

HOPSEWEE HERITAGE: *The Hume-Lucas Story*

Thomas Lynch, Jr., sold Hopsewee in 1762 to Robert Hume, who died only four years after moving to the plantation. Hume had two sons: Alexander, who died in the siege of Savannah in 1779, and John, who was only two years old when the family moved to Hopsewee. As a young man, he fought with Francis Marion (the Swamp Fox) during the Revolutionary War.

After the war, the Hume family lived at Hopsewee in winters and Charleston in the summers. He died in 1841, leaving behind seven children and several grandchildren. In 1844, the estate of John Hume listed the property for public sale—advertising it as “That Plantation Called Hopsewee”—and divided the proceeds among his heirs.

The successful bidder was his grandson, John Hume Lucas, who was married to his first cousin, Eleanor Ball Simons, also a grandchild of John Hume. Hopsewee remained a very successful rice plantation under his care. In 1850 the Georgetown Census showed Hopsewee Plantation had 178 slaves and produced 360,000 pounds of rice. After Lucas died in 1853, his widow and three children lived in nearby Charleston most of the year, returning to Hopsewee for Christmas and Easter.

The plantation at Hopsewee continued successful production under an agent’s supervision until the Civil War. The beautiful furnishings that had remained in the home fell into the possession of Yankee troops during the evacuation of Charleston; whatever was left was distributed among the former slaves.

In 1866, the planters, who had left their homes as wealthy men, returned from battle poverty stricken and tried to take up the old way of life on the abandoned plantations. Although Hopsewee was never planted again, a large number of remaining slaves continued renting and working on the property.

William Lucas, the eldest son of John Hume Lucas and his wife, Mary Doar Lucas, returned to Hopsewee in 1900, where they lived until his death in January, 1914. In 1935 Mrs. William Lucas wrote, “Now the old house is closed and has been for twenty-one years. Will it ever be opened again? Not for the Lucas family in whose possession—and the Humes—it has been for nearly two hundred years. It is taken care of and, as much as possible, kept in order, but this once quiet place is now on the Georgetown-to-Charleston highway, which goes right through the property, within a short distance of the residence.”