

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: South Carolina	
COUNTY: Charleston	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.45.0034	DATE 10/15/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fig Island *Site*

AND/OR HISTORIC:
(38CH42)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
[REDACTED]

CITY OR TOWN:
Edisto Island

STATE: South Carolina CODE: 39 COUNTY: Charleston CODE: 019

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) none
Comments: _____			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

[REDACTED]

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Charleston STATE: South Carolina CODE: 39

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
none

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

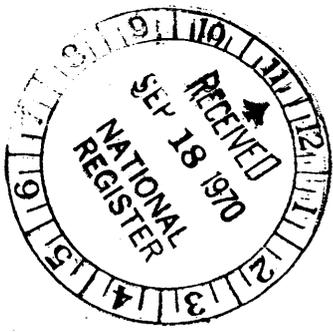
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Fig Island site consists of three prehistoric Indian shell middens
 [REDACTED]
 out evidence of occupation.

[REDACTED] It contains a great quantity of oyster and other mollusc shell and pottery sherds. Shell has been removed in the past along the north end of the midden, but a large, presumably deep, deposit remains. Fig Island 2 is a midden deposited in a ring shape in the [REDACTED] crest to crest and stands to a maximum height of four feet above a flat central area, [REDACTED]. The rim, virtually intact, contains abundant shell, animal and fish bone, and pottery sherds. Fig Island 2 is currently under excavation by the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina (July and August 1970). Fig Island 3 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Slightly less than half this ring remains.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

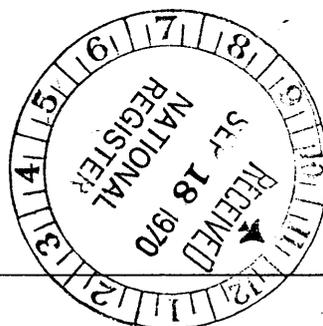
- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fig Island Shell Rings, Nos. 2 and 3, are two of 20 or more prehistoric shell rings located from the central coast of South Carolina to the central coast of Georgia, a distance of about 150 miles. All are believed to date early in the second millenium B.C., and they contain some of the earliest pottery known in North America. Only very limited excavations have been undertaken in a few of these rings. Consequently, the function of the ring shape is unknown, although the rings appear to be carefully planned and systematically deposited structures. As such, they also present one of the earliest records of sedentary life among people who must have lived entirely by foraging. The shell rings can be expected to yield valuable information about past habitats on the coast, both from their rich content of food refuse and from their relationships to modern environments. Most are situated about 5 feet above present mean sea level, but the relationship to sea level at the time of occupation is unknown. It seems unlikely that sea level was a great deal higher about 4000 years ago than at present from the evidence of these lowlying rings. An unknown number of shell ring sites has been lost to marine erosion and to borrowing shell for road building; many of the remaining rings show the effects of unauthorized digging.

Fig Island represents a complex of at least two rings (Nos. 2 and 3), and possibly one or more others on No. 1 which are obscured by shell removal, overlying deposits, or dense vegetation. Other shell ring complexes are located at Sapelo Island, Georgia (3 rings), and Hilton Head Island, S.C. (2 rings). Excavations at Fig Island, now underway, should yield much information about the use of rings and ring complexes, past environments, and so on. Fig Island 2, which is virtually intact, is exceeded in diameter only by the largest shell ring at Sapelo Island, Georgia.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: [REDACTED]

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
South Carolina	39	Charleston	019
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Dr. E. Thomas Hemmings

ORGANIZATION: **Institute of Archeology and Anthropology** DATE: **7-23-70**

STREET AND NUMBER:
University of South Carolina

CITY OR TOWN: **Columbia** STATE: **South Carolina** CODE: **39**

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Charles E. Lep

Title Director, South Carolina Department Archives and History

Date August 29, 1970

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

Ernest Allen Connolly
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date OCT 15 1970
OCT 15 1970

ATTEST:
Woodford
Asst. Keeper of The National Register

Date OCT 6 1970

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