

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration FormDetermined Eligible  
10/6/88

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Sams Tabby Complex (38BU581)

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number South end of Datha Island at Mink's Pt. near Jenkins Cr. ☐ not for publicationcity, town St. Helena Island ☐ vicinitystate South Carolina code 045 county Beaufort code 013 zip code 29920

## 3. Classification

## Ownership of Property

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

## Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)  
☐ district  
☒ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

## Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>16</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>16</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c1740-c1935Number of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 0

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Mary W. Edmunds  
Signature of certifying official8/11/88  
DateGeorge L. Vogt, State Historic Preservation Officer, S. C. Dept. of Archives & History  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☒ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

- ☐ removed from the National Register.  
☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

10-6-88

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Domestic/Secondary Structures

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/outdoor recreation

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Tabby

walls Tabby

roof

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Sams Tabby Complex (38BU581) is located on the south end of Datha Island at Mink's Point near Jenkins Creek. The plantation complex encompasses approximately ten acres on which the ruins and/or archaeological remains of at least twelve tabby structures have been identified. Presently, 38BU581 is surrounded by a golf course and other grassed areas with limited understory vegetation.

This site, possibly built upon and occupied well before 1783, was sold that year by Robert and Sarah Gibbs to William Sams. William Sams' son, Berners Barnwell Sams, was the next owner-occupant of the two-story, four room tabby house. In the early 1800s he added two wings to the original house, because of the increase of his family. Other tabby structures, possibly constructed at this time, included a rectangular enclosure comprised of tabby walls, a large tabby kitchen (with an 8 ft fireplace), and five tabby slave quarters. This configuration of tabby walls, buildings, and plantation house surrounded an interior courtyard. Immediately outside this enclosure were a variety of tabby dependencies which included a barn/stables, a smokehouse or blade house, a well/dairy house, and a well. About 300 ft northwest of these structures was the Sams family cemetery and Episcopal chapel enclosed by high tabby walls. Two other structures, possibly an overseer's house and a granary/mill were located to the southeast of the plantation house. Approximately 600 ft southwest of the main house was a tabby cotton house. Ruins or foundations of all these structures have been archaeologically inventoried. Historic documentation indicates additional buildings, within close proximity, included main barns, a slave street, fowl houses, and a pigeonier; these structures have not been located to date.

The most intact ruins, which retain some standing walls, chimneys, or tabby foundations, are the main house, kitchen, cemetery wall, well, and smokehouse. One structure, the smokehouse, is entirely intact and retains the only pitched tabby roof known to exist anywhere in the United States. Extensive main house ruins define the house design as a rectangular central portion with smaller wings offset to the rear. One large tabby pier was centered under each of the two wings.

☐ See continuation sheet

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The chapel, portions of the main house, barn/stables, overseer's house, granary, and cotton house exhibit intact and/or non-contiguous tabby foundations. In addition, recent archaeological investigations have exposed the tabby foundation remains which comprise the kitchen, the slave quarters, and the walls which connect with the house to form the courtyard enclosure.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☒ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Archaeology/Historic - Non-Aboriginal

Period of Significance

c. 1780 - c. 1880

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

Sea Islanders

Black Freedmen

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Although varying levels of archaeological investigations ranging from data recovery to testing have been conducted at 38BU581, this site retains a high level of integrity within the unexcavated as well as excavated areas. The research conducted at these sites has demonstrated the density, clarity, and diversity of archaeological deposits and features at each site. Interpretations of eighteenth and nineteenth century sea island cotton and indigo plantation lifeways and patterns of behavior may be derived from the analyses of the variety of cultural materials represented at the site.

Berners Barnwell and Lewis Reeve Sams acquired the plantation, which encompassed the entire island, from their father in the early 1800s; the brothers then divided the original plantation in half. The Sams grew indigo, cotton, and oranges. Apparently they shared the 35-acre orange orchard. This important and unique orange crop was shipped by schooner to Charleston for distribution to northern markets. The slave labor force necessary for these plantation operations numbered in the hundreds. Archaeological surveys have identified tabby ruins, probably representative of slave quarters/houses and other farm buildings, scattered over the island. Following the Civil War, the Lewis Sams plantation house was destroyed by hurricanes. Consequently, the most extensive and intact tabby ruins and archaeological remains are the Sams Tabby Complex (38BU581).

Berners Barnwell Sams (1787-1855), physician and planter, had a good knowledge of all the work that was required for building, planting, and management operation. He also was well known for his administrative talents. Sams reputedly gave religious instruction, as well as medical attention, to his slaves. (Dabbs) In 1850 he planted such crops as cotton, corn, sweet potatoes, and orchard products, working some one hundred and seventy-five slaves on a plantation of some nineteen hundred to two thousand acres. (1850 Agricultural Census, Beaufort County, South Carolina) It seems that Sams spent his winter months

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residing in his c. 1818 Beaufort home, while his brother Lewis remained on the island during this time and may have possibly been in charge of all the family plantation operations on Datha. However, in 1852, a few years before his brother's death, Lewis built a residence in Beaufort. (1850 Population Census, Beaufort County, South Carolina; Historic Resources of the Lowcountry)

During and subsequent to the Civil War, the Sams Tabby Complex was occupied by freedmen. Before the turn of the century the main house accidentally burned and the property was probably abandoned at that time. Many details relative to this plantation are not historically documented. The site exhibits excellent integrity and is both archaeologically and architecturally significant. Archaeologically, 38BU581 has the potential to yield valuable scientific data which will provide details regarding eighteenth through nineteenth century occupation of the site. Analysis of the architectural remains coupled with archaeologically derived data can provide information regarding a wide range of research questions. These questions include:

- 1) Definition of the time of earliest building and occupation activities at the site.
- 2) Definition of the building phases and the function of individual buildings.
- 3) Comparison and contrast of the lifeways of high status to low status planters, overseer's, and slaves.
- 4) Information relative to the lifeways and treatment of house slaves who lived in quarters located within the plantation courtyard. Also, such data would provide the opportunity for a comparison of house servant versus field slave status at the Sams Plantation as well as with other antebellum slave occupations.
- 5) Information relative to the lifeways of freedmen living at the plantation absent white planters/owners.
- 6) Definition of landscape use patterns through time.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

SC Department of Archives and History  
Columbia, SC

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 10 acres

UTM References

A 17 538995 358130  
Zone Easting Northing

C 17 539320 358210

B 17 539285 358285  
Zone Easting Northing

D 17 538860 358240

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nomination is shown as the black line on the accompanying U.S.G.S. Topographic Map, Frogmore, S.C., Quadrangle, drawn at a scale of 1:24000.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the tabby ruins of the main house and historic outbuildings as well as other landscape and architectural features significant to the Sams plantation.

☐ See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Patricia Cridlebaugh, Staff Archaeologist

organization SC Department of Archives and History date 15 February 1988

street & number 1430 Senate St., P.O. Box 11669 telephone (803) 734-8608

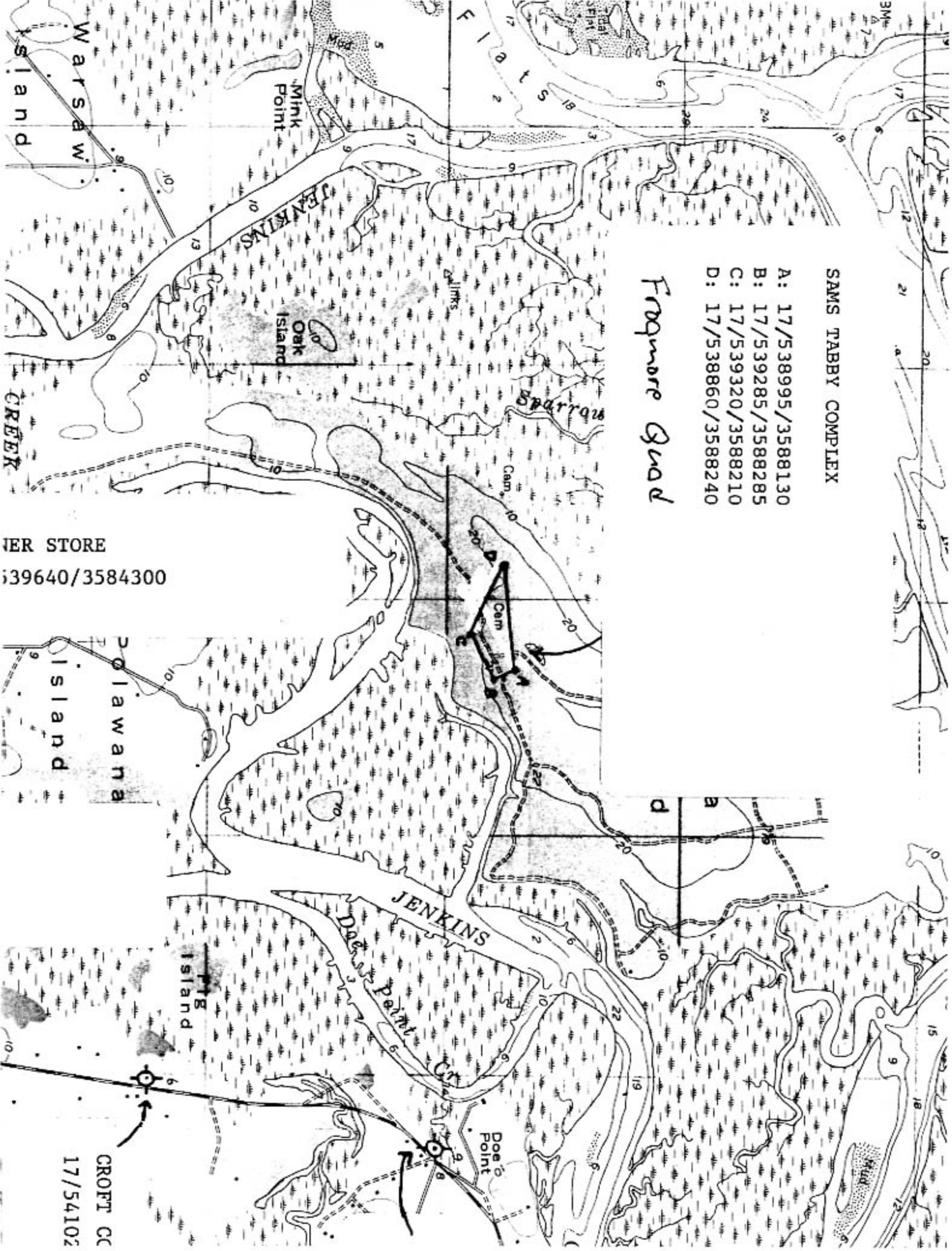
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29211



SAMS TABBY COMPLEX

A: 17/538995/3588130  
 B: 17/539285/3588285  
 C: 17/539320/3588210  
 D: 17/538860/3588240

*Freemore Quad*



HER STORE  
 539640/3584300

CROFT CC  
 17/54102

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Sams Plantation Complex Tabby Ruins

Name of Property

Beaufort County, South Carolina

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8

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The Sams Tabby Complex (38 BU 581) on Dataw (Datha) Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina, was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to owner objection by the Keeper of the National Register on October 6, 1988. Subsequently, ownership of the property changed hands and the new owner, the Dataw Island Owners Association, requested that the objection be removed and the property listed. The National Park Service listed the property in the National Register on March 4, 2011. At the time this request was submitted to the National Park Service by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SC SHPO), the SC SHPO also requested that the historic name be revised as Sams Plantation Complex Tabby Ruins, which is a more accurate and comprehensive description of the site. This is consistent with two other tabby ruin sites in Beaufort County previously listed in the National Register, the Laurel Bay Plantation and Riverside Plantation Tabby Ruins. The SC SHPO is making this request again as part of the documentation submitted to correct errors in the original nomination. Archaeological and historical evidence corrects errors in Sections 7 and 8, numbers 3 and 4 below.<sup>1</sup>

The following information corrects errors in the original nomination:

- 1) Historic Name: Sams Plantation Complex Tabby Ruins.
- 2) Location: South end of Dataw (Datha) Island, near intersection of Dataw Drive and Dataw Club Road.
- 3) Narrative Description: The "Smokehouse" is actually the Dairy/Cold Room.
- 4) Statement of Significance: The original statement of significance contains conflicting statements regarding the destruction of the Sams plantation house, first saying it was destroyed by hurricanes and later saying by fire. Archaeological evidence indicates that the plantation house was destroyed by fire in the 1870s.

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this   X   nomination   X   request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property   X   meets        does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant   X   nationally        statewide        locally. (        See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

State or Federal agency and bureau

<sup>1</sup> Leslie M. Drucker, Ph.D., Carolina Archaeological Services, Columbia, South Carolina, October 1982, Final Management Summary prepared for Alcoa South Carolina, Inc., Jupiter, Florida, "Phase 1, Cultural Resources Investigations at Datha Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina."