flowers and shrubs laid out in numerous formal gardens. In 1799, she designed a three hundred foot walk bordered with roses that led from the back of their house to the slave hospital; there were "nearly a hundred varieties of roses."<sup>134</sup> She also designed the back garden, planted date and olive trees, and

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<sup>130</sup> Bessie Lewis, *King's Retreat Plantation: Today and Yesterday* (St. Simons Island: Midred Huie Wilcox, 1980), 8.

<sup>131</sup> Burnette Vanstory, *Georgia's Land of the Golden Isles* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), 175.

<sup>132</sup> Lewis, 9.

<sup>133</sup> Vanstory, 175.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

supervised the building of the tabby greenhouse.<sup>135</sup> The only remnant from Mrs. Page's gardens at Retreat is a ruin of a corner of the greenhouse.

Also on the property are the remains of a two-story slave hospital that was built near the main house. It was built of tabby and contained ten rooms. The first floor was for women; two nurses lived on the second floor; and the attic floor was reserved for men. Each room was twelve by fifteen feet and contained a fireplace and two windows. The staircase was located in a wide hall in the middle of the building.<sup>136</sup>

The Pages had only one child, a daughter named Anna Matilda Page. In 1824, Anna married Thomas Butler King, a lawyer from Massachusetts. Within two years of their marriage, Anna Page's parents, Major and Mrs. William Page died, leaving Retreat Plantation to Anna. Anna and her newly wedded husband were living on Waverly, a plantation on the mainland, at the time of her parents' deaths. Cotton prices were going down and managing several plantations was economically difficult, so the newlyweds moved to Anna's childhood home, Retreat. Anna and Thomas had nine kids: five boys and four girls. The growing family needed more room, so the Kings built a four-room, two-story addition that accommodated the boys and their tutor.

Anna continued her mother's love for designing and adding to her gardens. A "cedar pleasaunce" was planted to form a windbreak between the house and ocean, and shell walks were laid out to meander through the arboretum that included specimen trees and rare shrubs, many brought in from foreign countries as gifts from friends of her husband. When John James Audubon visited Retreat, he was "fain to think he had landed on one of the fairy islands said to

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<sup>135</sup> Lewis, 10.

<sup>136</sup> Cate, 75.

have existed in the Golden Age.”<sup>137</sup> Even after Retreat had been deserted during the Civil War, the property was beautiful as told by Colonel Higginson of the Union Army, “the plantation we visited (Retreat) had the loveliest tropical garden, though tangled and desolate, which I have ever seen in the South. The deserted house was embowered in great blossoming shrubs, and filled with hyacinthine odors, among which predominated that of the Little Chickasaw roses where everywhere bloomed and trailed around.”<sup>138</sup> Anna also oversaw the planting of a grand avenue of live oaks that formed the entrance to the plantation;<sup>139</sup> only portions of the historic drive exist today.

In 1859, devastation struck the King family; the eldest son, Butler, died and his mother, Anna, followed within the year. Anna’s husband, Thomas Butler King, was heartbroken as his remaining sons went off to fight in the Civil War, one never to return. In 1864, Thomas Butler King died of health problems. During the war, other members of the King family sought safe shelter at their plantation, “The Refuge,” located on the mainland. Retreat Plantation lay deserted until after the war.<sup>140</sup>

After the war was over, one of the Kings’ sons, Mallery, moved back to Retreat to try to restore the plantation back to its former glory and productivity. The plantation would never enjoy the prosperity it once had. Cotton prices were low and the crops were insufficient; the challenges of restoring the old plantation were overwhelming. After years of struggling to revive Retreat, Mallery King’s family finally gave up and moved back to the mainland to pursue other interests. A few years later in 1905, a fire destroyed Retreat Plantation, leaving the ruins of the plantation house, slave hospital, and a small corner of the greenhouse. In 1926, the Sea Island

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<sup>137</sup> Vanstory, 177-179.

<sup>138</sup> Lewis, 24.

<sup>139</sup> Cate, 71.

<sup>140</sup> Vanstory, 179.

Company bought the property from the King family to build a golf course. The property is now known as Sea Island Golf Course and is located on Retreat Avenue.

### **Preservation Management and Policy**

Currently, there is no formal preservation policy on Sea Island Golf Course, even though it still has remnants from the former Retreat Plantation, including the ruins, a corn barn, and a tabby slave cabin. The ruins are treated as a manicured landscape and are located near the parking lot, not on the golf course itself. The most complete ruin is of the slave hospital; it has two walls and the bottom portion of a chimney.

The slave hospital has had a recent stucco layer applied to the tabby undercoat. The stucco has been scored to look like it had been poured into forms. There are also a few square “windows” left open in the stucco walls to allow visitors to see what the undercoat of tabby looks like. The top edges of the wall have a masonry coping consisting of a mixture of Portland cement and shells to give the appearance of tabby. The windows have been stabilized with wood frames installed in the openings. Tie-rods have been inserted in each wall to keep the structure stabilized. The brick chimney has been repointed with a faux tabby mortar, consisting of Portland cement and shells.



**Figure 7-1. Ruins of Retreat Plantation House, 1955** (Source: Cate 68, photo by Orrin Sage Wightman).



**Figure 7-2. Ruins of Retreat Plantation House, 2006** (photo by author).





**Figure 7-3. Ruins of Retreat Slave Hospital, 1955** (Source: Cate 74, photo by Orrin Sage Wightman).



**Figure 7-4. Ruins of Retreat Slave Hospital, 2006** (photo by author).



**Figure 7-5. Rear View of Slave Hospital Ruins (photo by author).**



**Figure 7-6. Close-up View of Interior of Slave Hospital Ruins (photo by author).**

All that remains of the main house of Retreat are brick footings and a chimney. The footings were repointed with Portland cement and shells and the chimney with Portland cement.

On both sites, crushed shells have been placed around the ruins as aesthetic elements, along with a multitude of trees and plants. Underground drainage systems have been installed. The live oaks surrounding the hospital are part of the historic oak avenue planted by Anna Page King.



**Figure 7-7. Interpretive Tabby "Window" Opening and Tie-rod (photo by author).**



**Figure 7-8. Close-up View of Brick Footing at Main House (photo by author).**

### **Evaluation**

The ruins of Retreat Plantation have been maintained as a well-manicured landscape that is aesthetically pleasing for anyone that passes by. The Sea Island Company has done a good job in stabilizing the ruins, but there is no policy or local designation protecting it. Even though there is no evidence of the company wanting to destroy the ruins, the owners can alter the appearance or even destroy the ruins at any time because it is privately owned. The Sea Island Company is not governed by any policies or regulations in preserving it.

In 2004, the Sea Island Company demolished the historic Cloister on Sea Island, its flagship hotel establishment, to make room for a new hotel that would accommodate more guests. With the Sea Island Company's past track record, there is cause for concern over the protection of the ruins.

Recommendations to the Sea Island Company include making a policy regarding the preservation of historic resources as well as hiring someone with a preservation background who would oversee the policy and maintain it throughout the Sea Island Company property sites. This person would also make sure that the preservation methods of the ruins adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation. This new position would also be responsible for gathering information and submitting a nomination for Retreat Plantation to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as it is not currently listed.

To protect the ruins further, the Sea Island Company should consider donating a preservation easement on the ruins to a government entity or non-profit organization and at the same time, obtain substantial tax credits from this agreement. The Sea Island Company would still retain ownership of the ruins; however, the company would agree not to alter or destroy the appearance of them. From a preservation easement, the ruin would be protected in perpetuity.

Unfortunately, Retreat Plantation is located within a private golf club and is not open to the public. Only members of the club are able to see the former plantation. There is no interpretation on the site with the exception of a few signs located in front of each ruin.

Because the ruins are not located on the actual golf course, it would be feasible for the Sea Island Company to open the ruins to the public without compromising private access to the golf course. This can be done by relocating the private entrance and guard station behind the site of the ruins. The main entrance is currently located at a point before reaching the ruins.

As one of the last remaining plantations on St. Simons Island, an archaeological investigation of the site would prove informative and beneficial to researchers as well as the public. An archaeological investigation would provide information on the area's colonial and

antebellum heritage. From this study, an informed interpretation of the site could be given to the public.

Finally, Retreat Plantation was once part of an elaborate landscape. Restoring the historic landscape according to detailed descriptions and drawings would not only enhance the grounds where the ruins are located, but also provide an interpretation of antebellum gardens.

## **FORT FREDERICA**

### **Historical Background**

Fort Frederica was established by General James Oglethorpe in 1736 as a military buffer between the English in Georgia and the Spanish in Florida. The town of Frederica, which encompassed the fort, was settled by forty families, who built and defended the fort until the soldiers came in 1739. The town's ultimate purpose was to provide soldiers with amenities for living, while at battle with the Spanish. The townspeople of Frederica consisted of a multitude of professions as represented by the tradesmen and craftsmen of the town: the baker, doctor, surveyor, accountant, and tailor among others.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Margaret Davis Cate, *The Original Houses of Frederica, Georgia: The Hawkins-Davison Houses* (St. Simons Island: Fort Frederica Association, 1956), 203-204.



**Figure 7-9. Magazine at Fort Frederica** (photo by author).

The town occupied approximately thirty-five acres on the western side of St. Simons Island. The location was chosen by Oglethorpe as the best strategic outpost for the British. The town was laid out into two wards – the South and North Wards, which were divided by Broad Street. The town was laid out in eighty-four lots, which were granted to settlers as they arrived. As the town of Frederica grew, the area needed additional security. Therefore, the townspeople fortified the whole town and built a moat surrounding it.<sup>142</sup>

The town relied heavily on the soldiers for economic development. Tradesmen and craftsmen depended on the soldiers to buy goods from them. Without them, the town would not be able to survive and prosper. While soldiers from Frederica and St. Augustine (Spanish) fought, the town of Frederica was safe; however, in 1748, after several victories by the British, a

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 203.

peace treaty was signed between the English and Spanish. This event spelled the beginning of the end for the military town of Frederica, for the British soldiers left Frederica the following year. After the soldiers moved away, the tradesmen and their families also left Frederica, as their main source of income had evacuated the town. With most of the townspeople gone, Frederica became an abandoned town of dilapidated houses and overgrown streets. Remaining building materials were salvaged to build other houses on the island. Over the years, new construction and development was built over the abandoned and desolate site. Only one ruin remained on the site of the former town, and it was located on the property of Mrs. Belle Stevens Taylor. Because of her friendship with Mrs. Georgia Page Wilder, President of the Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America, Mrs. Taylor donated the plot of land on which the ruin stood to the Colonial Dames of America in 1903. In turn, the Colonial Dames of America repaired and saved the ruin.<sup>143</sup>

In 1941, the Fort Frederica Foundation was formed<sup>144</sup> and in 1943, it raised enough money to acquire the remaining land of the former town of Frederica. Two years later in 1945, the National Park Service took over the management of the property and it became known as the Fort Frederica National Monument.<sup>145</sup>

### **Preservation Management and Policy**

When the National Park Service took over the former town of Frederica in 1945, there was nothing remaining above ground except the magazine and old barracks. The river had already washed away part of the battery when the National Park Service stepped in. An archaeological investigation was done soon after the National Park Service's acquisition of the

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>144</sup> Trevor R. Reese, *Frederica: Colonial Fort and Town* (St. Simons Island: Fort Frederica Association, 1969).

<sup>145</sup> Cate, *The Original Houses of Frederica, Georgia: The Hawkins-Davison Houses*, 205.

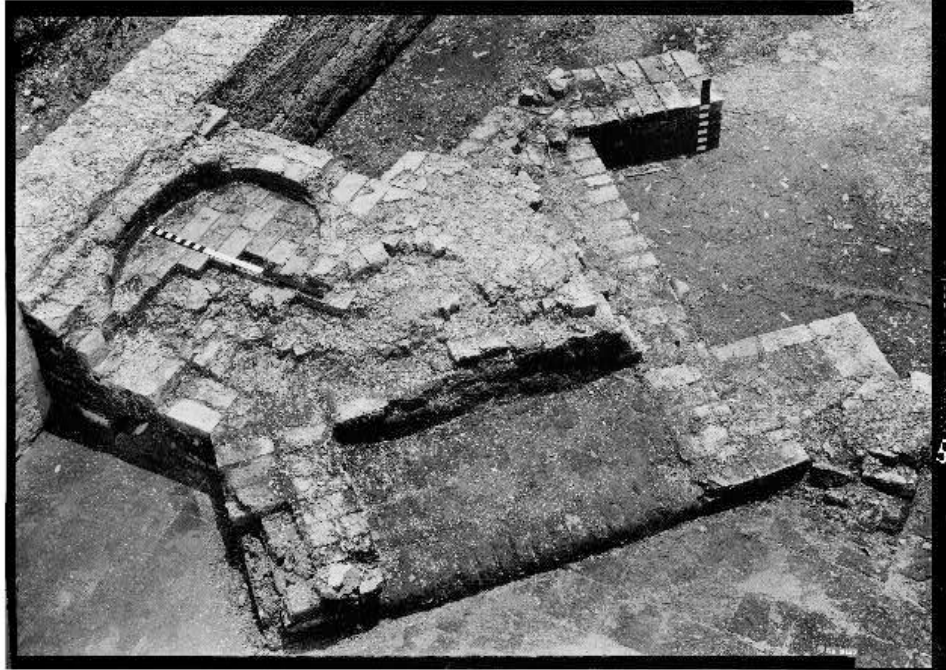


property. House sites were excavated and artifacts from the former town were uncovered. Foundations were unearthed, dinnerware was excavated, and former roads and ditches were found. Through the archaeological investigation, evidence of the building materials and framework were analyzed. Bottom portions of walls, brick floors, wood door and window casings, and brick fireplaces were found.

For site interpretation, some of the former foundations were restored or reconstructed over the original remaining building materials. Modern bricks and other contemporary building materials were brought in to reconstruct some of the foundations and structural remnants. Interpretive markers are placed throughout the site for visitors to visualize and read about the buildings that formerly occupied the town. There are also signs discouraging visitors from walking on and inside the ruins; however, there are no protective barriers to keep them from doing so.

### **Evaluation**

Once listed as one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Places, Fort Frederica's status is now favorable because of the extensive work the National Park Service has done to remedy the effects of deterioration and marsh erosion.



**Figure 7-10. Fireplace and Oven from John Callwell House, 1958** (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS GA,64-FRED,5-5, photo by Jack E. Boucher).



**Figure 7-11. Fireplace and Oven from John Callwell House, After Reconstruction, 2006** (photo by author).



**Figure 7-12. New bricks pointed with Portland cement and placed over original materials (photo by author).**

Like Wormsloe, early attempts of preservation to the ruins are harmful to the original material. The Portland cement used to lay the top layer of modern bricks do not allow the underlying colonial bricks to breathe; therefore, leaving the modern bricks static while the original bricks move, crack, and spall, thus, causing severe permanent damage to the original material. On the other hand, the modern bricks keep visitors from trampling on the original building material. The new materials brought in to reconstruct some of the foundations for interpretive reasons bear the brunt of traffic, while the original materials are underneath. However, if the original material is being damaged from the topmost “protective layer” of modern bricks, then what protection are the ruins really receiving? Although done in goodwill, the modern materials are actually harming the underlying historically significant building

material. As not to confuse visitors, guests to the site should be made aware of the reconstructed portions of the site through signage and interpretation. Not only will this educate them about preservation but will also help them appreciate what's left of the former colonial village.

Currently, the site has no protective barriers to keep visitors from walking on and inside the ruins; however, there are plenty of markers explaining the importance of staying off of them. Installing barriers would only diminish from the experience of touring the former colonial town. Keeping the site as clear as possible remains true to the experience of walking through the ruinous town.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

When preserving and stabilizing ruins, the reoccurring problem shared among most of the agencies is lack of funding to maintain and preserve the ruins to the fullest extent. None of the organizations have a substantial amount of money to spend on preserving and stabilizing the ruins.

To receive most grants, it is required that the property be listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This accolade is important in procuring local ordinance designation and protection, as well as applying for much needed funding. With the exception of Retreat Plantation, all of the aforementioned ruins are listed on the National Register. Of the eight ruins, the two sites that received grants from the Save America's Treasures program are managed by independent organizations and owned by governmental agencies: the Carpentry Shop is owned by the City of Savannah and managed by the Coastal Heritage Society, a not-for-profit agency; Horton House and Chichota are owned by the state and managed by the Jekyll Island Authority, an independent agency. Both the Carpentry Shop and the Horton House benefited from this program, which has helped their causes substantially in preserving the ruins of these significant buildings. Their staffs include people with historic preservation backgrounds and are knowledgeable about available outside funding for historic resources.

Early preservation efforts at Wormslow were done to protect the ruins, but are actually harming them. Reversing the preservation mishap could actually harm the ruins even more. Although Mr. Thompson is very knowledgeable about tabby preservation and passionate about the ruins, he is heavily burdened with maintaining the entire site and does not have the funding to preserve the ruins the way he would want. By adding an additional staff person to find available

funding and oversee preservation workshops or classes that teach historic tabby applications, Mr. Thompson would have more time to focus on the overall site, and the tabby ruins would be preserved. Measuring Wormslow periodically to determine the rate of deterioration is a good practice that all ruin sites should incorporate into their management plans.

Both the National Park Service and Georgia State Parks Division are agencies that protect not only historic resources but natural ones as well. Both agencies' strategic plans and policies give the parks' natural resources more priority than historic ones. The NPS policy states that environmental assessments must be researched before any work is done to Dungeness and The Chimneys; however, no formal assessments are made about fertilizers, insecticides, or other lawn products before they are used near the foundations of these historic resources. The protection of natural resources is described before and more extensively than the preservation of historic resources. Their organization names also lend to a priority system of parks versus historic resources: National PARK Service and Georgia State PARKS and Historic Sites. Historic preservation and conservation are in constant conflict within the agencies. There must be a compromise between the two; otherwise, the ruins at these sites will return to nature and disappear forever. Examples of this occurrence include the Casino at the Dungeness complex and the carriage house at the Plum Orchard compound, both managed by the NPS, and both architecturally significant buildings that were integral parts of their respective sites. The NPS determined that the significance of these two buildings did not warrant preservation. The General Management Plan for the NPS states that all cultural resources would be preserved under ideal conditions, but "the costs of preservation may occasionally outweigh the benefits to be derived there from."<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> NPS, *Appendices to General Management Plan*, 130.

Through early preservation attempts, the National Park Service has inadvertently harmed the exposed foundations at Fort Frederica; however, the magazine and old barracks are stabilized. The site is open to the public and gives visitors an informative interpretation of colonial military life.

To keep any more buildings or structures, including ruins, from returning to nature, the stewardship of historic resources should be transferred to an independent agency or another governmental agency where there is not a constant struggle between preservation and conservation. Although the two agencies would still have to make compromises, it would relieve the struggle within a single agency that shows more priority to natural resources. The historic resources of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division (Department of Natural Resources) should be transferred to the Historic Preservation Division, where the interest of historic resources is their main priority. At the very least, the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division should be educated in the preservation and maintenance of historic resources. Historic resources under the National Park Service should be transferred or leased to a local non-profit, or “friends group,” whose main focus would be preserving the ruins.

Because of limited government funding, the ideal situation would be to lease the historic sites that are currently under the jurisdiction of the park services to a local non-profit organization interested in preserving and protecting these significant resources. This would alleviate the financial burden from the park services and allow independent agencies to focus their interests on one site and procure funding through grants and other sources.

The Sea Island Company has been preserving the ruins of Retreat Plantation since 1926. The ruins are stabilized but not protected under any local ordinance. The strictly private organization can alter or even destroy the ruins at any time if they should so choose. Although

the ruins appear in excellent condition, the preservation methods are not historically accurate; Portland cement was used to treat the ruins. Because the Sea Island Company's focus is not to preserve the ruins but to use them as aesthetically pleasing landscape elements, historical accuracy is sacrificed. An archaeological study for interpretation of the site would prove beneficial for opening the site to the public, as the ruins are part of one of the last remaining plantations on St. Simons Island. Donating a preservation easement would protect the site for perpetuity.

As for the best building methods used for the ruins, stabilization and applying a protective covering is the best practice given to them to prolong their longevity. In 1998, a symposium on conserving and preserving tabby in the coastal southeast took place on Jekyll Island. From that symposium came an article detailing the process of restoring the gardener's house, also called the Tabby House, on Cumberland Island. First they tested the materials to determine an appropriate recipe for creating a new mixture to apply to the deteriorating tabby building. They found the original material consisted of a 1:3 formula of lime to sand with wood ash. After initial applications on test panels, the final formula used for the stucco layer was 1:1:4, hydrated lime to hydraulic lime to Play Sand mix. Two coats were applied to the building; each coat was allowed to dry for one to days. Throughout this entire restoration process, research and testing the original materials were the key factors in their success in restoring the Tabby House on Cumberland Island.<sup>147</sup>

For all former buildings in ruinous states, stabilization of framing members is the initial step in preserving them. Any deteriorated framing member should be replaced in kind if it

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<sup>147</sup> Lauren B. Sickels-Taves, "Handle with Care: Tabby Is No Ordinary Concrete," in *The Conservation and Preservation of Tabby: A Symposium on Historic Building Material in the Coastal Southeast* (Jekyll Island, Georgia: 1998).



cannot be repaired, as stated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation. For brick buildings, a breathable waterproofing protective coating should be applied to keep water from infiltrating the material. This approach prolongs the longevity of the brick masonry.

By looking at the case studies discussed in this document, the following points regarding the preservation of ruins in coastal Georgia can be made.

- **Ruins are best preserved when owned by governmental agencies but managed by independent organizations.** The Carpentry Shop and Horton House are excellent examples of ruins that have been preserved with historical accuracy. Chichota has been maintained as a landscape; no harm to the ruin has been done.
- **When managed by a federal or state agency that also oversees natural resources, there is constant conflict between historic preservation and conservation.** Dungeness and The Chimneys have awaited preservation and stabilization due to research of environmental assessments.
- **When owned by a private organization without protection of a local ordinance, the ruin is at risk of historically inaccurate preservation methods, alteration, or demolition.** The Sea Island Company's preservation of the Retreat Plantation ruins, although in excellent condition, are not protected under any local ordinance designation.

When a site is owned by the governmental agency but managed by an independent organization, more attention is given to the protection of a ruin's preservation and stabilization. Although the National Park Service and the Georgia State Parks understand the importance of preserving ruins, the agencies do not sufficiently preserve their historic resources either because of limited funding or potential harm to natural resources. Historic resources are better preserved and maintained when they are leased and managed by independent organizations and owned by governmental agencies that oversee their preservation activities.

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