

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED 1111 28 1975
DATE ENTERED AUG 28 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Coffin Point Plantation

AND/OR COMMON

same

2 LOCATION

10 miles east of Beaufort on S.C. Hwy 21, turn left on County Road #77, continue 1.5 miles, house directly ahead at end of .5 mile avenue of oak trees

STREET & NUMBER

3 mi. E of Frogmore at NE end of Seaside Rd. on St. Helena Island

CITY, TOWN

St. Helena Island

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

South Carolina

VICINITY OF
CODE 045

COUNTY
Beaufort

CODE
013

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME George and Priscilla McMillan

STREET & NUMBER

Coffin Point

CITY, TOWN

Frogmore

VICINITY OF

STATE
South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Beaufort County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Bay Street

CITY, TOWN

Beaufort

STATE
South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Columbia

STATE
South Carolina

TABLE 1112

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- DETERIORATED
- GOOD
- RUINS
- FAIR
- UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

CHECK ONE

- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

EXTERIOR: Coffin Point is a two-story white clapboard structure with raised basement. Although the actual date of construction is unknown, Coffin Point possesses characteristics of the Federal style of architecture and is believed to have been constructed about 1801.

Front of structure has stairs leading to a one-story porch with deck. Vertical shiplap is on first floor. Four 2/2 windows with simple lintels are on each floor and are flanked by louvered shutters. Door on first floor is semielliptical. Second floor doorway has sidelights and a semielliptical fanlight. Structure has hip roof with dentil cornice trimming roofline. Roofline broken by pediment. Gabled dormer windows on east and west sides of structure also have semielliptical pattern. Rear facade has one-story porch with deck. Second floor porch originally on rear of structure was removed when damaged by hurricane in 1959. Second floor rear bedrooms were damaged during storm and only a portion was rebuilt. Two hooded chimneys visible from rear. Foundation of house is of tabby. Two cisterns remain in basement and have been loosely filled in with debris.

INTERIOR: Central halls divide the four main rooms on first and second floors. Main floor features archways and wainscoting. Front two rooms of first floor have denticulated mantels. Original pine floors remain. Staircase has scroll pattern. A large office studio on the ground floor has wall of exposed tabby and an unpainted mantle over the fireplace similar in design to those of main floor. Exposed roof construction in attic shows that ceiling rafters are pegged.

SURROUNDINGS: An avenue of oaks one-half mile long provides land entrance to Coffin Point Plantation. Set on a large tree-shaded expanse of green, the house overlooks St. Helena Sound. No original outbuildings are in existence. (The Beaufort County Open Land Trust owns the one-half mile long avenue of oaks. This area is included in the nomination and extends ten feet deep on each side of Coffin Point Road.)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black History		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1801

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Coffin Point, once a prosperous Sea Island plantation, was also a center of activity during the Port Royal experiment in the early years of the War Between the States.

The exact date of construction for the Coffin Point Plantation house is not known; however, Coffin Point Plantation diaries held by the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston date back to 1800. An entry dated October (1801) notes an agreement to employ a Mr. Wade and additional carpenters "to work on St. Helena in the erecting a dwelling house, stable, Negro Houses."¹ As there is no signature and several entries are missing, the diary's author is not identified; however, it is a Coffin Point Plantation Book and is believed to have belonged to Ebenezer Coffin. Coffin, born in Boston 1763, moved to South Carolina and settled at Coffin Point. His son, Thomas Astor Coffin, was in charge of the plantation until Union occupation of St. Helena in 1861.

The builder of Coffin Point was influenced by the Federal style of architecture. The second story doorway is typical of this style with a semielliptical fanlight and with sidelights flanking the door. As is traditional of many early 19th Century houses in the Sea Islands, the foundation of Coffin Point is of tabby.

Prior to the War Between the States Coffin Point was a well known cotton plantation on the Carolina coast, having a reputation of being well managed and prosperous. Cotton produced at Coffin Point received top prices at market, and the high quality sea island cotton seed produced on the plantation and given the Coffin name was in great demand. In addition to producing cotton, some ship building and/or ship repairs took place at the plantation. A diary dated 1816 by Ebenezer Coffin discusses the supplies, slaves, and carpenters involved in the repair of a ship at St. Helena's. The Coffins were a prosperous family, owning land on St. Helena Island as well as a residence in Charleston. After Union occupation of St. Helena, Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the U.S. Treasury Department, reported that 260 slaves had been found at Coffin Point. With the arrival of Union troops in 1861, the Coffins left St. Helena. Thomas Coffin died in Charleston in 1863.

(see continuation sheet)

1

Thomas A. Coffin papers. S.C. Historical Society, 1801.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Thomas Aston Coffin Papers in the South Carolina Historical Society, Fireproof Building, Charleston, S.C.

Easterby, J.H., contributor, "Shipbuilding on St. Helena Island in 1816, A Diary of Ebenzer Coffin," South Carolina Historical & Genealogical Magazine, XLVII, 1946

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ca. 22

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	54,9	19,0	3,518,817,5,0	B	1,7	54,9	68,0	3,518,719,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
c	1,7	54,8	9,2,0	3,518,719,2,0	D	1,7	54,8	12,0	3,518,811,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Coffin Point Plantation House rests on property bounded on the Northeast by the high water mark of St. Helena Sound measuring thereon for a distance of 412.9 feet; Southeast by lot now belonging to Georgianna M. Cook and measuring thereon for a distance of 536.6 feet; Southwest by McTeer Drive and measuring thereon for a distance of 374.5 feet & Northwest by property of J.E. McTeer, Jr. along 3 lines measuring 275.4 feet, 259.2 feet, and 77.0 feet. (see continuation sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary Ann Eaddy, Historic Preservation Division

(Cindy Cole--Lowcountry Regional Office)

George McMillan

ORGANIZATION

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE

5/2/75

STREET & NUMBER

1430 Senate Street

TELEPHONE

(803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

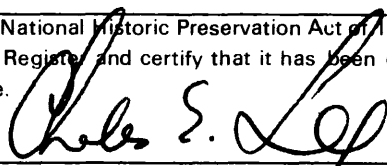
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE



TITLE

Charles E. Lee
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

5/19/75

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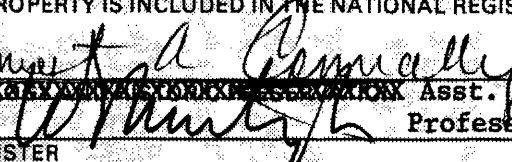
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

AUG 28 1975

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Asst. Director, AUG 22 1975

ATTEST:



Professional Services

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE one

On November 7, 1861 the Sea Islands in the Beaufort area were captured by Union troops. Soldiers were dispatched to confiscate the plantations, crops, and other possessions, which included approximately 10,000 slaves, abandoned by the fleeing white population. The responsibility for the collection of abandoned property was that of the Treasury Department; as a result, Secretary Salmon P. Chase fostered a plan to train and educate newly released slaves in order to prove their effectiveness as free laborers. This effort, beginning March 1862, came to be known as the Port Royal Experiment. Coffin Point Plantation, located on St. Helena Island, was to be directly affected by these events. Cotton agents were sent to the Sea Islands; one of these, Colonel William H. Nobles, whose activities covered the northern end of St. Helena Island, used Coffin Point Plantation as his headquarters. Of the first teachers and labor superintendents sent to St. Helena, Edward S. Philbrick of Massachusetts was appointed to the position at Coffin's Point. Philbrick, who was to be one of the most prominent of the "Gideonites," bought acreage at Coffin Point as well as several other plantations in order to carry on the experiment with free labor. He continued this work at Coffin Point until 1865.

In the early 1890s U.S. Senator James Donald Cameron, a Republican from Pennsylvania and Secretary of War during the Grant Administration, and his wife Elizabeth, niece of General W.T. Sherman, bought Coffin Point. Henry Adams, great-grandson of John Adams and grandson of John Quincy Adams, was a friend of the Camerons and visited them at Coffin Point several times. Adams' correspondence with Mrs. Cameron appears in volumes of his published letters, and his visits to Coffin Point are mentioned in The Education of Henry Adams.

In 1952 Coffin Point was purchased from the Cameron estate by J.E. McTeer, then Sheriff of Beaufort County.

In 1969 Coffin Point was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. George McMillan. Mrs. McMillan, an Associate of the Russian Research Center at Harvard, is the author of Khrushchev and the Arts and is the translator of Twenty Letters to a Friend by Svetlana Alliluyeva. Mr. McMillan has published in the field of civil rights, contributing to such magazines as Life, Look, Harper's and New York Review of Books. He is also the author of The Old Breed: A History of the First Marine Division and has written a biography of James Earl Ray.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE two

Item 9 Biographical References continued:

Johnson, Guion Griffis. A Social History of the Sea Island. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1930.

Pearson, Elizabeth Ware, ed. Letters from Port Royal 1862-1868. Vol. VIII. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969.

Rose, Willie Lee. Rehearsal for Reconstruction, The Port Royal Experiment. New York: Vintage Books, 1964.

Johnson, Allen, ed. Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. III. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

Adams, Henry. The Education of Henry Adams, An Autobiography. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918.

Ford, Worthington Chauncey, ed. Letters of Henry Adams, 1838-1918. Vol. I. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930-38.

Beaufort County Courthouse, Clerk of Court, Deeds.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE three

An additional 16.7 acres of plantation property is bounded on the Northeast by McTeer Drive measuring thereon for a distance of 592.4 feet; Southeast by Coffin Point Road & measuring thereon for a distance of 1334.9 feet; Southwest by a property line of Frederick Larsen & others measuring 342.3 feet; Northwest on property of James Sturkie & others for a distance of 329.1 feet; Southwest by property of James Sturkie for 284 feet & Northwest by Orchard Road for a distance measuring 1001.12 feet.

The above is a description of the McMillan property included within the nomination. Also included is the section of McTeer Drive located between the orchard and the Coffin Point Plantation house. There is a one-half mile long avenue of oaks owned by the Beaufort County Open Land Trust which provides the land entrance to Coffin Point Plantation.

The Land Trust's property extends 10 feet deep on each side of Coffin Point Road. This area is also included within the nomination's boundaries.