

# A look back: Wedgefield Plantation through the years

By Tommy Howard news@southstrandnews.com Jan 19, 2018 Updated 22 hrs ago



The residence at Wedgefield Plantation dates back to the 1930s. This house was built by Robert Goelet of Rhode Island, who bought the property in 1935. This photo is from the book, "Georgetown Rice Plantation" by Alberta Morel Lachicotte Quattlebaum.

Buy

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Wedgefield Plantation sits along the Black River, just a few miles north of Georgetown.

Known today as a residential community with a country club, golf and tennis courts and Manor House restaurant, the property currently encompasses about 520 acres.

After being closed for more than a year, Mitch Thompkins and several family members are working to reopen the property and are selling memberships to the country club and other amenities.

Long before golf, a swimming pool and tennis courts graced the property, Wedgefield was among more than 150 rice plantations in Georgetown County.

## Early years

Back in the day, around 1734 when John Green received several land grants, he had land that was later developed into Wedgefield, Mansfield, Windsor, Beneventum and Peru plantations.

Windsor and Wedgefield had much in common through the mid-1700s.

Members of the Waties family were Indian agents and traded with the Indians in Georgetown County.

John Waties bought some of the land in 1757, and in 1761 his executors sold a portion to Samuel Wragg. He and his brother Joseph Wragg had come to the Carolina colony as merchants.

In the Charleston area the brothers prospered as high-volume slave traders.

They owned and developed plantations in the Charleston area, and both brothers were involved in colonial government.

In 1738, Joseph Wragg purchased some land along the Black River. Later, Samuel Wragg bought a portion of Joseph's land from his niece, who had inherited the land when her father died. Samuel Wragg and John Waties exchanged some lands, including a portion of Waties' Windsor Plantation. He later bought a portion of Waties' remaining land from his executors.

There were several other transactions with some of this land. Meantime, Samuel Wragg continued as a merchant and was also part owner of the schooners "Ann" and "Non Parel." Both of those were built in Georgetown. He also was part owner of the "Winyah Packet," built in Massachusetts but later transferred to Georgetown.

During those Colonial years, Wragg established rights to operate a ferry at his Black River plantation. Since much travel was river-based and roads were limited, the ferry operation could be profitable. Wragg's Ferry could generate a dollar for a four-wheeled carriage, 50 cents for a two-wheeled carriage and 20 cents for a horse and rider. Since the location was near Georgetown and Pee Dee plantations, the ferry provided good income.

During the Revolutionary War, British soldiers occupied Wedgefield. In 1787, Samuel Wragg died and his son Samuel Wragg Jr. became the owner. In 1796, he and several others were named to a committee

to study the location of the ferry. The next year they determined "Wragg's Ferry was, on many accounts, inconvenient and from its exposure to high winds frequently impassable."

The committee recommended moving the crossing to Christopher Gadsden's nearby Beneventum Plantation, at the site formerly known as Charing-Cross ferry. Gadsden and his heirs held the ferry rights for 21 years. They were later acquired by John Julius Pringle when he bought Beneventum, and it became Pringle's Ferry.

Samuel Wragg attended Cambridge University -- later Harvard. While he continued to own Wedgefield and some other properties, he didn't trade, sell and exchange his lands to the extent that many other plantation owners did, according to "The Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County and the Santee River."

In 1840, Wragg sold his 399-acre plantation to Dr. Francis S. Parker. A year later, Parker traded Wedgefield to his father-in-law, Rev. Maurice H. Lance, in exchange for Greenwich Plantation. His wife was Anna Maria Taylor Allston. She was the sister of John Man Taylor and heir to several properties, including Mansfield, which is adjacent to Wedgefield.

Rev. Lance had been a lay reader at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia. In Georgetown, he succeeded the Rev. Hugh Fraser at Prince George in 1815.

Through his wife, Lance owned and operated not only Wedgefield but also Springfield, Mansfield, Greenwich and Mauricena plantations.

Over time, rice in Georgetown made plantation owners wealthy. In 1850, Lance produced 660,000 pounds of rice at Wedgefield and Mauricena with 262 slaves.

### **Aftermath of the Civil War**

After the Civil War -- Lance and his family apparently moved to the Upstate during the war -- he sold Wedgefield to John Francis Pyatt.

Times were quite tough all around in the aftermath of the Civil War. Pyatt was struggling to manage Kensington and Richmond plantations -- in 2018 a subdivision, Walmart and other properties make up significant portions of those former plantations. Pyatt assigned his mortgage on Wedgefield to Joanna Gaillard. Later, members of the Hazzard family acquired the property. Brothers William Miles Hazzard and John P. Hazzard were planting Beneventum and Keithfield, and they set up their nephew William W.H. Holmes at Wedgefield in 1892, according to the "Historical Rice Atlas."

As happened with many properties around the turn of the 20th Century, Wedgefield changed hands again in 1909. Frederick Wentworth Ford bought the property. He had married into the Lucas family, who owned Rice Hope Plantation on the Santee River. In 1920, the Fords sold Wedgefield to James J. Scurry of Georgetown and E.F. Prosser of Johnsonville. There were several other sales in the 1920s and 1930s.

In 1935, Wedgefield took on the look familiar today. Robert Goelet of Newport, Rhode Island bought the property, tore down the old house and built a new home. This third house is today the Manor House restaurant and clubhouse at Wedgefield. In 1946, Ingram-Dargan Lumber bought the property, deeding it to Stewart Clare the next year.

Another Hazzard – John P. Hazzard III – bought Wedgefield in 1950. His family sold the property in 1969. Several subsequent owners developed Wedgefield into the subdivision as it is today, along with the golf course, Manor House restaurant, tennis courts and pool.

Much of the material for this history came from the “Historical Rice Atlas” by Suzanne Cameron Linder and Marta Leslie Thacker, and “Georgetown Rice Plantations” by Alberta Morel Lachicotte Quattlebaum.

Mitch Thompkins, as mentioned previously, is now operating Wedgefield Country Club with those amenities. His wife Jamie and sisters-in-law Renee and Denise are working to convert one of the rooms in the Manor House into a history room.

Visit [www.wedgefieldcountryclub.com](http://www.wedgefieldcountryclub.com), "Wedfield Country Club" Facebook page, email [MitchThompkins@yahoo.com](mailto:MitchThompkins@yahoo.com) or call 843-325-3534 for more information on Wedgefield Plantation.

The officé address at the Manor House is 129 Club House Lane, Georgetown, SC 29440.