United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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  EDISTO ISLAND MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

and or common

2. Location

street & number  NA  not for publication

city, town  Edisto Island  NA  vicinity of

state  South Carolina  code 045  county Charleston  code 019

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name  See Individual Inventory Forms (Multiple ownership)

street & number

city, town  vicinity of  state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.  Charleston County Courthouse

street & number  Broad and Meeting Streets

city, town  Charleston  state South Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title  S. C. Inventory of Historic Places  has this property been determined eligible?  yes  X  no

date 1982  federal  X  state  county  local

depository for survey records  S. C. Department of Archives and History

city, town  Columbia  state South Carolina 29211
7. Description

Condition

\( \checkmark \) excellent
\( \checkmark \) good
\( \checkmark \) fair

Check one:

\( \checkmark \) original site
\( \checkmark \) moved
date

Check one:

\( \checkmark \) unaltered
\( \checkmark \) altered

\( \checkmark \) deteriorated
\( \checkmark \) ruins
\( \checkmark \) unexposed

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Edisto Island Multiple Resource Area nomination contains fourteen individual properties located on Edisto Island, South Carolina, which illustrate life on the island from ca. 1682 until ca. 1898. These properties include tabby house ruins, plantation residences, tabby oven ruins, a store, a plantation commissary, a slave cabin, a house associated with black history after the Civil War, a church's outdoor tabby baptismal pool, and a road.

Additional Information

Edisto Island, located approximately forty miles southeast of Charleston on the coast of South Carolina, is bound on the north and northeast by the North Edisto River, the Dawhoo River, and the intracoastal waterway (Watts Cutt), on the southwest by the South Edisto River, and on the southeast by the Atlantic Ocean.

Containing some 28,811 acres, Edisto is in effect an island made up of islands. This is evident at high spring tides. Intersected by several bold creeks, such as St. Pierre, Store, Russell, Steamboat, and Ocella, Edisto gives the impression that it is not one distinct island, but many. In fact, in addition to Edisto and Edingsville Beaches several other areas are referred to as islands. These include Bailey, Raccoon, Scanawah, Little Edisto, Whooping, Pockoy, and Botany Bay.

Extremely irregular in its dimensions, Edisto Island is at least twelve miles in length and width. Consisting primarily of farm land that was once grown in indigo and sea island cotton, the island's topography is generally very flat. The more elevated areas have a light, sandy soil, while the low grounds or bottoms are of a stiff, clayey quality. Edisto's soil is generally very fertile, with a small proportion of barren land. The remainder of Edisto is made up of woods and salt marsh, the latter of which coverslarge expanses in the northern and western sections. In some cases portions of the marsh were diked and put into production of long-staple cotton.

To the present, Edisto Island remains very rural, with development being restricted to the beach and pockets along S. C. Highway 174, which runs very irregularly through the island.

All of the properties included in the Edisto Island nomination achieved significance between ca. 1682 and ca. 1898. Collectively, they consist of a wide range of resources which contribute to the overall historical and visual quality of the area.
Survey Methodology

This nomination is the product of a comprehensive historical and architectural survey of approximately forty properties on Edisto Island, conducted between May 1982 and October 1984, by Jill Kemmerlin and Martha W. Fullington, survey staff of the State Historic Preservation Office, South Carolina Department of Archives and History. In the latter stages they were assisted by Suzanne P. Wylie and Debra J. Allen of the National Register staff. The goal of the survey was to assess for preservation potential and National Register eligibility all properties in the survey area with historical or architectural value. Additionally, a number of sites with archaeological potential were surveyed. All properties were photographed, recorded on survey forms, and located by number on three U.S. Geological Survey Topographic Maps which include portions of Edisto Island. Supplementing the field survey were historical research, a substantial amount being gathered by Norman McCorkle, Historical Markers Specialist with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, and personal interviews with property owners and local historians. Once completed, the surveyed properties were evaluated according to the National Register criteria.
8. Significance

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Specific dates: ca. 1682—ca. 1898
Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The nomination for the Edisto Island Multiple Resource Area includes fourteen individually nominated properties on Edisto Island, Charleston County, South Carolina, which are of historical and/or architectural significance to the locality and state. These sites, in addition to thirteen properties on Edisto Island already listed in the National Register of Historic Places, are illustrative of about three hundred years of white and black inhabitation, and many hundreds more of Indian habitation. Properties included in this nomination date from ca. 1682 until ca. 1898. They consist of the tabby ruins of the house of one of Edisto Island's first white settlers, five antebellum plantation houses, a slave cabin, a commissary, the ruins of tabby ovens, an early post-Civil War farm, a store, a house associated with black history in the post-Civil War period, a baptismal pool, and an intact section of the old main road on Edisto Island. An agrarian society, the remnants of which have survived in large measure to the present day, is portrayed in these properties.

Additional Information

Edisto Island has had a long history of inhabitation, successively by the Indians, the Spanish, and the English, who brought African slaves to the island in the early years of settlement. Robert Sandford, a Barbadian from the Cape Fear colony, explored the southeastern coast of North America in 1666, and during that expedition, is said to have visited Edisto Island, encountering an Indian tribe which called themselves Edistows. (1) The first evidence of European influence on the island came in the latter part of the sixteenth century with the Spanish, who are said to have called the island "Oristo," a name which may have been a variant of that of the local Indian tribe. (2) A Spanish mission is supposed to have been operated briefly by Jesuit missionaries on the site. The site includes an Indian mound. (See Spanish Mount Point, "The Mound," (38CH62), listed in the National Register in 1974.)

No English settlement occurred until after 1674, the year in which the Lords Proprietors of the colony, led by Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury, instructed Dr. Henry Woodward to buy Locke (Edisto) Island (undoubtedly named for John Locke, seventeenth century philosopher, author of the first Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, and secretary to Lord Ashley) from the Indians for a piece of cloth, hatchets, beads, and other goods and to establish friendly relations with them. (4) In that same year, Andrew Percival, a relation of the Earl of Shaftesbury, was slated to be the governor of a plantation to be established on Locke Island; however, this plantation never materialized. (5)
Some time after 1674, Paul Grimball is supposed to have been granted 600 acres where he settled with his wife and daughters. (6) It is known that on 30 May 1683 the Lords Proprietors granted to Grimball 1,590 acres on Edisto Island, of which he was already in possession. (7) In about 1682, Joseph Morton, fifth colonial governor of the province, constructed his house on the island and brought large numbers of slaves to the property. (8)

Living in these remote areas proved rather hazardous for the earliest white settlers. The Toogoodoos, in sharp contrast to the more peaceful Edistows, were a fierce, warlike Indian tribe which inhabited the area just north of the Dawhoo River and made life uneasy for Morton and others. (9) In 1686 came "one hundred Spaniards, with Negroes and Indians," in a raid. (10) They landed first at what stood the plantation home of Paul Grimball, Secretary of the Province, who was attending with Governor Morton the Council meeting in Charleston. (11) Both Grimball's and Morton's houses were pillaged and burned, although some resistance was offered by the colonial militia. The marauders carried off slaves and other property valued at no less than £3,000 sterling. (12) The tabby remains (see individual inventory form) of Grimball's house can still be seen in a clump of trees very near to the river.

Among the early families who settled on Edisto Island appear names such as Grimball, Seabrook, Jenkins, Chisolm, Middleton, Clark, Frampton, Baynard, Hanahan, Townsend, Murray, Whaley, Edings, Hamilton, Mikell, Wilkinson, Wescott, Mitchell, and Bailey. (13) Early in the eighteenth century, rice was experimented with on Edisto; however, because of the lack of freshwater ponds and suitable land, rice cultivation never took hold. (14)

Island planters concentrated their efforts more with the culture of indigo, which brought prosperity to Edisto. Since its production entailed unpleasant work by a sizable labor force, planters introduced to Edisto large-scale usage of slaves. (15) As early as 1732, there were 553 slaves belonging to Edisto Island planters. Most of these were concentrated in St. Paul's Parish, in which was located Edisto; however, others were distributed among the parishes of St. Bartholomew, St. Helena, and St. Andrew. (16)

England provided the chief market for Carolina indigo, its Parliament instituting in 1749 a bounty to be paid to importers.
Though this bounty encouraged the production of indigo, its effect would have been far greater had the planters received it directly and had it been more discriminating, thus encouraging improvement in the quality of Carolina indigo. (17) Quantity, however, was not affected, for in favorable years Edisto Island plantations produced as many as 330 casks of 160 pounds each. (18)

Indigo’s high point of production in South Carolina came in the decade prior to the Revolutionary War. It was during that period that its cultivation spread along the rivers in the interior of the state. (19) Unfortunately, the advent of the American Revolution brought a cessation of the bounty, and thus a decline in indigo production. A revival came slowly in the post-war period due primarily to the continued viability of the British market. (20) After 1796, however, the industry in South Carolina collapsed, giving rise to other crops such as sea island cotton. (21) The presence of four indigo vats at Peter’s Point Plantation (listed in the National Register in 1973) in 1821, suggests a very late date of indigo cultivation on Edisto. (22)

By 1732, twenty-five percent of Edisto Island’s planters owned five hundred acres or more. (23)

The prosperity which Edisto planters enjoyed in the pre-Revolutionary War days soon brought a need for public roads and other improvements in transportation to, from, and on the island. An act of the state legislature in June 1714 voted approval for a "highroad and causeway" to be built from (24) In 1751 an act appointed commissioners for "cutting, clearing and cleaning 'Watt's Cutt'" (at the northwest corner of the island). (25)

Robert Mills, in his Statistics of South Carolina, wrote that "to afford the means of maintaining a regular intercourse with the adjacent main, and the contiguous islands of Wadmalaw, two ferries were established about sixty-six years since (ca. 1760) by legislative authority; but such was the infrequency of the intercourse, that these ferries have been discontinued." (26) He went on to state that "measures are now (1826) however taken by the state, to construct a causeway and ferry, from this island (Edisto) to the main land. Contracts have been made for its execution." (27) This was in use until about 1920, when the "Hump Bridge" was constructed over Russell Creek, and the Dawhoo Bridge was built to span the creek by that name, thus giving Edistonians automobile access to the mainland and to Charleston. (28)
Mills' Atlas indicates a main road on the island roughly (30) This road, still in existence, is a part of this nomination (see individual inventory form).

Other roads such as Point of Pines, Peter's Point, Botany Bay, and Steamboat Landing are distinctive and important features in the history of the island. While most ferries were abandoned, these roads and the several bold creeks (i.e. Steamboat Creek, St. Pierre's Creek, which divides into Fishing Creek, Store Creek, and Bailey Creek), which cut deep into the island, were for many years the means of transportation on Edisto.

The island was not affected by the Revolution to any great degree. A voluntary company of Edistonians was organized in 1776, the roster or muster roll of which still survives. (31) Though most of the island families' livelihoods depended upon the British government, they appear to have been patriotic to the cause of the new United States of America.

Throughout much of 1781 fighting occurred in South Carolina all the way from Savannah to Charleston; however, Edisto Island, rather remote from the beaten path, escaped battle. (32)

Suffering the loss of profitability of indigo by the hostilities between England and her American colonies, Edisto planters ultimately turned in 1796 to the production of cotton. With seeming reluctance and great doubts of the result, planters began cultivating a long staple strain which came to be called sea island cotton. In favorable years a planter on an extended scale made 270 pounds per acre. There were, however, lots of land, owing either to peculiar local advantages, favorable seasons, or superior management, which produced as much as 435 pounds per acre. (33) Sea island cotton flourished in the black fertile soil of Edisto and "produced a long silky staple with so perfect a texture it was adapted to the most delicate manufacture". (34) Edisto planters experimented with their seed, and ultimately each perfected his own jealously guarded strain, recognizable only to its owner. (35) Some fertilizers, such as guano, began to be used, but of more general use was the salt-marsh mud, which was easily accessible from the fields and was the cheapest, yet most profitable, manure. (36) The sale of this long staple cotton brought fabulous wealth to Edisto planters. No longer did most continue to live in the sturdy, yet moderately-sized, homes of the eighteenth century. With such abundant wealth they constructed gracious lofty
mansions, with gazebos, summer houses, and beautiful gardens and walks. These included such houses as William Seabrook's House (listed in the National Register in 1971); Middleton's Plantation (listed also in 1971), owned once by the Chisolm family; Isaac Jenkins Mikell's Peter's Point Plantation (listed in 1973); and the Townsend family's Bleak Hall (demolished; outbuildings listed in 1973). Others from this period of great houses are part of this nomination. These consist of Brooklands, ca. 1800, owned by the Jenkins family; William Seabrook, Jr.'s Oak Island, ca. 1828; James and Carolina Lafayette Seabrook Hopkinson's Cassina Point, ca. 1848; and Prospect Hill, ca. 1800, built by Ephraim Baynard (see individual inventory forms).

Population statistics on Edisto Island are difficult to determine accurately because the censuses do not always specify Edisto Island inhabitants, but more often group them with those of Wadmalaw and John's Island (cumulatively known as St. John's Colleton County). A census of the island taken in 1808 set the white population at 236 inhabitants. According to a tax return of the district for the year 1807, population on the island included 2,609 slaves.

Some plantations on Edisto Island, mentioned in an account dated some time before 1808 by Joseph James Murray of the island, include those of the Rev. Mr. McLeod, Messrs. Ephraim Mikell, James Clark, William Eddings, Daniel Townsend, William Seabrook, William C. Meggott, Dr. Chisolm, Gabriel Seabrook, and Norman McLeod.

Edisto Island flourished throughout the antebellum period. As they prospered, the above mentioned families, in addition to others, established a resort village on Edingsville Beach, a small barrier island connected to Edisto by a causeway built on a foundation of sea shells and black marsh mud. It was discovered, without knowledge of the reason, that the sea breezes brought relief from the dreaded "country fever", or malaria, so prevalent in the Low Country during the hot months. This settlement remained until a hurricane in 1893 washed it out to sea.

The Civil War brought an end to the affluent life of the island's planters. Plantation houses and promising crops were abandoned in the face of the oncoming Union army. With the occupation of the entire island by Union troops beginning in the Spring of 1862, there soon came the evacuation of some sixteen hundred blacks from Edisto to St. Helena Island, where they remained throughout the war. This mass exodus, part of the Port Royal Experiment, transformed Edisto into a no-man's-land that was raided sporadically throughout the war by scouting parties from each army.
On 16 January 1865, came General William T. Sherman's famous Special Field Order Number 15, designating the whole sea island region, from Charleston southward to the St. John's River, and the coastal lands thirty miles to the interior for exclusive Negro settlement. (44) Thousands of freedmen, both for Edisto occupants and those from the interior, quartered on Edisto, clinging to "possessory" titles to lands on the island. Many of them, especially the children, died either in transit or once on Edisto, from starvation or dysentery. (45) They lived in every available building, including the main plantation houses. Living conditions were atrocious, and not until after the war ended did the Freedmen's Bureau, established on 3 March 1865, act in the interests of the former slaves to make them better. (46)

After the war a number of former plantation owners petitioned President Andrew Johnson to have their properties restored, explaining that their old homes were the only places they had to go. Their request was finally granted in late 1865 by the Freedmen's Bureau, under the direction of General O.O. Howard. Edisto freedmen were allowed to harvest the existing crops and to contract or lease the lands they had occupied. Freedmen's schools were allowed to continue. (47) This arrangement was not totally satisfactory to all freedmen, and these sought land by other means.

On 27 March 1869, the State legislature established the South Carolina Land Commission, beginning a unique Reconstruction program intended to provide freedmen with the opportunity to become landowners. The origin of the state's commitment toward making former slaves freeholders can be found in the Port Royal Experiment on the sea islands during the Civil War. (48) In 1872 an association of freedmen on Edisto reportedly bought a 750-acre plantation on the island. (49) It is unlikely, however, that after the war many freedmen acquired land through cooperative purchase. (50) In 1870, a mass meeting of blacks on Edisto, chaired by James Hutchinson, a mulatto, produced a letter addressed to Governor Robert K. Scott, asking him or someone to purchase a 900-acre plantation on the island to be divided among the freedmen. (51) It remains unclear as to the results of this request. It is known, however, that Hutchinson received a 452-acre plantation located the former Clark Plantation, a part of which was subdivided about 1878 among his children and other freedmen. The house, ca. 1880, (see individual inventory form) of his son, Henry Hutchinson, is included in this nomination. (52)

In the years following the war and Reconstruction, Edisto began to redevelop. Many former plantation owners and their families
re-established their farms, on which they resumed production of sea island cotton. Some established post-war plantations, one of the best known of these being Sunnyside, ca. 1875, (see individual inventory form), home of Townsend Mikell. (53) Cotton gins operated here and elsewhere on the island during this period. Commercial establishments such as Bailey's Store (see individual inventory form) became focal points to island residents, and plantation commissaries, such as the one at Old House Plantation (see individual inventory form) became prevalent. These served the needs of plantations and farms, with some serving more than one. (54)
NOTES


4Robert K. Ackerman, South Carolina Colonial Land Policies (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), p. 29; Puckette, p. 3.

5Ibid., pp. 28-29.

6Puckette, p. 3.

7Grant to Paul Grimball, 30 May 1683, Volume 38, p. 218 (Microfilm copy), Secretary of State of South Carolina, Recorded Instruments, Land Grants, Colonial Series, 1694-1776: Royal Grants. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

8Graydon, pp. 1-2.

9Ibid.; Puckette, p. 3.


11Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Puckette, p. 4; Graydon, p. 3.
14 Ibid.
15 Puckette, p. 4.

16 Assessment on Edisto Island, in St. Paul's Parish, 20 April 1732, Private Papers, Box 8, Folder 5, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.


18 Puckette, p. 4.

21 Ibid.
22 Puckette, p. 4.
23 Assessment on Edisto Island.


27 Ibid.

28 Leiding, p. 216; Puckette, p. 58.

29 Mills, Atlas.

30 Puckette, p. 7.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.


34 Graydon, p. 2


37 Puckette, p. 11.

38 Ramsay, p. 279.

39 Ibid., pp. 279-80.

40 Mills, Statistics, pp. 474-75.

41 Graydon, pp. 3, 140.


43 Ibid., p. 183.
44Ibid., pp. 327-28.
47Rose, pp. 352-54.
49Ibid., p. 19.
50Ibid.
51Ibid., p. 38; C.C. Bowen to Governor Robert K. Scott, 3 February 1875, in Governor Robert K. Scott Papers, Letters Received, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.
52Telephone interviews with Mrs. Myrtle Hutchinson Esteves, Charleston, S.C., 18 December 1985 and 6 January 1986; Charleston County Plats, plat of land owned by James Hutchinson, recorded 8 November 1900, copy in possession of Mrs. Esteves.
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: See Individual Inventory Forms

Quadrangle name: ____________________________

Quadrangle scale: ____________________________

UTM References

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11. Form Prepared By

Andrew W. Chandler, National Register Manager

Tom Shaw, Architectural Historian

Patricia Criddlebaugh, Archeologist

South Carolina Dept. of Archives/History

Date: January 9, 1986

1430 Senate Street

734-8577

Columbia

South Carolina

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national | state | local

See Individual Inventory Forms

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature: [Signature]

Date: 9/24/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register:

[Signature]

Date: 11/28/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: ____________________________

Chief of Registration
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Furman University, Greenville, S.C.
Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend Papers, South Carolina Baptist
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State Historic Preservation Office Files

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

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<td></td>
<td>7. Oak Island</td>
<td>Keeper - 11/28/86 Attest</td>
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<td>8. Point of Pines Plantation Slave Cabin entered in the National Register</td>
<td>Keeper - 11/28/86 Attest</td>
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<td>10. Sunnyside</td>
<td>Keeper - 11/28/86 Attest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Name: Edisto Island MRA
State: Charleston County, SOUTH CAROLINA

Nomination/Type of Review
11. Townsend's Hephzibah Jenkins, Tabby Oven Ruins
12. Wescoat Road
13. Old House Plantation and Commissary (B.I.)

Date/Signature
Keeper: [Signature]
Attest: [Signature]
Keeper: [Signature]
Attest: [Signature]
Keeper: [Signature]
Attest: [Signature]
Keeper: [Signature]
Attest: [Signature]