

Did You Know?

Dataw changes hands....the early years (Part 2)

1770: Anne Wigg left Dataw Island to her son, Lewis Reeve. Lewis planted rice here and then began planting indigo. Lewis Reeve is the likely builder of the central section of our plantation ruins.

1774: Lewis Reeve, having never married, left the island to his sisters Sarah Gibbes and Ann Carson. Sarah Gibbes and her husband, Robert, gained control of the island.

1783: William Sams, Sarah Gibbes' cousin, lived on Wadmalaw Island, just south of Charlestown. William is the third generation of the Sams Family that first settled on Wadmalaw Island in the late 1600s. He was a Loyalist and served as a Justice of Peace under the British while they occupied Charlestown during the Revolutionary War. In 1783, at the end of the war, William Sams lost his property under the Confiscation Act and was forced to move. He purchased the deed to Dataw Island from his cousin Sarah Gibbes. William with his wife, Elizabeth Hext, established a successful cotton plantation on Dataw Island. Both William and Elizabeth are buried in the existing Sam's family cemetery, which is between the plantation ruins and Dataw Drive.

1798: William Sams died, leaving the island to his wife and his three youngest sons: Lewis Reeve Sams, Berners Barnwell Sams and Edward Hext Sams. When they became of age, Lewis and Berners bought out their brother Edward's share. Lewis Reeve Sams then built his house near today's marina and Berners Barnwell Sams added onto the existing structure, now our plantation ruins.

The Sams Family Plantation Complex includes the ruins of the plantation house, kitchen, dairy, blade house, cemetery, chapel, stable, slave houses and surrounding areas where vegetables, fruit trees, and other plants were grown. This complex is the most significant historic site on Dataw and is eligible for the National Registry of Historic Places.

"Did You Know?" is a feature presentation of the Dataw Historic Foundation.

This is one in a series of fascinating facts and short stories about our Island.