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From Rice Fields to Duck Marshes: Sport Hunters and Environmental Change on the South Carolina Coast, 1890–1950

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FROM RICE FIELDS TO DUCK MARSHES: SPORT HUNTERS AND
ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE ON THE SOUTH CAROLINA COAST, 1890–1950

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DEDICATION

In memory of my brother Marc D. Lockhart, who began this journey with
me

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ABSTRACT

In part because some historians are ethically opposed to their avocation, sport hunters of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era are an understudied group. As environmental actors, they have been virtually ignored. Based on the biological traits of their quarry, one particular subset of sportsmen, waterfowl hunters, were especially disposed to manipulating the environment in which they hunted. Their efforts to attract migratory waterfowl to privately owned wetlands through habitat management, which started nearly a half-century before federal engineers and biologists undertook similar work on the national wildlife refuges in the 1930s, were pioneering. By the midpoint of the twentieth century, sportsmen were managing several million acres of wetlands in the United States as waterfowl habitat.

In areas with high concentrations of duck-shooting preserves, sportsmen's management activities could alter the regional ecology. Strong evidence of duck hunters effecting widespread environmental change comes from South Carolina, where they purchased unprofitable rice plantations around the turn of the twentieth century and converted them to shooting preserves by employing a mixture of old and new approaches to wetland use. Initially, they carried on traditional agricultural practices and retained much of the ecological integrity of the rice plantations. Later, though, after adopting modern waterfowl-management

techniques that sportsmen were using with good results in other parts of the country, they altered the ecology of the plantations by introducing new species of plants and reclaiming tidal impoundments. Managed duck marshes, artificial ecosystems created by the sportsmen, became a dominant feature of South Carolina's coastal wetlandscape by the mid-twentieth century. At this point, hunters in South Carolina and elsewhere began passing on responsibility for managing waterfowl habitat to wildlife biologists.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the Gilded Age, hunting for sport became a popular pastime of the urban elite in the United States, who accumulated—either individually, in small groups, or as members of well-organized clubs—large blocks of open countryside where they could indulge their enthusiasm for pursuing game without interference. In the aggregate, their private hunting grounds amounted to tens of millions of acres. Historians have had almost nothing to say about nineteenth-century sportsmen’s relationships to the lands they hunted. At a time when rapidly accelerating technology was ravaging the environment and sportsmen were involved in the nascent conservation movement, it is tempting to think of these hunting “preserves,” as the name implies, preserving the last vestiges of untouched American wilderness, where wildlife still thrived under natural conditions. In reality, sport hunters often went to great lengths to keep their preserves well-stocked with game, including manipulation of the natural environment. Within the sport-hunting community, duck hunters were most active in manipulating the environment since the birds they sought were strong flyers, could bypass one pond for another, and flocked to where they found the habitat favorable. In their efforts to attract migratory waterfowl for shooting, turn-of-the-century sportsmen developed and then replicated at preserve after preserve

in state after state a wetland ecosystem that had never existed before in nature—the managed duck marsh. After much of the birds' natural wetland habitat succumbed to drainage and drought in the early twentieth century, the sportsmen's managed duck marshes served an important conservation purpose as well. In regions with concentrations of duck-shooting preserves such as the rice-plantation country of coastal South Carolina, managed marshes came to predominate the wetlandscape. The environmental history of these unnatural wetlands brings to light hunters' ecological connection to their hunting grounds.

One reason that sport hunters do not receive recognition for having pioneered in the areas of waterfowl management and wetlands conservation is because bureaucratic conservationists of the New Deal era took the credit for themselves. Ira N. Gabrielson, for example, was the last chief of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey and the first director of its successor, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Shortly after his retirement on April 1, 1946, *Science Monthly* invited Gabrielson to contribute an article reviewing the major accomplishments of these agencies during his eleven-year administration. In his reflections, Gabrielson pointed to the dramatic recovery of the continental migratory waterfowl population, decimated from decades of intense hunting pressure and habitat destruction, as one of the greatest successes from his time in office. According to the bureau's estimate, waterfowl numbers roughly quadrupled under Gabrielson's watch. He attributed the gains in large measure to the aggressive expansion of the national wildlife refuge system instituted during the brief tenure of his predecessor, Jay N. "Ding" Darling—from 104 refuges with

6,085,542 acres in 1934 to 266 refuges totaling 13,619,121 acres just five years later. Yet acquiring critical waterfowl habitat along the migration routes was only the first step in building the refuge system. The second was to improve the quality of that habitat in order to maximize the number of birds that could use the refuges.¹

Under Darling and Gabrielson, the Biological Survey embraced the emerging science of waterfowl ecology, which stressed the role of wetland management in conservation—that is, increasing the capacity of migratory ducks and geese an ecosystem can support, or “carry,” by artificially enhancing the water, food, and cover resources available to them for breeding, nesting, resting, or wintering.² “It takes more than building a dam or other water-control structure and flooding a piece of land to make a waterfowl refuge,” wrote Gabrielson, extolling the wildlife biologists who had taken the bureau’s long-term research into waterfowl feeding habits—the basis of which was laboratory analysis of the

¹ Ira N. Gabrielson, “The Fish and Wildlife Service: A Summary of Recent Work,” *Scientific Monthly*, September 1947, 181–186; Michael W. Giese, “A Federal Foundation for Wildlife Conservation: The Evolution of the National Wildlife Refuge System, 1920–1968” (Ph.D. diss., American University, 2008), 152.

² On the intersection of waterfowl ecology, wetland management, and national conservation policy in the 1920s and 1930s, see David L. Lendt, *Ding: The Life of Jay Norwood Darling* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979), 63–87; Jared Orsi, “From Horicon to Hamburgers and Back Again: Ecology, Ideology, and Wildfowl Management, 1917–1935,” *Environmental History Review* 18 (Winter 1994): 19–40; Giese, “Federal Foundation for Wildlife Conservation,” 88–159. The foregoing literature was produced by historians. Also of value is the work of wildlife biologist Eric G. Bolen, the foremost student of the history of waterfowl management in the scientific community. See Bolen, “Waterfowl Management: Yesterday and Tomorrow,” *Journal of Wildlife Management* 64 (April 2000): 323–335. See also Guy A. Baldassarre and Bolen, *Waterfowl Ecology and Management*, 2nd ed. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing Company, 2006), 9–10, 475–479. For a more detailed international perspective, see John Paul Morton, “Duck Diplomacy: U.S.-Canadian Migratory Waterfowl Management, 1900–1961” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1996), 116–188. For a history of the concept of carrying capacity in wildlife biology, see Christian C. Young, “Defining the Range: The Development of Carrying Capacity in Management Practice,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 31 (Spring 1998): 61–83.

contents of thousands of duck stomachs—and applied it to management at the refuges. “One of the outstanding accompaniments to the refuge program was the development of successful techniques for harvesting, handling, storing, and planting seed and bulbs or other vegetative parts of waterfowl food plants. These methods are now routine practice, with a high percentage of success.” Also impressive was the engineers’ “physical development of . . . a confused medley of building water controls and diversions that local wiseacres sometimes said could not possibly work but did.” These were “daring and ingenious applications of development schemes in a field where it was necessary to pioneer,” Gabrielson declared. The fruition of their ingenuity, in his telling, was managed marshes “capable of maximum production of waterfowl food and habitat.”³

Historians who have written about waterfowl management in the United States do so from the perspective of the Biological Survey, and their scholarship generally aligns with Gabrielson’s account.⁴ Historiographically, then, the idea

³ Gabrielson, “Fish and Wildlife Service,” 185 (first and fifth quotations), 186 (second, third, and fourth quotations). Gabrielson discussed management of migratory waterfowl on the refuges at greater length in his book *Wildlife Refuges* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1943), esp. pp. 24–31, 40–54, 133–181.

⁴ Ann Vileisis, Michael Giese, and Robert Pasquill Jr. touch on various technical aspects of migratory-bird refuge development during the New Deal. See Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America’s Wetlands* (1997; repr., Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1999), 179; Giese, “Federal Foundation for Wildlife Conservation,” 154–159; Pasquill, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama, 1933–1942: A Great and Lasting Good* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 207–213. Nancy Langston and Fredric L. Quivik treat complex resting- and breeding-ground restoration projects at refuges in Oregon and North Dakota, respectively, in the 1930s and 1940s. See Langston, *Where Land and Water Meet: A Western Landscape Transformed*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Book (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 91–116; Quivik, “Engineering Nature: The Souris River and the Production of Migratory Waterfowl,” *History and Technology* 25 (December 2009): 307–323. Robert M. Wilson and Philip Garone offer integrated examinations of how irrigation and monoculture came to dominate waterfowl habitat on Oregon and California refuges following World War II. See Wilson, *Seeking Refuge: Birds and Landscapes of the Pacific Flyway*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Book (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 44–64, 79–94, 99–127; Garone, *The Fall and Rise of the Wetlands of California’s Great Central Valley* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

behind the managed duck marsh—namely, government experts controlling nature as a means to increase its efficiency in producing a sustainable resource—fits neatly into the standard interpretation of the Progressive Era conservation movement. If we look beyond the boundaries of the national wildlife refuges, though, we find that duck hunters complicate the accepted conservation narrative because they began managing marshes for waterfowl far in advance of the federal government. A comparison of two duck marshes from bordering properties on the coast of South Carolina in the late 1930s—one owned by sportsmen, and the other administered by the Biological Survey—brings the issue of primacy into stark relief.

The waterfowl-management projects undertaken at Cape Romain Migratory Bird Refuge, located twenty miles northeast of Charleston, between 1937 and American entry into World War II were typical of the Gabrielson era: impounding wetlands, controlling water levels, and propagating food plants to create high-quality habitat. With the help of a dragline and labor from the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration, refuge personnel constructed eleven hundred acres of duck marsh at Cape Romain by first erecting earthen dikes, each equipped with a sluice box for irrigation, across two shallow tidal basins. Then they sowed the brackish ponds behind the embankments with two salt-tolerant duck-food perennials native to the area: widgeon grass (*Ruppia maritima*), which grows completely submerged, and salt-marsh bulrush (*Scirpus robustus* Pursh), an emergent sedge. As rainfall, surface

2011), 135–163. See also Wilson, “Directing the Flow: Migratory Waterfowl, Scale, and Mobility in Western North America,” *Environmental History* 7 (April 2002): 247–266.

runoff, and flooding from the nearby Santee River gradually decreased the salinity of the diked marshes, the Biological Survey added to the duck food supply by introducing freshwater plants such as sago pondweed (*Stuckenia pectinata*), wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*), banana lily (*Nymphoides aquatica*), bushy pondweed (*Najas guadalupensis*), watershield (*Brasenia schreberi*), and wild millet (*Echinochloa muricata*).⁵ “This provision of freshwater loafing and feeding grounds has greatly increased use [of the Cape Romain refuge] by waterfowl,” observed Gabrielson in 1943.⁶

In spite of the progress Gabrielson’s staff had made at Cape Romain, a group of well-heeled hunters known as the Santee Club conducted the largest, most sophisticated habitat-management operation—public or private—in South Carolina on a huge preserve that extended along fourteen miles of coastline from the northern boundary of the federal refuge to the North Santee River, fifteen miles south of Georgetown. On October 4, 1938, while work crews were busy diking marshland at the refuge in preparation for the first freshwater plantings, a

⁵ Conservation workers gathered the widgeon grass from wetlands elsewhere on the refuge and transplanted masses containing roots and seeds to the new Jack’s Creek pond on Bull’s Island. The crops of salt-marsh bulrush started in Jack’s Creek as well as the impoundment on Cape Island came from twenty bushels of seed—fifteen collected at Cape Romain, plus five shipped from the Savannah River Migratory Bird Refuge on the South Carolina-Georgia border. On the Cape Romain duck marshes, see J. M. L. Jr. [John M. Lofton Jr.], “Do You Know Your Lowcountry? Cape Romain Sanctuary,” *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), October 18, 1937; “U.S. Builds Dams on Two Coastal Islands for Fresh Water Duck Ponds,” *ibid.*, May 15, 1938; “Fifth Anniversary of CCC (Cape Romain),” April 5, 1938, available online in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Historic News Releases database, <http://www.fws.gov/news/historic/1938/19380405e.pdf> (accessed June 23, 2010); “Report: Cape Romain Refuge for the Fiscal Year 1938,” July 25, 1938, pp. 1, 6–7, 9–10, electronic copy in Administrative Files, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, Awendaw, S.C.; “Annual Report—Cape Romain Refuge, Fiscal Year 1940,” July 10, 1940, pp. 8–11, *ibid.*; “Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1941,” June 30, 1941, pp. 2–4, *ibid.*

⁶ Gabrielson, *Wildlife Refuges*, 171.



Figure 1.1. The north-central South Carolina coast, 1938. Map by Elbie Bentley.

three-man team from the Biological Survey traveled by boat up the Intracoastal Waterway to the Santee Club and toured one of the oldest, most extensively managed duck marshes in the state. Harold L. Blakey, an associate biologist in the bureau's Division of Wildlife Surveys, reported, "We met the manager of the marsh in the field and discussed management practices and local conditions, making several short trips into the border of the marsh at landing places

established for accessibility.”⁷ In addition to describing widgeon grass and other aquatic and marsh plants cultivated to draw ducks, Blakey wrote, “All portions of the marsh are under management for controlled water level, utilizing low dikes, sluice box drains and tide gates.” But what may have impressed the biologist most was the sheer size of the preserve and the scale of the development. He estimated that the duck marsh he visited was “two thousand or more acres,” yet it was only one in a series at the Santee Club that stretched from his vantage point to the horizon in every direction.⁸ The contrast between the expansive, highly developed Santee Club marshes and the much smaller, newly built government marshes at Cape Romain was striking.

Habitat management represented a new direction for Gabrielson’s agency, but in the chapters that follow, a study of the history of recreational hunting and wetland use at the Santee Club, at the adjacent Kinloch Gun Club, and in the surrounding low-country region will show that the practice was hardly as innovative as the outgoing chief claimed in hindsight. During the last decade of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth, scores of South Carolina rice plantations, once among the most valuable agricultural land in the world, were taken out of market production and sold or leased to wealthy sportsmen from the North, who used the century-old rice fields as duck-shooting preserves. Each year from late October through March, millions of migrating waterfowl

⁷ Harold L. Blakey, “Wildlife Relationships in the Santee Drainage Basin, Santee River Delta,” in “Report of Activity, Field Research Station, Month of October 1938, Charleston, South Carolina,” November 1, 1938, p. 3, box 2, Cape Romain Biological Reports–2b folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Division of Wildlife Refuges, Biological Reports, 1908–1967, National Archives II, College Park, Md.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3–4 (quotations on p. 3).

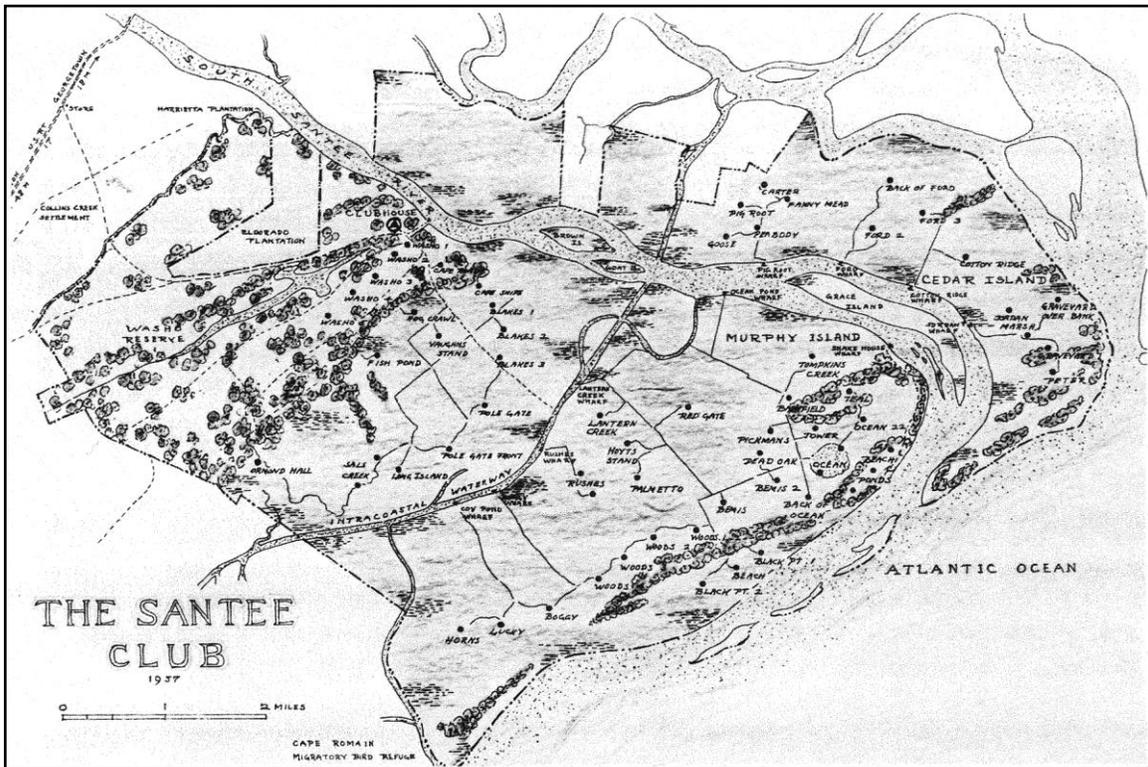


Figure 1.2. Map of the Santee Club preserve drawn in 1937. Source: private collection.

flocked to the rice impoundments, which were customarily flooded after harvest and left littered with waste grain—a combination of abundant standing water, ample food, and mild climate that led author Archibald Rutledge, who spent his youth on a working Santee River rice plantation in the 1880s and 1890s, to call coastal South Carolina “a regular Riviera for wintering wild fowl.”⁹ To ensure good shooting, these absentee duck hunters often hired the people who knew the plantations best—their white former owners and the descendants of black slaves who had toiled on them for generations—to maintain the historical rice-field habitat by hand using the age-old methods. Early in the interwar period,

⁹ Archibald Rutledge, *Plantation Game Trails* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 250.

though, as plantation labor pools shrank and federal waterfowl-hunting regulations tightened, sportsmen began to abandon traditional rice culture in favor of managed duck marshes—a less economically intensive, more environmentally sustainable approach to holding large numbers of wildfowl on the preserves that had proved successful for hunters in other parts of the country. Hence, by the time the Biological Survey began to manage wetlands for waterfowl at Cape Romain in the late 1930s, northern sportsmen and the Carolinians in their employ had already converted thousands of acres of rice fields up and down the coast into duck marshes, effecting ecological change in the river-plantation district on a landscape scale.

When Ira Gabrielson retired, he had been with the Fish and Wildlife Service for over forty years, making it easy to understand how his perception could have been colored by his career as a bureaucrat and loyalty to his longtime colleagues.¹⁰ Federal engineers and biologists using public funds to expand, improve, or restore waterfowl habitat on public lands was indeed a pivotal episode in the history of American wildlife conservation. What both Gabrielson and historians of the Fish and Wildlife Service fail to take into account, however—and what Harold Blakey's experience at the Santee Club in 1938 plainly illustrates—is that there exists a parallel, much older history of private individuals manipulating large areas of privately owned wetlands out of concern for waterfowl shooting and conservation. Who pioneered in altering wetland ecosystems to attract waterfowl? My research indicates that the pioneers were

¹⁰ Gabrielson, "Fish and Wildlife Service," 181.

sportsmen and, to borrow Gabrielson's derisive reference, the "local wiseacres" who worked for them—men like Ludwig A. Beckman, the anonymous manager of the marsh at the Santee Club alluded to in Blakey's account above. They—not trained professionals with the federal government—were the first to manage duck marshes by means of engineering, irrigation, and plantings.

Before proceeding any further, some terms require explanation. In this work, "sportsmen" will be used interchangeably with "sport hunters," "gentleman hunters," and "leisure hunters." All have a specific historical connotation. As described by John F. Reiger, Daniel Justin Herman, and others, these terms refer to a self-aware subculture that coalesced in the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century and carried forward through the period under study here, from the mid-1890s to the mid-1940s, with only minor modifications. This group consisted of upper- and upper-middle-class white men—and more than a few white women—most of them from urban centers in the Northeast and Midwest, who hunted for pleasure rather than subsistence or profit. Imitating the sporting traditions of the English aristocracy, these American elitists adopted a code of honorable conduct in the field that was intended to give their rural diversion an air of gentility and distinguish them from the masses of hunters concerned only with feeding their families or filling their pockets. Sportsmanship, which emphasized enjoyment of the chase, a "fair chance" for game, unselfish shooting, and an appreciation of natural history, was believed to imbue its adherents with health, manliness, virtue, martial prowess, patriotism, and a conservation ethic for wildlife and its habitat. Equal parts privileged patrician and

rugged outdoorsman, with the mentality of a naturalist and a strong sense of environmental stewardship—no one embodied these traits more completely than did President Theodore Roosevelt, viewed by contemporaries and historians alike as the iconic sportsman of the Gilded Age.¹¹ Presidents Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland also were avid members of the sport-hunting fraternity.¹² In fact, Cleveland frequently hunted at and was an honorary member of the Santee Club prior to his death in 1908.¹³

Since sportsmen were the first to manage marsh ecosystems as waterfowl habitat, it follows logically to ask whether the members of the Santee Club and others like them can be regarded as “ecologists.” Ecology, which is defined as

¹¹ See John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, 3rd ed. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001), 5–66; Daniel Justin Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 122–199, 218–253. Also see Andrea L. Smalley, “‘Our Lady Sportsmen’: Gender, Class, and Conservation in Sport Hunting Magazines, 1873–1920,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 4 (October 2005): 355–380; Nicholas W. Proctor, *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 5–36, 76–98, 129–132; Thomas R. Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation, 1880–1920,” *Environmental Review* 12 (Spring 1988): 51–60; Donald W. Klinko, “Antebellum American Sporting Magazines and the Development of a Sportsmen’s Ethic” (Ph.D. diss., Washington State University, 1986), 1–41, 98–117, 180–229; Thomas L. Altherr, “The American Hunter-Naturalist and the Development of the Code of Sportsmanship,” *Journal of Sport History* 5 (Spring 1978): 7–22. While a minority of sport hunters were women, none have a part in this particular narrative. Therefore, I will employ exclusively the masculine form of words such as *sportsmen* and *gentleman hunters*.

¹² Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 108. Although outside the scope of this study, nineteenth-century sportsmen included recreational fishermen as well. President Chester A. Author was a passionate devotee of angling. See *ibid.* The foremost angler among presidents of the twentieth century was Herbert Hoover. See Hal Elliott Wert, *Hoover, the Fishing President: Portrait of the Private Man and His Life Outdoors* (Mechanicsburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 2005).

¹³ Henry H. Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club* ([Boston?]: privately printed, [1934?]), 4. On Grover Cleveland’s last trip to the Santee Club, which took place fifteen months prior to his passing, see Cleveland to L. A. Beckman, March 21, 1907, in *ibid.*, 5. See also “Cleveland Having Good Time,” *News and Courier*, March 14, 1907; “Cleveland on the Santee,” *ibid.*, March 19, 1907; “Many Congratulated Cleveland,” *ibid.*, March 20, 1907; “Cleveland’s Hunt Brought to Close,” *State* (Columbia, S.C.), March 22, 1907. “After several days’ visit to the club house of the Santee Gun club [*sic*],” the *State* article reads, “something over 200 ducks were bagged” by the president and his party “without half trying [*sic*]. Mr. Cleveland killed over half of these.”

“the scientific study of the distribution and abundance of organisms and the interactions that determine distribution and abundance,” did not become an established branch of biology in the United States until well into the twentieth century, and it was not until the eve of World War II that ecological concepts and research techniques were widely applied to wildlife conservation work.¹⁴

However, as Alan R. H. Baker reminds us, “thinking ecologically”—that is, thinking about the interrelationship between animals, plants, and their non-living environment—has “great antiquity.”¹⁵

Only two historians, Reiger and Thomas L. Altherr, have given serious consideration to the ecological thinking of gentleman hunters in the age before ecology. Both consult similar sources, and both arrive at much the same conclusions. Although sportsmen were not ecologists in the twentieth-century sense, Altherr finds that they “displayed an ecological consciousness,” while Reiger writes that “many of them possessed an ecological orientation—perceiving the interrelatedness of wildlife and their habitats.”¹⁶ Not surprisingly, hunters devoted much of their attention to studying the behavior of game species, but Reiger proposes that their curiosity and concern extended to the

¹⁴ Colin R. Townsend, Michael Begon, and John L. Harper, *Essentials of Ecology*, 3rd. ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 4; Thomas R. Dunlap, *Saving America’s Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850–1990* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 65–83.

¹⁵ Alan R. H. Baker, *Geography and History: Bridging the Divide*, Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 75.

¹⁶ Altherr, “American Hunter-Naturalist,” 7, 14–15 (quotation on p. 7); Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 1.

“*total* natural environment.” In this way, he adds, sportsmen “foreshadowed the science of ecology.”¹⁷

Foreshadowed is the key word here. Sportsmen like Roosevelt thought of themselves as “hunter-naturalists.” The hunter-naturalist was a powerful and enduring ideal within the sporting community that had taken shape before Roosevelt was born in 1858. Seven years prior, early sportsman Charles W. Webber wrote, “And who is this Hunter-Naturalist? I answer, something of the Primitive Hunter and modern Field-Naturalist combined.”¹⁸ Inquisitiveness about the workings of the natural world was an intrinsic part of the sportsman’s code, which led many sport hunters to become students of natural history. An area of scientific inquiry that bridged botany, zoology, and mineralogy, natural history sought to collect, describe, and classify, mainly based on observation, objects found in nature, both living and non-living. Donald Worster identifies notable naturalists from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as having espoused “ecological ideas,” and he argues that there is an unbroken chain connecting traditional natural history and contemporary ecology.¹⁹ But was this link strong enough for us to regard the hunter-naturalists as ecological thinkers?

Reiger and Altherr rely heavily on the personal papers and prolific writings of a few prominent hunter-naturalists such as Roosevelt and one of his mentors,

¹⁷ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 108 (first quotation), 112 (second quotation) (emphasis in original).

¹⁸ C. W. Webber, *The Hunter-Naturalist: Romance of Sporting; or, Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters* (Philadelphia: J. W. Bradley, 1851), 4. See also Theodore Roosevelt, “The American Hunter-Naturalist,” *Outlook*, December 9, 1911, 854–856.

¹⁹ See Donald Worster, *Nature’s Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

magazine editor George Bird Grinnell. This top-down approach leaves a lot of questions unanswered, and no shortage of historians remain dubious of certain aspects of their argument, including the suggestion that sportsmen had anything approaching a holistic ecological view. Singling out Reiger on this last point, one skeptic states that based on the evidence presented, “to accept those propositions requires an act of faith.”²⁰ A goal of this project is to encourage greater scholarly dialogue about sport hunting and the environment by moving toward the topic from a different direction than Reiger and Altherr. It is my contention that the strongest proof of sportsmen’s environmental engagement does not come from the top down, by looking at what a small number of the most articulate hunters had to say about nature in the abstract, but from the ground up, by studying them as conscious agents of environmental change. In doing so, it may be helpful for us to think about gentleman duck hunters as transitional figures whose background in natural history and an incipient ecological perspective guided them down the path of waterfowl management and wetlands conservation.

The window of time between the demise of commercial rice growing on the South Carolina coast, when northern sportsmen commenced purchasing the plantations for duck shooting, and the early 1950s, when some began to turn over management of the plantation marshes to professional wildlife biologists, offers a rare opportunity for long-term, ground-level inquiry into not only the ecological orientation of sportsmen but also their environmental agency. Peter H.

²⁰ Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation,” 57.

Wood, Joyce E. Chaplin, and S. Max Edelson are among those responsible for a considerable body of scholarship that helps us to understand how planters and slaves drastically modified the ecology of the low country during the colonial and antebellum periods, when South Carolina was a global leader in rice production.²¹ From the mid-eighteenth century onward, Carolina planters grew rice in irrigated fields along tidal rivers. Mile after mile of intersecting dikes, ditches, and canals punctuated by culverts and gates allowed for precise control of water levels. By the 1850s, when development of the state's extensive rice infrastructure reached its zenith, clusters of plantations formed immense impoundment grids at intervals along the seaboard from the Waccamaw River in the north to the Savannah River in the south. James H. Tuten picks up the narrative at this point, examining continuities and changes in the delicate ecological balance of rice culture from 1860s through the 1920s, when a few

²¹ Major works on the history of rice culture in South Carolina and Georgia include Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (1974; repr., New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina*, Blacks in the New World (1981; repr., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*, 25th anniversary ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730–1815* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1993); William Dusinger, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (1995; repr., Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000); Mart A. Stewart, "What Nature Suffers to Groe": *Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680–1920*, Wormsloe Foundation Publications, no. 19 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

holdouts harvested their last crops for market.²² No comparable study exists, though, for the period that came next—South Carolinians have been referring to it as “the second Yankee invasion” since at least the 1930s—when sportsmen remade the abandoned agricultural wetlandscape to reflect their interests in recreational hunting and conservation.²³ Numerous scholars take note of the shifting pattern of ownership and use of the rice lands after the plantation economy failed, but for the most part, the complex ecological consequences of these changes are lost on them.²⁴ Indeed, from an environmental standpoint, the

²² See James H. Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010).

²³ Reporter Chalmers S. Murray of Edisto Island used an early example of the expression. “The movement of the Yankee millionaires south was the second invasion. They came riding in private planes, mahogany decked yachts and chartered pullman [*sic*] coaches,” he remarked, “bringing with them white servants who turned up their noses at everything they saw around the countryside” in addition to “polo ponies, snooty foxhounds . . . imported whiskeys, antique furniture and sporting clothes fashioned in London that never seemed to fit the wearers. Then came camp followers—baseball stars, titled Europeans, fat United States senators and their flashy wives, and friends and relatives who hunted in the morning, slept in the afternoon and spent the night drinking.” After writing a series of flattering articles on the subject for the *News and Courier* in the early 1930s, Murray admitted to having “watched the northern millionaires in action so long that I have perhaps grown a little bitter.” See Murray to “Mr. [Herbert R.] Sass, [February?] 1934, box 24/101, folder 14, Herbert Ravenel Sass Papers, 1862–1960, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston. In a second letter to Sass, Murray referred to Georgetown County, where much of his reporting centered, as “conquered territory.” See Murray to “Mr. Sass,” [March?] 1934, *ibid.* For a partial list of Murray’s *News and Courier* articles about northern-owned plantations, see *Northern Money, Southern Land: The Lowcountry Plantation Sketches of Chlotilde R. Martin*, ed. Robert B. Cuthbert and Stephen G. Hoffius (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), xxiv–xxv (n. 3).

²⁴ The definitive treatment of this subject is Daniel J. Vivian, “The Leisure Plantations of the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1900–1940” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2011). To be fair, Vivian’s main interests are architectural and social, not environmental. See also George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 485–497; Charles F. Kovacik, “South Carolina Rice Coast Landscape Changes,” in *Proceedings of the Tall Timbers Ecology and Management Conference, Number 16: February 22–24, 1979, Thomasville, Georgia* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Tall Timbers Research Station, 1982), 47–65; Suzanne Cameron Linder, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of the ACE River Basin—1860* ([Columbia?]: Published by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for the Archives and History Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, and the Nature Conservancy, 1995); Linder and Marta Leslie Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County and the Santee River* (Columbia: Published by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for the Historic Ricefields Association, Inc., [2001?]); Hoffius, introduction to *Northern*

return of the Yankees was a watershed for the region. Many of the old rice plantations are still used for either private or public waterfowl shooting, and artificial duck marshes, first introduced by sportsmen between the two World Wars, persist to the present as a dominant, man-made ecosystem in the riverine environment of the coastal zone.²⁵

Several factors make the Santee Club a particularly illuminating example of the effect sportsmen had on the coastal ecology of South Carolina in the first half of the twentieth century and their environmental legacy in the low country. These include the club's long history, the prominence and stability of its membership, the breadth of its landholdings, and its role as a regional wetlands management and conservation leader. Still more illuminating for historians of sport and the environment is the incomparable richness of the club's documentary record. Simply put, the larger story of latter-day ecological change on the Carolina rice coast could not be told without heavy reliance upon documentation from the Santee Club.

Money, Southern Land; Lawrence S. Rowland and Stephen R. Wise, *Bridging the Sea Islands' Past and Present, 1893–2006: The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina, Volume 3* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 284–313. Several studies of individual neo-plantations and their northern owners are more ecologically informed, including three in which women hunter-conservationists figure prominently. See Virginia Christian Beach, *Medway: A Plantation and Its People* (Charleston, S.C.: Wyrick and Co., 1999); Mary E. Miller, *Baroness of Hobcaw: The Life of Belle W. Baruch* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006); Lee G. Brockington, *Plantation between the Waters: A Brief History of Hobcaw Barony* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2006).

²⁵ At the peak of production in the mid-nineteenth century, rice impoundments comprised roughly 150,000 of South Carolina's half-million acres of tidal wetlands. A report from 1987 found that one-half of the original rice acreage was still impounded and being managed as waterfowl habitat. See M. Richard DeVoe and Douglas S. Baughman, *South Carolina Coastal Wetland Impoundments: Ecological Characterization, Management, Status, and Use* (Charleston: South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, 1987), 1: v, 9–11.

The Santee Club was chartered in 1898 with eleven members, but for most of its existence—from the turn of the century until 1974, when the club transferred the title for its vast hunting preserve to the Nature Conservancy and effectively disbanded—membership shares were capped at forty. Over the years, the nearly two hundred individuals who belonged to the Santee Club were among the wealthiest and most privileged sportsmen in America. Their ranks brimmed with bankers, capitalists, corporate attorneys, stockbrokers, industrialists, entrepreneurs, and heirs to Gilded Age fortunes—the cream of the eastern elites from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland.²⁶ As early as June 3, 1899, the day after millionaire drug manufacturer Isaac E. Emerson received his certificate of membership, the *Baltimore American* opined that Santee was “the most influential gunning club in the United States.”²⁷ Clarence H. Mackay, head of his father’s international cable-telegraph empire, became a member of the club the next year, as did second-generation department-store magnate Eben D. Jordan Jr.²⁸ Jordan’s son

²⁶ For a list of the charter members of the club as well as the active membership roll in 1900, see Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 4. For a fairly complete member listing, see B. Brannan Reath II, *Santee Club—A Legend* (Philadelphia: Printed by the Winchell Company, 1971), 7, 9, 10–13. For more on the donation of the Santee Club preserve to the Nature Conservancy, see Jack Leland, “Large Land Tract Given Conservancy,” *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), June 26, 1974; Robert P. Stockton, “Conservancy Given 25,000-Acre Tract,” *News and Courier*, June 27, 1974; Wallace Hitchcock, “Club Donates Land for Conservation,” *State*, June 27, 1974; John Devlin, “Nature Conservancy Given 25,000-Acre Tract in South Carolina,” *New York Times*, June 27, 1974; “Santee Coastal Preserve Established,” *Biosphere*, *South Carolina Wildlife*, September–October 1974, 64; John Davis, “A Special Place,” *ibid.*, 49–56; John V. Dennis, “Past and Present at Santee Coastal Reserve,” *Nature Conservancy News*, Fall 1974, 11–17.

²⁷ “Dr. Emerson’s New Club,” *Baltimore American*, June 3, 1899. On Emerson, see “Capt. Emerson Dies at His Valley Home,” *Sun* (Baltimore), January 24, 1931.

²⁸ On Mackay, see *Dictionary of American Biography, Supplements 1–2: To 1940*, s.v. “Mackay, Clarence Hungerford,” available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310008542 (accessed January 5, 2012). See also “Heir to Mackay Millions,” *Baltimore Sun*,

Robert together with the Hoyt brothers—Edward, Theodore, Walter, and George—who inherited their father’s interest in the United States Leather Company, were members by 1906.²⁹ The club elected steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie’s nephew Frank to membership five years later, with William L. McLean, publisher of the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*, and Jay Cooke II, son of the famous “financier of the Civil War,” following in 1913 and 1925, respectively.³⁰

Before the middle of the next decade, the presidents or board chairmen of the Standard Oil Company, the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, the Corn Exchange National Bank and Trust Company, the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Company, the Chemical Bank and Trust Company,

July 28, 1902; Earle J. Grellert, “The Present Head of the Mackay Enterprises,” *State*, August 10, 1902; “Clarence Mackay Dies at Home Here after Long Illness,” *New York Times*, November 13, 1938. On Jordan, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. “Jordan, Eben Dyer,” available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310010106 (accessed January 5, 2012). See also “Eben D. Jordan Died Yesterday,” *Boston Daily Globe*, August 2, 1916; “Eben D. Jordan Dies at Home,” *Boston Journal*, August 2, 1916; “Eben D. Jordan Dies at His Summer Home,” *Boston Herald*, August 2, 1916; “Eben D. Jordan’s Estate Totals \$5,569,015,” *ibid.*, February 10, 1917.

²⁹ On Robert Jordan, see “Robert Jordan Dies in His Paris Home,” *New York Times*, November 4, 1932. On the Hoyts, see Frank W. Norcross, *A History of the New York Swamp* (New York: Chiswick Press, 1901), 98–101; “Walter S. Hoyt Dies in Roosevelt Hospital,” *New York Times*, July 15, 1920; “Edward Hoyt Dies; Leather Pioneer,” *ibid.*, November 29, 1925; “George S. Hoyt Dies in Stamford Home,” *ibid.*, October 15, 1931.

³⁰ On Frank M. Carnegie, see Mary R. Bullard, *Cumberland Island: A History*, Wormsloe Foundation Publications, no. 22 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 179–248, 331 (n. 54); obituary, *New York Times*, February 23, 1917. On McLean (and his sons, who are mentioned subsequently in the text), see *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. “McLean, William Lippard,” available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310007781 (accessed January 5, 2012). See also “W. L. McLean Dead; Noted Publisher,” *New York Times*, July 31, 1931; “The Bulletin Left to McLean’s Sons,” *ibid.*, August 6, 1931; Andrea Knox, “The Bulletin, from Birth in 1847 . . . to Its Death Tomorrow: It Was Read,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 28, 1982. On Jay Cooke II (along with his son, who is referenced later in the text), see Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *Jay Cooke: Financier of the Civil War* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Co., Publishers, 1907), 2: 464; Lydia J. Ryall, *Sketches and Stories of the Lake Erie Islands*, Perry Centennial ed. (Norwalk, Ohio: American Publishers Co., 1913), 305–320; “Jay Cooke Foresees the Birth of Great Industrial Cities,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 6, 1903.

and the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company had joined the Santee Club. So too had Edward Hoyt's son Oliver, William McLean's sons Robert and William Jr., and Jay Cooke III.³¹ "There probably is no similar organization in the United States that has such a group of men high in the world of large interests," wrote John Vavasour Noel, a journalist who visited the club in 1932.³²

Noel's words held true of the Santee Club into the 1970s. Members at that time included retired vice president of General Electric Company Lemuel R. Boulware; Oliver G. Willits and John T. Dorrance Jr., who served successively as chairmen of the board of Campbell Soup Company from 1956 to 1984, as well as Dorrance's sons John and Bennett; leading candymaker Forrest E. Mars Sr.;

³¹ The Standard Oil officer referred to here was Herbert L. Pratt; for Penn Mutual Life Insurance, William A. Law; for Corn Exchange National Bank and Trust, Paul Thompson; for Pennsylvania Railroad, William W. Atterbury; for Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust, Marshall S. Morgan; for Chemical Bank and Trust, Percy H. Johnston; and for Lehigh Coal and Navigation, Samuel D. Warriner. On Pratt, see John N. Ingham, *Biographical Dictionary of American Business Leaders, N-U* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), s.v. "Pratt, Charles"; "Herbert Lee Pratt," *Successful American*, April 1903, 226–227. Law was a native South Carolinian and graduate of Wofford College in Spartanburg. On Law, see "William A. Law Promoted," *State*, June 7, 1922; "Law Athletic Field Is Name of Wofford Site," *Spartanburg Herald* (Spartanburg, S.C.), June 3, 1930; "W. A. Law Is Killed in Hunting Mishap," *New York Times*, January 22, 1936. On Thompson, see "Heads Philadelphia Bank; Paul Thompson New President of Corn Exchange National," *ibid.*, February 16, 1937; "Paul Thompson, Veteran Banker; Chairman of Corn Exchange National Bank and Trust Co. of Philadelphia Dies," *ibid.*, December 14, 1942. On Atterbury, see *Dictionary of American Biography, Supplements 1–2: To 1940*, s.v. "Atterbury, William Wallace," available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310018570 (accessed January 5, 2012). Atterbury appeared on the front cover of *Time* magazine's February 20, 1933, issue and was profiled in an article in the Business and Finance department entitled "State and Stakeholders," pp. 41–42, 44–46. On Morgan, see "Heads Philadelphia Bank; M. S. Morgan Becomes President of Fidelity Trust Company," *New York Times*, February 16, 1937. On Johnston, see Frank Wilson Nye, *Knowledge Is Power: The Life Story of Percy Hampton Johnston, Banker* (New York: Random House, 1956); "With Bank 25 Years: P. H. Johnston of the Chemical to Celebrate Tomorrow," *New York Times*, August 26, 1942. On Warriner, see "General Strengthening of Stocks; S. D. Warriner Elected President of Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 5, 1912; "S. D. Warriner, 75, Coal Leader, Dead," *New York Times*, April 4, 1942.

³² John Vavasour Noel, "Santee Gun Club Conserves Game," *News and Courier*, February 28, 1932.

past board chairman Thomas B. McCabe of Scott Paper Company; plus two du Ponts and a Rockefeller.³³

The Santee Club distinguished itself not only by the influence and affluence of its members but also by the extent of its land. During the club's heyday, it controlled twelve former rice plantations in Charleston and Georgetown Counties, together totaling approximately twenty-five thousand acres—about three-quarters of which were wetlands. Its duck-shooting preserve dwarfed most others in South Carolina, which rarely comprised even half as many plantations, and was easily one of the largest in the country, equaled in area only by a few of the San Joaquin River preserves in California's vast Central Valley.³⁴

In 1974 the Santee Club made headlines for donating its seventy-six-year-old preserve to the Nature Conservancy. Valued at \$20 million (96 million in 2014

³³ On Boulware, see Damon Stetson, "Founder of 'Boulwarism': Lemuel Ricketts Boulware," *New York Times*, November 3, 1969; Joan Cook, "Lemuel Ricketts Boulware, 95; Headed Labor Relations for G.E.," *ibid.*, November 8, 1990. On Willits and the Dorrances, see "Campbell Soup Names Dorrance, 43, Chairman, Succeeding Willits," *Wall Street Journal*, March 2, 1962; "John T. Dorrance Jr. Dies at 70; Was Chairman of Campbell Soup," *New York Times*, April 10, 1989. On Mars, see Barbara L. Gerber, "Mars, Forrest Edward, Sr.," in *The Scribner Encyclopedia of American Lives*, vol. 5, *Notable Americans Who Died between 1997 and 1999*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson, Karen Markoe, and Arnold Markoe (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2002), 368–371, available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, CX2874800205 (accessed January 7, 2012). See also "Mars Joins Galaxy of Famous Entrepreneurs," *Washington Post*, March 19, 1984; Bart Barnes, "Master Candymaker Forrest Mars Sr. Dies; Imperious Leader Built Secretive Family's McLean-Based Company," *ibid.*, July 3, 1999. On McCabe, see "Scott Paper Names Dunning as Chairman, Succeeding McCabe," *Wall Street Journal*, December 20, 1968; Joseph B. Treaster, "Thomas B. McCabe Dies at 88; Headed Scott and Federal Reserve," *New York Times*, May 28, 1982. The du Ponts were A. Felix Jr. and Christopher T.; the Rockefeller was J. Sterling. Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 7.

³⁴ J. M. L. Jr. [John M. Lofton Jr.], "Do You Know Your Lowcountry? Santee Gun Club," *News and Courier*, November 15, 1937; Leland, "Large Land Tract Given Conservancy"; Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 19; Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 29; T. S. Palmer, *Private Game Preserves and Their Future in the United States*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Biological Survey, Circular No. 72 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910?], 6.



Figure 1.3. Pond in Jordan Marsh, Santee Club, January 1928. Jordan Marsh was named for club member Eben D. Jordan Jr. of Boston. The name also was a pun: Jordan's father had co-founded the major northeastern department-store chain Jordan, Marsh & Company in 1851, and thirty years later, the junior Jordan was made a partner in the business. He joined the Santee Club in 1900, two years after it was chartered, and later served as its second president. *Source:* private collection.

dollars), the land transfer was hailed at the time as “one of the most valuable single gifts made in the interests of American conservation—almost comparable to the Rockefeller gifts of entire national parks.”³⁵ But for the Santee Club, it was merely the last and most public expression of a longstanding commitment to conserving waterfowl and managing their habitat. Since the 1920s, the club's progressive approach to wetland management had made it a model for other

³⁵ Editorial, “Santee Heritage,” *New York Times*, July 1, 1974. All of the inflation-adjusted monetary values present in this work were calculated online at <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppowerus/> (accessed June 8, 2016).

sportsmen in the low country. The club hosted owners and managers of neighboring ducking preserves, instructing them in impoundment construction and maintenance as well as propagation of duck food plants, even supplying vegetation from its own marshes for transplanting. Additionally, Beckman traveled as far away as Beaufort County, in the southeastern corner of the state, to conduct on-site consultations for friends of the club members. Perhaps nothing crystallizes the Santee Club's sustained investment in waterfowl management like the fact that when deeded to the Nature Conservancy, its preserve was bisected by over one hundred miles of functional duck-marsh dikes.³⁶

While far from complete, the surviving documentary record of the Santee Club covers a chronological sweep and contains a level of detail that is unique among the northern duck-hunting clubs of South Carolina. Four primary sources related to the Santee Club are especially valuable for their comprehensiveness. Two members from different generations produced brief, celebratory histories of the club, both of which were privately printed for the membership and a few friends. The first, issued in 1934, was by Bostonian Henry H. Carter, a member since 1901. The second, from 1971, was by B. Brannan Reath II of Easton, Maryland, who joined the club in 1928.³⁷ Filled with factual errors, these

³⁶ Dennis, "Past and Present at Santee Coastal Reserve," 14.

³⁷ Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 9; Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 9–10, 15, 17. Most of these books remain in private hands, but a small number of non-circulating copies are available for public reference. Carter's *Early History of the Santee Club* is held at the James L. Thomason Library, Presbyterian College, Clinton, S.C., and the New York Public Library, New York City; a photocopy is in the pamphlet collection of the South Carolina Historical Society. Reath's *Santee Club—A Legend* can be viewed at the Village Museum, McClellanville, S.C. *Early History of the Santee Club* was reprinted as an appendix to *Santee Club—A Legend*. One of the errors in *Santee Club—A Legend* bears correcting straightaway. Reath gives 1900 as the year of

anecdotal treatments are most useful when consulted alongside contemporaneous newspaper articles and the manuscript journals of Ludwig Beckman. Beckman, a retired rice planter from nearby McClellanville, served as the club's superintendent from 1905 to 1945 and was regarded as the dean of South Carolina duck-marsh managers. Although the majority of his daybooks and scrapbooks have been lost, some are preserved in a private collection.³⁸ For the family of a succeeding superintendent, a set of revealing historical photographs from the club spanning multiple decades have become a treasured heirloom. Rare copies of the Carter and Reath histories as well as the photo albums and Beckman journals were generously made available to the author by their owners, with the latter forming the backbone of my research material. To my knowledge, the Beckman journals are one of a kind.

Access to the aforementioned items is limited or restricted, but an array of other original sources on the Santee Club is available for public inspection. With the owner's permission, the author donated photocopy versions of several of the Beckman journals to the Village Museum at McClellanville, where they have been added to the genealogy archive in the Family History Room. Excerpts from an additional Beckman journal as well as a small group of associated club and family records evidently exist only as photocopies at the Village Museum. The

Carter's election to membership in the Santee Club. However, for reasons that will be discussed in chapter 5, the actual date of his election was in all probability 1901.

³⁸ The privately held Beckman volumes cover the years 1919–1924, 1924, 1928, 1933, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, and 1938–1946.

museum's director obtained these independently of the author before the originals were destroyed.³⁹

Seven volumes of the Santee Club's bag records, which contain day-by-day accounts of the hunting done by members and guests from 1901 to 1969, are housed in the publically accessible collections of the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston.⁴⁰ Also accessible to the public is a small cache of papers at the University of South Carolina's South Caroliniana Library that belonged to one of the founding members and concerns the first years of the club.⁴¹ Furthermore, at least one member published a memoir that draws on experiences at the Santee Club; the son of another put down his thoughtful remembrances in a lengthy magazine article; Beckman's son recalled aspects of the club in his autobiography; and informal interviews with African American employees of the club appeared in a local-history anthology and a conservation-

³⁹ See the following at the Village Museum, McClellanville, S.C.: Santee Club Records, 1899–1933; L. A. Beckman Historical Records, 1925–1932; Beckman Family Research Records.

⁴⁰ Despite the extent of the material, the Santee Club Bag Records should not be regarded as exhaustive. For instance, an anonymous notation inserted at the margin of the entry for December 24, 1904, gives notice that “1904–05 is very incomplete as members present from Jan 6–23 and Feb 4–16 failed to enter their scores.” See Santee Club Bag Records, vol. 1, 1901–1909, p. 144, South Carolina Historical Society. Nor are all omissions in the records noted. As an example, the hunting done by President Cleveland at the club in March 1907, which is referenced in note 13 and documented in multiple contemporary newspaper articles, does not show up in the game log. Peter Mathiessen also raises the prospect of hunters' egos getting in the way of accurate documentation. After firing prematurely at four small, scrawny ducks on his first-ever hunt at the club in 1953, Mathiessen suspected that his guide, Richard Campbell, “filed a false report to cover our disgrace, for in the club log for that infamous day I am credited with Big Duck—two black duck and two mallard.” Mathiessen, “Happy Days,” *Audubon*, November 1975, 78, 87 (quotation).

⁴¹ See Santee Club Papers, 1897–1902, box 2, folders 176–182, Thomas Eveleigh Richardson Collection, ca. 1683–1933, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

themed coffee-table book.⁴² In addition, the Santee Club hosted a parade of guests through the years—hunters, tourists, politicians, journalists, artists, and ornithologists among them—who recorded their impressions of the club members and the club property. A number of these narrative accounts are extant, either having been published in old periodicals or filed away in scattered repositories.

In a short, popular history of hunting clubs located in the South Carolina low country, Jim Casada remarks that “in terms of surviving records and printed sources . . . no other Southern club, with the possible exception of the Beaver Dam Club made famous by Nash Buckingham, can boast a more documented past” than the Santee Club.⁴³ Apparently, though, Casada made this claim having only consulted the Carter and Reath books. Suzanne Cameron Linder and Marta Leslie Thacker likewise cite Carter and Reath along with a trio of magazine and newspaper articles on the club from the 1970s in their *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County and the Santee River*.⁴⁴

⁴² See B. Nason Hamlin, *Such Jolly Years* (Dedham, Mass.: Transcript Press, Inc., 1937), 201–224; Ludwig Armstrong Beckman Jr., *The Autobiography of Rev. Ludwig Armstrong Beckman Jr. of Louisville, Mississippi* (Fulton, Miss.: Printed by the Itawamba County Times, Inc., [1978?]), passim; Mathiessen, “Happy Days,” 64–68, 70, 74, 76, 78, 80, 84–88, 90–95; William Baldwin, *Inland Passages: Making a Lowcountry Life* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2004), 105–110; Virginia Christian Beach, *Rice and Ducks: The Surprising Convergence that Saved the Carolina Lowcountry* (Charleston, S.C.: Evening Post Books, 2014), 69–73.

⁴³ Jim Casada, “Old-Time Hunt Clubs,” *South Carolina Wildlife*, November–December 1991, 46–48 (quotation on p. 47). Journalist Nash Buckingham (1880–1971) of Memphis, Tenn., wrote extensively about his experiences waterfowling at the Beaver Dam Club near Tunica, Miss., where he was a member. His articles appeared in major hunting and fishing magazines such as *Recreation*, *Outdoor Life*, *Field and Stream*, and *Sports Afield*, and many were reprinted in anthologies. A brief biographical sketch of Buckingham by Casada entitled “Nash Buckingham, Southern Gentle Man” is available online at <http://owaa.org/owaa-legends/nash-buckingham-southern-gentle-man/> (accessed March 21, 2011). See also Steve Bowman and Steve Wright, *Arkansas Duck Hunter’s Almanac* (Fayetteville, Ark.: Ozark Delta Press, 1998), 58–59.

⁴⁴ Linder and Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County*, 843 (n. 17), 844 (nn. 19–28).

Almost all of the other Santee Club-related primary sources inventoried in the bibliography of this work have never been utilized by historians.

The situation is similar for the sources in the bibliography pertaining to the Kinloch Gun Club. The Santee Club and the Kinloch Gun Club were neighbors. Their properties lay directly across the North Santee River from each another, except for one section south of the river where they adjoined, and their clubhouses sat scarcely four miles apart. The clubs had more in common than their physical proximity, however. When Kinloch incorporated in 1912, fourteen years subsequent to Santee, its founders consciously modeled the new club after the older one. In fact, evidence will be presented later of them requesting information from the secretary of the Santee Club that they used to organize Kinloch on an almost identical basis, and they sent their first superintendent to Santee to study the layout and operations under Beckman. In succeeding years, the respective members and managers kept in contact. Kinloch often followed Santee's lead, adopting management strategies and techniques that the senior club had established as practicable.⁴⁵ The Kinloch Gun Club owned less land, had a smaller membership, hosted fewer visitors, had less influence with other sportsmen, and was shorter lived than the Santee Club. Still, it managed waterfowl habitat on a sizable tract for almost two decades, and enough primary sources survive from the club for Kinloch to serve as another informative example of the impact of duck hunters from the North on low-country ecology.

⁴⁵ The most direct link in the management of the clubs was L. Eli Mills, the assistant head guide at Santee whom Kinloch hired as its head guide in 1929. Mills brought a number of new ideas from Santee that Kinloch implemented immediately.

In terms of landholdings, the Kinloch Gun Club was impressive in its own right. At its largest, Kinloch encompassed close to a dozen rice plantations and exceeded eighty-three hundred acres. Few ducking preserves anywhere covered more area, yet Kinloch was barely one-third the size of the mammoth Santee Club. Like at Santee, wetlands constituted the majority of Kinloch's acreage. Its name came from Kinloch Creek, which flowed through the heart of the club's preserve before emptying into Minim Creek, a tributary of the North Santee River.

Members of the dynastic du Pont family formed the nucleus of the Kinloch Gun Club. The du Pont fortune came from E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, one of the world's leading producers of gunpowder and explosives. Based in Wilmington, Delaware, the company originated with Eleuthère Irénée du Pont, who began construction of his first powder works in 1802, two years after emigrating from France. Within a decade, he had become the principal supplier of gunpowder to the U.S. government. Three of du Pont's great-grandsons—Alexis I. du Pont, his brother Eugene du Pont Jr., and their cousin Eugene E. du Pont—were among the incorporators of the Kinloch Gun Club. The latter's brother Philip F. du Pont and three additional cousins—A. Felix du Pont, Irénée du Pont, and T. Coleman du Pont—joined the club later along with du Pont in-laws Robert R. M. Carpenter and W. Winder Laird.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ For the lineage of Eleuthère Irénée du Pont, see Pierre S. du Pont, *Genealogy of the Du Pont Family, 1739–1949*, 2 vols. (Wilmington, Del.: Printed by the Hambleton Company, Inc., 1949). For a general history of the family and the company, see Max Dorian, *The du Ponts: From Gunpowder to Nylon*, trans. Edward B. Garside (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962). On the economic, political, and social impact of the Du Ponts in their home state, see John A. Munroe, *History of Delaware*, 5th ed. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006). Three Du Ponts have been the subjects of scholarly biographies. See Alfred D. Chandler Jr. and Stephen Salsbury, *Pierre S. Du Pont and the Making of the Modern Corporation* (1971; repr., Washington, D.C.: Beard Books, 2000); Norman B. Wilkinson, *Lammot du Pont and the American Explosives*

Most of the rest of the Kinloch Gun Club members were connected with the du Ponts in one way or another, either as high-ranking employees of the company, business associates, or friends of the family. The majority of these members lived in Wilmington. They included William G. Ramsay, vice president and chief engineer of the Du Pont Company, and his son Joseph; Joseph G. Ewing, manager of Du Pont's Bureau of Advertising and subsequently its Rifle Smokeless Division; attorney Josiah Marvel, a specialist in corporate law whose shingle hung outside of the Du Pont Building; lumberman J. Danforth Bush, who also had an office in the Du Pont Building; John J. Satterthwait and Henry M. Taylor, president and vice president, respectively, of the Remington Machine Company, which manufactured steam engines and refrigerating machinery; Joseph Bancroft and Alexander F. Crichton, who had interests in local textile mills; and Charles R. Miller, the governor of Delaware from 1913 to 1917.⁴⁷

Industry, 1850–1884 (Charlottesville: Published for the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation by the University Press of Virginia, 1984); Joseph Frazier Wall, *Alfred I. du Pont: The Man and His Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁴⁷ On Ramsay and his son, see "Ramsay, William Gouverneur," in *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Being the History of the United States*, vol. 27 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1939), 242–243. See also "Thirty-Seven and One-Half Pounds of Turkey," *Du Pont Magazine*, March 1919, 28. On Ewing, see obituary, *American Rifleman*, November 1938, 43. On Marvel, see "Marvel, Josiah," in *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Being the History of the United States*, vol. 18 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1922), 201. On Bush, see Philadelphia Letter, *St. Louis Lumberman*, February 1, 1910, 52; *Association of Centenary Firms and Corporations of the United States*, 2nd issue (Philadelphia: Christopher Sower Company, 1916), 57–58; obituary, *Necrological Record of the Week, American Lumberman*, December 18, 1926, 76. On Satterthwait, see "Satterthwait, John Jackson," in *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Being the History of the United States*, vol. 46 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1963), 251. On Taylor, see "Probe Resignation of Wilmington Pastor; Henry M. Taylor, Prominent Business Man Dies," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 16, 1918; "Henry M. Taylor, Deceased," *Ice and Refrigeration*, February 1918, 104. On Bancroft, see "Joseph Bancroft, 60, of Delaware Is Dead," *New York Times*, May 7, 1936. On Crichton, see "A. F. Crichton Found Dead," *ibid.*, April 27, 1939. On Miller, see "Ex-Gov. C. R. Miller of Delaware Dead," *ibid.*, September 19, 1927.

Beyond Delaware, small clusters of Kinloch Gun Club members could be found in Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Counted with the New York members were brothers Charles T. Church and Frederic E. Church, whose company made Arm & Hammer baking soda; composer and band conductor John Philip Sousa; and William Ramsay's cousins Frederic G. Carnochan and Gouverneur M. Carnochan Jr., the sons of a stockbroker. Also of note were Boston real-estate developer C. Ashley Hardy and George Hewitt Myers of Washington, half-brother and heir of the cofounder of the Bristol-Myers pharmaceutical firm.⁴⁸

The Kinloch Gun Club's membership dwindled until only four du Ponts—Eugene Jr., Eugene E., Felix, and Irénée—together with Carpenter and Sousa remained in 1930. In July of the following year, journalist Chalmers S. Murray

⁴⁸ On the Churches, see "Church, Charles Thomas," in *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, vol. 51 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1969), 473–474. See also "C. T. Church, President of Baking Soda Firm," *New York Times*, February 17, 1953; R. Stephen Irwin, "Wildlife in a Baking Soda Box," *Field and Stream*, December 1997, 66–67. There are several biographies of Sousa. The most recent one, which focuses on his early career in music and rise to prominence, is Patrick Warfield, *Making the March King: John Philip Sousa's Washington Years, 1854–1893* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013). See also *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Sousa, John Philip," available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310003119 (accessed September 11, 2015); "Sousa, John Philip," in *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Being the History of the United States*, vol. 33 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1947), 445–446. On the Carnochans and their kinship with Ramsay, see "Navy Officer Killed in Airplane Crash," *New York Times*, October 18, 1943; "Frederic Carnochan, Ethnologist, 61, Dies," *ibid.*, August 4, 1952; William B. Aitken, *Distinguished Families in America Descended from Wilhelmus Beekman and Jan Thomasse Van Dyke* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1912), 146–147. On Hardy, see Albert Nelson Marquis, ed., *Who's Who in New England: A Biographical Directory of Leading Living Men and Women of the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Company, 1916), s.v. "Hardy, Charles Ashley"; "Broker Killed by His Own Gun While Hunting," *Boston Herald*, December 2, 1929; "Life and Times of Charles Hardy and Chatham," *Cape Cod Times* (Hyannis, Mass.), June 8, 2014. On Myers, see Martha McWilliam, "One Man's Romance with Fiber Created the Textile Museum," *Smithsonian*, March 1987, 109–117; Walter B. Denny, "Myers, George Hewitt," in *The Grove Encyclopedia of American Art*, ed. Joan Marter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3: 396.

called the club “one of the most exclusive organizations of its kind in America.”⁴⁹ Each time that a member withdrew from the club, either Eugene du Pont, Eugene E. du Pont, or Robert Carpenter had bought their shares, making them the majority stockholders. By December 1931, these three were the only remaining members of the club, so they dissolved it for tax purposes and held the property, which they henceforth called “Kinloch Plantation,” jointly.

The archival materials connected with the Kinloch Gun Club are neither as diverse nor as chronologically inclusive as those of the Santee Club, but for the period they cover—from a few months prior to the incorporation to a few years after the dissolution, when the two du Pont cousins purchased Carpenter’s interest in the plantation—they are actually more thorough. Comprising one manuscript collection at the South Carolina Historical Society and two at the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware, the Kinloch sources consist of extensive correspondence, several annual reports, and legal as well as financial documents. A private collection of photographs taken at the Kinloch Gun Club in the 1920s also is extant and has been digitized by the Georgetown County Library.

Three historians have skimmed the surface of the manuscript collections. The Kinloch Gun Club Records at the South Carolina Historical Society belonged to Russell M. Doar, the second superintendent. Scott M. Giltner uses Doar’s payrolls to illustrate general points about African American hunting guides in the post-Civil War South, and my chapter in Julia Brock and Daniel Vivian’s *Leisure*,

⁴⁹ C. S. Murray, “Kinloch, Exclusive Santee Gun Club,” *News and Courier*, July 12, 1931.

Plantations, and the Making of a New South, which focuses on the Santee Club, briefly summarizes rice-planting activities at Kinloch based on the same set of papers and newspaper articles from the 1930s.⁵⁰ Another contributor to the Brock and Vivian anthology, Jennifer Betsworth, cites Hagley’s Kinloch Gun Club Papers—which basically amount to the records of the club’s first president, William Ramsay—in her discussion of the influence of winter colonists on early-twentieth-century plantation architecture and landscape design in Georgetown County.⁵¹ These previous studies have three things in common: (1) they give short shrift to the Kinloch Gun Club; (2) they consult no more than one of the aforementioned collections; and (3) they cite only a handful of documents out of the thousands available.

As a matter of fact, the richest resource on Kinloch, the papers of Eugene du Pont Jr., has been tapped the least. Du Pont was president of the club for all but its first four years of existence. Held at Hagley, the bulk of this collection is letters—in excess of fifteen hundred of them—from Kinloch’s third superintendent, T. Cordes Lucas, to du Pont and club secretary Robert Carpenter. Betsworth references one of these letters in her unpublished Master’s

⁵⁰ Scott E. Giltner, *Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 129–132; Matthew A. Lockhart, “‘Rice Planters in Their Own Right’: Northern Sportsmen and Waterfowl Management on the Santee River Plantations during the Baiting Era, 1905–1905,” in *Leisure, Plantations, and the Making of a New South: The Sporting Plantations of the South Carolina Lowcountry and Red Hills Region, 1900–1940*, ed. Julia Brock and Daniel Vivian (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2015), 118.

⁵¹ Jennifer Betsworth, “Reviving and Restoring Southern Ruins: Reshaping Plantation Architecture and Landscapes in Georgetown County, South Carolina,” in Brock and Vivian, *Leisure, Plantations, and the Making of a New South*, 66, 72–73.

thesis.⁵² Although Lucas wrote regularly with updates on club business, plantation affairs, and hunting prospects, his brief reports do not capture the day-to-day minutiae of the Beckman journals.

The last major source for the present study was the records of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. Members and staff of both the Santee Club and the Kinloch Gun Club corresponded with representatives of this agency along with its predecessor, the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, on a range of issues related to hunting, management, and conservation. In addition to communications to and from the clubmen, the Fish and Wildlife Service collection holds various reports about the Santee drainage and its delta ecosystems made by engineers and biologists that concern, either directly or indirectly, the Santee and Kinloch properties. All of these materials appear in the secondary literature for the first time here.

Managed duck marshes became part of the American wetlandscape in the late nineteenth century and grew increasingly common after the turn of the twentieth century. In South Carolina, they monopolized large sections of the coastal riverine environment. These modified wetland ecosystems provide a lens for close inspection of sportsmen as environmental actors in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Through evolving management strategies at the Santee Club, the Kinloch Gun Club, and some of the other nearby duck-shooting preserves,

⁵² See Jennifer L. Betsworth, “‘Then Came the Peaceful Invasion of the Northerners’: The Impact of Outsiders on Plantation Architecture in Georgetown County, South Carolina” (Master’s thesis, University of South Carolina, 2011), 79.

we see hunter-naturalists not only gaining knowledge firsthand from observations of migratory waterfowl and their feeding behavior as well as secondhand from a variety of sources that included local land-use customs, other hunters, popular writings on natural history, the sporting press, private consultants, and government scientists but also putting these insights into effect for luring birds to their shooting grounds. Gentleman waterfowlers recognized the correlation between good hunting and good habitat from an early date, and they demonstrated a willingness to experiment with planting and engineering their marshes to achieve these ends. It is significant, both from the standpoint of how sportsmen related to the environment and regarding their place within the larger conservation movement, that they put their understanding of waterfowl habitat requirements to practice for their purposes ahead of anyone with training in ecological theory.

National in outlook, the next two chapters explore the controversial place of sportsmen in the historiography of conservation, their turn toward private hunting preserves in the nineteenth century, and their heightening ecological awareness as the frontier retreated and game grew scarce. A wide-ranging discussion of the environmental history of early ducking preserves in the third chapter concludes by narrowing our focus to the South Carolina rice coast, setting the scene for an extended examination of the trend among sportsmen from the North to acquire plantations and manage them for waterfowl habitat. Duck shooting on the low-country rice plantations before and after the Civil War is compared in chapter 4, bringing the narrative forward to when sportsmen from

New York City and Philadelphia formed the Annandale Club, South Carolina's first northern ducking club, in the late 1880s.

Chapters 5 and 6 study the rise and decline of Georgetown's golden age for duck shooting. Special consideration is given in these chapters to the early histories of the Annandale Club, the Santee Club, and the Kinloch Gun Club. The agricultural history of the rice plantations and the long shadow of slavery initially set the South Carolina ducking preserves apart from those in other states. Santee and Kinloch's approaches to integrating waterfowl shooting and traditional rice culture are the subject of chapter 7, and in chapter 8, the examination shifts to natural duck foods and the beginnings of modern, habitat-based management at the clubs. Chapter 9 takes a close look at management of the Santee Club's wetland impoundments between 1920 and 1940. In the 1930s, the managed duck marshes of the Santee Club faced imminent ecological disaster when the South Carolina Public Service Authority undertook to dam and divert much of the flow of the Santee River, the fourth largest by average volume on the Atlantic coast of the United States and primary source of freshwater for the club's myriad marshes, into Charleston Harbor by way of the Cooper River. The response of the Santee Club to the Santee-Cooper Project, which reveals that decades of hunting and managing the Santee River marshes had created a strong wetlands conservation ethic on the part of the sportsmen, constitutes chapter 10. The final chapter addresses the Santee Club's period of greatest environmental influence—when it was instrumental in the spread of duck-marsh ecosystems across the low-country region in the 1930s and 1940s—and notes

sportsmen's deference to wildlife professionals in the 1950s, after academically trained wetland managers began doing private consulting work on the plantations. It closes by reflecting on early sportsmen's lasting contributions to the ecology of coastal South Carolina.

CHAPTER 2

CONNECTING HISTORIANS, HUNTERS, AND HABITAT

A longstanding source of contention among scholars, sportsmen occupy a controversial place in the historiography of conservation. In the main, the controversy springs from two root causes. First, for as long as there have been sport hunters in the United States, there has been a segment of society, including many in the academic community, that found their diversion morally objectionable.¹ Second, historians cannot agree on the chronology of the conservation movement and, therefore, assign different meanings to the role sportsmen played in its inceptive stage. Gentleman hunters may have shared similar class interests, but in the field, they were not all alike. Historians' incapacity for distinguishing who hunted what and where compounds the confusion. Amid the controversy and confusion, the bond between the hunter-naturalists and the natural world gets lost. The place for connecting the two is sportsmen's private hunting preserves.

Since the 1970s, a running debate between historians who see sportsmen as the fathers of modern conservation and those who do not has dominated the scholarly dialogue, with each side accusing the other of allowing its interpretation

¹ Thomas L. Altherr and John F. Reiger address this issue in "Academic Historians and Hunting: A Call for More and Better Scholarship," *Environmental History Review* 19 (Autumn 1995): 39–56.

to be influenced by personal pro- or anti-hunting biases. The lightning rod in this dispute is John F. Reiger, whose book *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* has gone through numerous printings since it first appeared in 1975, including a revised and expanded third edition in 2001, and is widely considered one of the seminal works in the field of U.S. environmental history. Following the lead of Samuel P. Hays, most historians date conservation to the turn of the twentieth century, when a confluence of events related to rapid population growth and economic expansion led to calls for “wise use” of the nation’s forest, water, and mineral resources as well as preservation of the scenic remnants of the western wilderness. The federal government responded by creating a series of professionally staffed Interior and Agriculture Department agencies with the expertise to ensure that America’s natural treasures were safeguarded from special interests and managed efficiently in trust for future generations.² Reiger maintains, however, that decades before Gifford Pinchot and John Muir became the faces of the conservation movement—as far back as the 1870s—sport hunters had recognized that the “total natural environment” was in trouble and rallied to save it.³

For better than two centuries after English colonization of the New World, European Americans hunted and trapped with abandon. The wilderness was at

² The standard texts include Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890–1920* (1959; repr., Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999); Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001); Alfred Runte, *The National Parks: The American Experience*, 4th ed. (Lanham, Md.: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2010).

³ John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, 3rd ed. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001), 126.

hand, and the supply of game seemed limitless. Reiger relates that unlike in Europe, where wild animals were the exclusive dominion of the landowner, citizens of the United States, whether they owned land or not, considered hunting a democratic right, and “the game was the property of whoever was able to kill it.” Despite a minimum of legal protection, most species of wildlife remained relatively abundant until demand for meat to feed the country’s swelling urban populace and feathers, which were used as women’s fashion accessories, created a lucrative market during the Industrial Revolution for a wide range of game that previously had little or no economic value.⁴ James B. Trefethen and Theodore W. Cart, another two on the short list of historians who have researched sportsmen’s contributions to conservation, point to advances in firearms, transportation, and refrigeration technology that allowed market hunters to slaughter and ship ever greater quantities of wildlife to the cities by the mid-nineteenth century.⁵ It was a golden era for the market hunters, writes Reiger. Absent of the sportsmen’s concern for ethics and aesthetics afield, these mercenaries “killed without restraint, because the more game they took, the more money they made.”⁶

With their sporting traditions under mounting threat, Reiger describes how after the Civil War, gentleman hunters united politically not only to stem the

⁴ Ibid., 30–31, 94–95 (quotation on p. 31).

⁵ James B. Trefethen, *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (New York: Winchester Press and Boone and Crockett Club, 1975), 59–62; Theodore Whaley Cart, “The Struggle for Wildlife Protection in the United States, 1870–1900: Attitudes and Events Leading to the Lacey Act” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1971), 25–32.

⁶ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 46–47, 7 (quotation).

unchecked commercial destruction of game but also “to preserve the entire context of their recreation.”⁷ They started by forming sport-hunting clubs and local game protective associations, and soon, several national periodicals emerged to promote the “club idea” within the ranks and express their viewpoints on sportsmanship as a value system to new audiences. The most important of these outdoor magazines was *Forest and Stream*, a weekly that commenced publication in New York in 1873. The sporting press quickly became a powerful organizing tool. Nearly one hundred sportsmen’s clubs got their start during the winter of 1874–1875; three years later, *Forest and Stream* founding publisher and editor Charles Hallock reported that the nationwide total had risen to 308. With the sporting journals sounding constant encouragement, club activity gained momentum as the twentieth century approached.⁸ From *The Sportsman’s Directory* of 1891, Daniel Justin Herman documents the existence of 968 “rod and gun clubs,” close to 90 percent of which were located in the urbanized Northeast and Midwest.⁹ One of these was the prestigious Boone and Crockett Club, founded in 1887, which Reiger calls “the first private organization to deal effectively with conservation issues of national scope.” Roosevelt, Pinchot, and George Bird Grinnell, editor of *Forest and Stream* from 1880 to 1911 and founder

⁷ Ibid., 46.

⁸ Ibid., 49, 57–59 (quotation on p. 59).

⁹ Daniel Justin Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 239.

of the Audubon Society, were among the conservation luminaries who belonged to the Boone and Crockett Club.¹⁰

Once organized for action, sportsmen pressured lawmakers to enact sweeping reforms aimed at protecting wildlife and natural areas. This included lobbying the states to constitute fish and game commissions, appoint game wardens, and restrict hunting by setting closed seasons, bag limits, legitimate methods of taking game, licensing fees, and stiffer penalties for poaching. At the federal level, sport hunters championed putting aside millions of acres for national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges and sought systematic, apolitical administration of government lands to prevent abuses. Their efforts culminated in passage of the landmark Lacey Acts of 1894 and 1900. Drafted by Congressman John F. Lacey of Iowa, an ardent sportsman and member of the Boone and Crockett Club, the former law protected Yellowstone National Park and became a cornerstone of the national park concept, while the latter helped put an end to market hunting by making the interstate shipment of wildlife taken in violation of state law a federal crime. Reiger's study concludes in 1901—when so many other conservation histories begin—with the presidential inauguration of

¹⁰ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 146–174 (quotation on p. 153). Four years after joining the staff as natural-history editor, Grinnell bought Hallock's interest in *Forest and Stream* and became editor in chief on January 1, 1880, a position he held for the next thirty-one years. Grinnell's "Audubon Society," which he launched in 1886 and dissolved in 1889, was a forerunner of the National Association of Audubon Societies (1905) and the National Audubon Society (1940). Ironically, the popularity of Grinnell's short-lived ornithological organization was its undoing: with nearly fifty thousand members at its peak in the autumn of 1888, the society got too large for him to manage in his spare time. See *ibid.*, 50–51, 99–102, 220; [Charles Hallock], "Our New Dress," *Forest and Stream*, November 18, 1876, 232. See also Mark V. Barrow Jr., *A Passion for Birds: American Ornithology after Audubon* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 102–120.

Theodore Roosevelt.¹¹ By this time, what Reiger refers to as “the first conservation movement” had institutionalized the code of the sportsman in America.¹²

While his book has drawn a number of detractors over the years, Reiger’s chief critic is Thomas R. Dunlap.¹³ On the surface, Dunlap praises Reiger for shining a light on “the importance of hunting as a recreation and hunters as a political group in late-nineteenth-century America.” Additionally, Dunlap concedes that “the legal and institutional framework of wildlife protection in the United States, formed between 1880 and 1920, is the legacy of sport hunters.”¹⁴ Yet he disagrees fundamentally with Reiger on two key points.

¹¹ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 67–71, 90–187. In the third edition of the book, Reiger includes an epilogue on twentieth-century ecologist, conservationist, and sportsman Aldo Leopold. According to Reiger, Leopold’s “land ethic represents the highest development of the environmental responsibility inherent in the code of the sportsman.” See *ibid.*, 255.

¹² Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, xi, 65.

¹³ See Thomas R. Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation, 1880–1920,” *Environmental Review* 12 (Spring 1988): 51–60. In addition to Dunlap, major facets of Reiger’s thesis are disputed by, among others: Alfred Runte, review of *American Sportsmen* (1st ed.), *Journal of Forest History* 20 (April 1976): 100–101; Samuel P. Hays, review of *American Sportsmen* (1st ed.), *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 59 (Summer 1976): 330–332; Gerald Prescott, review of *American Sportsmen* (1st ed.), *Arizona and the West* 18 (Summer 1976): 177–178; Runte, letter to editor, *Journal of Forest History* 20 (October 1976): 221–222; Stephen Mikesell, review of *American Sportsmen* (1st ed.), *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 27 (Autumn 1977): 86–87; Mikesell, letter to editor, *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 28 (Spring 1978): 72; Thomas L. Altherr, review of *American Sportsmen* (rev. ed.), *Journal of Sport History* 15 (Summer 1988): 188–191; Lisa Mighetto, *Wild Animals and American Environmental Ethics* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 32, 41; Christian C. Young, *In the Absence of Predators: Conservation and Controversy on the Kaibab Plateau* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 221–222 (n. 12); Daniel J. Philippon, *Conserving Words: How American Nature Writers Shaped the Environmental Movement* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 56–58. Dunlap’s article integrates most of these criticisms.

¹⁴ Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation,” 51–52 (first quotation on p. 52, second on pp. 51–52). A similar, slightly more flattering discussion of sport hunters as conservationists appears in Thomas R. Dunlap’s *Saving America’s Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850–1990* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 8–17.

First, quoting liberally from Hays and adhering to his classic timeline, Dunlap states, “What marked off the conservation movement was a concern for the ‘interrelationship of all resource use’ and a commitment to scientific management and bureaucratic administration. Pinchot pushed a program that called for a redistribution of power. He and other conservationists wanted decisions about resource allocation shifted from politicians at the state and local levels to experts working for the federal government.” Moreover, conservationists of the Progressive Era put an emphasis on economic development. “At ‘the heart of the conservation idea’ was the ‘concept of planned and efficient progress,’ with technicians directing policy on the basis of expert knowledge with the long-term goal of maximizing return from various resources.”¹⁵ The sportsmen’s movement, which was non-utilitarian in nature and led by interested amateurs, was missing those defining features, asserts Dunlap. He adds, “Experts with real authority began to dominate hunting as a conservation program only in the 1930s when game management became an academic discipline. Graduates of the programs began to replace the hacks [appointed to wildlife commissions], and the federal government set up a research program and funded wildlife work as part of conservation programs and park services.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation,” 55.

¹⁶ Ibid. One of the earliest examples of sportsmen deferring to scientific expertise was the Cooperative Quail Investigation, which was conducted from 1924 to 1929 by the U.S. Biological Survey and a group of hunting-preserve owners in the Red Hills region of southern Georgia and northern Florida. The sportsmen funded the investigation and offered their land as an outdoor laboratory, while the Biological Survey contributed institutional support and oversight. The project was led by ornithologist Hebert L. Stoddard, who became an influential figure in the professionalization of game management in the 1930s. On the Cooperative Quail Investigation and its successor, the Cooperative Quail Study Association, see Albert G. Way, *Conserving Southern Longleaf: Herbert Stoddard and the Rise of Ecological Land Management*,

Second, Dunlap rejects the centrality of sport hunting and the sportsman's code to nature preservation in the nineteenth century. In support of his thesis, Reiger identifies nearly eighty individuals for whom "the pursuit of wildlife seems to have provided that crucial first contact with the natural world that spawned a commitment to its perpetuation."¹⁷ Here, Dunlap charges Reiger with overreaching. "That roster is impressive in numbers and names, but it loses much of its impact on analysis," he writes.¹⁸ Dunlap begins by adducing the near universality of hunting among boys during the middle period of American history and what that means as far as a "control group." He notes, "Given the popularity of hunting, it would probably be possible to assemble land speculators, timber barons, and mine owners into a group as large as that of the conservationists. From this one could then argue that hunting and fishing provided a 'crucial first contact' that led them to devote their lives to the conquest of nature."¹⁹

Regarding the list itself, Dunlap gives several examples of men whom he believes Reiger misclassifies, because at some point in their lives they either gave up hunting or conveyed ambiguous opinions about it. As for the rest of the list, the avowed sportsmen, Dunlap remarks, "It is hard to see with the evidence

Environmental History and the American South (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 78–205. See also Way, "Burned to Be Wild: Herbert Stoddard and the Roots of Ecological Conservation in the Southern Longleaf Pine Forest," *Environmental History* 11 (July 2006): 500–526.

¹⁷ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 65.

¹⁸ Dunlap, "Sport Hunting and Conservation," 56.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

available that hunting was that important to people, even enthusiastic hunters.”²⁰ On these grounds, he surmises only a small minority obtained a primary sense of identity from their avocation or cared enough about it to abide by sporting precepts in the field, thereby undercutting Reiger’s stance that they shared “a ‘worldview,’ even a religion.”²¹ Dunlap goes on to question the cultural motives of the sportsmen. “I would argue . . . that hunting was not primarily a sport,” but “one of the rituals adopted by ‘old stock’ Americans to cope with a changing world.”²² In that case, not only Reiger’s list but also the code of the sportsman and the environmental ethic implicit in it become suspect, even spurious.

For his part, Reiger remains resolute, insisting that “substantiation for an organized, sportsmen-led, wildlife-conservation movement is the documented existence of an organized, sportsmen-led, wildlife-conservation movement!” When compared to the hunting population at large, how can it not be obvious that the sportsmen’s movement, made up of at least several thousand self-aware, articulate, politically involved urbanites who combined forces in the 1870s, is the control group? he asks. Why is it so difficult to take at face value the statements made time and again by Roosevelt, Grinnell, Lacey, and numerous other trailblazing conservationists “that their love for wildlife began with hunting or fishing and their internalization of the code of the sportsman”? Why trivialize a complex activity like hunting as mere ritual? Reiger judges that some objections

²⁰ Ibid., 56–57 (quotation on p. 57).

²¹ Ibid., 57; Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 49.

²² Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation,” 57.

The American Sportsman's Creed

By ZANE GREY



LET ME pause in these momentous days and think with wonder and reverence how the spirit and activity of the American pioneer hunters and fishermen have given us the American soldier—that splendid type of the land of the free and the home of the brave.

I want my boy and his comrades and the boys of the future to receive this heritage of gun and rod. It is a heritage of the open, which now must be idealized to a love of nature and a thoughtfulness for the meaning and preservation of life.

Feeling this, I record my unalterable belief that a Sportsman should

1. *Never in sport endanger human life.*
2. *Never kill wantonly or needlessly or brutally.*
3. *Obey the laws of State and Nation, work for better laws, and uphold the law-enforcing authorities.*
4. *Respect the rights of farmers and property owners and also their feelings.*
5. *Always leave seed birds and game in covers.*
6. *Never be a fish- or game-hog.*
7. *Discourage the killing of game for commercial purposes by refusing to purchase trophies.*
8. *Study and record the natural history of game species in the interest of science.*
9. *Love Nature and its denizens and be a gentleman.*

To this ideal I consecrate myself—that sport shall not be my only aim—that my reward and my lesson shall be in the thrill of the chase and the glory of the heights, and the whistle of the stag—in the music of the murmuring stream and the leap of the playing trout—in the gold of the autumn woods and the whirr of the ruffed grouse—in the sweet, soft scent that breathes from off the sea and in the beauty and silence of the lonely hills and dells.

Signed.....

this.....day of.....19..

at.....State of.....

WITNESS:.....

President, American Game Protective Association

(This creed, handsomely printed in color on heavy board, suitable for hanging or framing, will be mailed on receipt of ten cents in stamps. Address, American Game Protective Association, 233 Broadway, New York city)

Figure 2.1. Composed by best-selling Western novelist Zane Grey, "The American Sportsman's Creed" was published in several formats and distributed by the American Game Protective Association, a national organization led by sport hunters and supported by manufacturers of sporting arms and ammunition, beginning in 1918. It was designed to educate the public on the high standards of sportsmanship and publicize "sport for sport's sake." *Source:* This reproduction appeared on page 3 in the July 1918 edition of the association's *Bulletin*.

to the conclusions presented in *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* come from “flawed analysis, based partly on the inability of scholars to differentiate among the many groups and categories of hunters,” but the bigger element of the opposition owes to preexisting prejudices.²³ Reiger, who is open about his own “personal experience with the sporting traditions of the rod and the gun,” doubts the capacity of his critics, particularly Dunlap, to be objective on the issue of hunting. He cites an instance where Dunlap refers to hunting as a “barbaric relic” and present-day sportsmen as an “embattled and despised minority.”²⁴ Reiger retorts, “As one of the despised, my scholarship is automatically suspect, while his is not, though he is an animal-‘rights’ proponent and equally despised in many circles.”²⁵ In 1995 Reiger joined with Thomas L. Altherr in challenging “academic environmental historians to give hunting its historical due—no matter what their individual predilections.”²⁶

Sportsmen were a catalyst for legislative change in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era—on this and little else, Reiger and Dunlap see eye to eye. For a long time, the (occasionally heated) discourse over whether to include or exclude them from the vanguard of the conservation movement contributed to a rather

²³ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 65 (quotations); John F. Reiger’s commentary on Thomas R. Dunlap’s article “Sport Hunting and Conservation, 1880–1920,” *Environmental Review* 12 (Spring 1988): 95.

²⁴ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, viii; Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation,” 58. Reiger describes himself as having “been an ardent sportsman since childhood” who spent “countless dawns . . . in duck blinds.” See John F. Reiger, *Two Essays in Conservation History*, Pinchot Lecture Series (Milford, Penn.: Grey Towers Press, 1994), 53.

²⁵ Reiger’s commentary on Dunlap’s article, 96.

²⁶ Altherr and Reiger, “Academic Historians and Hunting,” 54. Timothy Silver’s review of the latest edition of *American Sportsmen*, which he labels a “mini-classic,” bespeaks the gradual acceptance of most of Reiger’s arguments by his peers. See Silver, review of *American Sportsmen* (3rd ed.), *Environmental History* 7 (July 2002): 525–526.

circumscribed view of the sport-hunting subculture. This began to change in the 1990s with the publication of a number of texts that explored themes of race, ethnicity, class, and gender in the history of recreational hunting. Studies by Ted Ownby, Andrea L. Smalley, and Scott E. Giltner, to name a few, have steered the historiography in an exciting new direction.²⁷ Somewhat surprisingly, though, we now know much more about sportsmen as cultural and political actors than environmental ones. By concentrating our attention first on the public activities of gentleman hunters, such as penning editorials and petitioning assemblymen, and later on their social interactions with others, we have lost sight to a large degree of this group's connection to the land itself.

Sportsmen responded to the crisis of dwindling wildlife and wilderness in ways outside of the political arena. One widespread response that has received only cursory consideration from historians was to create their own private game preserves by purchasing or leasing, sometimes individually but more often in association with others, large swaths of the best remaining hunting grounds. The preserve idea originated in Western civilization during the Middle Ages, when

²⁷ The most important of these, not already cited in note 11 of chapter 1, are Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865–1920*, Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Stuart A. Marks, *Southern Hunting in Black and White: Nature, History, and Ritual in a Carolina Community* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); Louis S. Warren, *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America*, Yale Historical Publications (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997); Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Andrea L. Smalley, " 'I Just Like to Kill Things': Women, Men, and the Gender of Sport Hunting in the United States, 1940–1973," *Gender and History* 17 (April 2005): 183–209. See also Scott E. Giltner, *Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). For a slightly older study that remains relevant, see Steven Hahn, "Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging: Common Rights and Class Relations in the Postbellum South," *Radical History Review* 26 (October 1982): 37–64.

nobles from Britain and the Continent enclosed large, forested “parks” on manors to protect game, especially deer, for their own personal sport.²⁸ Although a few country estates with English-style walled deer parks dotted the landscapes of colonial Virginia and Maryland, hunting preserves were rare in the United States until the rising tide of the postbellum club movement floated their popularity among sportsmen.²⁹

The demand for private hunting preserves by 1890 caught even the crusading editor of *Forest and Stream* by surprise. “The system of buying and leasing territory for shooting and fishing purposes is progressing with great strides. It is in line with the coming of a new order,” Grinnell predicted, “under which the angler or hunter who does not belong to a club will eventually be shutout. These changed conditions [were] . . . little dreamed of a few short years ago.”³⁰ In 1894 both *Forest and Stream* and its midwestern counterpart, Chicago-based *American Field*, initiated a series of articles examining the rapid growth “on this continent of the European system of game preserving.”³¹ The nascent U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey took notice too, producing its own report, T. S.

²⁸ S. A. Miles, *Parks in Medieval England*, *Medieval History and Archaeology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15–44; Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain since 1066* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 62–73, 91–92, 102–103, 106.

²⁹ T. S. Palmer, *Private Game Preserves and Their Future in the United States*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Biological Survey, Circular No. 72 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910?], 2–3; Barbara Wells Sarudy, *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake, 1700–1805* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 59–60; William B. Marye, “Place Names of Baltimore and Harford Counties,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 53 (September 1958): 247–248.

³⁰ [George Bird Grinnell], “The Preserve System,” *Forest and Stream*, June 26, 1890, 1.

³¹ [George Bird Grinnell], “American Game Preserves,” *Forest and Stream*, February 17, 1894, 1 (quotation); Will Wildwood [Fred E. Pond], “American Game Preserves,” no. 1, “Blooming Grove Park,” *Travel, American Field*, October 13, 1894, 344.

Palmer's *Private Game Preserves and Their Future in the United States*, in 1910.

Three years after that, zoologist and well-known conservation spokesman William T. Hornaday commented that in the United States, "there is raging a genuine fever for private game preserves. . . . Some of those already existing are of fine proportions, and cost fortunes to create. Every true sportsman who is rich enough to own a private game preserve, sooner or later acquires one. You will find them scattered from the Bay of Fundy to San Diego."³²

No historian is more attentive to this phenomenon than Reiger. He sees the private preserves of Victorian America as an outgrowth of the increasingly self-conscious sporting set affecting cultivated European traditions.³³ "Another, more important, factor in the establishment of preserves," Reiger argues, "was outdoorsmen's desire to perpetuate game and habitat in spite of the utter indifference of a nation seemingly obsessed with economic development. Instead of waiting for the indolent state and federal governments to assume their responsibility for natural resources, sportsmen decided to take the initiative themselves." But even Reiger's treatment of this "important contribution in the private sector" is narrow and unsophisticated, with much of his brief discussion devoted to the dynamic conservation plans of two of what he calls "the earlier, better-known preserves," Blooming Grove Park in Pennsylvania and New York's Adirondack League Club, successor to the Bisby Club. Like Cart before him,

³² William T. Hornaday, *Our Vanishing Wild Life: Its Extermination and Preservation* (New York: New York Zoological Society, 1913), 358.

³³ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 88, 122–123.

Reiger presents Blooming Grove as prototypical. He then uses the Adirondack League Club to carry Cart's interpretation relative to Blooming Grove one step further.³⁴

Three affluent residents of New York City—jeweler Fayette S. Giles, fashion-plate publisher Genio C. Scott, and adventurer-journalist Charles Hallock, who two years later became the original publisher and editor of *Forest and Stream*—conceived Blooming Grove Park in early 1870. As told by Hallock in 1873, the inspiration for the preserve came directly from “Fontainebleau and the Grand Duchy of Baden”: after residing in France for six years, where he “engaged actively in field sports, both in the forests of Fontainebleau and in Germany,” Giles returned with “the idea of providing a grand park or inclosure within a reasonable distance of New York, where game might be bred and protected as it is in Europe.”³⁵ After much searching, the trio found a promising twelve-thousand-acre tract in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania, just four and a half hours by rail from the metropolis and close enough, Hallock boasted, that “the sportsman may leave New York, or any other adjacent city, and in twenty-four hours return with a saddle of venison, a bag of birds, or a basket of trout. To active business men whose time is precious, this is an advantage worthy of consideration.” By December, Giles had funded

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 87 (second quotation), 88 (first and third quotations).

³⁵ “Blooming Grove Park,” *Harper's Weekly*, December 17, 1870, 815; Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 88; Charles Hallock, *The Fishing Tourist: Angler's Guide and Reference Book* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), 225 (second quotation), 226 (first quotation); Cart, “Struggle for Wildlife Protection,” 90–91.

purchase of the parcels in fee simple. More land was bought and leased later, gradually enlarging the preserve to beyond twice its initial size.³⁶

Although the venerable hunting grounds of French and German monarchs inspired Blooming Grove, “this is not to say that the Old World precedent was copied exactly. The fundamental differences—a better word might be antagonisms—between aristocracy and democracy forbade it,” notes Reiger.³⁷ One major difference had to do with the democratic, capitalistic features of the preserve’s ownership structure. “It was at once decided to form a club of gentlemen fond of sporting for the purpose of improving, stocking, and enclosing the tract. The result,” wrote Hallock, “was the incorporation, in March, 1871, of the ‘Blooming Grove Park Association.’”³⁸ The association was constituted like a joint-stock corporation, with its own charter and annual meeting for the election of directors by the shareholders, which numbered about one hundred two years after the incorporation. The directors, in turn, appointed Giles as Blooming Grove’s first president, Scott as treasurer, and Hallock as corresponding secretary. The board of directors made all decisions that affected the association, its financial affairs, or its real property—consisting not only of the acreage but also a resort-style clubhouse as well as outbuildings such as staff quarters,

³⁶ Hallock, *Fishing Tourist*, 225–226 (quotation on p. 225); Cart, “Struggle for Wildlife Protection,” 90; Wildwood, “Blooming Grove Park,” 345; “The ‘Forest and Stream’s’ Fourth Annual Report on Game in Preserves,” pt. 2, “Unfenced Parks—Continued,” *American Game Parks, Forest and Stream*, August 7, 1897, 105. In 1889 Blooming Grove owned eighteen thousand acres in fee simple and held ninety-nine-year leases on ten thousand acres. See “In a Sportsman’s Paradise,” *New York Herald*, December 24, 1889.

³⁷ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 122.

³⁸ Hallock, *Fishing Tourist*, 226.

boathouses, stables, and kennels—by majority rule.³⁹ Still and all, despite being “more New World than Old World in character,” Reiger reinforces that the so-called “American Fontainebleau” and the profusion of preserves that came afterward were strictly upper-class enclaves.⁴⁰ Seconding Reiger on this point, Herman sets forth that “to own a game preserve, or to belong to a club that did, was to be an American aristocrat.”⁴¹

Along with “the affording of facilities for hunting, shooting, and fishing on the grounds thereof by the members,” concern for the perpetuation of quarry was explicit in the Blooming Grove Park Association charter: “the objects of said corporation shall be the preservation, importation, breeding, and propagation of all game animals, birds and fishes adapted to the climate.” The sportsmen realized that coverts to shelter the quarry were equally important, and to this end, as well as a potentially profitable timber investment, the charter further provided for “cultivating forests.”⁴²

The first order in establishing the preserve was protection of the wildlife and habitat already on the land. To compensate for weak state game laws and

³⁹ Palmer, *Private Game Preserves*, 3; Wildwood, “Blooming Grove Park,” 344–345; Hallock, *Fishing Tourist*, 227–228.

⁴⁰ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 123. There are several references to Blooming Grove Park as the “American Fontainebleau” in nineteenth-century books, periodicals, and newspapers. One example—possibly the earliest in print—can be found on page 820 of the *Harper’s Weekly* edition from December 17, 1870, in the caption for the illustration accompanying the article entitled “Blooming Grove Park.” Another is “The American Fontainebleau,” *Hartford Daily Courant* (Hartford, Conn.), May 21, 1879. Hallock himself used the moniker. See Hallock, *Fishing Tourist*, 226.

⁴¹ Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 250.

⁴² Wildwood, “Blooming Grove Park,” 345. This *American Field* article quotes extensively from a “graphic description of the origin of this enterprise, the purposes of the association, and the natural advantages and attractions of Blooming Grove Park . . . written by Charles Hallock when the association was in its infancy.” Otherwise, the original source is unattributed. See *ibid.*

lax local enforcement, Blooming Grove sportsmen imposed hunting regulations on themselves from the outset, writing closed seasons, bag limits, firearm restrictions, and other forms of responsible field etiquette into club by-laws. Violators could face stiff fines. The association took extra precautions against outsiders, enclosing large sections of the preserve with eight-foot wire fences and hiring wardens to patrol for trespassers and forest fires. Poachers and arsonists faced prosecution.⁴³

In addition to these protective measures, the Blooming Grove association experimented with artificial propagation of a variety of both native and exotic game species, taking precedent from the centuries-old European practice of gamekeeping.⁴⁴ The idea was to acquire breeding stock, which would be kept in pens of varying sizes and, to quote Hallock, “their product at maturity turned into the main hunting park.” Any surplus would be offered to other preserve owners. The association started by building a captive herd “from the abundant supply of native deer now on the territory,” Hallock explained.⁴⁵ This was accomplished

⁴³ Wildwood, “Blooming Grove Park,” 345; Hallock, *Fishing Tourist*, 228.

⁴⁴ On the history of British gamekeeping, see Stuart Haddon-Riddoch, *Rural Reflections: A Brief History of Traps, Trapmakers, and Gamekeeping in Britain*, 2nd ed. (Glendaruel, Scot.: Argyll Publishing, 2006), esp. pp. 285–327. Haddon-Riddoch dates gamekeeping “in its recognised form” to about the twelfth century, coinciding with the Normans’ introduction of rabbits to England. Gamekeepers concentrated strictly on the preservation of game by destroying vermin and discouraging poachers until the late eighteenth century, when the earliest attempts at breeding game were initiated. With more game animals “being raised and released, so obviously there were more to be poached.” Haddon-Riddoch estimates that the professional class of gamekeepers and their assistants in Great Britain had swelled to twenty thousand by the 1850s. *Ibid.*, 290, 296–298 (first quotation on p. 296, second on p. 290). Recent archaeological findings reveal that the Romans brought rabbits to the island in the first or second century, so the actions of the Normans actually constituted a reintroduction. See David Sapsted, “Romans Introduced the Rabbit,” *Daily Telegraph* (London), April 14, 2005.

⁴⁵ Wildwood, “Blooming Grove Park,” 345.

using dogs to drive deer from the forests into lakes, where sportsmen in boats lassoed the animals one by one as they swam and removed them to the “wire paddock.”⁴⁶ The members purchased imported game birds as well. “There is a yard already stocked with some thirty pheasants, which are now nesting, and likely to produce two hundred birds the coming season. The second year a thousand birds can be turned loose into the Park for sport.” White-tailed deer and ring-necked pheasants were only the beginning, though. Through the cooperation of the Smithsonian Institution, Hallock expected to receive trapped specimens of pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, and black-tailed deer from John Wesley Powell’s contemporary expedition in the Rocky Mountains, “and arrangements have been made for securing moose from Nova Scotia and elk and buffalo from the far West.” Hallock envisioned that “the minkeries, otteries and rabbit warrens will be another interesting feature” of the preserve.⁴⁷ “Although the more extravagant dreams of its [Blooming Grove’s] founders were not fulfilled,” observes Cart, against an American backdrop, their novelty attracted considerable attention from fellow sport hunters, scientists, and the press.⁴⁸

More noteworthy in Reiger’s eyes was the land management plan at Blooming Grove, which he advances as “*probably the first attempt to establish*

⁴⁶ J. A. [pseud.], “A Week at Blooming Grove Park,” *Forest and Stream*, November 5, 1874, 194; Charles Hallock, *An Angler’s Reminiscences: A Record of Sport, Travel and Adventure, with Autobiography of the Author* (Cincinnati: Sportsmen’s Review Pub. Co., 1913), 46 (quotation).

⁴⁷ Wildwood, “Blooming Grove Park,” 345.

⁴⁸ Cart, “Struggle for Wildlife Protection,” 92.

*systematic forestry in the United States.*⁴⁹ This was another instance of the sportsmen adopting a European precedent, since during his time abroad Giles likely had been influenced by the sustained-yield techniques of early professional foresters in France and Germany. As put by Hallock, “It is the intention to cultivate forests on correct principles” for the dual purposes of enhancing wildlife habitat and providing a steady stream of revenue for the club through timber sales. He specified that “the different varieties of trees [would be planted] on the soil best adapted to their growth, and, by so doing, three hundred acres a year may be cut, which would take thirty years to go over the main Park, . . . and this time makes a good growth” for the next rotation. Thus, by cultivating an uneven-aged stand of timber, continuous cutting cycles were possible. Moreover, logging activities would spare the most sensitive habitat, “leaving out water and breeding parks.”⁵⁰

Reiger chides his fellow historians for having “universally” accepted Gifford Pinchot’s word that his work at Biltmore Forest, located on George W. Vanderbilt’s palatial country estate outside of Asheville, North Carolina, represented “the beginning of practical Forestry in America. It was the first piece of woodland in the United States to be put under a regular system of forest management whose object was to pay the owner while improving the forest.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 89 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁰ Wildwood, “Blooming Grove Park,” 345.

⁵¹ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 89; Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, commemorative ed. (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1998), 50.

Reiger counters Pinchot's claim: "Though his work was far more extensive than that done at Blooming Grove, it did not begin until 1892, twenty years later."⁵²

Reiger credits Cart with being the only historian who has "perceived the importance of Blooming Grove Park in the history of conservation" and quotes him at length:

The concept and execution of the Blooming Grove plan provided the first large-scale demonstration of integrated natural-resource planning for primarily recreational purposes in America, something that would not be approached in the public sector for twenty years. . . . Yellowstone Park, created in the next year [1872], had no effective game protection until 1894 and had no plan to cultivate its timber. . . . Blooming Grove had no public counterparts until the national forest system provided for multiple use of timber and game resources.⁵³

A group of well-to-do New Yorkers that included paper manufacturer and former U.S. senator Warner Miller organized the Adirondack League Club in 1890 along the same lines as Blooming Grove.⁵⁴ Three years later, following a merger with the adjacent Bisby Club, which dated to 1878, the league had two hundred members, three luxurious clubhouses, and the largest preserve in the Adirondack Mountains. It owned 104,000 acres outright and held leases on an additional seventy-five thousand acres. Accessed via an easy train ride from the city, the *New York Times* reported that "it is entirely feasible for a New-York member of the league to leave the Grand Central Station at 9 o'clock in the evening, breakfast at one of the clubhouses the next morning," spend the day

⁵² Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 89.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ "A Band of Foresters," *New York Times*, June 26, 1890; "Warner Miller Dies," *Paper*, March 27, 1918, 28; Seaver Asbury Miller, "The Sporting Clubs in the Adirondacks," *Outing*, August 1898, 476-478.

afield, ride back that night, “and take his place at his office desk at 9 o’clock [the subsequent morning], with a single day’s absence.”⁵⁵

Reiger posits that the Adirondack League Club was responsible for the nation’s third earliest attempt to manage timber systematically (the first being Blooming Grove, of course, and the second, Biltmore Forest). Quoting from a guidebook for tourists published in 1893, he states that the club was created “by a number of gentlemen of sporting proclivities, for the purpose of establishing a game preserve in a chosen quarter of the Adirondack wilderness and to put into practice the system of rational forestry prevailing on the continent of Europe, which reconciles the preservation and continual reproduction of forest areas with a continual and increasing income.”⁵⁶

One of the members of the Adirondack League Club’s board of trustees in the early 1890s was German-born and -educated professional forester Bernhard E. Fernow, who served as chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Division of Forestry from 1886 to 1898 (preceding Pinchot in that position) and later became dean of the first four-year forestry college in the country at Cornell University. Something of a transcendent figure, Fernow at first glance seems to confuse Reiger’s archetype of sportsman-steward with Hays’s highly trained bureaucrat. But Reiger insists that Fernow was “very much a sportsman . . .

⁵⁵ Harvey H. Kaiser, *Great Camps of the Adirondacks* (1982; repr., Boston: D. R. Godine, 2003), 51; “Old Sports Club Lost,” *New York Times*, December 10, 1939; “The Adirondack League’s Hunt,” *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, August 19, 1893, 143; Margherita Arlina Hamm, “The Adirondack League Club,” *Peterson Magazine*, October 1896, 1051–1057; Alfred L. Donaldson, *A History of the Adirondacks* (1921; repr., Fleischmanns, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press, 1996), 2: 159–160; “An Adirondack Club,” *New York Times*, July 9, 1894 (quotation).

⁵⁶ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 90.

[who] often pursued hunting, fishing, and forestry simultaneously.” Reiger continues, “The responsibility for the natural environment inherent in the British sportsman’s code . . . had its counterpart in the German tradition. It helps to explain the origins of the commitment to conservation that Fernow . . . brought . . . to the United States and helped to establish here.”⁵⁷

As the Adirondack League Club’s “forestry adviser,” Fernow contracted for the selective logging of mature spruce timber on the property. This move was designed to provide the club with a constant cash flow, while at the same time preserving the forest habitat for game.⁵⁸ “Even though it was planned in 1890, the Adirondack project was probably not put into operation until after Pinchot began his work in early 1892. Nevertheless, it deserves mention,” declares Reiger, “because it took place—like the Blooming Grove effort twenty years before—on a preserve established by sportsmen.”⁵⁹

Reiger’s assertions as to the national significance of the private conservation initiatives undertaken by the Blooming Grove Park Association and the Adirondack League Club are bold and provocative, marking milestones in American environmental history that others have overlooked. Through their plans for managing land and wildlife in concert on the preserves, particularly the sustainable forestry components, Reiger demonstrates a budding ability to think and act in ecological terms on the part of high-profile sportsmen’s clubs led by

⁵⁷ Ralph S. Hosmer, “Fernow Hall,” *Cornell Forester*, June 1923, 5–8; Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 107–110 (first quotation on p. 109, second on p. 110).

⁵⁸ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 90 (quotation), 230.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

two of the foremost conservationists of their generation, Fernow and Hallock. “It is not difficult to see that Hallock’s thinking was far ahead of its time,” comments Reiger. Much the same could be said about Fernow, whom Reiger regards as “easily the most important pioneer . . . of the incipient forestry movement of the 1880s.”⁶⁰ Fernow and Hallock clearly were on the cutting edge of sportsmen’s turn toward land-based game management, but how typical were their attitudes and actions of the movement’s rank and file, including the growing legion who subscribed to Hallock’s weekly journal, *Forest and Stream*? For that matter, how representative were Fernow and Hallock of the scores of new members who joined their own clubs after shares were offered to the public? And there are other questions. How effective were the trials in managing habitat on the Blooming Grove Park Association and Adirondack League Club preserves? How enduring were they? Did they evolve over time? Did they inspire similar ventures at neighboring preserves? What was the environmental impact of the sportsmen’s forestry projects locally? Regionally? Reiger does not say.

The relationship between sport hunters and the environment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was more complex than we currently can account for in the historical literature. Although Reiger comes closer than anyone else to providing positive proof of sportsmen as ecological agents, his myopic view, which fixes on early forest conservation efforts at a pair of upland preserves, leads him into the same mistake he lays at the feet of many of his critics—namely, failure to differentiate groups of hunters and categories of hunting. In writing about the conservation impulse among sportsmen, Reiger is

⁶⁰ Ibid., 49 (first quotation), 108–109 (second quotation) .

fond of describing nature as the “the necessary context of their sport.”⁶¹

However, a broader interrogation of the subject of hunting on private preserves reveals that there was not one context of sport, but several. If we are to make the environment a meaningful part of the conversation about gentleman hunters, then we must start by gaining a better understanding of these varied contexts and how their differences affected the course of conservation history.

⁶¹ Ibid., 54. Similar turns of phrase can be found on pp. 3, 46, and 106.

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING THE ECOLOGY OF EARLY AMERICAN DUCK-SHOOTING PRESERVES

Investing in a private game preserve meant making an extended commitment to hunting a particular piece of ground, so developing a conservation strategy that would ensure ample game well into the future was the logical next step for many forward-thinking sportsmen of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Most plans were not nearly so formal or far flung as the one for Blooming Grove discussed in the last chapter, but they were similar in that they often combined aspects of what Aldo Leopold, one of the founders of scientific game management, later referred to as negative and positive controls. Leopold defined negative controls as passive prohibitions against the destruction of game or its food and cover on the land. Beginning as tribal taboos and local customs long before gaining the force of law, such restrictions were ancient in origin, and thus, they are of less interest to us here. Positive controls, on the other hand, pertain to the active “building up” of depleted game populations, marginal land, or both.¹ “During the last two or three decades,” wrote Leopold in the early 1930s, “restrictive legislation has been gradually reinforced by the growth of the idea of

¹ Aldo Leopold, *Game Management* (1933; repr., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 12.

production,” which “is as yet still in its infancy.” It was sportsmen’s involvement in this generative phase of producing game—“cropping” was the word Leopold preferred—that henceforth will occupy most of our attention.²

The private game preserves that appeared in the United States on an unprecedented scale following the Civil War can be sorted into three types: fenced upland preserves, unfenced upland preserves, and duck-shooting preserves.³ Each type of preserve was characterized by a distinctive history and hunting culture, and these distinctions gave rise to divergent philosophies of conservation. At issue was whether positive controls on game were best applied directly or indirectly. Depending on a host of geographical, environmental, and economic factors as well as the individual or club’s sporting preferences, two common management strategies emerged: game breeding and habitat improvement. Upland preserves tended to emphasize the former approach, while ducking preserves concentrated on the latter.

Sportsmen with ducking preserves began to modify the ecology of the wetlands they hunted in the late nineteenth century. Their initial focus was identifying ducks’ natural food plants and propagating them in suitable habitat on the shooting grounds. Small scale and simplistic in the beginning, the hunters’ management activities would grow more intricate and expansive with time. In the twentieth century, the thrust of management shifted to creating new habitat for

² Ibid., 15–16 (first quotation on p. 16, second on p. 15).

³ T. S. Palmer, *Private Game Preserves and Their Future in the United States*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Biological Survey, Circular No. 72 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910?], 3–7.

natural duck foods by impounding areas of marsh and controlling the flow of water. Engineering, irrigation, and plantings—the hallmarks of modern marsh management—had important environmental consequences. The combined effects of impoundment at clustered ducking preserves could transform regional wetlandscapes. In addition, productive privately managed habitat became a key component of waterfowl conservation. One region that was slow to reflect larger trends in the modernization of duck marshes, the South Carolina low country, presents a useful counterpoint to the national narrative.

Upland preserves were derivatives of the medieval deer parks. Sportsmen used them for hunting not only antlered game in the time-honored tradition, but increasingly over the course of the nineteenth century as better shotguns became available and incubation technologies advanced, also non-migratory game birds. The Blooming Grove Park Association and the Adirondack League Club initiated some of the oldest American examples of systematic forestry in the European fashion. However, sportsmen who managed game through conservation of forest habitat were the exception, not the rule. Documented management projects based on positive controls at upland preserves, notably the fenced variety, beginning in the 1870s were dominated by attempts at artificial propagation of game.⁴

⁴ See Frederic C. Walcott, "Private Game Preserves as Factors in Conservation," in William T. Hornaday, *Wild Life Conservation in Theory and Practice, Use and Abuse of America's Natural Resources* (1914; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1972), 195–222. Several publications of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey also contain relevant historical information. See Palmer, *Private Game Preserves*; David E. Lantz, *Raising Deer and Other Large Game Animals in the United States*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Biological Survey, Bulletin No. 36 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910); John C. Phillips, *Wild Birds Introduced or Transplanted in North America*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Technical Bulletin No. 61 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1928). In addition, the sporting press is replete with stories of

Rearing large numbers of game animals in confinement and releasing them on the hunting grounds seemed an obvious, straightforward solution to replenishing the natural supply. But with minimal prior experience and limited understanding of wildlife biology, the potential pitfalls for sportsmen were many. Game stock raised in close contact with humans and deprived of normal parental influence could lose the innate ability to exist in the wild. When this happened, those docile creatures that did not quickly fall prey to predators upon liberation either gravitated to the nearest barnyard or stood a good chance of starving over winter. Well-intentioned sportsmen unknowingly released some of the hand-reared animals when they were too young to survive on their own; they planted others in unsuited habitats where it would have been impossible for them to thrive. Additional risks were present even before release. Improper crating and shipment resulted in high mortality rates, while the unnatural population density of coops and pens made the stock more susceptible to diseases and parasites.⁵ Artificial propagation was a blunt ecological instrument, but for the stalkers of deer and other resident upland game, its potential appeared limitless. Blinded by the possibilities of “more game and fewer game laws”—a catch phrase of

sportsmen stocking their upland preserves. A concise overview is found in George Ethelbert Walsh, “American Game Preserves,” *Outing*, February 1901, 539–544. For an astute account of an early benchmark in American game breeding, Pierre Lorillard’s preserve at Jobstown, New Jersey, which was established in 1879, see X [pseud.], “Foreign Game Birds in America,” *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, September 3, 1885, 103–104. “Mr. Lorillard has shown the practicality of enclosing a plot of ground and supplying it with game. What he has done others can and will do . . . in the next twenty-five years,” remarked George Bird Grinnell. See [Grinnell], “The Rancocas Game Preserve,” *ibid.*, 102.

⁵ Allan T. Studholme, “A Bird in the Bush Is Worth Two in the Hand,” in *Transactions of the Thirteenth North American Wildlife Conference, March 8, 9, and 10, 1948 . . . St. Louis, Missouri*, ed. Ethel M. Quee (Washington, D.C.: Wildlife Management Institute, 1948), 209–211; James B. Trefethen, *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (New York: Winchester Press and Boone and Crockett Club, 1975), 161; Walcott, “Private Game Preserves as Factors in Conservation,” 199.

sporting editor Dwight W. Huntington, one of the leading advocates for artificial propagation on the national scene—many came to see mass production of wildlife by man as the conservation movement’s panacea.⁶

The earliest game breeder of consequence was John D. Caton of Ottawa, Illinois. A world traveler, a former chief justice of the state supreme court, and the author of published works on natural history as well as sporting ethics, Caton was the epitome of the nineteenth-century hunter-naturalist.⁷ About 1859 he erected the first of three breeding enclosures on his two-hundred-acre property, which *Forest and Stream* cited four decades later as “the pioneer fenced preserve of the modern type.”⁸ Caton became well known for having “brought together in one park nearly all the varieties of our native game except the moose and caribou, which only thrive under conditions of a wooded country and an extended range,” for the purposes of observation and propagation in captivity.⁹ A latter-day game breeder from Illinois stated that Caton’s “labors were merely for

⁶ See [Dwight W. Huntington], “More Game and Fewer Game Laws,” *Game Breeder*, April 1912, 22–23.

⁷ “The ‘Forest and Stream’s’ Third Annual Report on Game in Preserves,” pt. 1, “Fenced Parks—Continued,” *American Game Parks, Forest and Stream*, July 11, 1896, 24; “Sketch of Judge Caton’s Career,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 31, 1895; “John Dean Caton,” *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), July 31, 1895; Occasional [pseud.], “Deer Parks and Paddocks,” *Forest and Stream*, June 3, 1875, 267. Caton was a frequent contributor to both the *American Naturalist* and sporting periodicals. He is best remembered for *The Antelope and Deer of America* (1877; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1974) and “The Ethics of the Field Sports,” in *The Big Game of North America*, ed. G. O. Shields (New York: Rand, McNally and Company, 1890), 567–575.

⁸ T. S. Palmer, *Chronology and Index of the More Important Events in American Game Protection, 1776–1911*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Biological Survey, Bulletin No. 41 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), 25; “From Ottawa,” *Daily State Journal* (Springfield, Ill.), July 23, 1872; “The ‘Forest and Stream’s’ Fifth Annual Report on Game in Preserves,” *American Game Parks, Forest and Stream*, April 1, 1899, 248 (quotation).

⁹ *Appletons’ Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1896*, 3rd ser., vol. 1, s.v. “Game-Preserving in the United States” (quotation); Palmer, *Private Game Preserves*, 3.

the love he had for the animals themselves and with no thought of any profit thereof.”¹⁰ He did gift or sell some of his excess game to other sport hunters for conservation uses from time to time, however. In 1879, for example, Caton shipped a small number of his more than one hundred wild turkeys, which were mostly semi-domesticated hybrids, to the Blooming Grove Park Association for restocking its preserve. Caton sent along instructions about how to care for the birds, advising that they “should be carefully treated and well fed for at least a few generations” until they “resort to the wild state.” But when the Blooming Grove sportsmen released the turkeys that survived transit, they disappeared into the woods and were never seen again.¹¹

Unfortunately, the outcome of Blooming Grove’s experience with the Caton wild turkeys was representative of much of this kind of experimentation. Artificial replenishment turned out to be a costly diversion in terms of both time and assets, which hindsight suggests set the cause of wildlife conservation back by several decades.¹² “Game farming,” as it was sometimes called, rarely

¹⁰ Warren R. Leach, “Elk and Deer Breeding,” *Game Breeder*, March 1913, 169.

¹¹ Judge [John D.] Caton, “Domestication of the Wild Turkey,” pts. 1 and 2, *Poultry Notes*, *Prairie Farmer*, January 16 and 23, 1875, 21 and 29; J. D. Caton, “The Wild Turkey and Its Domestication,” *American Naturalist* 11 (June 1877): 321–330; [Charles Hallock], “Hon. J. D. Caton’s Domesticated Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*),” *Natural History, Forest and Stream*, October 18, 1877, 207 (quotation); Phillips, *Wild Birds Introduced or Transplanted*, 10. In 1881 Caton sold fifty-four elk that were used to introduce the species in Europe. “Shipping Live Elk,” *Daily Inter Ocean*, December 10, 1881.

¹² See Ross O. Stevens, *Talk about Wildlife for Hunters, Fishermen, and Nature Lovers* (Raleigh, N.C.: Bynum Printing Company, 1944), 83–98; Studholme, “Bird in the Bush,” 207, 210; Melvin O. Steen, “Shall We Improve Habitat or Stock—for Wildlife? Game,” *Outdoor America*, July–August 1948, 4, 10. For commentary on the pros and cons—mostly cons—of artificial production from several consequential conservationists of the past, see William T. Hornaday, *Thirty Years War for Wild Life*, *American Environmental Studies* (1931; repr., [New York?]: Arno Press, Inc., 1970), 56–62; Aldo Leopold, “Wild Lifers vs. Game Farmers: A Plea for Democracy in Sport,” “Grand-Opera Game,” and “Chukaremia,” in *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold*, ed. Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press,

resulted in established wild populations and was too expensive for the majority of hunters to conduct long-term, particularly when supplemental environmental controls like predator reduction and winter feeding were required to sustain the introduced stock on the preserves. Furthermore, there were complaints from discriminating shots about the inferior recreational value of the farm-raised game. The eldest son of Aldo Leopold, an esteemed conservationist in his own right, and an authority on issues related to semi-domesticated game birds, biologist A. Starker Leopold captured the disappointment of true sportsmen everywhere: “Any pheasant hunter knows the difference between a wild cock and a scraggle-tailed banded bird released from a box the night before. One is a trophy, the other simply a target.”¹³

In spite of these deficiencies, sportsmen’s interest in captive breeding peaked between the early 1920s and the late 1940s when the populations of many popular species of native upland game such as quail, grouse, wild turkey, rabbit, deer, and elk reached historical lows and the new, ecology-based science of game management, which stressed the conditioning of habitat, had not yet gained mainstream acceptance. Commercial game farms opened during this period as well, offering an alternate source of stock for those unable or unwilling to launch their own breeding operations. But more often than not, sportsmen found the commercial breeders unsatisfactory for the same reasons—prohibitive

1991), 62–67, 169–172, 245–246; Leopold, *Game Management*, 43–44, 94–95, 356–360, 394; Ira N. Gabrielson, *Wildlife Management* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1951), 122–139.

¹³ A. Starker Leopold, “Quantitative and Qualitative Values in Wildlife Management,” in *Natural Resources: Quality and Quantity*, ed. S. V. Ciriacy-Wantrup and James J. Parsons (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 130.

costs and vanishing returns. Pressured by the politically powerful sportsmen's groups, state wildlife departments even got into the business. Illinois established the first state game farm in 1905. During the New Deal, the federal government funneled large sums of emergency-relief funds into high-volume propagation plants for game birds in dozens of states that more resembled factories than farms.¹⁴ The earliest mouthpiece for this wing of the movement was the monthly *Game Breeder and Sportsman*, launched in 1912 by the Game Conservation Society and edited by Huntington until his death in 1938.¹⁵

In a 1948 article entitled "A Bird in the Bush Is Worth Two in the Hand," Allan T. Studholme of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a former student of Aldo Leopold's at the University of Wisconsin, commented that since the nineteenth century, "practically every animal species that could fly, walk, crawl, or swim, that could even remotely be considered game, has been [bred and] released. The failures have and still continue to greatly outnumber the successes."¹⁶ Despite sinking untold millions of private and public dollars into artificial propagation, the only sustained success sportsmen could claim in this area of management was the introduction of the ring-necked pheasant in the 1870s and 1880s, a highly adaptive species from eastern Asia that was naturalized in Great Britain earlier in

¹⁴ Palmer, *Chronology and Index*, 40; Harry T. Rogers, "Game Farm Activities," *Bulletin of the American Game Protective Association*, April 1919, 3; Stevens, *Talk about Wildlife*, 94–96; Gabrielson, *Wildlife Management*, 127–131.

¹⁵ Dwight W. Huntington, "Why Our Game Vanishes," *Game Breeder*, April 1912, 5–8 (the title of the periodical changed to *Game Breeder and Sportsman* in 1934); "D. W. Huntington, Editor, Dies at 87," *New York Times*, November 27, 1938.

¹⁶ Studholme, "Bird in the Bush," 207; "Allan T. Studholme," In Memoriam, *Fish and Wildlife News*, Winter 2002–2003, 26.

the century and eventually became the most hunted upland game bird in the northern United States.¹⁷

Instead of revealing a keen awareness of the interrelationship between wild animals and their environment, upland hunters' stubborn adherence to breeding and releasing game demonstrated quite the opposite for a large segment of the sporting population. But some sport hunters of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were more attuned to ecological nuances than others. The indirect approach to positive controls on game populations, the alternative to breeding and releasing, was habitat improvement. Aldo Leopold put forward in *Game Management*, his keystone textbook from 1933, that "the property of mobility . . . is of fundamental importance in selecting a scheme of management." Naturally, mobility as a biological trait varies greatly among game species. "The yearly mobility may be almost zero in quail," Leopold observed, "but almost half the circumference of the earth in certain migratory birds."¹⁸ Sportsmen had been cognizant of the connection between mobility and management as far back as the late antebellum period, which contributed considerably to the different historical and environmental trajectories of upland preserves versus ducking preserves after the Civil War. If game remained where it was released or could be compelled to do so by fences, as in the case of resident upland species, then those who undertook the expense of raising it stood the greatest chance of enjoying the returns during hunting season. But if it was apt to fly away at any

¹⁷ Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 160–163; Phillips, *Wild Birds Introduced or Transplanted*, 5, 42–46.

¹⁸ Leopold, *Game Management*, 73.

moment—and into the sights of gunners in the next county or state—like waterfowl, then the independent incentive for production was not nearly so strong. While one group of hunters headed down the dead-end path of artificial restocking, a second was exploring the possibility of luring game to their preserves through manipulation of the natural world. By providing plenty of food, water, and cover, they believed they could create conditions that would entice a plentiful supply to linger on their property in spite of regular shooting. This method proved to be especially effective with highly mobile quarry that could be concentrated on small areas such as migratory waterfowl. Because of the mobility and migrational behavior of waterfowl, wildlife management within the context of habitat got its start on the ducking preserves.

Unlike the upland preserves, which had historical roots that stretched back a millennium or more, ducking preserves were a product of the nineteenth century. Numerous writers have drawn close parallels between the history of waterfowl hunting and the modern shotgun.¹⁹ The former “is essentially the story of the evolution of” the latter, Harry M. Walsh asserts succinctly.²⁰ Less understood, though, is the shotgun’s impact on the rise of ducking preserves and the beginnings of wetland management by sportsmen.

¹⁹ As examples, see Harry M. Walsh, *The Outlaw Gunner* (Cambridge, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1971), 21–27; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 58–61, 146; John Marchington, *The History of Wildfowling* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1980), 39–53, 157–162; Janet Kear, *Man and Wildfowl* (London: T & A D Poyser, 1990), 96–107; Guy A. Baldassarre and Eric G. Bolen, *Waterfowl Ecology and Management*, 2nd ed. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing Company, 2006), 2–6, 470–472.

²⁰ Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 21.

The seasonal flights of migrating ducks and geese along the great river basins and seacoast of eastern North America, reportedly so immense that they blotted out the sun, must have excited the imaginations of colonial hunters, but bagging even a few birds at a time in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could be a frustrating ordeal. Early waterfowlers relied on muzzleloading flintlocks that changed little for more than one hundred and fifty years following the Restoration. Having taken up the new sport of wing shooting during his decade-long exile on the Continent, King Charles II returned to England in 1660 with some of the world's finest French-made fowling pieces. Soon, English gunsmiths were producing similar designs and exporting them to the colonies. "These guns had single barrels, usually about four feet long, and were still cumbersome by today's standards, but they were certainly better balanced and a distinct improvement on the fowling pieces of the previous century. Theoretically, it was now possible to attempt shots at flying targets," remarks Peter F. Blakeley.²¹ Shooting birds on the wing may have been possible by the 1650s and 1660s, but it remained impracticable for much longer. Among American gunners, Walsh states that "about 1750, anyone who shot a bird flying was looked upon with amazement."²² Ammunition was part of the problem too. An economical

²¹ Marchington, *History of Wildfowling*, 58–61; Richard Akehurst, *Sporting Guns* (1968; repr., London: Octopus Books, 1972), 9, 11–12; Peter F. Blakeley, *Successful Shotgunning: How to Build Skill in the Field and Take More Birds in Competition* (Mechanicsburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 2003) 8–9 (quotation on p. 9).

²² Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 25.

technique for creating uniformly round shot pellets, which became a staple of wing shooting, was not discovered until the 1770s.²³

On account of their wetland habitat and agility in the air, ducks presented a unique challenge for hunters armed with flintlock muzzleloaders. The lag between ignition of the main powder charge, which was set in motion by pulling the trigger, and expulsion of the shot from the barrel made the chances of hitting a small, fast-crossing target very slim, while the barrel's large, open bore limited range and accuracy. Plus, the necessity of pouring loose priming powder into an exposed pan beside the breech led to a high probability of misfire in damp conditions. No doubt there were occasions when massive flocks flying in tight formation passed so low overhead that an indiscriminate shot in their direction brought down several birds.²⁴ For the most part, though, waterfowlers stalked their prey to within a short distance and fired—once—at rafts of ducks feeding or sleeping on the water. Not only was reloading in time for a second shot out of the question, but it also would have required resting the stock on the ground, which Walsh notes “could present a problem on a marsh at high tide.”²⁵ Tromping through mud and taking potshots was neither elegant nor efficient. Therefore, duck shooting was usually undertaken out of necessity only by those of meager means who lived along the water's edge. In fact, despite its royal lineage, the

²³ Blakeley, *Successful Shotgunning*, 10; Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 23.

²⁴ Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 59; Akehurst, *Sporting Guns*, 12–17, 25–26.

²⁵ Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 25 (quotation); Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 58–60; George Bird Grinnell, *American Duck Shooting*, *Classics of American Sport* (1901; repr., Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 1991), 430–433.

fowling piece had become associated with the laboring poor in Great Britain by the beginning of the nineteenth century.²⁶

Starting in the 1820s, a succession of innovations in firearms brought about a surge in the popularity of waterfowling across all social strata. The first important development in the evolution of the shotgun was the percussion cap, which ushered in a new era of faster, more reliable ignition systems that finally rendered the antique flintlock obsolete. Encased in copper and filled with a detonating agent called fulminate of mercury, these caps snapped into place over an opening in the breech. When the trigger of a percussion gun was pulled, the hammer struck the cap, sending a spark directly into the chamber and setting off the main charge. This technology assisted waterfowlers in several ways. Percussion caps were far less susceptible to misfire from wetness than flintlocks, and the shorter ignition interval improved the hunter's aim. What is more, percussion firing made quick second shots possible for the first time, as a number of American gun manufacturers began incorporating the feature into fairly light, pointable double-barreled shotguns. Still, loading was done through the muzzle and continued to be a tedious process.²⁷

The modern shotgun took shape in relatively short order after breechloaders were adapted to a recent breakthrough, the self-contained cartridge, in the 1850s. Although breechloading guns that relied on external

²⁶ Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 25; Akehurst, *Sporting Guns*, 42; Marchington, *History of Wildfowling*, 32–33, 54, 78–79, 107.

²⁷ Blakeley, *Successful Shotgunning*, 13–14; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 59; Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 21–25.

percussion caps had been in existence for years, they offered few advantages over muzzleloaders and never gained favor. But with the advent of the new cartridges, each of which held its own primer, powder, wadding, and shot inside a sturdy paper-and-brass case, the breechloading concept suddenly had the potential to make reloading almost effortless. Shotguns with drop-down barrels hinged to the action that snapped shut using a spring-loaded locking bolt were on the market before the end of the decade. Breechloaders were not common in the United States until the 1870s. By then, the design had been streamlined further by the internal placement of the hammer. Reloading these “hammerless” models was even easier because, through a series of levers and springs, the act of opening the breech cocked the weapon. Also in the 1870s, choke boring was introduced. Choke-bored barrels gradually constricted toward the muzzle, permitting precision shooting at much greater distances by controlling the pattern of the expelled shot.²⁸

Modes of mass production were refined over the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the latest shotguns progressively became more affordable. Their firepower increased dramatically as well. Repeaters, fed from a tubular magazine beneath the barrel by means of a manual slide pump or under-lever, came along by 1890, followed around ten years later by recoil-operated autoloaders. These highly evolved models enabled waterfowlers to execute between five and ten long-range shots with deadly accuracy in rapid succession, especially after white, “smokeless” gunpowder replaced the ordinary black variety

²⁸ Marchington, *History of Wildfowling*, 46–53; Akehurst, *Sporting Guns*, 67–76, 78–80; Blakeley, *Successful Shotgunning*, 14–17; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 146.

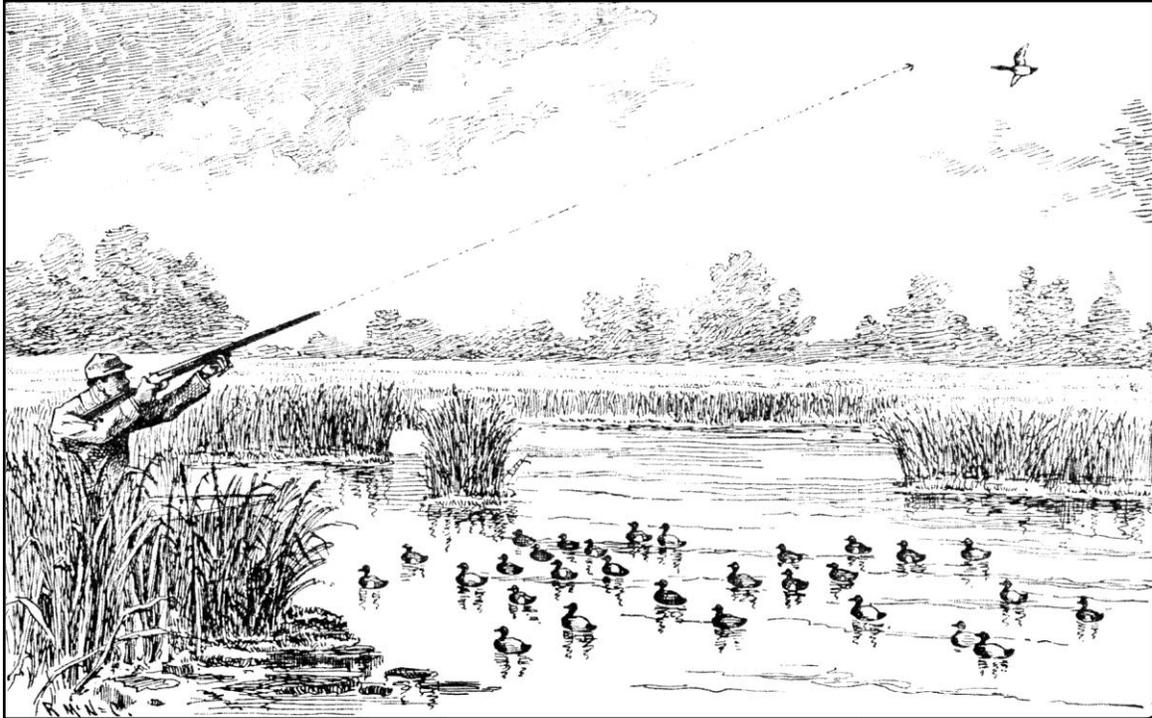


Figure 3.1. Progress in the development of firearms during the nineteenth century elevated duck shooting, once an arduous chore, to an art form. Entitled “A Long Side-Shot,” this engraving from the 1890s depicts a gunner taking aim at a single redhead (*Aythya americana*) flying at high speed forty to fifty yards distant. For earlier generations of waterfowlers, attempting a shot this difficult would have been considered a waste of ammunition. Source: William Bruce Leffingwell, *The Art of Wing Shooting: A Practical Treatise on the Use of the Shot-Gun, Illustrating, by Sketches and Easy Reading, How to Become an Expert Shot* (1895), p. 77.

as the twentieth century dawned. No longer did a thick cloud of dark smoke from the first blast of the shotgun obscure the shooter’s sight for subsequent ones.

“Large kills by many hunters over a wide area were now possible,” Walsh concludes.²⁹

At each milestone in the modernization of the shotgun, duck shooting for pleasure became more inviting. Englishman Peter Hawker’s book *Instructions to*

²⁹ Akehurst, *Sporting Guns*, 87–88; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 146; Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 21–27 (quotation on p. 27).

Young Sportsmen in All That Relates to Guns and Shooting, first published in 1816, helped to legitimize waterfowling as a respectable pursuit in the eyes of the British gentry just as the percussion era commenced, and predictably, it was not long before imported shotguns and brief excursions to the nearest ducking grounds were fashionable among the emergent American leisure class from the industrializing northern cities, most notably the younger generation of up-and-coming businessmen and professionals.³⁰ The first American edition of Hawker's *Instructions to Young Sportsmen*, edited by New York newspaperman and avid waterfowler William T. Porter, appeared in 1846.³¹ Five years later, in his book *Hints to Sportsmen*, Elisha J. Lewis of Philadelphia wrote, "This amusement, though not as popular, or followed with the same zest by the sportsmen of America as it is by those of England and other countries, is nevertheless every season attracting increased attention to its real merits as a manly and exciting sport."³²

Few in number, the earliest devotees of duck shooting in the United States found a profusion of birds for the taking and plenty of open space for uninterrupted shooting practically at their doorsteps. Once the autumn air turned

³⁰ Marchington, *History of Wildfowling*, 77–103; Daniel Justin Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 128–138; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 69–72; Jennie Holliman, *American Sports (1785–1835)* (Durham, N.C.: Seeman Press, 1931), 3–10, 14–20, 27–36.

³¹ Porter's *Instructions to Young Sportsmen in All That Relates to Guns and Shooting by Lieut. Col. P. Hawker . . . to Which Is Added the Hunting and Shooting of North America, with Descriptions of the Animals and Birds* was published by Lea and Blanchard of Philadelphia in 1846 from the ninth London edition.

³² E. J. Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen, Containing Notes on Shooting; the Habits of the Game Birds and Wild Fowl of America; the Dog, the Gun, the Field, and the Kitchen* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1851), 169.

chilly, all it took to indulge their passion was a short buggy or boat ride past the outskirts of town, then renting a room at a modest hotel or private residence and hiring a local waterman as a hunting guide. Gentleman hunters from New York City, for instance, had the Great South Bay and Long Island Sound as their playgrounds. There was a circle of “ardent and enthusiastic . . . followers of Long Island fowl shooting” during the 1830s and 1840s that included several pioneers of sporting journalism such as the aforementioned William Porter and author Henry William Herbert, an aristocratic British immigrant better known by his penname of “Frank Forester.”³³ In addition to editing Hawker’s book, Porter was founding editor of the *Spirit of the Times*, the most successful of the prewar precursors to *Forest and Stream*, and Herbert, a frequent contributor to Porter’s weekly magazine, is considered by historians to have been the philosophical father of sport hunting in the United States.³⁴

³³ Henry William Herbert, *Frank Forester’s Field Sports of the United States, and British Provinces, of North America* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1849), 2: 123–132, 142 (quotation on p. 125); I. V. W. [pseud.], “Three Days at Lif Sneidecker’s,” *Original Sketches, New-York Mirror*, November 25, December 2, December 9, 1837, 172–173, 180–181, 188–189; Omri [pseud.], “A Long Island Sporting Incident,” *Spirit of the Times*, September 20, 1845, 350; “Liff Snedico’s, Long Island,” *On Dits in Sporting Circles*, *ibid.*, July 6, 1850, 234; John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, 3rd ed. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001), 7–9, 13–16. Two additional sportsmen of note in the circle of New York City duck hunters were naturalist J. P. Giraud Jr. and attorney William P. Hawes. Giraud confessed that “water fowl [*sic*] shooting in the celebrated South Bay” was his “favorite amusement,” and Hawes, a close friend of Herbert who wrote for sporting periodicals under the pseudonym “J. Cypress Jr.,” drew inspiration for such stories as “Duck Shooting” from his own personal Long Island exploits. See Giraud, *The Birds of Long Island* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 305 (quotation); Hawes, *Sporting Scenes and Sundry Sketches; Being the Miscellaneous Writings of J. Cypress, Jr.*, ed. Frank Forester [Henry William Herbert] (New York: Gould, Banks, and Company, 1842), 1: 187–199.

³⁴ On Porter, Herbert, and the role of the sporting press in the embryonic development of a sportsmen’s ethic prior to the Civil War, see Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 126, 131–132, 173–181, 187; Donald W. Klinko, “Antebellum American Sporting Magazines and the Development of a Sportsmen’s Ethic” (Ph.D. diss., Washington State University, 1986), 3, 157–218; Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 32–44, 46, 73–74, 197.

The national influence of the New Yorkers notwithstanding, the epicenter of early American waterfowling was Baltimore and the Chesapeake Bay. “There is no place in our wide extent of country where wild fowl shooting is followed with so much ardor as on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries . . . by gentlemen who resort to these waters from all parts of the adjoining States to participate in the enjoyments of this far-famed ducking-ground,” Lewis observed.³⁵ The same author predicted that urbanites’ interest in duck shooting would only increase along with their opportunities for conveniently venturing further afield. As the network served by railroads and steamships extended west and south from hubs in the Northeast, Lewis envisioned that “our pleasure-loving and novelty-seeking people will flock to the secluded haunts of the wild fowl much more generally than they do at present.”³⁶

The newest technologies that added to sportsmen’s enjoyment of duck shooting also enticed lower-class hunters seeking to turn a profit. Most waterfowlers during the nineteenth century were professionals who supplied the markets of the growing cities with meat. As characterized by Herbert, these men were “a bold, hardy, lawless, and some say, half-piratical race, half-fowlers, half-fishermen, and more than half-wreckers,” who made and carried out their own rules “by the strong hand and with the aid of their Queen Anne’s muskets and a handful of heavy shot.”³⁷ Living close to their work, they hunted relentlessly day

³⁵ Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen*, 171–173 (quotation on p. 171); Herbert, *Frank Forester’s Field Sports*, 2: 132.

³⁶ Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen*, 169.

³⁷ Frank Forester [Henry William Herbert], *The Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen: With Directions for Handling the Gun, the Rifle, and the Rod; the Art of Shooting on the Wing; the*

and night, usually by boat, as long as ducks were in the vicinity. Only the limits of their imagination and ammunition checked the slaughter.³⁸

Although they took full advantage of the parade of shoulder-fired duck guns already mentioned, the most devastating weapon in the arsenal of the market hunter was the extremely large-bore punt gun—basically, a lightweight, swiveling cannon mounted on a station in a shallow-draft skiff—capable of killing or maiming scores of sitting ducks at a single discharge. Ducks stood little chance against another lethal invention, the battery, either. Also called a sink box, this floating wooden contraption, which looked like a wide platform built around the top of an open coffin, could be towed offshore to where ducks were known to congregate, anchored, and sunk until even with the water level. When surrounded by decoys, its low profile became nearly invisible from the bird's eye view. Up to two supinely positioned shooters with several guns at their sides laid in wait in the box until a flock of ducks was descending all around them. Then they sat up and unleashed a fusillade into their midst from only a few feet away.³⁹

As more advanced shotguns allowed for easier targeting of individual birds in flight, aficionados came to see firing at ducks on the water or from point-blank range as unsportsmanlike. In the interest of fairer odds for the game and as a

Breaking, Management, and Hunting of the Dog; the Varieties and Habits of Game; River, Lake, and Sea Fishing, Etc., Etc., Etc. (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1856), 343.

³⁸ George Reiger, *The Complete Book of North American Waterfowling: A Handbook of Techniques and Strategies*, 3rd ed. (New York: Lyons Press, 2000), 48; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 59–60.

³⁹ Herbert, *Frank Forester's Field Sports*, 2: 128–130, 142–145; Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen*, 186–187, 189–194; Forester, *Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen*, 341–344; Reiger, *Complete Book of North American Waterfowling*, 38–42; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 59–61; Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 89–113, 129–165.

test of marksmanship, they preferred shooting from a respectable distance. This could be done from a marsh blind over decoys at incoming birds, from a bar at birds crossing high in the sky almost directly overhead, or from a point or an island at passing birds silhouetted on the horizon. A fair chance of escape was never part of the equation for market hunters, however.⁴⁰

In some situations, market hunters could make more money with less effort by hiring themselves out as guides to visiting sportsmen, who were willing to pay the locals for not only the benefit of their intimate knowledge of the ducking grounds but also the use of their boats, blinds, decoys, and dogs. As a rule, though, the relationship between amateur and professional waterfowlers was adversarial, even combative. Their motives were at odds, their methods were contradictory, and their perceptions of one another were colored by class antagonism.⁴¹

Moreover, the birds' instinct to migrate with the seasons and mass directional movement exacerbated the human problem. Every spring and fall, the entire continental population of migratory waterfowl traveled thousands of miles in predictable patterns along narrow, north-south corridors, habitually passing over the same rivers and bays on their way back and forth from scattered summer breeding grounds in the northern latitudes to warmer southern wintering grounds, where they amassed in myriads to escape the intolerable cold and ice.

⁴⁰ Herbert, *Frank Forester's Field Sports*, 2: 123–124, 135–137, 142; Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen*, 195–197; Forester, *Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen*, 337, 344–345; Reiger, *Complete Book of North American Waterfowling*, 48–52; Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 5–13.

⁴¹ Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 72–73; Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 5; Reiger, *Complete Book of North American Waterfowling*, 35–38, 51. See also "Duck Shooting in Maryland," *On Dits in Sporting Circles*, *Spirit of the Times*, December 13, 1856, 522.

Long before accumulated data from banding studies enabled Frederick C. Lincoln of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey to map the four North American flyways—Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific—in the 1930s, duck shooters had learned when and where to expect which species along the migration routes and how the weather and the tides affected their daily rhythms on the wintering grounds. The interior breeding grounds were barely explored by European Americans and all but inaccessible to the average sportsmen in the mid-nineteenth century, and they were much too far from the point of sale to attract market hunters. Therefore, virtually all shooting occurred within the southern half of what Lincoln later identified as the Atlantic Flyway, and most of that was confined to ducks coming and going from resting and feeding areas on the wintering grounds. An abundance of the quarry converged on close spaces during relatively brief windows, and an army of pleasure and profit seekers was in direct competition for not only the ducks but also the best spots to shoot them. They gradually crowded in on each other, and by the 1850s, there were clashes over shooting supremacy. Conflict occurred even earlier at heavily hunted locales like Long Island and the Upper Chesapeake Bay.⁴²

Complicating matters for both sides, but especially the sportsmen, was the fact that very few individuals owned the property they hunted. They either shot by

⁴² Robert M. Wilson, *Seeking Refuge: Birds and Landscapes of the Pacific Flyway*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Book (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 72–75; Philip Garone, *The Fall and Rise of the Wetlands of California's Great Central Valley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 135–137; Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen*, 178, 204; Herbert, *Frank Forester's Field Sports*, 2: 132, 135–136, 142–143; Forester, *Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen*, 337, 343–345; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 59, 72–73, 143–144; Reiger, *Complete Book of North American Waterfowling*, 48–52; Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 47–48.

permission of the landowner or trespassed. Indeed, Peter Hawker himself, “the Magnus Apollo of wild fowl shooting,” was not above trespassing.⁴³ In addition to the private property, many thousands of wetland acres in the United States were regarded as “commons”—that is, they belonged to everybody and nobody.⁴⁴ A few states had waterfowl conservation regulations on the books during this period—for example, both Maryland and Virginia prohibited punt gunning by fire or lamp light in certain counties, and New York outlawed batteries on Long Island—but the statutes were rarely enforced.⁴⁵ Thus, the commons were subject to hunting by anyone at anytime. A vacuum of law, order, and property rights existed in the wetlands, and under these conditions, mercenary hunters thrived.

In an effort to push the highly territorial market men off of the prime ducking grounds and gain control for themselves, gentleman hunters began organizing clubs, pooling their capital, and acquiring the choice wetlands tracts they had shot over as tourists or heard about from locals and other sportsmen. As we saw in chapter 2, historian John Reiger dates the sportsmen’s club movement to the 1870s, but his interpretation, which comes at the subject solely from the perspective of the upland preserves, is skewed. In the context of ducking preserves, the club idea was much older.

⁴³ Marchington, *History of Wildfowling*, 91; Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen*, 208 (quotation).

⁴⁴ Ann Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America’s Wetlands* (1997; repr., Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1999), 5–6.

⁴⁵ Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 78, 136; Palmer, *Chronology and Index*, 22–23; Grinnell, *American Duck Shooting*, 481–484; Giraud, *Birds of Long Island*, 294–295; Herbert, *Frank Forester’s Field Sports*, 2: 142–143; Lewis, *Hints to Sportsmen*, 186–187, 192; Forester, *Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen*, 343. C. John Sullivan provides a thorough treatment and legislative timeline of state and local waterfowl conservation efforts in Maryland in *Waterfowling on the Chesapeake, 1819–1936* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 71–89.

Given its proximity to major population centers and status as the premier wintering area for waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway, it is no surprise that Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States, was the site of some of the earliest club activity. One of the first clubs in Maryland was the Maxwell's Point Gunning Club, a "society of gentlemen" from Baltimore who came together in 1819 to purchase 180 acres on the Gunpowder River not far from the city. The most celebrated club of the era, the Carroll's Island Club, was located nearby at the mouth of the Gunpowder, fourteen miles north of Baltimore. Although the date of its founding is unknown, the club was leasing a portion of Carroll's Island in 1829.⁴⁶

That same year, the Carroll's Island Club garnered attention in newspapers from Baltimore to New York City after one of the members "during the late snow storm, killed and bagged, at one shot, on the wing, with a single barrel gun, nineteen canvass back ducks."⁴⁷ The club's fame spread quickly thanks to John Stuart Skinner of Baltimore, editor of the first specialty periodical devoted to field sports with a national audience, the monthly *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, which he founded in 1829. In the April 1830 issue, Skinner tantalized his readers with this tale: "Those who have never witnessed it, have little idea of the number, weight and quality of fine ducks that

⁴⁶ Baldassarre and Bolen, *Waterfowl Ecology and Management*, 378–379; Sullivan, *Waterfowling on the Chesapeake*, 3 (quotation); C. John Sullivan, *Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Decoys and Long Guns: Tales of Carroll's Island Ducking Club* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2008), 23–30; Grinnell, *American Duck Shooting*, 472–476.

⁴⁷ First reported in the *Baltimore American*, the story of the nineteen canvasbacks killed with one shot at Carroll's Island was reprinted in several newspapers in late January and early February 1829, including the New York *Evening Post* (quotation) and the *National Gazette and Literary Register* of Philadelphia on January 27.

are sometimes brought down when on the wing at Carroll's Island, in a day's shooting." He recalled a day in November 1829 when "a few gentlemen, of whom Capt. Robinson, of the Union Steam Boat Line, and his brother, were two, killed, as they flew over the bar, 150 fine canvass backs and red heads; their dogs were exhausted or they would have got more; as it was, they had to send for the ox cart to take them home."⁴⁸ In a communication to a protégé of Skinner's, *Spirit of the Times* editor William Porter, a visitor to Carroll's Island in 1838 depicted "one of the most enlivening scenes you ever witnessed [in which] thousands of ducks are passing and repassing over our heads, and the deadly shot are rattling against the sides and wings of the victims. . . . I have seen six or eight ducks fall at the same instant." Persuaded by a stream of spectacular accounts emanating from Carroll's Island over the years, Porter proclaimed in response, "This famous shooting ground is probably equaled by none other in this country."⁴⁹

Members of the Carroll's Island Club during the 1830s were mainly Baltimore merchants and bankers. From 1840 until his death in 1865, the owner of the island was William Slater, a prosperous farmer. As part of his lease agreements with the sportsmen, Slater was responsible for providing accommodations for club members at his commodious brick residence, constructing blinds, tending decoys, maintaining boats and other club property, and employing an "acceptable and competent man for the Exclusive use of the

⁴⁸ Klinko, "Antebellum American Sporting Magazines," 25–36; [John S. Skinner], "Great Shooting," *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, April 1830, 415 (quotation).

⁴⁹ H. D. C. [pseud.], "Duck Shooting on Carroll's Island," On Dits in Sporting Circles, *Spirit of the Times*, October 20, 1838, 286.

Club for three months in each year.” Slater renegotiated his leases with the Carroll’s Island Club at higher rates every few years, a tactic that likely was typical of many proprietors of waterfront shooting tracts on Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries as demand steadily drove land values and lease prices up in the 1840s and 1850s.⁵⁰ The lessees reorganized as the Carroll’s Island Ducking Club in 1851 with a maximum membership of fifteen. By this time, private “gunning shores” prevailed from one end of Chesapeake Bay to the other.⁵¹ “The sport often had by parties at these points, which are for the most part rented by clubs of sportsmen or by individuals, . . . is magnificent,” Herbert noted, “and very jealously preserved.”⁵²

After obtaining high-priced exclusive shooting privileges, gentleman duck hunters had good reason to be jealous of their sport and took matters into their own hands to preserve it. One option was to police themselves. Self-imposed bag limits were a thing of the future, but some clubs tried to maintain the quality of their shooting by placing restrictions on the number of guns per day and gunning days per week in their by-laws. Along these lines, the Carroll’s Island Club seems to have had a members-only policy in the early years that was extraordinarily stringent. According to one description from 1833, “no member is

⁵⁰ Sullivan, *Tales of Carroll’s Island Ducking Club*, 30–41 (quotation on p. 38); obituary of William Slater, *Baltimore Sun*, October 5, 1865. After Slater’s passing, his wife became “landlady” of the island. See Sullivan, *Tales of Carroll’s Island Ducking Club*, 41.

⁵¹ Sullivan, *Tales of Carroll’s Island Ducking Club*, 33–36; Sullivan, *Waterfowling on the Chesapeake*, 3–26 (quotation on p. 3). The Carroll’s Island Ducking Club was reorganized again in the early 1880s, when a twenty-member syndicate (fifteen New Yorkers and five Baltimoreans) purchased the island from the Slater estate. See Sullivan, *Tales of Carroll’s Island Ducking Club*, 41–42.

⁵² Forester, *Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen*, 337.

permitted to invite his best friend to shoot with him. Such a rule as this does not exist anywhere else in the state.” More common was the club rule at Carroll’s Island that set aside a section of the preserve, Bay Cove, as a sanctuary where waterfowl could never be molested.⁵³

Clubs also had to guard against poaching. It is not known what, if any, measures the Carroll’s Island Club took to deter illegal hunting. Since Carroll’s Island had a resident owner during the Slater years, the club may have experienced comparatively less of this kind of trouble. Oftentimes, however, sportsmen posted signs and brought in reformed market hunters to protect their ducking preserves and the adjacent waters from trespass. “It is not without desperate, and at times even bloody affrays, that the poachers are prevented from carrying on their ruinous trade,” attested Herbert.⁵⁴

It did not take long for the effects of overshooting to become apparent on Chesapeake Bay. Dr. J. J. Sharpless of Philadelphia, a respected naturalist and correspondent of acclaimed ornithologist John James Audubon, estimated in the early 1830s that the wintering population of waterfowl in the Chesapeake Bay region had decreased by half in fifteen years. Sharpless wrote, “This change has arisen, most probably, from the vast increase in their destruction, from the greater number of persons who now make a business or pleasure of this sport, as well as the constant disturbance they meet with on many of their feeding

⁵³ Sullivan, *Tales of Carroll’s Island Ducking Club*, 34–36, 61; S. H. [pseud.], “Duck Shooting on the Chesapeake Bay,” *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, August 1833, 636 (quotation).

⁵⁴ Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 72; Forester, *Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen*, 343 (quotation).

grounds, which induces them to distribute themselves more widely, and forsake their usual haunts.”⁵⁵

With all of the best properties taken and the prospects for waterfowling on Chesapeake Bay in decline, sportsmen began to look elsewhere. The national transportation system expanded rapidly during the 1850s, and by the eve of the Civil War, ducking clubs had started to spring up in peripheral territories like North Carolina’s Currituck Sound and the Lake Erie marshes of Ohio that were too remote a decade prior.⁵⁶ In the 1870s and 1880s, with the sportsmen’s movement in full swing and interest in shooting sports at an all-time high, a wave of new ducking preserves swept across the country. They monopolized the shooting at places like Horicon Marsh northwest of Milwaukee, Fox Lake and the Illinois River watershed in Chicago’s hinterland, the bottomlands of the Mississippi River valley near Saint Louis and Memphis, and the Suisun Marsh east of San Francisco.⁵⁷ Compared to Chesapeake Bay, land was less expensive

⁵⁵ Sharpless quoted in John James Audubon, *The Birds of America, from Drawings Made in the United States and Their Territories*, vol. 6 (New York: J. J. Audubon, 1843), 301–302.

⁵⁶ John Bronson, “Atlantic Coast Shooting Grounds,” *The Sportsman Tourist, Forest and Stream*, October 20, 1881, 225; “The Canvasback Duck; The Currituck Clubs,” *New York Herald*, November 4, 1888; Archie Johnson and Bud Coppedge, *Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound* (Virginia Beach, Va.: CurBac Press, 1991), 98–100; Tod Sedgwick and Roy Kroll, *Winous Point: 150 Years of Waterfowling and Conservation* (Lanham, N.Y.: Derrydale Press, 2010), 13–27.

⁵⁷ E. [Emerson] Hough, “Opening Day at Horicon,” pt. 1, Chicago and the West, *Forest and Stream*, October 1, 1891, 205–207; Hough, “Shooting Clubs of Chicago,” no. 1, “The Fox Lake District,” *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, December 27, 1888, 456–457; Hough, “Shooting Clubs of Chicago,” no. 7, “The Mak-Saw-Ba Club,” *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, February 14, 1889, 64; Hough, “Shooting Clubs of Chicago,” no. 9, “The Swan Lake Club,” *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, March 7, 1889, 131; Lynn Morrow, “St. Louis Tourist-Sportsmen: Urban Clubs in the Wetlands,” *Missouri Historical Review* 97 (October 2002): 20–42; I. E. Nagle, “The Beaver Dam Club,” *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, January 1, 1885, 446; Guido [pseud.], “Duck Shooting at Wapanocca,” *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, November 24, 1894, 445; Paul R. Litzke, “Arkansas and the South,” *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, August 26, 1899, 165; Steve Bowman and Steve Wright, *Arkansas Duck Hunter’s Almanac* (Fayetteville, Ark.: Ozark Delta Press, 1998), 40–41, 56–59,

in these newly opened areas, clubs were more likely to own their preserves or hold long-term leases, and the preserves tended to be much larger in acreage. The railroads also reached the inviolate breeding grounds of Minnesota, North Dakota, and the Canadian Prairie Provinces during these decades, bringing sportsmen-tourists by the hundreds on chartered summer hunting excursions in addition to hordes of commercial hunters and permanent settlers.⁵⁸ Sport hunters now found themselves competing for ducks on a continental scale with not only the market hunters but also each other. The encroachment of agriculture and industry on critical waterfowl habitat was a source of growing concern as well. Every season, it seemed that fewer ducks made the return migration.

In its glory days, the shooting at the Carroll's Island Club came easy. The only requisites for members to enjoy a full day's sport were arriving at the island by 9 P.M. in order to draw for blinds, getting a good night's sleep in warm downy beds, rising early the next morning and eating a hearty breakfast prepared by the Slaters' house servants, taking a ten-minute stroll from the house to a narrow bar that jutted out into the bay, sitting down on stools in ready-made grass blinds with plank floors, and blasting one passing duck after another until the barrels of their shotguns became uncomfortably hot or their retrievers played out, whichever came first. Then it was back to the house for dinner and whiling away the

81–82; C. [pseud.], "Duck Shooting in California," *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, September 18, 1884, 144–145; Grinnell, *American Duck Shooting*, 464–465; Annabel Lee, "Some Sportsmen's Clubs of California: Where Sport Is Perennial," *Outing*, February 1902, 538–541; Garone, *Wetlands of California's Great Central Valley*, 105–106.

⁵⁸ Grinnell, *American Duck Shooting*, 584–588; Wells W. Cooke, *Distribution and Migration of North American Ducks, Geese, and Swans*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Biological Survey, Bulletin No. 26 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 11; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 145–147.

afternoon until time for the ducks' evening flight and more shooting. The members' involvement during the off-season was limited to an annual meeting held in Baltimore in early September for discussing club business, primarily the status of the lease and appointment of a committee to go make arrangements with Slater.⁵⁹ Through it all, they hardly got their boots muddy.

Future generations of sportsmen would have to make more of an effort to engage the environment than the venerable Carroll's Island Club, especially after waterfowl populations began to decline drastically in the late nineteenth century due to excessive hunting and accelerated habitat destruction. Henceforth, satisfactory shooting would require the investment of substantial amounts of time and resources in creatively developing the preserves to attract ducks. It was common knowledge among duck hunters that the birds were most numerous and active where they fed, so the logical starting point for sportsmen was to enhance feeding opportunities on their preserves. Initial efforts involved identification and propagation of the plants that grew naturally in wetlands and made up a significant percentage of the ducks' diet. More than a half-century before habitat management informed by the foods and feeding behavior of waterfowl came of age on the national wildlife refuges in the 1930s and 1940s, it was born on the ducking preserves of gentleman hunters.

During the peak years for waterfowling on the Chesapeake, contemporary scientific and sporting literature attributed the exceptional shooting to the prevalence in the bay of a single submerged aquatic plant, *Vallisneria americana*,

⁵⁹ Sullivan, *Tales of Carroll's Island Ducking Club*, 26–27, 33–41; H. D. C., "Duck Shooting on Carroll's Island," 286.

commonly called duck grass, tape grass, or wild celery. In his monumental, multi-volume book *The Birds of America*, Audubon quoted Sharpless's article from the early 1830s as authoritative on the subject: "The Chesapeake Bay, with its tributary streams, has, from its discovery, been known as the greatest resort of water-fowl in the United States. This has depended on the profusion of their food, which is accessible on the immense flats or shoals that are found near the mouth of the Susquehanna, along the entire length of North-East and Elk rivers, and on the shores of the bay and connecting streams, as far south as York and James rivers."⁶⁰ Sharpless went on to say that "most of these fowl feed on the same grass, which . . . has been called duck-grass, *Valisneria [sic] Americana*. It grows from six to eighteen inches in length, and is readily pulled up by the root. Persons who have closely observed these Ducks while feeding, say that the Canvass-back and Black-head dive and pull the grass from the ground, and feed on the roots, and that the Red-head and Bald-pate then consume the leaves."⁶¹

The topic of wild celery came up in the sporting magazines too. In 1833 John Skinner solicited an anonymous sportsman to contribute an article entitled "Duck Shooting on the Chesapeake Bay" to the *American Turf Register*. In addition to his expertness in "the art of killing ducks," the author, who was identified only as "S. H.," exhibited both a familiarity with the work of early ornithologist Alexander Wilson and, considering the date, a surprisingly sensitive

⁶⁰ Audubon, *Birds of America*, 6: 301.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 6: 302.

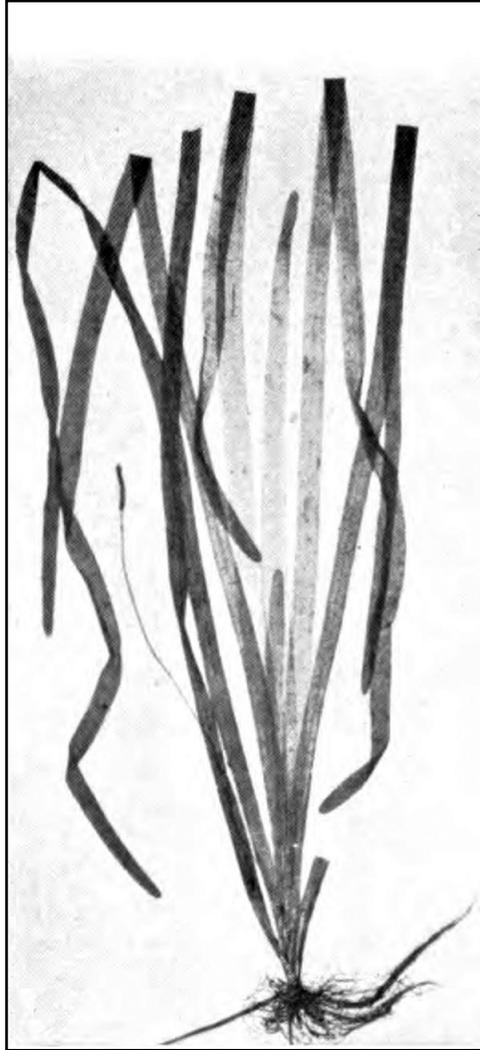


Figure 3.2. Wild celery. Early waterfowlers singled out this plant as the most important duck food growing in Chesapeake Bay. Source: A. C. Martin and F. M. Uhler, *Food of Game Ducks in the United States and Canada* (1939), plate 48.

appreciation of “the order and beauty of nature.”⁶² Writing at about the same time as Sharpless, he likewise connected the abundance of ducks on the bay in winter

⁶² S. H., “Duck Shooting on the Chesapeake Bay,” 631 (second quotation), 636 (first quotation).

to the vast beds of wild celery in its waters, though the sportsman's physical description of the plant itself was actually more accurate:

With few exceptions, all the wild ducks live on the same food, which is the roots of a grass that grows in the mud, at the bottom of the water. The root of this grass is three inches long, and terminates in a bulb, white like celery. This grass grows on the shoals in the Susquehanna, and most other rivers that empty into the Chesapeake, in four, six, and ten feet [of] water; but never where the tide leaves the bottom dry. The blade is six feet long and half an inch wide, like a narrow ribbon. It grows so thick all over the flats, that it is with difficulty a flat-bottomed boat can be pushed through it when the tide is out; and when the ducks tear it up by the roots, the tops float ashore in large patches, where it is rolled up in windrows by the serf [*sic*].⁶³

While wild celery was bountiful in the freshwater shallows of Chesapeake Bay and at sporadic locations elsewhere, it was sparsely distributed throughout its general range. As early as 1829, an ornithologist from Philadelphia named George Ord suggested introducing wild celery into new areas of suitable habitat as a means to improve duck hunting. His motives appear to have been epicurean: "As the *Vallisneria*, will grow in all our fresh water rivers, in coves, or places not affected by the current, it would be worth the experiment to transplant this vegetable in those waters where it at present is unknown. There is little doubt the Canvas-backs would, by this means, be attracted; and thus would afford the lovers of good eating an opportunity of tasting a delicacy, which, in the opinion of many, is unrivalled by the whole feathered race."⁶⁴ Gentleman hunters were the first to act on Ord's suggestion, but not until waterfowling for sport caught on

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 629.

⁶⁴ Alexander Wilson, *American Ornithology; or, The Natural History of the Birds of the United States . . . with a Sketch of the Author's Life*, by George Ord, ed. George Ord, vol. 3 (New York: Collins and Co., 1829), 348.

nationally and the footprint of the ducking preserves expanded beyond the Chesapeake Bay region to other parts of the country where wild celery was less common.

David W. Cross of Cleveland undertook some of the first recorded experimentation with propagating aquatic plants as duck food at the Winous Point Shooting Club near Port Clinton, Ohio. Like pioneering Illinois game breeder John Caton, a contemporary, Cross exemplified the classic hunter-naturalist. Born in 1814 in Pulaski, New York, Cross relocated to Cleveland in 1836 to practice law. As a rising young professional, he joined with several peers in forming the Ark, a social club dedicated to exploring the members' common interests in hunting, taxidermy, and natural history. The "Arkites," as they styled themselves, met in the law office of Cleveland mayor Leonard Case Sr., and their president was Case's son William, who was himself elected mayor of the city in 1850 at the age of thirty-two. The club's name derived from its diverse collection of stuffed specimens, which cluttered the two-room office building to such an extent that some said it resembled Noah's Ark. From 1838 to 1850, Cross devoted much of his spare time to his first love, hunting deer with rifles. By 1849, though, some of the Arkites had become involved with the Cleveland and Sandusky Duck and Goose Hunting Association, an informal assemblage of sportsmen who periodically camped on Squaw Island, eighteen miles west of Sandusky, and went waterfowling in the surrounding marshes of Muddy Creek Bay, which was separated from Lake Erie by Sandusky Bay. It was likely that Arkites active in the Cleveland and Sandusky Duck and Goose Hunting

Association acquainted Cross with wing shooting at Muddy Creek Bay in the early 1850s, and he was one of the founders of the Winous Point Shooting Club, which grew out of the association in 1856.⁶⁵

Immediately upon incorporating as a stock company of thirty shares, the Winous Point Shooting Club purchased 205 acres along the northern shore of Muddy Creek Bay and built a two-story clubhouse, an icehouse, and a boathouse on Winous Point, a half-mile north of Squaw Island. The original members, who mostly hailed from cities in northern Ohio and Pittsburgh, chose William Case as club president and hired the previous landowner and his wife to manage the Winous Point property. By 1877 steady additions to the preserve had brought the club's holdings to nearly seventy-five hundred acres, slightly more than two-thirds of which it owned in fee simple. Four years later, the club owned and leased in excess of thirteen thousand acres.⁶⁶

Following a series of lucrative industrial investments, Cross retired from his legal practice in 1860 at age forty-six, freeing him to pursue his newest avocation even more enthusiastically. "Cross is an inveterate duck hunter," the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported in 1885, and "when the season closes in Ohio

⁶⁵ [George Bird Grinnell], "D. W. Cross," *Forest and Stream*, April 23, 1891, 266; D. W. Cross, "A Deer Hunt in Ohio: 'Many Years Ago,'" *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, February 23, 1882, 67–68; Sedgwick and Kroll, *Winous Point*, 3–13.

⁶⁶ "The Duck Season and Duck Shooting—The First Cracks—The Great Marsh and the Club House," *Cleveland Daily Plain Dealer* (Ohio), September 23, 1858; Sedgwick and Kroll, *Winous Point*, 15–27; "A Famous Sportsmen's Commune," *Cleveland Daily Plain Dealer*, April 30, 1877; En Garde [pseud.], "Winous Point Club," *The Sportsman Tourist*, *Forest and Stream*, June 9, 1881, 366.



Figure 3.3. Cleveland attorney and dedicated waterfowler David W. Cross (1814–1891). Cross was a leader in the early efforts to propagate wild celery on ducking preserves. Wild celery was a favorite food of the canvasback, which Cross and most other nineteenth-century sportsmen esteemed above all duck species. *Source:* [George Bird Grinnell], “D. W. Cross,” *Forest and Stream*, April 23, 1891, p. 266.

he follows the ducks south.”⁶⁷ Several years prior to publication of this newspaper article, probably in 1881, Cross had joined a newly formed syndicate of northern sportsmen called the Narrows Island Club that owned a ducking

⁶⁷ [Grinnell], “D. W. Cross,” 266; “The Lounger’s Observations,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 29, 1885 (quotation).

preserve near Poplar Branch, North Carolina.⁶⁸ There, while waterfowling on Currituck Sound, he befriended fellow club member George Bird Grinnell, the ambitious conservationist from New York who had taken over the editorship of *Forest and Stream* in 1880. In retirement Cross authored an instructional book for outdoorsmen entitled *Fifty Years with the Gun and Rod*, and he is mentioned now and again in Tod Sedgwick and Roy Kroll's excellent coffee-table club history, *Winous Point: 150 Years of Waterfowling and Conservation*.⁶⁹ Still, most of what we know about Cross's work with duck food plants comes from the pages of *Forest and Stream*.

Cross presented the Winous Point Shooting Club with its first logbook for bag records in 1862. After reviewing the unbroken succession of club logbooks since then, Sedgwick and Kroll state that Cross was "hands down the duck-shootingest Winous Point member." During twenty-seven years of hunting at the club, he shot a staggering 11,645 ducks, a total that doubtless ranks him as one of the most prolific amateur waterfowlers in U.S. history.⁷⁰ Left unrecorded in the logbooks, however, were the innumerable hours that Cross spent on the expansive Winous Point preserve *not* hunting. As related by Grinnell, "Soon after the establishment of this club, Mr. Cross began the careful study of the habits of

⁶⁸ Jo Anna Heath Bates, ed., *The Heritage of Currituck County, North Carolina, 1985* (Currituck, N.C.: Published by the Albemarle Genealogical Society in cooperation with the Currituck County Historical Society and Hunter Publishing Company, Winston-Salem, N.C., 1985), 34; Johnson and Copedge, *Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound*, 137–139.

⁶⁹ See D. W. Cross, *Fifty Years with the Gun and Rod, Including Tables Showing the Velocity, Distance, Penetration or Effect of Shot, Calculated by Leonard Case, Esq., Gun Trials, by the Chicago Field; How and Where to "Hold," Etc.* (Cleveland, Ohio: Short and Forman, 1880). See also Sedgwick and Kroll, *Winous Point*, xxv, 5, 43, 45–47, 54–55, 57, 59, 68–70, 80–81, 85–86, 189, 304.

⁷⁰ Sedgwick and Kroll, *Winous Point*, 43, 304 (quotation).

the different species of water fowl that resorted to these extensive marshes.”⁷¹ In his book, Cross classified the species he hunted according to their feeding patterns: “marsh ducks” dabbled for plant material near the water’s surface, and “open-water ducks” dove to forage seeds, roots, and tubers from the shallow bottom.⁷² The most plentiful ducks at Winous Point, canvasbacks (*Aythya valisineria*) and redheads (*Aythya americana*), were divers.⁷³ Grinnell wrote regarding Cross, “He soon discovered that the food that attracted them here and that made it a resort of such vast numbers . . . , both in spring and fall, was the bulb and tender leaves of the wild celery.” Upon further investigation, “He learned, too, that the seed of the wild celery could be gathered in October, and when planted in suitable water with mud bottom would grow well and attract the ducks in their annual passage to and from the breeding grounds.”⁷⁴ Other native plants of value as duck food that Cross identified in the Winous Point marsh included northern wild rice (*Zizania palustris*); common arrowhead, or wapato, (*Sagittaria latifolia*); deer-tongue arrowhead (*Sagittaria rigida*); and American waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*).⁷⁵

As ducking preserves became more prevalent between 1870 and 1890, many sportsmen with a vested interest in improving shooting on their properties began to awaken to the possibilities of managing habitat through the propagation

⁷¹ [Grinnell], “D. W. Cross,” 266.

⁷² Cross, *Fifty Years with the Gun and Rod*, 82–97 (first quotation on p. 82, second on p. 92).

⁷³ [Grinnell], “D. W. Cross,” 266. See also Sedgwick and Kroll, *Winous Point*, 47, 64, 73.

⁷⁴ [Grinnell], “D. W. Cross,” 266.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; Sedgwick and Kroll, *Winous Point*, 189.

of duck food plants. Minnesota and Wisconsin seedsmen first started soliciting orders “for fall delivery” of northern wild rice in *Forest and Stream* in July 1876.⁷⁶ All manner of ducks fed on the young shoots and seeds of wild rice. The northern subspecies of this tall marsh grass abounded in the lakes of the Upper Midwest, and the southern subspecies (*Zizania aquatica*) was locally distributed along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Northern wild rice was the first plant to be marketed commercially to sportsmen as wild duck food because its seed was economical to harvest in addition to being simple to sow. *Forest and Stream’s* founder and first editor, Charles Hallock, called his readers’ attention to the seed advertisements in early September. “It is a fact generally conceded that, all things being equal, birds will be found in greatest abundance and regularity where they best can obtain their favorite food,” wrote Hallock, who also was a charter member of the Blooming Grove Park Association. “It would therefore seem to be an experiment worth trying to introduce into our lakes and sluggish streams where it does not now exist the growth of this wild ‘rice’ in expectation of its attracting the ducks flying fast to stop there and feed, thus affording many a shot to the gunner where he could never hope for one before.” Hallock urged eastern seedsmen to stock wild rice and closed, “We earnestly beg all sporting clubs to take up this matter.”⁷⁷ After buying out Hallock and taking over as editor

⁷⁶ “Wild Rice for Sale,” advertisement for Thomas P. Cantwell, Brainerd, Minn., *Forest and Stream*, July 20, 1876, 393; “Wild Rice Seed,” advertisement for Richard Valentine, Janesville, Wisc., *ibid.*, July 27, 1876, 409.

⁷⁷ [Charles Hallock], “Cultivating Wild Rice to Attract Fowl,” *Forest and Stream*, September 7, 1876, 72–73 (first quotation on p. 72, second on pp. 72–73, third on p. 73).



Figure 3.4. Wild rice. This was the first duck food plant to become commercially available in the United States. Sportsmen could order seeds by mail in the 1870s. The specimen pictured here is from the southern subspecies. *Source: Martin and Uhler, Food of Game Ducks in the United States and Canada (1939), plate 59.*

of the magazine on January 1, 1880, George Bird Grinnell invited further dialogue on the culture of food plants for ducks.

It appears that Grinnell's first contact with Cross came in the summer of 1881, after the editor queried the *Forest and Stream* readership about wild celery on July 7: "Can any one inform us as to the cultivation of wild celery? Has it ever

been transplanted or sown in waters to serve as food for wild fowl? Who can supply the seed, and at what price? When should it be sown? This information is sought by several correspondents.”⁷⁸ On August 11, Grinnell published an answer from Cross, who stated that “in a cause of so much interest to sportsmen . . . [as] the food attractions of wild fowls to any given locality, I should be glad to see the experiment of transplanting tried and will cheerfully give all the aid and information I can.” Cross briefly described his experience with the plant, which “grows in enormous quantities on the grounds of the Winous Point Shooting Club, in Sandusky Bay,” and suggested that the optimum time for transplanting was “after the bulbs are matured and before ice is formed—somewhere between Oct. 15 and Nov. 15.” He added, “If any one desirous of trying the experiment will address a letter on the subject before the 15th of November I will endeavor to have the roots gathered, packed in moss and forwarded. There will be no expense outside of boxing and transportation.”⁷⁹ By the end of August, Cross wrote Grinnell that he had already received quite a few inquiries about transplanting wild celery, and in October, he began shipping bulbs as well as seeds to sportsmen in several states.⁸⁰

One of Cross’s correspondents in the autumn of 1881 was H. H. Thompson of the Bisby Club in upstate New York. In reply to his solicitation, Thompson received an “exhaustive paper” from Cross on the culture of wild

⁷⁸ [George Bird Grinnell], “Wild Celery,” *Forest and Stream*, July 7, 1881, 448.

⁷⁹ D. W. Cross, “Wild Celery,” *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, August 11, 1881, 30.

⁸⁰ [George Bird Grinnell], “Wild Celery,” *ibid.*, September 1, 1881, 84; D. W. Cross, “Wild Celery,” *Game Bag and Gun*, *ibid.*, January 5, 1882, 449.

celery. Thompson was so impressed by Cross's knowledge of the plant that he forwarded the letter to Grinnell, who published it in *Forest and Stream* on January 5, 1882. This lengthy letter offers our best glimpse of Cross as student of the physiology and ecology of wild celery. In it he discussed conducting thorough observations of wild celery at each stage of its growth cycle as well as comparisons of its hardiness and reproductive characteristics in waters of varying depth, temperature, clarity, and current. He also wrote about collecting roots, bulbs, and seed pods from the marsh for closer examination. For instance, having painstakingly inspected a sample of ten seed pods, he informed Thompson that the pods contained on average 412 seeds. "Whether the roots themselves die out every year or are perennial I am not prepared to say," Cross wrote, "but I have experiments in progress, which I trust will enable me to determine the fact next fall." Thompson's application arrived too late in the season for Cross to supply him with bulbs and seeds from Winous Point, but after recommending where and how to plant them based on a host of soil and water considerations, Cross closed his letter with a personal invitation to Thompson: "If you will come to our club house in October next, or advise me to whom and where to ship them, I will endeavor to see that you have such a supply as will enable you to try the experiment of raising wild celery in the 'North-Woods.'"⁸¹

Grinnell quickly came to view Cross as the leading authority on wild celery and for years considered this published letter from Cross to Thompson to be the

⁸¹ Cross, "Wild Celery," January 5, 1882, 449.

definitive treatment of the subject. Throughout the 1880s, Grinnell continually referred inquisitive sportsmen to Cross and distributed copies of Cross's article on wild celery to interested parties until his reserve of back issues was exhausted. On April 8, 1886, "in response to a number of inquiries," Grinnell reprinted Cross's 1882 article in *Forest and Stream*.⁸²

Two of the sportsmen who worked with Cross to propagate wild celery where they hunted wrote Grinnell about their experiences. The first success story came from Massachusetts. In the September 27, 1883, issue of *Forest and Stream*, Grinnell relayed the news that "a few of the sportsmen of Springfield" had "planted both seeds and roots in the Connecticut River, and each have grown." As the season for transplanting was drawing near, Grinnell took this opportunity to remind readers that "in the pages of this journal Mr. D. W. Cross, of Cleveland, Ohio, very courteously volunteered to supply to those who might wish for them, seeds and bulbs from the grounds of the Winous Point Club."⁸³ In early 1887, three years after Grinnell recommended that he consult Cross, S. E. Kingsley of Syracuse, New York, informed the editor of how he had produced a bumper crop of wild celery in Big Sandy Pond on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario:

I have always felt considerable interest in this pond. There is and has been for years there a heavy growth of wild rice, which proves attractive to ducks in the fall, especially of the more common class. There was no wild celery at this place. The result was that ducks

⁸² S. E. Kingsley, "Success with Wild Celery," *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, February 3, 1887, 26. See D. W. Cross, "Wild Celery," *Natural History, ibid.*, April 8, 1886, 203–204.

⁸³ [George Bird Grinnell], "Wild Rice and Wild Celery," *Forest and Stream*, September 27, 1883, 162. See also Robert O. Morris, "Wild Celery," *Game Bag and Gun, ibid.*, May 18, 1907, 778.

calling for this kind of feed frequented this pond only in limited numbers, say redheads, canvasbacks, etc. I was, of course, much interested in regard to the growing of celery at this place. I wanted, if possible, to make this pond attractive for all kinds of ducks. I conversed with many who knew the ground well (perhaps better than I did). I was discouraged. It was said that the ground was not adapted to its growth. Suffice it to say I wrote to Mr. Cross (who, by the way, proved to be very much of a gentleman as well as a sportsman). He knew, if not all, much about wild celery. He gave me many new ideas regarding its reproduction, and proffered to me much advice. I made an order through a friend of mine, for seeds and bulbs [from Cross], and through his [Cross's] advice and by his directions sowed the seed and planted the bulbs at various points on the pond . . .

. . . Last fall, late in October, . . . I found the wild celery seed sown had taken fully and well. The bulbs also had proved effective and had come up in great abundance.⁸⁴

Three weeks after this account appeared, on February 24, Grinnell published a follow-up communication from Kingsley. It was written at the request of the editor and contained Kingsley's personal tips for growing wild celery.⁸⁵ On the front page of the same issue, Grinnell renewed Hallock's call to action from the 1870s, entreating sportsmen to direct additional energies into cultivating duck foods. Hallock's emphasis had been on wild rice, but after more than a decade of progress on that front, Grinnell shifted the focus to wild celery: "The introduction of wild rice to waters where it was not indigenous has, in many cases, furnished an attraction for wild ducks and provided excellent shooting. Now that the cultivation of wild celery has been tested and proved practicable, it only remains

⁸⁴ Kingsley, "Success with Wild Celery," 26.

⁸⁵ See S. E. Kingsley, "Growing Wild Celery," *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, February 24, 1887, 85.

for clubs, associations and individuals to take up the work and add to their annual wild duck supply.”⁸⁶

It seems that Cross remained the principal source of seed and practical instruction on transplanting wild celery for Grinnell’s nationwide network of sportsmen into the late 1880s. “I know of no other man to order celery seed from,” Kingsley remarked.⁸⁷ Grinnell knew of no one else either, and in his February 1887 editorial encouraging gentleman hunters to take a greater interest in the propagation of wild celery, he once again recommended that they solicit Cross for assistance. This time, though, Grinnell seemed apologetic on account of Cross’s advanced age (he had turned seventy-two the previous November) and the frequent impositions already made on his altruistic spirit: “Mr. Cross, to whom our correspondent alludes as the one who secured celery seed for him, might perhaps be willing to assist others in the same manner, for we know him to be most obliging; but it is quite possible that the attention necessary to be given to the subject in compliance with repeated demands, might be too great a tax upon his time.” Grinnell recognized, as did Hallock in his appeal concerning wild rice, that commercial availability was key to inspiring widespread cultivation. “If some one on the Chesapeake Bay or elsewhere, where wild celery abounds, would undertake to supply the seed and bulbs, he might find enough profit in it to pay for the labor.”⁸⁸ Seedsmen were slow to respond, however. In answering a

⁸⁶ [George Bird Grinnell], “Wild Celery,” *ibid.*, 81.

⁸⁷ Kingsley, “Growing Wild Celery,” 85.

⁸⁸ [Grinnell], “Wild Celery,” February 24, 1887, 81.

letter to the editor in 1895, Grinnell provided the names of two individuals, one in Wisconsin and one in New Jersey, who sold wild celery. *Forest and Stream* did not carry an advertisement from a dealer offering wild celery seed for sale until 1902.⁸⁹

When Cross died in 1891, Grinnell memorialized that he “did much to introduce the wild rice and the wild celery in regions where they had hitherto been unknown.”⁹⁰ The scarcity of documentation makes it impossible to estimate the number of propagation projects that Cross had a hand in personally, but data collected by Waldo L. McAtee of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey in the first decade of the twentieth century does shed light on Cross’s contribution to a larger trend. The Bureau of Biological Survey was formally established in 1905. Its initial thrust was research, and “in the early years,” related one federal wildlife biologist, “the food-habits laboratory was the busiest place in the Survey.”⁹¹ McAtee headed up the food studies relative to waterfowl. His first technical report based on analysis of the contents of several hundred stomachs from sixteen species of ducks was issued in 1911, two decades after Cross’s death.⁹²

⁸⁹ “Wild Rice, Bridgeport, Pa.,” Answers to Correspondents, *Forest and Stream*, June 1, 1895, 447; “Wild Celery Seed,” advertisement for R. B. White, Waterlily, N.C., *ibid.*, June 28, 1902, iv.

⁹⁰ [Grinnell], “D. W. Cross,” 266.

⁹¹ Paul G. Redington, “The United States Bureau of Biological Survey,” *Scientific Monthly*, October 1933, 292; Arthur S. Hawkins, “The U.S. Response,” in *Flyways: Pioneering Waterfowl Management in North America*, ed. A. S. Hawkins et al. ([Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1984), 5 (quotation).

⁹² Henry M. Reeves, “Waldo L. McAtee,” in Hawkins et al., *Flyways*, 85–86. See W. L. McAtee, *Three Important Wild Duck Foods*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Biological Survey, Circular No. 81 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911]. Several of McAtee’s later publications on waterfowl food plants also were consulted for this study. See McAtee, *Five Important Wild-Duck Foods*, Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, no. 58 [Washington,

McAtee's findings not only confirmed the long-standing conclusions of gentleman duck hunters like Cross about the importance of wild rice and wild celery as duck foods but also uncovered a third plant of note, a submerged aquatic commonly called sago pondweed (*Stuckenia pectinata*), that had been largely overlooked by the sportsmen. McAtee's research on the distribution of these duck food plants indicated that wild rice had been successfully propagated from coast to coast at locations in twenty-one states and wild celery in seventeen. This was an era when the Biological Survey was in its infancy, the few national wildlife refuges existed only to protect the rookeries of wading birds threatened by the millinery industry, and the states showed little concern for species that migrated beyond their borders. Implicit in the McAtee report, then, is that these sites of duck food propagation were almost invariably ducking preserves and the people responsible for the work were sportsmen.⁹³ Neither was it a coincidence that, as McAtee admits, "much less is known about the transplanting of pondweeds,"

D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914]; McAtee, *Eleven Important Wild-Duck Foods*, Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, no. 205 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1915]; McAtee, *Propagation of Wild-Duck Foods*, U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin, no. 465 (Washington, D.C.: [Government Printing Office], 1917); McAtee, *Food Habits of the Mallard Ducks of the United States*, U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin, no. 720 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918); McAtee, *Wildfowl Food Plants: Their Value, Propagation, and Management* (Ames, Iowa: Collegiate Press, Inc., 1939).

⁹³ The author calculated the state totals from the maps on pp. 5 and 12 of McAtee, *Three Important Wild Duck Foods*. Some of the state lines and propagation designations on the map showing the range of wild rice (p. 5) are blurry and indistinct, particularly for the New England region. Therefore, the total of twenty-one states where wild rice was propagated is the author's estimate. Regardless, McAtee's figures are without much doubt too low. He likely arrived at them through observations and interviews in the field as well as correspondence with ornithologists and sportsmen conducted since he first began working as an intern at the Biological Survey in 1903, though his research methods are not disclosed in the report. There is no indication that he did any historical research, and as a consequence, some documented propagations from the nineteenth century were omitted from his data. For instance, McAtee's map does not reflect that wild celery had been propagated in Arkansas and Mississippi. However, a correspondent of *Forest and Stream* writes about its successful introduction on the grounds of the Wapanocca Outing Club and the Saint Francis Club in Arkansas as well as the Beaver Dam Club in Mississippi in 1888. See Game Bag and Gun, *Forest and Stream*, September 17, 1891, 165.

since sportsmen were mostly unaware of the significance of sago pondweed and had not experimented with it widely on the preserves.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, facilitated by new rail lines and privately owned steam yachts, the inexorable march of ducking clubs toward the southernmost wintering grounds in the continental United States continued. In the 1890s and early 1900s, gentleman hunters began pushing into the South Carolina low country, the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas, and central and southern California. This far south and west, where the sport of duck shooting was poorly developed, organized clubs were all but unheard of, and hunting properties were still inexpensive, sportsmen were even more likely to control sprawling preserves that covered hundreds, if not thousands, of acres. Following this latest round of preserve expansion, Dwight Huntington commented in 1910 that “nearly all of the best marshes and the desirable lands about the ponds and lakes in the United States which are frequented by wild fowl during their migrations now are owned or leased by individuals and clubs.”⁹⁵

By the early twentieth century, habitat management on the ducking preserves was no longer a novelty, but a necessity. With waterfowl migrations

⁹⁴ McAtee, *Three Important Wild Duck Foods*, 15.

⁹⁵ Dwight W. Huntington, *Our Wild Fowl and Waders* (New York: Amateur Sportsman Co., 1910), 97 (quotation); Palmer, *Private Game Preserves*, 6; Edward G. Taylor, “The Pearl River Country,” *The Sportsman Tourist*, *Forest and Stream*, June 4, 1898, 442; “Hunting Grounds and Fishing Camps: Tally-Ho Club Adds Large Stretch to Preserves . . . before All Shooting Territory Is In Private Possession,” *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), October 4, 1904; R. K. Sawyer, *A Hundred Years of Texas Waterfowl Hunting: The Decoys, Guides, Clubs, and Places, 1870s to 1970s*, Gulf Coast Books, no. 23 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012), 59–295 passim; Garone, *Wetlands of California’s Great Central Valley*, 105–106; John De Witt, “Duck Shooting in California,” *Overland Monthly*, November 1910, 439–449; “Swell Shooting Club,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1896; “Investing Money in Duck Marsh,” *ibid.*, August 11, 1907.

dwindling and wetlands disappearing at faster rates than ever before, management measures assumed greater intensity, complexity, and cost. This was especially true of some of the recently opened areas in the Southeast and Southwest that did not possess the extensive feeding grounds and other natural advantages of famed duck-shooting destinations like Chesapeake Bay, the Mississippi River bayous, or Suisun Marsh. In 1918, following a survey of ducking preserves in the Central Valley of California, Joseph Grinnell and a team of investigators from the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology reported, "It now takes a scientifically managed gun-club pond with every attraction that can be offered to wild fowl to bring the birds in large numbers."⁹⁶ What it took to enjoy shooting reminiscent of waterfowling's golden age, in other words, was regulating water levels and raising food crops in man-made duck marshes. Thus, sportsmen went from introducing wild rice and wild celery in shallow freshwater coves and slow-moving streams naturally suited to their growth during David Cross's day to altering entire wetland ecosystems in order to create new habitat for duck food plants by the time George Bird Grinnell retired as editor of *Forest and Stream* in 1911. This latter method often involved building dikes across the arms or mouths of estuaries to halt the action of the tides, using floodgates and ditching to overflow large areas and reduce salinity, and planting feed in the brackish or freshwater marshes established behind the embankments. Here again, sportsmen who constructed artificial duck marshes

⁹⁶ Joseph Grinnell, Harold Child Bryant, and Tracy Irwin Storer, *The Game Birds of California*, Semicentennial Publications of the University of California, 1868–1918 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1918), 10.

on the preserves anticipated similar initiatives on the national wildlife refuges by several decades.

A notable early example of sportsmen diking a tidal inlet with the purpose of converting open salt marsh to a freshwater impoundment occurred at the Bolsa Chica Gun Club, located in Orange County between Long Beach and Newport Bay on the southern coast of California. A group of millionaire bankers, capitalists, and lawyers from Los Angeles and Pasadena founded this club in 1899. The membership was limited to forty and included several part-time residents of the Golden State from New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Saint Louis. They elected Count Jaro von Schmidt, a Bohemian noble who had settled in the United States in the 1880s, as the club's first president. The count previously was president of the San Joaquin Shooting Club, which had diked several sections at the head of Newport Bay in 1895 and 1896 on a preserve leased from rancher James Irvine. But Irvine terminated the lease, and the work had to be abandoned. This led von Schmidt and a core of members from the San Joaquin Shooting Club to form a new club and buy twenty-five hundred acres of beach and marshland at Bolsa Chica Bay.⁹⁷

The Bolsa Chica Gun Club completed two major construction projects prior to opening in October 1899 for its inaugural shooting season. One was a large, well-appointed clubhouse on a mesa overlooking the Pacific Ocean, and the other was an earth-fill dam built by a steam dredge that closed off the bay

⁹⁷ "New Sportsmen's Club," *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 1899; "Duck Shooters Getting Good Bags," *ibid.*, November 25, 1900; "Dam Contest Hangs Fire," *ibid.*, February 3, 1903; "A Duck Preserve," *ibid.*, July 27, 1896; "Swell Shooting Club"; Palmer, *Private Game Preserves*, 7.

from the sea. The *Los Angeles Times* described the dam, which was five hundred feet long and contained four cement spillways with automatic floodgates, as a “capital piece of engineering.” Prior to its installation, the semidiurnal tides coursed through approximately sixty miles of channels and sloughs on the club property, submerging almost two-thirds of the bay at high tide and exposing sizeable mud flats at low tide. Once the tide was shut out, the club sank thirty artesian wells, installed pumps, and started filling the impounded area with freshwater, the depth of which could be controlled by the gates. The output from these wells, the overflow from several hundred others at ranches further up the Bolsa Chica watershed, and “the rains of the past few seasons have washed the salt from the ground,” the *Times* reported in 1903. In the mild Mediterranean climate of coastal California, the club experimented with a wide selection of perennial and annual duck foods, including varieties of domesticated grains such as sorghum and rice that thrived in the fertile marsh soil.⁹⁸ “By these means,” the *Riverside Daily Press* observed, “an ideal duck marsh was developed.”⁹⁹

Improvements at ducking clubs could have a significant environmental impact when multiplied across a region. In an article from 1907 entitled “Investing Money in Duck Marsh,” the *Los Angeles Times* noted that numerous clubs south of the city had erected dikes, drilled wells, and flooded tidal basins with

⁹⁸ “New Sportsmen’s Club”; “Duck Shooters Getting Good Bags”; “Dam Contest Hangs Fire” (second quotation); “Biggest Duck Hunting Club,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1906 (first quotation); Palmer, *Private Game Preserves*, 7.

⁹⁹ “Bolsa Chica Preserve One of World’s Greatest,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, Calif.), June 20, 1910.

freshwater. The author of the article lamented, “It is a sore blow to the ‘unattached’ hunter who can do but little with the ducks, the shooting of which is principally a club proposition in Southern California owing to the fact that the natural ponds long since have been drained for celery and other agricultural purposes. The only duck shooting is that created by the clubs through buying up tracts of waste land” bypassed by farmers and “forming ponds.” Within a decade of the founding of the Bolsa Chica Gun Club, duck marshes were a prominent feature of the Orange County wetlandscape.¹⁰⁰

Private duck marshes became a cornerstone of waterfowl conservation in the twentieth century, protecting vulnerable wetlands from drainage and adding critical links to the chain of habitat provided by the national wildlife refuges along the migrational corridors. Although urban sprawl swallowed up most of the Orange County ducking preserves after 1930—Bolsa Chica being a noteworthy exception—an estimated six thousand ducking clubs in forty-eight states managed roughly three million acres in 1963, according to a nationwide survey. By comparison, in the same year, the 220 national wildlife refuges managed primarily for waterfowl comprised slightly less than 2.6 million acres. Louisiana, the heart of the Mississippi Flyway wintering grounds, and California, winter home to the majority of waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway, had the most clubs of any of the states with around one thousand each, while Louisiana had the most privately managed acres, 1.5 million.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ “Investing Money in Duck Marsh.”

¹⁰¹ John M. Anderson and Frank M. Kozlik, “Private Duck Clubs,” in *Waterfowl Tomorrow*, ed. Joseph P. Linduska (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Sport

Writing in 1910 about duck shooting in California, one author surmised that “the amount of money invested by local sportsmen in duck clubs and preserves would about cover the sum total of a national bank’s yearly operations, and the annual cost of maintaining them would run several small cities.” Indeed, the expense of managing duck marshes could be enormous, and private ducking clubs, which had always been exclusive, became even more so as the twentieth century progressed. The 1963 survey found that some clubs had put in close to \$1 million developing their marshes, with annual maintenance costs of \$50,000 (7.73 million and 387,000 in 2014 dollars, respectively).¹⁰²

Nowhere was duck shooting more exclusive than in South Carolina, the state where clubs managed the most acres per capita. In total, fourteen ducking clubs in South Carolina had seventy thousand acres under management, all located within the narrow coastal zone of the low-country region. One of the fourteen, the Santee Club, accounted for approximately 11,500 of those acres, or about 16.5 percent of the total. Yet even if this club and its exceptionally large marsh are taken out of the equation, the remaining South Carolina ducking clubs still managed on average forty-five hundred acres, substantially more than their counterparts in any other state.¹⁰³

Fisheries and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1964), 519, 523; J. Clark Salyer II and Francis G. Gillett, “Federal Refuges,” in *ibid.*, 505. On the later history of Bolsa Chica Bay, which eventually became a state ecological reserve, see Dan Weikel, “A New Life for Bolsa Chica,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 2004, home edition.

¹⁰² De Witt, “Duck Shooting in California,” 440; Anderson and Kozlik, “Private Duck Clubs,” 525.

¹⁰³ Anderson and Kozlik, “Private Duck Clubs,” 523. The figure for managed marsh acreage at the Santee Club comes from Jack Truluck, “Costly Strings Tie Down ‘Valuable Gift’ to S.C.,” *State* (Columbia, S.C.), March 6, 1975.

The history of wetland use in South Carolina that accounted for the small number of clubs and their immense acreages in the 1960s also presented gentleman waterfowlers of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era with a unique set of management challenges. In other parts of the country, sportsmen developed duck marshes in wetlands that were, for all practical purposes, ecologically pristine. In the South Carolina low country, however, they encountered wetland environments adapted for intensive agriculture. While other duck hunters were building tidal impoundments on their preserves one by one from the ground up, those who moved into South Carolina inherited a coastline already checkered with thousands of them.

South Carolinians had been impounding tidal wetlands to grow rice on large plantations for over 150 years. Tidal rice cultivation utilized the effect of rising and falling tides on rivers to irrigate fields in the floodplain. This technique could only be applied to the zone of tidal influence above the upstream limit of saltwater incursion, which varied from within a few miles of the open ocean to forty miles inland according to the river. The suitability of a site for tidal rice culture depended on whether the river originated in the piedmont or on the coastal plain, its volume of freshwater, the size and shape of its estuary, and additional hydrological factors.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Charles F. Kovacic and John J. Winberry, *South Carolina: The Making of a Landscape* (1987; repr., Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 73; Sam B. Hilliard, "Antebellum Tidewater Rice Culture in South Carolina and Georgia," in *European Settlement and Development in North America: Essays on Geographical Change in Honour and Memory of Andrew Clark Hill*, ed. James R. Gibson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 101–104.

Twice a day as the tide rose, a wedge of dense saltwater entered the mouths of the rivers, displacing the freshwater and forcing it back upstream. At high tide, this action raised the water level in the lower reaches of the rivers and their tributaries anywhere from a foot or so at some locations up to ten feet at others during spring tides. On the ebb tide, the level of the water dropped and the normal flow of the rivers resumed.¹⁰⁵

During the second half of the eighteenth century, planters and slaves reclaimed thousands of acres in the tidal zone to take advantage of the predictable fluctuations in water levels for flooding and draining rice fields. This involved developing an intricate system of dikes, canals, ditches, and ingenious tide-operated, gravity-flow water-control structures called “trunks”—in essence, rectangular wooden culverts constructed of heavy cypress lumber and fitted with a hanging gate at each end. Producing rice for export under these closely controlled conditions generated enormous wealth for the plantation owners. Yet recasting the wetlandscape so extensively by hand and maintaining the changes in the face of tropical storms and floods was a Herculean task that led planters to invest considerable capital in the importation of armies of enslaved laborers. Their preference was for slaves from certain rice-growing regions of West Africa who were already experienced in tidal culture. Between 1750 and 1770, South

¹⁰⁵ Kovacik and Winberry, *South Carolina*, 73; Hilliard, “Antebellum Tidewater Rice Culture,” 103–104.

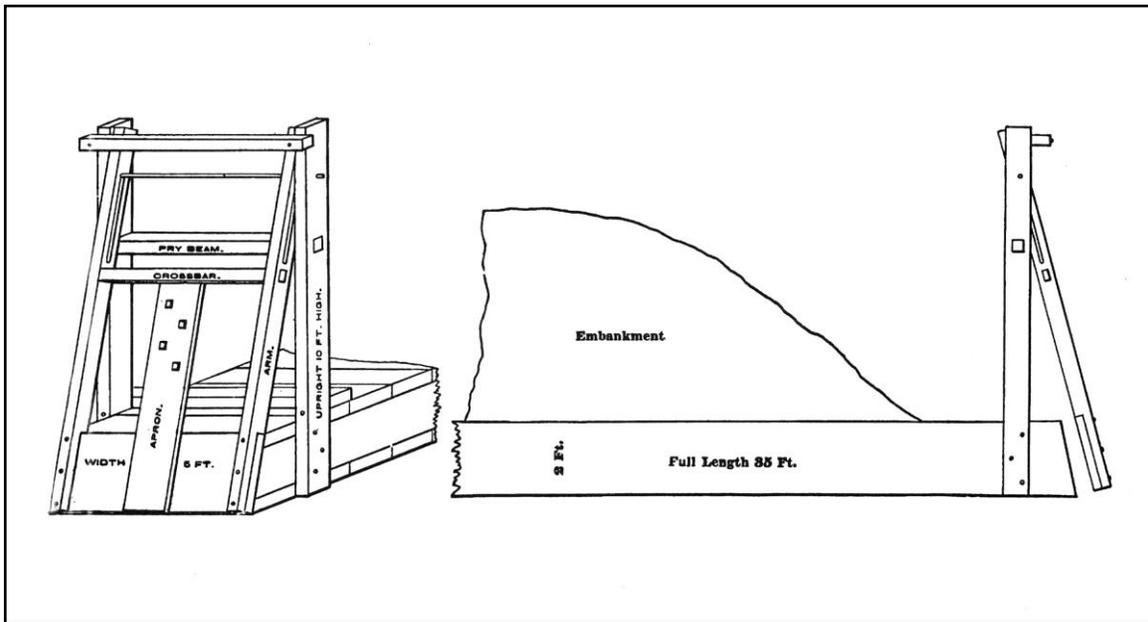


Figure 3.5. Quartering and cross-sectional diagrams of a rice trunk. *Source:* Frank Bond and George H. Keeney, *Irrigation of Rice in the United States* (1902), plate XXII.

Carolina’s slave population more than doubled, and in parts of the rice belt, blacks came to outnumber whites as much as nine to one.¹⁰⁶

Wresting rice fields from tidal marshes and swamps was a back-breaking, time-consuming process, which slaves accomplished using little more than axes, spades, and hoes. The first step was to erect a large earthen dike, usually referred to in South Carolina as a “bank,” along the river’s low-water line that was

¹⁰⁶ Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730–1815* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 228–251; Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 78–98; S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 72–80, 98–113; Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 82–98; Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina*, *Blacks in the New World* (1981; repr., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 74–114; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 39, 61.

substantial enough not to be overflowed by the spring tides. Banks were typically about five feet high, three feet across at the top, and twelve to fifteen feet wide at the base, with sloping sides to reduce erosion. Some followed the contours of the river for miles, enclosing hundreds of acres. Next, a ditch was excavated between the bank and the field, and a trunk running from the ditch to the river was buried in the bank. The field was then cleared, leveled, and divided by “cross” banks into sections of ten to forty acres, which were further subdivided into rows of planting beds. Each section, or “square,” was a separately functioning impoundment with shallow internal ditches known as “quarter drains” and a trunk for precise regulation of the water. All connected back to the main ditch by a network of “face” ditches running between the squares. Following completion of the field fronting the river, new ones could be built behind it that were supplied with water directly from the river by means of a canal skirting the original embankment. Reclaiming a single rice field required slaves to move tons upon tons of earth.¹⁰⁷

With this elaborate irrigation system in place, flooding the rice crop was simply a matter of raising the gate on the end of the main trunk closest to the river when the tide was higher than field level. River water would pour through the trunk, pushing open the interior gate, and into the field. Pressure exerted on the inside gate when the tide ebbed forced it to shut, preventing the water in the field from flowing back through the trunk and into the river. After a succession of

¹⁰⁷ Hilliard, “Antebellum Tidewater Rice Culture,” 105–109.

high tides, the entire field was inundated with freshwater. Reversing the process at successive low tides left the field dry.¹⁰⁸

Planters put tidal technology into practice at plantations on several rivers of the central and southern coast including the Cooper, Ashley, Edisto, Ashepoo, Combahee, and Savannah, but the richest rice lands in South Carolina bordered Georgetown District's Waccamaw, Great Pee Dee, Little Pee Dee, Black, Sampit, and Santee Rivers. At their peak around 1850, South Carolina plantations produced three-quarters of the rice grown in the United States, upwards of 150 million pounds per year, and Georgetown accounted for a little less than half of the state's total. During the peak years, rice impoundments on the low-country plantations encompassed approximately 150,000 acres, or nearly 30 percent of all tidal wetlands in the state of South Carolina.¹⁰⁹

After the Civil War, South Carolina's tidal plantations entered into a period of protracted decline. The rice industry survived the physical damage of the war, its concomitant disruptions to landholding and capital, and the transition from slave to free labor after emancipation, but planting never again approached its antebellum scale. Rice production plummeted in the late 1860s—from 119,100,528 pounds in 1859 to 32,304,825 in 1869—and then slowly recovered in fits and starts over the next three decades. Yet the state's postbellum rice crop

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 100, 108.

¹⁰⁹ Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 267, 269; Amory Austin, *Rice: Its Cultivation, Production, and Distribution in the United States and Foreign Countries*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Statistics, Miscellaneous Series, Report No. 6 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), 76; M. Richard DeVoe and Douglas S. Baughman, *South Carolina Coastal Wetland Impoundments: Ecological Characterization, Management, Status, and Use* (Charleston: South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, 1987), 1: v, 9.

only surpassed 50 million pounds once, in 1879, and came close again in 1899. Rice was cultivated on 78,388 acres in 1880, about half as many as before the war. In the 1880s, South Carolina lost its position as the leading rice producer in the nation to Louisiana, where the industry gained a competitive advantage through corporate financing, mechanization, and a new style of prairie farming. Increasing competition domestically from Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas and internationally from Asia as well as a succession of hurricanes between 1893 and 1911 forced many South Carolina rice planters out of business, opening the door for sportsmen from the North in search of fresh southern shooting grounds to lease and purchase devalued rice plantations as ducking preserves.¹¹⁰

Rice plantations were complex organisms. A journalist who visited South Carolina during Reconstruction famously referred to a working rice plantation as “a huge hydraulic machine, maintained by constant warring against the rivers,” and one prominent planter attested that “the whole apparatus of levels, floodgates, canals, banks, and ditches is of the most extensive kind, requiring skill and unity of purpose to keep in order.”¹¹¹ In addition to their environmental intricacies, the plantations were complicated places culturally and socially. Many had been abandoned for years, which resulted in deterioration of the expensive impoundment infrastructure. Thus, the most desirable plantations for duck

¹¹⁰ James H. Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 22–74; Charles F. Kovacik, “South Carolina Rice Coast Landscape Changes,” in *Proceedings of the Tall Timbers Ecology and Management Conference, Number 16: February 22–24, 1979, Thomasville, Georgia* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Tall Timbers Research Station, 1982), 54–55; Austin, *Rice*, 76.

¹¹¹ Edward King, *The Southern States of North America* (London: Blackie and Son, 1875), 434 (first quotation); David Doar, *Rice and Rice Planting in the South Carolina Low Country*, Contributions from the Charleston Museum, no. 8 (1936; repr., Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Museum, 1970), 8 (second quotation).

shooting were the ones still “under bank,” producing rice, and as a consequence, populated by communities of former slaves and their descendants whose ties to the land went back multiple generations. For all intents and purposes, the well-maintained plantations were turnkey ducking preserves. The challenge for the new owners would lie in keeping them that way as they transitioned the plantations from agricultural to recreational use.

What happened to these venerable properties when they passed into the hands of wealthy non-resident duck shooters? There were more differences than similarities between the prototypically modern preserves in southern California, which concentrated on growing wild marsh plants in artificial impoundments, and those established on low-country rice plantations around the turn of the twentieth century. By the onset of World War II, however, large-scale commercial rice cultivation in South Carolina had become a distant memory, and management of the plantation impoundments for waterfowl was in step with the national mainstream. For the historian, the fate of the South Carolina rice coast is a powerful example of the capacity of gentleman waterfowlers—the most ecologically attuned subset of sportsmen in America before the dawning of the age of ecology—to effect lasting environmental change locally as well as regionally through habitat improvement. The Santee Club, a leader in transforming the rice fields of the low country into duck marshes, will be central to the subsequent chapters.

The Santee Club dated to 1898. It may have been the largest of the northern ducking clubs in South Carolina and left the most indelible

environmental legacy, but it was not the oldest. That distinction belonged to the Annandale Club, which preceded the Santee Club by a decade. Before leaving the nineteenth century in chapter 5, the next one will look at the history of duck shooting on the Carolina rice plantations leading up to the creation of the Annandale Club in 1888. In the North, waterfowlers were predominantly white, and depending on their class, they shot ducks for their own pleasure or profit. Prior to the arrival of the northern sportsmen, however, duck hunters in the low country were mostly black, and until the Civil War, they went waterfowling because they had no choice in the matter.

CHAPTER 4

EXAMINING RACE AND SPORT ON NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOUTH CAROLINA RICE PLANTATIONS

As discussed in chapter 3, the British gentry embraced waterfowling as a gentlemanly pursuit in the early nineteenth century, and it caught on in the industrializing cities of the northeastern United States in the 1830s and 1840s. From the shores of Long Island and Chesapeake Bay, “duck fever” spread west and south in the ensuing decades until it was a national epidemic.¹ Thousands of prosperous male urbanites, many of whom had not been interested in guns since they were boys, took up duck shooting in their leisure time. They purchased the latest models of repeating shotguns, organized duck-hunting clubs or obtained memberships in established ones, and hired local people to run the clubs in and out of season. In only one region across the length and breadth of the American landscape was the respectability of duck shooting still questioned at the beginning of the twentieth century, the low country of South Carolina. Economic factors associated with rice-plantation agriculture and a racial stigma leftover from slavery negatively affected native whites’ perception of the activity. Owing to

¹ “Duck fever” was a commonly used phrase in stories about waterfowling from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. See, for example, Occidental [pseud.], “Duck Fever,” *Saturday Evening Post*, September 5, 1874, 8; J. Day Knap, “Duck Shooting on Great South Bay,” *Outing*, November 1895, 97–99; C. E. Wilson, “Ducks at Cape Hatteras,” *Forest and Stream*, August 16, 1902, 128; Nevil G. Henshaw, “Duck Fever: An Early Morning Hunt on the Prairies of Louisiana,” *Field and Stream*, November 1909, 626–628; John De Witt, “Duck Shooting in California,” *Overland Monthly*, November 1910, 439–449.

the decline of rice culture and the influence of sportsmen-tourists from the North, their ideas about duck shooting slowly changed following the turn of the century.

The low country's most vocal detractor of the sport of waterfowling was journalist James Henry Rice Jr., a self-taught ornithologist and pathbreaking conservationist who was elected the first executive secretary of the Audubon Society of South Carolina in 1907, appointed the state of South Carolina's first chief game warden four years later, and named the first southern field agent for the National Association of Audubon Societies in 1913. Rice was knowledgeable about hunting too. He was reputed to be "one of the best handlers of a shotgun who ever lived in South Carolina," and prior to taking up newspaper and conservation work, he had been a competitive marksman employed by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company.² At the time, according to Rice, he "spent day in and day out in the fields and woods, killing birds in order to keep in trim for shooting." Most of these birds, up to forty-five hundred in a season, were bobwhite quail—or "partridges," as Rice insisted upon calling them in the old southern style. As for ducks, though, Rice stated that he would sooner rest his gun on a pole and shoot chickens off of the roost in a barnyard.³

² "Jas. Henry Rice, Writer, Is Dead," *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), March 25, 1935; editorial, "James Henry Rice, Jr.," *State* (Columbia, S.C.), March 26, 1935; Alexander Sprunt Jr., obituary of James Henry Rice Jr., *Auk*, July 1941, 451–452; "Audubon Work To Be Expanded," *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), October 7, 1913; Henry E. Davis, *A Southern Sportsman: The Hunting Memoirs of Henry Edwards Davis*, ed. Ben McC. Moïse (Columbia: Published by the University of South Carolina Press in cooperation with the South Caroliniana Society with the assistance of the Caroline McKissick Dial Publication Fund, 2010), 285 (quotation).

³ James Henry Rice Jr., "Fifty Years of Waste," *Nature Magazine*, October 1923, 247–248 (quotation on p. 248); Rice, "The Partridge and Quail," *State*, December 10, 1911; Rice, "Hunts That Were Hunts," *News and Courier*, December 21 and 28, 1910 (these were the first and last installments in a four-part series); Rice, "New Game Laws Give Protection," *State*, October 26, 1913.

“Could some South Carolina planter who flourished before the war come back in the flesh,” Rice wrote in 1904, “he would be surprised and amused to learn that duck shooting is now sought after from one end of the country to the other by sportsmen, at least by a large class of sportsmen, who are willing to go any distance and to spend enormous amounts of money to get their favorite pastime. Before the war it was so little esteemed that the planters rarely, if ever, indulged in it.” Rice reminded readers of the *Charleston News and Courier* that the planter “went deer driving, shot the partridge or occasionally went after turkeys. Duck shooting he rightly regarded as beneath a true sportsman’s notice.”⁴

Like most upper-class white residents of the low country in his day, Rice was given to nostalgia for the splendor and grace of a by-gone plantation civilization that never really existed, but his comments on the hunting proclivities of the planters were pretty close to the mark. The low country’s landed leisure class predated the American Revolution, and the region had a rich sporting tradition that was inextricably entangled with its history of race-based slavery and plantation agriculture. These complicating factors led many antebellum South Carolina sportsmen to shun waterfowling for social and cultural reasons. Rice planters, who controlled much of the best waterfowl habitat in the state, were particularly disinclined to duck shooting. They delighted in eating wild ducks shot on their plantations, which they deemed a true delicacy. “It may be heresy to

⁴ James Henry Rice Jr., “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks,” *News and Courier*, December 18, 1904 (quotations). See also Rice, “Planting of Rice in South Carolina,” *ibid.*, December 25, 1904.

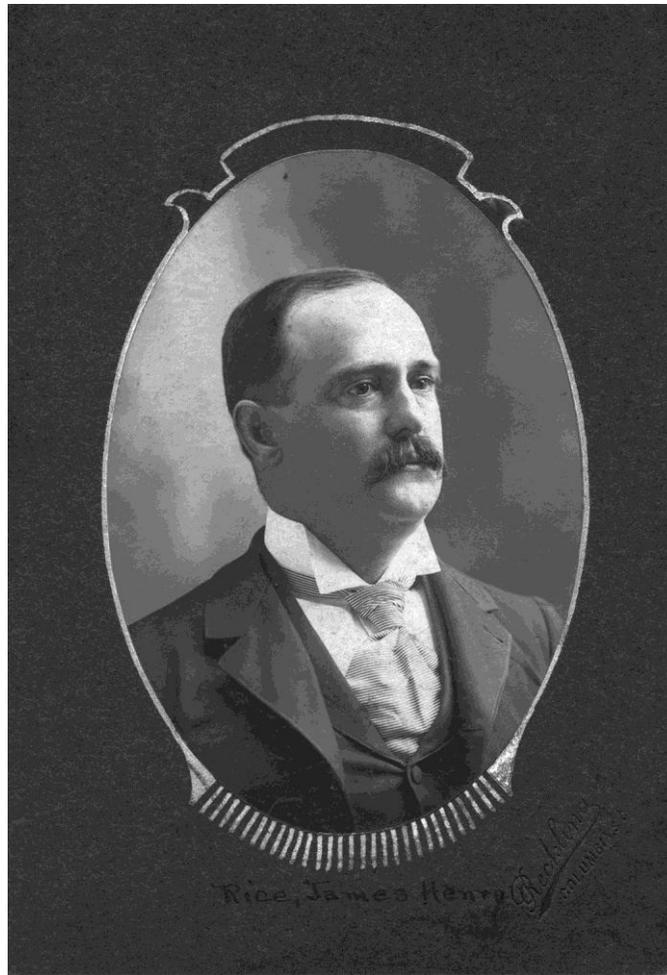


Figure 4.1. James Henry Rice Jr. (1868–1935). Raised on an up-country cotton plantation, Rice migrated to the coast as a young man, where he became enthralled by the culture of the rice planters. As a hunter-naturalist and later a game warden, he visited scores of rice plantations and befriended many of the state's oldest living planters. When he died, the *Columbia State* said of Rice that "he looked back . . . upon the Southern gentlemen of the Old Order period with veneration. The coast country, with its traditions and associations, called to this sentiment, and there he lived and worked for a generation." Among the traditions that Rice upheld most vehemently was that gentlemen do not shoot ducks. *Source:* Undated photograph of James Henry Rice Jr. by William A. Reckling. Courtesy of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

dispute the supremacy of the canvas-back duck of the Susquehannah [*sic*],” professed author and rice planter William Elliott III, “but I must say, that such . . . are not equal in flavor to the rice-fed duck of this region.”⁵ Yet many of these avid sportsmen were so averse to shooting ducks that they actually had their slaves do it for them.

The influence of racial ideas on the hunting habits of southerners during the long nineteenth century has been the subject of two important studies since 2002, Nicholas W. Proctor’s *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South* and Scott E. Giltner’s *Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War*. A common theme in the Proctor and Giltner volumes is elite white hunters’ concern about reducing competition between themselves and blacks for the choicest game. Proctor discusses how slaveholders began creating a “division between black and white game” in the eighteenth century that was based on English precedent, the inherent sporting qualities of the quarry, and its impressiveness as a trophy. This segregated hierarchy of game “developed alongside paternalism and the proslavery ideology,” growing more pronounced throughout the antebellum era. Accordingly, deer, bear, fox, and “most species of wildfowl” were “off limits to slaves.” Giltner argues that whites resented the blurring of the traditional color line separating “black game” and “white game” following emancipation. As slaves, blacks had

⁵ William Elliott, *Carolina Sports by Land and Water; Including Incidents of Devil-Fishing, Wild-Cat, Deer, and Bear Hunting, Etc.*, Southern Classics (1846; repr., Columbia: Published by the

University of South Carolina Press in cooperation with the Institute for Southern Studies and the South Caroliniana Society of the University of South Carolina, 1994), 246.

been relegated to hunting small game that whites held in low esteem such as rabbits, raccoons, and opossums, but as freedmen, they successfully asserted their independence by going after “large game and fowl,” the former domain of the master class. In the early twentieth century, frustrated whites enacted wildlife conservation laws in an effort to keep black hunters in check.⁶

Both Proctor’s analysis of the prevailing system of game segregation before the Civil War and Giltner’s exploration of its postbellum legacy are informed by numerous South Carolina sources. Proctor refers to William Elliott’s 1846 book *Carolina Sports by Land and Water* in demarcating the boundary between species of game hunted by slave-owning sportsmen and enslaved African Americans, for example, and Giltner relies on a 1915 South Carolina statute that required state licenses for hunting in seventeen counties to make his case for the racial undercurrents of the southern conservation movement.⁷

⁶ Nicholas W. Proctor, *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 129–132, 149–150 (first quotation on p. 149, second on p. 131, third and fourth on p. 129); Scott E. Giltner, *Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 52, 59–62, 67–68, 72–73, 154 (fifth, sixth, and seventh quotations on p. 59).

⁷ Proctor, *Bathed in Blood*, 129–130; Giltner, *Hunting and Fishing in the New South*, 138–139, 209 (n. 1). Giltner gets several facts wrong concerning South Carolina’s hunting-license legislation, which he calls the “Ziegler Bill.” He is referring to a bill “for raising revenue to protect birds, game and fish” that the House of Representatives adopted and sent to the senate on January 29, 1914, where it failed to pass. Giltner does not identify the sponsor of this bill, Representative Thomas W. Zeigler of Orangeburg County, but consistently misspells his last name by transposing the letters *e* and *i*. Actually, it was not until January of the next year, when a different Orangeburg County representative, Junius T. Liles, put forward a bill “to provide for a license for hunters, and a penalty to provide for failure to procure the same” that the measure gained bi-cameral support. The Liles Bill was ratified on February 20, 1915, and as Giltner correctly notes, the new law took effect on the following July 1. See *Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Being the Regular Session, Beginning Tuesday, January 14, 1913* (Columbia, S.C.: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1913), 8, 415, 778, 787; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Being the Regular Session, Beginning Tuesday, January 13, 1914* (Columbia, S.C.: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1914), 302, 458–459;

However, neither author takes account of the unique dynamic that set apart duck shooting in the low country. By examining the rise and decline of the rice planters' unusual attitude toward waterfowling, this chapter seeks to add shading and nuance to the baldly black-and-white picture of southern hunting that emerges from the works of Proctor and Giltner.

One reason that a number of rice planters did not shoot ducks was because they considered them inferior sport. The plantation gentry of Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina started imitating the elegant hunting customs of English monarchs and aristocrats in colonial times.⁸ England's great landowners since the early Middle Ages had preferred the excitement and regality of pursuing game on horseback with hounds. Emma Griffin notes that originally, deer were seen as the noblest object of the chase, and Britain's largest indigenous land mammal, the red deer, was "the quarry *par excellence*." But the deer population never recovered from the dismantling of the royal forests and private deer parks during the English Civil Wars, and by the eve of the Industrial Revolution, fox hunting was in vogue.⁹ Although they chased black bears, bobcats, and foxes in

Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Being the Regular Session, Beginning Tuesday, January 13, 1914 (Columbia, S.C.: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1914), 383, 866–867, 886, 910–911; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Being the Regular Session, Beginning Tuesday, January 12, 1915* (Columbia, S.C.: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1915), 33–34, 234, 1046, 1049, 1051, 1077.

⁸ James B. Trefethen, *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (New York: Winchester Press and Boone and Crockett Club, 1975), 69–70; Daniel Justin Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 68–74; Proctor, *Bathed in Blood*, 12, 84–88, 130; Chapman J. Milling, *Buckshot and Hounds* (South Brunswick, [N.J.]: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1967), [11–13].

⁹ Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain since 1066* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 11–140 (quotation on p. 80); Henry William Herbert, "Deer, and Deer Hunting," *Graham's Magazine*, August 1851, 120–122.

the aristocratic English fashion, South Carolina planters coveted the whitetail deer most of all.¹⁰ “Hunting deer was the favorite sport of the rice planters of Charles Heyward’s time,” wrote fifth-generation Combahee River rice planter Duncan Clinch Heyward in the 1930s regarding his grandfather, who was born in 1802.¹¹

The pinnacle of field sports on the rice plantations was the deer drive, a fast-paced, highly orchestrated group hunt that permitted planters to reinforce their martial skill, masculinity, and patriarchal authority in front of not only their peers but also their slaves. As practiced in the middle and lower parts of South Carolina, a deer drive started with the riders and the pack rendezvousing at a specified strip of woods, the white men present choosing a “captain” for the day’s hunt, and the captain directing everyone to take up carefully selected positions around the perimeter of the area to be hunted. The “drivers,” who were generally black and in most cases slaves, used the dogs to rouse deer from their resting places in dense underbrush and run them toward a line of white hunters, or “standers,” armed with shotguns and dispersed at an angle to the advancing drivers. If a wounded deer escaped, then the hunting party mounted and gave chase.¹²

¹⁰ John Drayton, *A View of South-Carolina, as Respects Her Natural and Civil Concerns* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed by W. P. Young, 1802), 226; David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina, from Its First Settlement in 1670, to the Year 1808* (Charleston, S.C.: Published by David Longworth, for the author, 1809), 2: 404–407; Elliott, *Carolina Sports*, 232–233.

¹¹ Duncan Clinch Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 90–91, 117–118 (quotation on p. 118), 148.

¹² J. Motte Alston, *Rice Planter and Sportsman: The Recollections of J. Motte Alston, 1821–1909*, ed. Arney R. Childs, Southern Classics (1953; repr., Columbia: Published by the University of

Deer drives, which had taken place in England in one form or another for more than a millennium, were steeped in rituals and symbolic meanings.¹³ For instance, it was customary for the hunters and drivers to carry cow horns slung around their necks for communication with each other and the pack in the field. Three long, low notes heralded the death of a deer, signaling the end of the drive. A ceremony performed over the deer carcass, the ancient tradition of “bloodying,” was a significant rite of passage for beginning hunters. Upon killing his first deer, the novice was indoctrinated into the hunting fraternity by having his face smeared in blood from the quarry. Custom likewise dictated who butchered the animal and how the meat was divided, with the trophies (antlers and hide) reserved for the shooter.¹⁴

South Carolina Press in cooperation with the Institute for Southern Studies and the South Caroliniana Society of the University of South Carolina, 1999), 53–54, 83–86; Elliott, *Carolina Sports*, 152–217; “A Day at Summerville,” *Southern Literary Journal*, n.s., 1 (May 1837): 229–231; A South Carolinian [pseud.], “A Day in the Woods,” *Spirit of the Times*, September 25, 1841, 349, 355. As a rule, deer drivers were slaves, though exceptions existed. Three of the drivers described in the preceding account were free men of color, “real Leather-stocking looking sort of fellows—veterans of the woods—as if they had been all their lives in the Pine land, and could not live out of it.” See *ibid.*, 355. For a woman’s perspective on a deer drive, see Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1838), 208–214.

¹³ Griffin, *Blood Sport*, 7–23, 51–53, 55, 70, 77–79, 80–81, 130–131. See also Edward Berry, *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ The culture of the deer drive in South Carolina became more democratic after the Civil War, yet it was no less ritualized. The best book about the modern deer drive is Chapman Milling’s instructive *Buckshot and Hounds*, a step-by-step manual intended to introduce the sport and its traditions to new audiences, especially “those hunters in Yankeeland who for the first time are waking up to the advantages of the shotgun; and who, it is hoped, will soon experience the delight which comes with the music of hounds, the sound of a distant shot, the heart-thumping thrill of anticipation, and the clear plaintive note of the driver’s horn on a golden autumn morning” (quotation on p. [14]). Also of interest is A. S. Salley Jr., *The Happy Hunting Ground: Personal Experiences in the Low-Country of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: State Company, 1926); Archibald Rutledge, *Tales of Whitetails: Archibald Rutledge’s Great Deer-Hunting Stories*, ed. Jim Casada (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992); Davis, *Southern Sportsman*. On the declining participation of African Americans as deer drivers in the twentieth century, see Ileana Strauch, “The Dying Art of Deer-Driving in the South Carolina Low-Country,” *Southern Cultures* 8 (Winter 2002): 69–78.

“For many white men [in the Old South],” writes Nicholas Proctor, “hunting was a consuming passion.”¹⁵ A reflection of the rice planters’ passion for deer drives was their organization of formal deer-hunting clubs. Early historian of South Carolina David Ramsay claimed in 1809 that “one of these exists in almost every district, especially in the low country.”¹⁶ Unfortunately, documentation of only a few clubs this old is extant. The oldest records belong to the Saint Thomas’s Hunting Club, formed in 1785 in the rice-growing, slave-majority parish of Saint Thomas, which bordered the Cooper and Wando Rivers north of Charleston. Drives took place once a month on “Club Days” in the vicinity of original member Andrew Hasell’s plantation, where construction of a clubhouse was completed in September 1786. As set forth in the rules, the members present shared all venison equally among themselves, with the person who killed the deer having the first choice. In addition to providing recreation, the Saint Thomas’s Hunting Club was an important social outlet for the rice planters. Members with well-known names like Ball, Harleston, Lesesne, Pinckney, and Rutledge hosted dinners and dances for friends and relations at the clubhouse. Still, deer hunting was the club’s *raison d’être*. The minutes of the Saint Thomas’s Hunting Club indicate that members killed 137 deer between September 1785 and April 1798, compared to just two bears and four foxes.¹⁷

¹⁵ Proctor, *Bathed in Blood*, 4.

¹⁶ Ramsay, *History of South-Carolina*, 2: 405.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Saint Thomas’s Hunting Club, 1785–1788, 1792–1798, box 34/121, folders 1–3, Saint Thomas’s Hunting Club Records, 1785–1801, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston; “Rules of St. Thomas’s Hunting Club, 1785–1801,” box 34/121, folder 3, *ibid.* Passages from these records have been published. See J. H. Easterby, ed., “The St. Thomas

The passion of rice planters for the drive hunt also comes through in their writings on the subject. An early ode to the deer drive by “A South Carolinian” from Saint Thomas’s Parish was published in the *Spirit of the Times* in 1841. The author expounded on

the peculiar exhilaration of spirit arising in the bosom of the Carolina sportsman, in anticipation of knocking over a fine buck, when at his stand he hears the voice of an experienced driver, making the welkin ring with his warning cry of “*Mind, Mausa, mind!*” . . . —nor even the mad delight of riding at full speed over bogs and brakes, thro’ entangled coverts, and thick woods, and under overhanging branches of trees, running the risk of having their brains dashed out at every jump; or being suspended by the hair like Absalom, from the limb of a great oak, *unless the rider is so fortunate to wear a wig!*¹⁸

Nothing could beat the thrill of the deer drive for Waccamaw River rice planter J. Motte Alston either. Born in 1819, Alston spent significant time afield in the 1840s and 1850s, when “often during the winter we would have regular deer hunts.” Writing fifty years after the fact, he vividly recalled: “Sometimes two or

Hunting Club, 1785–1801: Its Rules, Excerpts from Its Minutes, and a List of Members,” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 46 (July and October 1945): 123–131, 209–213. An enslaved individual named Cupid, who belonged to club member John Ball, killed at least eleven of these 137 deer. Cupid’s name appears repeatedly in the minutes. He was likely the Saint Thomas’s Hunting Club’s chief deer driver. If they were trusted with guns, then drivers often got good shots at deer that doubled back to elude the dogs. In addition to Saint Thomas, hunting clubs were established in the neighboring parishes of Saint John’s Berkeley and Saint Stephen’s after the Revolutionary War. The Saint Stephen’s Hunting Club was founded in 1786, followed by the Saint John’s Hunting Club and the Upper Saint John’s Hunting Club in 1800 and 1802, respectively. See Saint John’s Hunting Club Records, 1786–2008, South Carolina Historical Society. The records of the Saint Stephen’s Hunting Club and the Upper Saint John’s Hunting Club, which merged in 1843 to become the United Clubs of Saint Stephen’s and Saint John’s Berkeley, form part of the latter collection. See also Robert Wilson, *An Address Delivered before the St. John’s Hunting Club, at Indianfield Plantation, St. John’s, Berkeley, July 4, 1907* (Charleston, S.C.: Press of Walker, Evans and Cogswell Company, 1907); Francis Marion Kirk, *A History of the St. John’s Hunting Club* (n.p.: Saint John’s Hunting Club, [1950?]). On the racial demographics of the parishes mentioned here, see Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 95–101.

¹⁸ A South Carolinian, “Day in the Woods,” 349, 355 (quotation).

three deer were started, and then with the shouts of the drivers and the united cry of fifty dogs, each in its own peculiar tongue, and the cheering voices of the sable drivers, who kept up on fleet horses well behind the hounds, the excitement of those who expected the deer to pass their stands was altogether most painfully delightful.” The element of danger inherent in the drive added to the adventure. Alston recollected many “narrow escapes” from serious riding accidents, “for at times going at full speed through the woods I had some hard falls in trying to cut a deer off from taking refuge in the broad waters of Winyah Bay.”¹⁹

The author best known for celebrating the exhilaration of the chase was William Elliott of Beaufort, whose accounts of deer hunting on antebellum rice plantations between the Ashepoo and Combahee Rivers have become American sporting classics. Elliott immortalized “spirit-stirring incidents” from several of his drives in *Carolina Sports by Land and Water*, including one in which he rode hard after a deer carrying his load of buckshot.²⁰ Missing with his second barrel, he spurred his horse alongside the bounding whitetail:

Detaching my right foot from the stirrup, I struck the armed heel of my boot full against his head; he reeled from the blow and plunged into a neighboring thicket, too close for [the] horse to enter. I fling myself from my horse and pursue on foot—he gains on me: I dash down my now useless gun, and, freed from all encumbrance, press after the panting animal. A large, fallen oak lies across his path; he gathers himself up for the leap, and falls exhausted directly across it. Before he could recover his legs, and while he lay thus poised on the tree, I fling myself at full length upon the body of the struggling

¹⁹ Alston, *Rice Planter and Sportsman*, xvii–xix, 3 (n. 1), 83 (first quotation), 84 (second quotation), 85 (third quotation).

²⁰ Elliott, *Carolina Sports*, 161.

deer—my left hand clasps his neck, while my right detaches the knife; whose fatal blade, in another moment, is buried in his throat. There he lay in his blood, and I remained sole occupant of the field.²¹

Compared to a deer drive, waterfowling seemed unromantic and awfully tame. Besides, shooting ducks on the rice plantations was hardly a sporting proposition. After winging their way south from northern nesting areas to overwinter at lower latitudes, migratory waterfowl have two consuming biological requirements, rest and food. Food in the form of waste rice was plentiful on the plantations that checkered the South Carolina coast in the nineteenth century, where countless flocks congregated until time to make the long return passage in spring. Motte Alston wrote that along the forty-mile stretch of the Waccamaw River between his plantation and Georgetown, “the rice fields attracted millions of ducks.”²² On the Santee River, according to fifth-generation rice planter David Doar, “there were thousands of them in each field.”²³ Since ducks were present in such multitudes on the plantations, even a second-rate shot could have killed a prodigious number without much trouble. Thus, a sizeable bag of birds, the usual sign of a sportsman’s skill, was meaningless.

Seeing as it “was looked upon more as ‘pot-hunting’ than real sport,” Clinch Heyward’s forebears relegated shooting ducks for the master’s table to a

²¹ Ibid., 156–160 (quotation on p. 160).

²² Alston, *Rice Planter and Sportsman*, 75.

²³ David Doar, *Rice and Rice Planting in the South Carolina Low Country*, Contributions from the Charleston Museum, no. 8 (1936; repr., Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Museum, 1970), 7, 25 (quotation).

slave.²⁴ “On every rice plantation, there was some one Negro who was known as the plantation duck hunter, and this was his only work,” wrote Heyward.

Heyward’s great-grandfather Nathaniel owned an enslaved duck hunter named Matthias, “and if all the stories I have heard of him are true, he must have been a good one. Certainly his reputation long outlived him.” Every morning except Sundays during the duck season, Matthais paddled downriver in the dark to one of the rice fields, tied up his bateau, and waited for first light. As soon as he could see well enough to find his way, Matthais stalked silently across the frosty banks toward a large, unsuspecting flock, crawling on his hands and knees, then his belly, as he got closer. Once within range, he raised his long-barreled musket and fired one thunderous round into the raft of ducks as they fed. In an instant, clouds of frightened ducks took to the air in the fields all around him, and the only thing left to do was wade into the frigid water, fill his sack with the dead and crippled birds, and head for home. “Matthais’s day’s work was done,” pronounced Clinch Heyward.²⁵ The Heyward family’s idea of duck shooting as a menial task suited for slaves was evidently quite commonplace. Governor John Drayton observed around the turn of the nineteenth century that “the country gentlemen do not enter much into the sport of fowling, Carolinians generally preferring riding, . . . and when game of this kind is wanted, for family use, they, for the most part, send out a servant to procure it.”²⁶

²⁴ Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar*, 123.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 124–127 (first and second quotations on p. 124, third quotation on p. 126).

²⁶ Drayton, *View of South-Carolina*, 226. See also Alston, *Rice Planter and Sportsman*, 75.

Over time, duck shooting became a racially stigmatized activity in the eyes of a large number of rice planters. In a 1910 editorial entitled “Hunts That Were Hunts,” Henry Rice related part of a conversation he had with an “old rice planter”: “ ‘Shoot ducks? White people shoot ducks?’ asked he. ‘They did not in my time. We get negroes for such business: it is negro shooting. But I see grown white men shining shoes in some parts of the country, and it may be that they also shoot ducks.’ ”²⁷ David Doar concurred. “These planters would hunt deer, run a fox, go after partridges, or other game birds in season,” he wrote, “but you could not induce them to go duck or turkey shooting. Sometimes one would shoot a wild turkey if it flew near him while in the woods, but, duck, never. It was the trunkminder’s business to supply these.”²⁸

What is more, rice planters frequently considered ducks too much of an economic asset to shoot purely for recreation. Migratory waterfowl were valuable because they helped the planters to control “volunteer” rice, which did not sprout from the new seed planted in the spring but rather from scattered grains left behind after the last harvest. Volunteer rice was weedy, and once established in a field, it could outcompete the cultivated plants for water, sunlight, and soil nutrients, leading to a smaller marketable crop of lower quality. Doar referred to volunteer rice as a “scourge of the planters” that “caused them untold losses.” Their efforts to combat it began each year in late autumn. At harvest time, slaves cut the rice and laid the stalks on the stubble to dry for a few days before

²⁷ Rice, “Hunts That Were Hunts” (December 28).

²⁸ Doar, *Rice and Rice Planting*, 40–41 (quotation on p. 41).

bundling, stacking, and removing it from the fields for processing. Following the first frost, planters took two steps to prevent germination of the rice seeds that had fallen to the ground during cutting and handling: first, they had their slaves burn the thick stubble; and second, they flooded the fields, inviting hungry ducks arriving from the North to alight and feed among the flotsam.²⁹ “Thus, an unfailing supply of the choicest food is provided for these winter visitors, who show great adroitness in billing up the fallen grains from the fields, when overflowed,” remarked William Elliott.³⁰

The agricultural value that rice planters placed on ducks is clearly visible in an 1855 petition from the citizens of Georgetown District to the General Assembly of South Carolina. The memorial, which bore 109 signatures, complained of market hunters operating from “covered Flats and Boats” in the marshes and creeks of Winyah Bay. These hunters were “a Class of transient and irresponsible persons, known as ‘Duckers’ coming from . . . Connecticut and the other New England States, whose sole purpose has been, and is the shooting of Wild Ducks during the brief period of their migration hither in the Winter Seasons.” The petitioners explained that the profitability of the plantations was at stake:

It must be well known to . . . most of your Honorable Body that the Wild Ducks perform a most important office in our Rice growing Districts as Gleaners of Volunteer Rice, and the Seeds of Grasses and Weeds, and as a prolific source of Guano deposited—

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 23–26 (quotation on p. 23); Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar*, 28–30, 123–124; James H. Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 82–83, 88.

³⁰ Elliott, *Carolina Sports*, 246.

So that their periodical visits are always anxiously and devoutly to be wished for by the Planter. Taking refuge by day in the waters and fens aforesaid, they were wont to resort by thousands and millions to our fields by night, and thus, in times gone by, their good offices continually redounded to the welfare of the Country.³¹

Before the northern market hunters began waging “ceaseless warfare” against the wintering ducks in Georgetown District, “the air as well as the water seemed ever alive with those busy auxiliaries of Southern interests,” but it was “now, comparatively, almost a rare sight to behold a ‘Flock,’ . . . [as] those that have escaped destruction, have discontinued their periodical flights hither, and have sought new haunts, and a refuge elsewhere.” The petitioners closed by pleading for the ducks’ protection, asking the assembly to enact legislation that would prevent hunting by non-residents of the state.³²

J. Izard Middleton, a rice planter and state assemblyman who represented part of Georgetown District, presented this petition to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on November 26, 1855, and three days later, Middleton introduced a bill “to prohibit non-residents from hunting, ducking and fishing within the limits of this State.” Both were referred to the Committee on Internal Improvements, which recommended on December 6 against legislative action.³³

Middleton then took the floor and argued on behalf of his fellow rice planters:

³¹ Petition of the Inhabitants of Georgetown District, n.d. [1855], item 4772, Petitions to the General Assembly, 1776–1883, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia.

³² Ibid.

³³ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina: Being the Annual Session of 1855* (Columbia, S.C.: E. H. Britton and Company, State Printers, 1855), 4–5, 7, 45, 58 (quotation), 109, 219; *The South Carolina Legislative Times; Being the Debates and Proceedings in the South Carolina Legislature, at the Session Commencing November, 1855* (Columbia, S.C.: Printed and published by E. H. Britton and Company, 1856), 82.

Probably the members on this floor are not aware that these wild fowl, these ducks, are not only very valuable as game but are also very useful as scavengers, or I should rather say as gleaners. In the cultivation of rice, [in which] great interest is felt in that part of the country from which I come, the great annoyance of the planter is what is termed “volunteer rice.” Now Sir, these ducks clear away this volunteer rice, and if they are driven out by this annual bombardment of these transient poisons [persons?] the race will be destroyed, for our friends, the ducks, have no chance whatever in this unequal contest, and our crops will consequently be overrun with volunteer rice to the very serious injury of the cultivated crops.³⁴

“Really this is not a trifling matter,” Middleton assured his colleagues, “and I trust the House will not agree to the report of the committee as to prevent the future consideration of this subject.” Middleton’s speech must have been persuasive because his bill passed and was ratified into law on December 19, making duck hunting by anyone who had not been domiciled in South Carolina for at least two years a misdemeanor punishable by up to three months in jail and a \$200 fine (5,650 in 2014 dollars) for each violation.³⁵

Whether constables ever enforced the non-resident hunting law is doubtful, frustrating the planters’ efforts to put a stop to professional waterfowling on the wide waters of Winyah Bay. In the rice fields, though, where plantation masters held considerably more sway, they could compel their dependents—slaves, overseers, and offspring alike—to conserve ducks. Occasionally, planters permitted their young sons to practice their marksmanship by bagging a few ducks on the wing. D. E. Huger Smith, whose father owned a rice plantation on

³⁴ *South Carolina Legislative Times*, 82.

³⁵ *Ibid.* (quotation); *Journal of the House of Representatives* (1855), 235, 276; “An Act to Prohibit Non-Residents from Hunting, Ducking and Fishing within the Limits of the This State” (1855), in *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, vol. 12, *Acts from December, 1850, to January, 1861* (Columbia, S.C.: Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1874), 355.

the Combahee River, first used a gun in 1855 when he was nine years old. “As I grew older it was great sport to stand on the causeway . . . and shoot ducks flying in from the river and marshes at dusk. In the short winter twilight I could always get a half-dozen or so,” Smith wrote.³⁶ But at other plantations, such as those David Doar remembered on the Santee, ducks “were as sacred as the White Elephant.” Doar recounted, “After they . . . came down, every field was flowed for them and . . . neither the negroes on the place nor the sons of the planter were bold enough to take a shot. With this exception, however: the truckminder could take a shot now and then in order to supply the owner’s table.”³⁷

Furthermore, when the rice fields were flowed and disturbances from shooting were carefully limited, planters like the ones Clinch Heyward knew on the Combahee could expect the economic benefits associated with ducks to accrue for the entire season:

When the ducks came in the fall in those days, they not only came in great numbers, but they stayed in the fields day and night, for then it was the practice of the planters to flood their fields as soon as the crop was harvested and keep them flooded until late in the winter, when work for another crop had to be begun. When there was a late fall, from the rice stubble a second crop would grow and mature small heads of rice, so that these, together with the shattered rice from the first crop, afforded an abundance of food for the ducks. There was no need for them to go anywhere else. Early in November they began to pour into the fields in large flocks, and, not being constantly shot at as they are now, they remained until early spring.³⁸

³⁶ D. E. Huger Smith, “A Plantation Boyhood,” in Alice R. Huger Smith and Herbert Ravenel Sass, *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1936), 85.

³⁷ Doar, *Rice and Rice Planting*, 25.

³⁸ Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar*, 123–124.

Large impounded areas, managed habitat, and protection from poachers—as described by Doar and Heyward, Carolina rice plantations sound surprisingly similar to migratory-waterfowl refuges in the modern era.

If rice planters went duck hunting, then they usually did so discreetly, on backwaters away from the plantations. Instead of high-angle “pass shooting” or “point shooting” over decoys from a blind, the favorites of Chesapeake Bay sportsmen and most others throughout the country, the planters of the South Carolina rice coast preferred “jump shooting,” which they felt offered more of a challenge. This activity involved only two people, a sportsman and one of his trusted slaves. The pair would quietly cruise the secluded marshes and swamps beyond the plantations in a dugout cypress canoe, keeping close to the margins of the watercourses and flushing a few ducks from cover at a time here and there as they floated past. Armed with a fowling piece, the white hunter shot from the bow of the canoe when dabbling ducks such as mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), American black ducks (*Anas rubripes*), American wigeons (*Anas americana*), green-winged teal (*Anas crecca*), and wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*) sprang into the air. He depended on the black paddler at the stern not only to navigate the winding streams but also to pick up the birds that he killed or wounded. In his memoirs, rice planter Motte Alston of Waccamaw Neck remembered this being “by far the most enjoyable method of obtaining the greatest amount of sport” when “duck shooting.”³⁹ Santee River rice planter Henry M. Rutledge was

³⁹ George Bird Grinnell, *American Duck Shooting*, Classics of American Sport (1901; repr., Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 1991), 317, 330–331, 335–336, 354–355, 375–378, 464–465, 474–479; Alston, *Rice Planter and Sportsman*, 79–82 (quotation on p. 79).

another devotee of jump shooting. He introduced his youngest son, Archibald, to it at an early age, and Archibald Rutledge continued the tradition into the twentieth century in the company of sons and grandsons of his father's former slaves.⁴⁰ A few miles downriver from Hampton Plantation, the home of the Rutledges, the tradition lived on at Eldorado Plantation too. At the invitation of a friend "who was born and raised in sight of the Santee river [*sic*]," Alexander S. Salley Jr. often went duck shooting with "a negro [*sic*] and a boat in the Eldorado backwaters." A native of the low country, Salley wrote in 1923 that his "inherited sportsman's blood" prevented him from hunting ducks unless "I can procure a good boat, a skillful negro paddler and a winding creek or river." He added, "I would rather bag half a dozen that way than to make the bag limit over decoys."⁴¹ Even Henry Rice, who was probably the most discriminating sportsman in South Carolina during the Progressive Era, could appreciate the virtues of "flushing ducks along the river bends, when they are usually scarce and always wild."⁴²

Dr. Robert L. Baker was an exception to the rule of antebellum rice planters shooting ducks discreetly or not at all. Although he professed to have been "born a true Carolina sportsman," Baker was atypical in two key respects.⁴³

⁴⁰ Archibald Rutledge, *Santee Paradise* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1956), 11–12, 19–20, 22–23; Rutledge, *Those Were the Days* (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1955), 4–5, 141–144; Rutledge, *Plantation Game Trails* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 35–37, 102–104; Rutledge, *An American Hunter* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1937), 132–140, 211–213; Rutledge, *Hunter's Choice* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1946), 157, 163–165.

⁴¹ A. S. Salley Jr., "Breeds His Own Decoys for Mallard Shooting," *State*, May 13, 1923.

⁴² Rice, "Hunts That Were Hunts" (December 28, quotation); Rice, "New Game Laws Give Protection."

⁴³ R. L. B. [Robert L. Baker], letter to editor, *Charleston Mercury* (Charleston, S.C.), September 9, 1859.



Figure 4.2. “While there are all kinds of ways of shooting ducks, my favorite is paddling them up,” wrote Archibald Rutledge. “In this kind of sport, you rarely jump a big flock of ducks,” he went on to say, “singles and pairs—that is the rule.” This watercolor entitled “Cooper River Jump Shooting” depicts a mallard drake flushing from a clump of wild rice on the marsh edge. It was painted circa 1952 by artist-sportsman John Henry Dick, who was born in 1919 in New York but lived most of his adult life in South Carolina. *Source:* Dixie Plantation Guest Book, vol. 1 (April 1947–May 1957), p. 57, John Henry Dick Journals, 1947–1987, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

First was his background. The son of a Charleston house carpenter, he did not come from a family of planters and was not brought up participating in ceremonious plantation deer drives. In 1843, when he was thirty-five years old, Baker acquired interest in three rice plantations southwest of Charleston—one each on the Ashepoo, Chehaw, and Combahee Rivers—upon marrying a wealthy widow nearly twenty years his senior. Before becoming a planter, he ran a drug store in Charleston and “by misfortune in business” actually entered the marital union bankrupt.⁴⁴ Second, Baker had strong ties to amateur waterfowlers in the North, who undoubtedly affected his outlook on the sport’s social acceptability. He was an early subscriber, a faithful reader, and in later years, a frequent correspondent of the *Spirit of the Times*. After his financial position improved, Baker oftentimes escaped the low country’s “sickly season” during the late summer and early fall by visiting New York City, where he routinely called at

⁴⁴ Notice of probate hearing for the estate of Joseph Baker, *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Charleston, S.C.), August 28, 1826; “Queries,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 79 (April 1978): 148; Baker-Field wedding announcement, *Charleston Courier* (S.C.), June 12, 1843. Baker’s bride was Isabella Chaplin Field, whose considerable estate at the time of their engagement included multiple plantations and several hundred slaves. She had two grown sons, Thomas B. Chaplin and Saxby Chaplin Jr., by a previous marriage. Baker blamed Field’s sons, particularly the eldest, Thomas, for undermining their relationship. Thomas Chaplin is referenced further in note 62. For the scandalous details of Baker and Field’s unhappy marriage and their infamous prenuptial agreement, which was the subject of multiple lawsuits and appeals until the state’s highest court finally decided in Baker’s favor, see James A. Strobhart, ed., *Reports of Cases in Equity, Argued and Determined in the Court of Appeals, and in the Court of Errors of South Carolina, from November and December, 1846, to November and December, 1847, Both Inclusive*, vol. 1 (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by A. S. Johnston, 1848), 129–169 (quotation on p. 133). Baker was operating a drug store, located at the corner of Broad and East Bay Streets, by 1835. See James W. Hagy, ed., *Directories for the City of Charleston, South Carolina, for the Years 1830–31, 1835–36, 1836, 1837–38, and 1840–41* (1997; repr., Baltimore: Clearfield, 2002), 32. The city directory listed the former “druggist” as a “planter” by 1852. See Hagy, *Directories for the City of Charleston, South Carolina, for the Years 1849, 1852, and 1855* (1998; repr., Baltimore: Clearfield, 2002), 51. For an extended discussion of the two-decade legal battle between Baker and the Chaplin family over his interest in Isabella Field Baker’s estate, see Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, with the Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin (1822–1890)* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986), 100–111, 232–253.

the magazine's Broadway offices. Baker befriended what he referred to as "the 'Spirit' family," including founding editor William T. Porter and longtime publisher John Richards, even "Frank Forester" himself, Henry William Herbert. Baker also was good friends with Edward E. Jones, who was a member of Porter's staff for over a decade before succeeding him as editor in 1856. It was during Jones's brief editorship (the *Spirit of the Times* fell victim to the disruptions of the Civil War and ceased publication in June 1861) that Baker most actively corresponded about game and hunting in South Carolina.⁴⁵

One letter from Baker to the *Spirit of the Times* dated January 2, 1860, bears quoting at length as a rare example of a rice planter openly discussing shooting ducks for pleasure. In the missive, Baker presented a spirited defense of waterfowling as sport while relating his own experiences to those of the original gentleman waterfowler, Peter Hawker:

The legitimate sport, or the pursuit of the wildfowl, is not the most pleasant nor agreeable recreation of the sportsman; it is mostly superinduced by a spirit and constitution of hardihood akin to the most unflinching determination of will and resolution, to undergo the severest trials and labors of love in the manly and arduous enthusiasm of shooting wildfowl; it creates its own relish, apart from the choice and selection of field sports; it embraces too much water, by floods and fields, for the more agreeable operations of the landsman. To be a successful and skilful duck-shooter requires and demands many pre-requisites of both mind and body. The world-renowned Col. Hawker, one of the most remarkable and

⁴⁵ R. L. B. [Robert L. Baker], "Game in South Carolina," *Spirit of the Times*, April 24, 1858, 128; R. L. B. [Baker], "Interesting Letter from R. L. B.," *ibid.*, March 12, 1859, 54–55; J. [Edward E. Jones], "Editorial Correspondence," *ibid.*, March 3, 1860, 43; [Jones], "Editorial Reminiscences," *ibid.*, April 7, 1860, 97; "Luscious Water Melons," *Charleston Daily Courier* (S.C.), August 14, 1860; R. L. B. [Baker], "The Weather, Crops, and Game of South Carolina," *Spirit of the Times*, August 18, 1860, 332; R. L. B. [Baker], "'R. L. B.' Discourseth About," *ibid.*, April 6, 1861, 132 ("family" quotation). On Jones and the demise of the *Spirit of the Times*, see Donald W. Klinko, "Antebellum American Sporting Magazines and the Development of a Sportsmen's Ethic" (Ph.D. diss., Washington State University, 1986), 169–170, 208–213.

extraordinary sporting duck-shooters in his time throughout Britain, and perhaps of the civilized sporting world; his exploits, achievements, and indomitable perseverance, in the pursuit and destruction of the wildfowl, demonstrates the amount of physical endurance and sufferings with which his love and enthusiasm of a favorite sport induced him to peril and risk his life and health. I have felt and suffered some of the burning effects and disagreeable cold adventures upon a duck-shooting excursion; many and many has been the extremely cold and rainy morning, and even amidst sleet and snow, that I have started to the duck-shooting ponds before break of day, and had to break the ice to wade in, so as to secure a certain and deadly shot at the wily and watchful “dusky duck,” and the green-head, or mallard. It is no child’s play, or blind man’s bluff, nor does it assimilate to the superficial sport, which the little gunners and the Cockney sportsman would desire or prefer with *silk stockings* to engage in.⁴⁶

Clearly, Baker was a great admirer of Hawker. Indeed, it may have been William Porter, the editor of the first American edition of Hawker’s landmark *Instructions to Young Sportsmen*, who introduced Baker to the writings of “the father of wild-fowling.”⁴⁷ Baker probably saw Hawker as a kindred soul because both shared a fondness for a form of hunting that was spurned, at least outwardly, by their peers.

Two and a half months earlier, another of Baker’s letters to the *Spirit of the Times* revealed just how discordant his views about waterfowl hunting were from those of other rice planters. Geese migrated to South Carolina in much smaller numbers than ducks, and evidently, Baker regarded goose shooting as rare fun.

⁴⁶ R. L. B. [Robert L. Baker], “Field Sports of South Carolina,” *Spirit of the Times*, January 21, 1860, 590 (emphasis in original). Baker’s letters to the *Spirit of the Times*, which spanned from 1858 to 1861, are a snapshot of him in his prime as a waterfowler. Unfortunately, they give us no sense of when his love for the sport started and how it matured over time.

⁴⁷ Peter Hawker, *The Diary of Colonel Peter Hawker, 1802–1853*, ed. Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), 1: v. Further evidence that Baker was a student of Hawker can be found in: R. L. B. [Baker], “Interesting Letter from R. L. B.,” 55; R. S. B. [*sic*, Robert L. Baker], “Letter from Charleston, S.C.,” *Spirit of the Times*, August 13, 1859, 319.

“The wild-geese! We soon shall hear their clarion trumpet echo hawnk! hawnk! E-e—hawnk!” he exclaimed.⁴⁸ When the plantation of one of his neighbors on the Combahee River attracted a large wintering population of geese, Baker’s first thought was to ask for permission to take a few trophies. The neighboring planter, however, thinking first of his rice crop, would not hear of Baker molesting the geese. Baker grumbled:

Along the Rice River plantations, on the Combahee, vast numbers of the brant geese congregate to feed and subsist upon the volunteer rice, which is commonly abundant in some fields, and of much annoyance to some of our planters. I do remember that Mr. B once refused to allow me to shoot at or kill the geese, which were in his rice-field; they numbered thousands. He gave us his polite excuse that the geese ate up and destroyed all the “volunteer rice”; but his selfish excuse did not satisfy the cravings and enthusiasm of a fowler. . . . I have ever since concluded them his poultry, as he allows no one to shoot or disturb their meetings, nor their hawnk e-e hawnk!⁴⁹

Whereas the plantation of “Mr. B” was a sanctuary for the waterfowl in his “volunteer service,” Baker’s plantation, Field’s Point, was a hunting ground.⁵⁰

Later in the same letter, he detailed his strategy for shooting brant (*Branta bernicla*) in a flowed rice field: “They are extremely difficult to approach within gun shot distance. But as a decoy, a small canoe boat is filled or piled up with rice straw, the gunner or fowler is hid away, and thus, noiselessly paddling, he

⁴⁸ R. L. B. [Robert L. Baker], “Feathered Game in the South,” *Spirit of the Times*, October 15, 1859, 425.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Besides Baker, the only other plantation owner on the Lower Combahee River in 1859 whose last name started with the letter *b* was Andrew W. Burnet. Baker’s plantation and Burnet’s plantation were separated by one belonging to Oliver H. Middleton. On the Burnet and Middleton properties, see Suzanne Cameron Linder, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of the ACE River Basin—1860* ([Columbia?]: Published by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for the Archives and History Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, and the Nature Conservancy, 1995), 165–171, 341–345, 643–650.

⁵⁰ R. L. B. [Baker], “Feathered Game in the South,” 425.

approaches the unsuspecting body of geese; and when sufficiently near, he fires his destructive battery, amongst their ranks, and many remain as trophies to his cunningly devised stratagem to decoy the hitherto unapproachable Brant Goose.”⁵¹ Circumstantial evidence suggests that Baker may have learned a similar technique from his connections in New York and modified it to suit conditions on his plantation. Baker’s friend Henry William Herbert discussed how sportsmen on Long Island hunted brant in pairs, taking advantage of the birds’ instinct to swim ahead of an oncoming boat instead of flying away. The gunner was stationed on the shoreline in a moored skiff “with its decks heaped with trash and sea-weeds,” while “the confederate of the gunner” patrolled offshore in a second skiff. Upon locating a flock of brant feeding nearby, the latter sportsman, “by rowing round and after them slowly,” could “herd” the geese “like so many sheep” into range of the concealed gunner.⁵² Baker achieved the same effect using a boat blind that he paddled himself. He boasted, “I have killed as many as seven at one shot.” Baker had been “bagging numbers” of brant in this way for years, and “I trust this winter,” he expressed expectantly, to again “enjoy the old sport.”⁵³

Robert Baker was definitely a different breed of rice planter. In addition to blasting geese in his own rice field, he organized waterfowling “excursions” on

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Henry William Herbert, *Frank Forester’s Field Sports of the United States, and British Provinces, of North America* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1849), 2: 124; Herbert, “Brant, and Brant Shooting,” *Graham’s Magazine*, September 1851, 186 (first quotation), 187 (second, third, and fourth quotations).

⁵³ R. L. B. [Baker], “Feathered Game in the South,” 425.

the Combahee River for his friends. He described one of these excursions, which took place a few days after Christmas in 1859, in the *Spirit of the Times*.

Throughout the low country, Christmastime was the occasion of the largest, most anticipated deer drives of the year, with extended families of planters and their guests coming together to delight in one another's company and the thrill of the chase. "According to an old English custom, instead of going to church on Christmas morning, we went deer hunting," avowed Archibald Rutledge, adding that "on the plantations," it was "as natural as a Christmas tree, or kissing one's sweetheart under the mistletoe."⁵⁴ Baker had other ideas, however. He invited a group of Charlestonians whose "business avocations did not often afford such an opportunity to enjoy sport" out to the Combahee for a Christmas duck-shooting excursion. He seemed to relish introducing his uninitiated hunting partners to the rigors of waterfowling. "*I fouldly* aroused them from slumber several hours before daybreak, so as to make early preparation to be on the ducking waters ere the restless, wild, and coy game, would wing their flight at earliest dawn," he joked. The party bagged a total of seventy-two ducks over two days, but seeing as he was the only experienced waterfowler among them, Baker probably brought down most of the birds. He considered it a disappointing outing due to some of

⁵⁴ Archibald Rutledge, *Carolina Christmas: Archibald Rutledge's Enduring Holiday Stories*, ed. Jim Casada (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 7–12, 23–31, 133–145 (first quotation on p. 134, second on p. 28). See also A Citizen [pseud.], "Christmas—A Sketch," *Southern Literary Journal and Monthly Magazine*, January 1837, 366–380; Ralph Ranger [pseud.], "Sporting at the South; or, A Week on Cooper River," *Spirit of the Times*, February 21 and 28, March 7 and 14, 1846, 609–610, 1–2, 13–15, 25–26; Old Grumbler [pseud.], "Deer Hunting in South Carolina," *ibid.*, March 9, 1850, 26; William Gilmore Simms, *The Golden Christmas: A Tale of Lowcountry Life* (1852; repr., Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), esp. 54–58; Robert Wilson, "At the Old Plantation: Two Papers," *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science*, January and February 1876, 118–124, 241–249.

“the rice fields along the river being in a condition of drainage, which of necessity caused the wildfowl to seek after favorable localities.” The greatest disappointment for Baker surely came when he “saw a limited gang of brant geese . . . far beyond gun shot.”⁵⁵ Looking back, it may be that the only reason Baker asked “Mr. B.” for permission to shoot brant in his rice field was because the geese were out of gunning range from the river!

Besides ducks, Baker and his “sporting friends of the trigger” shot an abundance of snipe, partridges, and doves before returning “on the Railroad to the city with our display of game, exciting the surprise and admiration of many.”⁵⁶ In spite of the admiration Baker received in Charleston, “Mr. B” and the rest of the Combahee planters probably had little respect for him as a sportsman given his unabashed affinity for what they thought of as “negro shooting.” And the way he went about it on the excursions—sailing up and down the river with a party of gunners, harassing wildfowl at one plantation after the next like the market hunters from New England who plagued the Georgetown rice planters—doubtless did not endear him to them either.

Baker’s last communication to the *Spirit of the Times* was published in April 1861, just six days prior to the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter. In it, he stated he had “done little shooting this past season” due to the unsettled political situation and an “indisposition.”⁵⁷ But that was not the worst news. Baker was a

⁵⁵ R. L. B. [Baker], “Field Sports of South Carolina,” 590 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ R. L. B. [Baker], “‘R. L. B.’ Discourseth About,” 132.

“transatlantic friend” and loyal customer of Glasgow gunsmith James D. Dougall, reputed to be “the best fowling-piece maker now living.”⁵⁸ For months, Baker had been anticipating the arrival from Scotland via New York of Dougall’s latest model, an innovative double-barreled, breechloading shotgun that the rice planter believed would revolutionize the world of wing shooting. When the crate finally reached Charleston, though, Baker was dismayed to discover that someone had broken into it and stolen the valuable gunstock, without which the barrels were useless.⁵⁹ Whether Baker ever got to level a breechloader at brant or ducks is uncertain, but the federal blockade of Charleston Harbor, established in June, greatly reduced the chances of him receiving a replacement from Dougall.⁶⁰ After the *Spirit of the Times* stopped publishing on June 22, we lose all record of his hunting in the rice lands. By then, Baker’s best days of waterfowling were most likely behind him. His Combahee plantation, located near the mouth of the river, was the first one destroyed by federal forces during an 1863 raid that later became famous because of escaped slave-turned-abolitionist Harriet Tubman’s

⁵⁸ Baker frequently sang Dougall’s praises in the *Spirit of the Times*. See, for example, R. S. B. [sic, Baker], “Letter from Charleston, S.C.,” 319; R. L. B. [Baker], “J. D. Dougall’s Guns, and ‘R. L. B.’” *Spirit of the Times*, September 17, 1859, 375 (second quotation); R. L. B. [Baker], letter to editor, *ibid.*, June 16, 1860, 218; R. L. B. [Baker], “‘R. L. B.’ Discourseth About,” 132 (first quotation). Baker’s August 13, 1859, “Letter from Charleston, S.C.” to the editor of the *Spirit of the Times*, which was reprinted in the *Charleston Mercury* three days later, sparked a spirited debate between him and several sportsmen over the superiority of the Dougall shotgun versus one made by gunsmith J. Henry Happoldt of Charleston. See Centre Pellets [pseud.], letter to editor, *Charleston Mercury*, August 18, 1859; R. L. B. [Baker], letter to editor, *ibid.*, August 19, 1859; A Charleston Sportsman [pseud.], letter to editor, *Charleston Daily Courier*, August 20, 1859; One of the Five [pseud.], letter to editor, *Charleston Mercury*, September 7, 1859; R. L. B. [Baker], letter to editor, *ibid.*, September 9, 1859; One of the Five [pseud.], letter to editor, *ibid.*, September 16, 1859.

⁵⁹ “A New Breech Loader,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, July 11, 1860; R. L. B. [Baker], “Weather, Crops, and Game of South Carolina,” 332; R. L. B. [Baker], “‘R. L. B.’ Discourseth About,” 132.

⁶⁰ Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running during the Civil War*, Studies in Maritime History (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 25.

role in its planning and execution.⁶¹ Baker's estranged wife died the following year, and per their original marriage contract, his share of her plantation holdings passed to her second husband's heirs.⁶² Baker's health worsened over the course of the war too, and he died intestate in early 1867 at the age of fifty-nine.⁶³

Baker faced very little competition when he was out shooting ducks and geese with his fancy, custom-made Scottish fowling pieces before the war. Most of the time, the only other blasts that rang out at daybreak across the Combahee rice fields were from the muskets of a handful of enslaved trunk minders.⁶⁴ The tranquility of this scene stands in stark contrast to the ones that played out on the

⁶¹ See "Yankee Raid at Combahee Ferry," *Charleston Mercury*, June 3, 1863; "The Enemy's Raid on the Banks of the Combahee," *ibid.*, June 4, 1863. On the part Tubman played in the raid, see Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004), 162–174; Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), 203–220.

⁶² The oldest heir, Thomas Chaplin, was a cotton planter on Saint Helena Island, southeast of Beaufort. He and Baker did not see eye to eye on most things, to put it mildly. This included Baker's suitability as a husband for Chaplin's mother and the legitimacy of Baker's claim to Chaplin's mother's rice plantations. Baker and Chaplin also felt differently about shooting ducks. The latter's first love when it came to field sports was driving deer. On the other hand, he was a casual, infrequent waterfowler. We know this because Chaplin made regular entries in a journal from 1845 to 1858. Over that thirteen-year span, he recorded just five small bags of ducks, and most of these were incidental to either deer hunting or fishing. During the first two years of the journal, Chaplain sent a slave named Ben off of the plantation six times to shoot ducks on nearby Eddings Island. See Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 329, 332, 382, 386, 388, 390, 394, 422, 559, 621, 650–651, 681. Eddings Island (later, Saint Phillips Island) was one of a chain of barrier islands between Saint Helena Sound and Port Royal Sound that the planters of Saint Helena Island referred to collectively as the "Hunting Islands." See *ibid.*, 128; Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore, and George C. Rogers Jr. *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina: Volume One, 1514–1861* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 2; Page Putnam Miller, *Fripp Island: A History* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2006), 16–17.

⁶³ Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 232, 237, 252; Liz Newcombe, comp., "Index to City of Charleston, SC, 'Returns of Deaths,' 1819 to 1873; Also, Appendix Including Burials Performed by St. Matthews Lutheran Church between 1841 and 1860," 2009, [p. 44], South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, S.C.

⁶⁴ Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar*, 126.

crowded northern ducking grounds from Long Island to Chesapeake Bay, where urban sportsmen had clashed with local watermen over property rights and poaching since the 1830s. The peacefulness and orderliness of the Combahee rice fields also reveals the power of masters like “Mr. B” to control human interactions with waterfowl on their plantations.

As Baker found out firsthand from “Mr. B,” waterfowl conservation was a fundamental tenet of rice culture at numerous antebellum plantations in the low country.⁶⁵ Iazard Middleton and the Georgetown District planters were successful in reforming state game laws with respect to non-resident duck hunters in the 1850s, yet this was not an organized conservation “movement” like what historian John F. Reiger describes taking shape in the North after the Civil War. More organic, pragmatic, and conservative, it was born out of the planters’ Old World standards of sportsmanship and sensible stewardship of an economically important natural resource. Henry Rice revered the older generation of rice planters for many reasons, not the least of which was their enlightened attitude toward conserving waterfowl. “The planters never shot them,” he proclaimed, “or practically never did. Once in a while a young man would take a boat and flush ducks from the rice fields, shooting them as they arose. An old negro was kept around the plantation whose business was to kill ducks for the table.” Beyond that, though, the birds were protected. As a result, Rice remarked, “The number

⁶⁵ Not every planter kept his rice fields flooded in winter to invite migratory waterfowl. Robert F. W. Allston, for instance, believed that plowing the fields immediately after harvest and leaving the freshly turned earth exposed to freezing temperatures not only combated volunteer rice but also broke down the soil, which facilitated leveling in the spring. See Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops; Read before the Agricultural Association of the Planting States, on Occasion of the Annual Meeting, Held at Columbia, the Capital of South-Carolina, December 3d, 1853* (Charleston, S.C.: A. E. Miller, 1854), 31.

of wild ducks that formerly came to South Carolina was almost incredible.”⁶⁶ But as the rice industry declined in the 1860s and 1870s, so too did the culture of waterfowl conservation on the plantations.

The first step in undermining the rice planters’ conservation ethos was emancipation. The abolition of slavery meant that planters could no longer dictate where their former bondsmen lived, how much they worked, or what they hunted. They also lost the ability to regulate their access to firearms. One of the first freedoms that many slaves exercised following emancipation was to hunt the wildfowl that had previously been off limits to every African American on the plantations except the trunk minders. Rice stated that since the war, “the slaughter by pot hunters, chiefly negro hunters, although some whites figured largely in the business, has been terrific.”⁶⁷ The slaughter intensified as enterprising freedmen gained a newfound measure of economic independence by hunting for the market. “This is an easy way to make money,” Rice observed around the turn of the century, noting that in Georgetown County, South Carolina’s epicenter of rice cultivation, “every negro . . . has some kind of a gun and kills ducks.”⁶⁸

Several of Rice’s colleagues in the early wildlife conservation movement were becoming increasingly critical of the ducking clubs then sprouting up all over the country after having heard frequent reports of excessive bags. Perhaps

⁶⁶ Rice, “Hunts That Were Hunts” (December 28, quotations). See also James Henry Rice Jr., “The Game Situation in South Carolina,” *State*, October 18, 1908; Rice, “The Partridge—II,” *ibid.*, May 13, 1910; Rice “New Game Laws Give Protection”; Rice, *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, 2nd ed. (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Company, 1936), 104–105.

⁶⁷ James Henry Rice Jr., “The Mallard Duck,” *State*, September 15, 1910.

⁶⁸ Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks.”

the harshest words came from outspoken zoologist William T. Hornaday of New York City, who charged that the clubs were establishing “preserves” solely “for the purpose of preserving exclusively for themselves and their friends the best possible opportunities for killing large numbers of ducks and geese without interference. . . . The real object of their existence is duck and goose slaughter.”⁶⁹ Yet Rice claimed that “the rice field negroes of the rivers have killed as many ducks in a single day as any hunting club ever killed in a season.”⁷⁰

Born in 1883, Archibald Rutledge likewise called to mind that in his “younger days” along the Santee, “in the region of the plantations, every Negro would be on the delta with his musket and perhaps each one would get a pair or two of ducks.”⁷¹ Often, they got a lot more. “Some of the old-time negro ‘duckers’ ” that Rutledge recollected “were very successful,” including one, London Legree, who killed twenty-eight mallards with a single shot from a musket. White market hunters began operating more aggressively in the area as well.⁷² The creeks and canals of the Santee delta became “any man’s hunting-ground” after the war, Rutledge lamented, and the volume of indiscriminate shooting “took heavy toll of ducks.”⁷³

⁶⁹ William T. Hornaday, *Our Vanishing Wild Life: Its Extermination and Preservation* (New York: New York Zoological Society, 1913), 361–362.

⁷⁰ Rice, “Mallard Duck.”

⁷¹ Rutledge, *Those Were the Days*, 141–142.

⁷² Rutledge, *Plantation Game Trails*, 174–175, 260–261 (first and second quotations on p. 261).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 174 (second quotation), 260 (first quotation).

Game dealers in Georgetown bought the ducks shot in the Santee delta and around Winyah Bay and shipped them to consignees in Charleston and up the eastern seaboard. Completion in 1883 of the Georgetown & Lanes Railroad (later the Georgetown & Western), which connected the sleepy port to Florence, Richmond, Washington, and points north, was a boon to the nascent ducking business.⁷⁴ In the late 1890s, the *Charleston News and Courier* estimated that cumulative sales from hundreds of commercial waterfowlers at Georgetown were worth at least \$10,000 a year (294,000 in 2014 dollars) to “the poor people” of the county.⁷⁵ “Georgetown is a great duck market,” Rice pronounced, and the volume of the trade only increased in the new century. Per the *News and Courier* in 1905, “Tens of thousands of ducks have been shipped from here during a season.” Rice claimed to have seen five thousand mallards and black ducks move through the city in a single day.⁷⁶ In fact, in the final years before the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 empowered the federal government to ban the sale of migratory waterfowl, signaling an end to the long history of legitimate for-profit hunting, Georgetown became a top supplier of duck flesh to urban consumers in the North, even surpassing the Chesapeake Bay market, where a

⁷⁴ On railroad service to Georgetown, see George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 464–465; Thomas Fetters, *Logging Railroads of South Carolina* (Forest Park, Ill.: Heimburger House Publishing Company, 1990), 45–47; Ronald E. Bridwell, “*Gem of the Atlantic Seaboard*”: Part 2 of “*That We Should Have a Port*”: A History of the Port of Georgetown, South Carolina (Georgetown, S.C.: Georgetown Times, 1991), 22–23.

⁷⁵ “Ball Caines Is Safe,” *News and Courier*, January 30, 1898; “They Are after Ball Caines,” *ibid.*, December 21, 1897 (quotation).

⁷⁶ Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks” (first quotation); Edward Howe Forbush, *A History of the Game Birds, Wild-Fowl and Shore Birds of Massachusetts and Adjacent States* (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Company, State Printers, 1912), 514–515; August Kohn, “Georgetown and Vicinity,” *News and Courier*, July 11, 1905 (second quotation).

century of extreme exploitation had finally led to, as the New York *Sun* termed it, “the failure of the ducking grounds.”⁷⁷ In December 1914, for instance, South Carolina’s largest newspaper, the *Columbia State*, reported that “no train is going out of Georgetown these days without carrying anywhere from 50 to 200 packages of wild ducks . . . to tickle the palates of Northern epicures.”⁷⁸

Some of the most prolific market hunters operating in Georgetown County waters were white. This included Edmund A. “Ball” Caines, “the king of the shooters,” who purportedly brought in \$1,400 (38,900 in 2014 dollars) during the 1904–1905 ducking season.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Rice insisted that “there is . . . a vast quantity of ducks slaughtered by negroes.”⁸⁰ Freedmen who chose to subsist by hunting and fishing rather than working in the rice fields was one of the factors that contributed to the financial struggles of postbellum planters. In addition to being less tractable and efficient than slave labor, free labor commanded regular wages. To cover payroll and other expenses, planters needed credit. Capital and investors were in short supply in the low country,

⁷⁷ Wells W. Cooke, “Saving the Ducks and Geese,” *National Geographic Magazine*, March 1913, 371–373; “Georgetown Duck Shooting,” *Sun* (New York), March 12, 1899 (quotation). On the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, see Kurkpatrick Dorsey, *The Dawn of Conservation Diplomacy: U.S.-Canadian Wildlife Protection Treaties in the Progressive Era*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Book (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 192–237; John Paul Morton, “Duck Diplomacy: U.S.-Canadian Migratory Waterfowl Management, 1900–1961” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1996), 86–115. Concerning the first federal regulations adopted under the authority of the Treaty Act, see George A. Lawyer, *Federal Protection of Migratory Birds*, Separate from Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture, 1918, no. 785 (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1919), 10–13; Guy A. Baldassarre and Eric G. Bolen, *Waterfowl Ecology and Management*, 2nd ed. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing Company, 2006), 474.

⁷⁸ “Georgetown Game Goes to the North,” *State*, December 16, 1914.

⁷⁹ “Ball Caines Is Safe” (quotation); “Duck Hunters out of Prison,” *Charleston Evening Post*, May 29, 1905.

⁸⁰ Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks.”

however, so many were forced to borrow from northern moneylenders at high interest rates. Consequently, they put fewer acres into cultivation, which meant smaller harvests. Localized crop failures due to storms, freshets, and droughts became more common too, and as competing rice growers in the Old Southwest and overseas claimed a larger share of the market, prices fell. These hardships led to accumulating debts for South Carolina's last generation of rice planters.

Historian James H. Tuten notes that David Doar, Clinch Heyward, and their contemporaries persevered despite environmental, economic, and labor difficulties because planting rice in the low country "involved culturally defined self-identity as much as the desire to make money." They held out hope until the bitter end that the fortunes of Carolina rice would reverse, but in order to continue planting while profits disappeared, they had to find alternative sources of revenue. The last of the rice planters looked to diversify their income from the plantations through logging, turpentine, phosphate mining, and raising truck crops like lettuce and asparagus.⁸¹ More than a few pursued professional or political careers in order to support their plantations. Elizabeth Allston Pringle even enjoyed commercial success as an author recounting her experiences as "the woman rice planter."⁸²

⁸¹ Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide*, 32 (quotation).

⁸² See Patience Pennington [Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle], *A Woman Rice Planter*, Southern Classics Series (1913; repr., Columbia: Published by the University of South Carolina Press in cooperation with the Institute for Southern Studies and the South Caroliniana Society of the University of South Carolina, 1992). See also Anne Montague Blythe, "Elizabeth Allston Pringle's 'The Woman Rice Planter': The New York *Sun* Letters, 1903–1912" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1987).

Needing cash, some rice planters actually turned to market hunting. An obituary for Thomas Pinckney in the *Charleston Evening Post* stated that “after the war, he returned to his plantation on the Santee to resume rice planting, and found the old home in a woeful state,” so he “supported himself with his gun, disposing of his game in Charleston, thus supplying himself with what he was otherwise unable to buy.”⁸³ Pinckney’s obituary in the *News and Courier* confirmed that “for a time he shot game on his plantation and sold it.”⁸⁴ In the case of Pinckney, shooting ducks to sell was a temporary measure during the leanest of times, but for John Y. DuPre, whose plantation on Alligator Creek was located within a few miles of Pinckney’s, it seems to have been a steady sideline. DuPre developed a reputation in his community for being a proficient market hunter, and on November 26, 1897, his skill with a shotgun even garnered attention in the *Evening Post*. The paper’s McClellanville correspondent imparted news of “a cart load of the English beauties [mallards]” arriving in the village that morning from DuPre’s plantation “to be shipped to Charleston, and the remark was made that the ‘mighty hunter,’ Mr. J. Y. DuPre, seldom missed his mark.”⁸⁵

The final divorce between rice culture and waterfowl conservation occurred when planters, out of financial necessity, started selling hunting rights to their lands in the late 1880s and 1890s. To quote Henry Rice, they may have still regarded shooting ducks as “unworthy of a sportsman,” but there was no

⁸³ “Death Claims Capt. Pinckney,” *Charleston Evening Post*, November 15, 1915.

⁸⁴ “Capt. Thos. Pinckney Has Passed Away,” *News and Courier*, November 16, 1915.

⁸⁵ S. L. B., “In McClellanville,” *Charleston Evening Post*, November 29, 1897.

shortage of recreational hunters from others parts of the state and nation who were willing to pay for the privilege.⁸⁶ At the same time that the rice industry in coastal South Carolina was beginning a long, sustained downturn, a wave of rapid urban growth and industrialization washed over much of the rest of the country. One effect of this postwar manufacturing boom was that many more Americans now had time and income to devote to leisure activities. Another was that recently developed breechloading, hammerless, choke-bored shotguns became widely available. In the midst of these major cultural and technological changes, duck shooting gained mainstream appeal. “The number of the gunners was many times multiplied,” observed George Bird Grinnell, the influential editor of *Forest and Stream* magazine, and “as their numbers increased, they soon shot out the old places to which the fowl had always resorted, and were forced to search out new localities of game plenty.”⁸⁷ South Carolina’s rice coast was one of these new localities, and a number of cash-strapped planters took advantage of the outside demand for access to ducking grounds by offering lodging and hunting leases to sportsmen-tourists. The extra earnings helped them to hold on to their plantations and extend their rice-planting careers for a while longer, but for the overwhelming majority, the inevitable, selling out to northerners, could only be delayed so long. Some of the sellers immediately went to work for the buyers as plantation managers, which enabled them to remain on the land and

⁸⁶ James Henry Rice Jr., “Thomas E. Richardson,” *State*, August 10, 1933.

⁸⁷ Grinnell, *American Duck Shooting*, 584.

retain a measure of their identity as planters. Quite a few would even get paid to keep growing rice as bait for ducks well into the twentieth century.

The region's changing pattern of land ownership affected freedmen and their sons as well. First as enslaved trunk minders and later as emancipated market hunters, African American men had been the face of duck shooting in the low country in the nineteenth century. However, their opportunities for hunting faded when northern sportsmen bought the plantations. The new owners posted their properties, hired private game wardens, and began prosecuting trespassers. This forced black commercial waterfowlers out of business and back into subservient positions on the plantations, where their thorough knowledge of the quarry and the ducking grounds made them expert guides and watchmen. Many also found themselves laboring in the rice fields again, getting paid modest wages to grow bait for the ducks.

Born in 1897, journalist Harry R. E. Hampton edited an outdoors column entitled "Woods and Waters" in the *State* from 1930 to 1963. This descendant of a proud line of South Carolina sportsmen-planters admitted in 1939 that he felt confused and conflicted over his love of duck shooting.⁸⁸ He had learned from Henry Rice, one of his mentors, and others that "in the old days—antebellum, etc.—wild ducks were not shot for sport or considered game birds, a Negro

⁸⁸ Harry Hampton, "Did They or Didn't They," *Woods and Waters*, *State*, October 25, 1939. Hampton's great-grandfathers were among the most celebrated sportsmen in American history. His great-grandfather on his mother's side, William Elliott III, was the author of *Carolina Sports by Land and Water*. Henry William Herbert and William T. Porter dedicated *Frank Forester's Field Sports of the United States* and the original American edition of Peter Hawker's *Instructions to Young Sportsmen* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1846), respectively, to Hampton's great-grandfather on his father's side, Wade Hampton II.

gunner being employed to kill them for the table.”⁸⁹ Hampton’s favorite hunting spot since childhood was an expansive “morass” between the Edisto and Ashepoo Rivers known as the Ti-Ti, not far from his cousin’s rice plantation, Mount Hope.⁹⁰ On trips there, Hampton befriended an old African American trunk minder, Jim Moultrie, who was “a veritable Nimrod of the rice fields.” Hampton wrote of Moultrie: “Jim used to load his musket with a ‘nickel wutta powder an’ a nickel wutta shot.’ He . . . on one occasion is known to have got a flock of ducks in a ditch, eased up on them gradually, forcing them into a huddle and killed the whole crew at one blast—24 mallards and one scaup or blackhead. That was the way those trunk minders hunted—with one or two well directed flock shots a week.”⁹¹ Hampton could not understand how over the course of a few short decades, duck hunting in the rice-plantation country had evolved from a lowly task assigned to slaves, who sneaked up and fired on sitting ducks, to putting out decoys and picking off singles and doubles on the wing, which was a perfectly respectable pursuit for a gentleman of his pedigree. “They [decoys] are quite fashionable now and bear the stamp of approval of the most ethical sportsman,”

⁸⁹ Hampton, *Woods and Waters*, *State*, October 25, 1939. On Hampton as Rice’s disciple, see Harry Hampton, “Lost, a Friend,” *Woods and Waters*, *State*, March 31, 1935. Rice had a long relationship with the *State*, going back to his time as an editorial writer there in the 1890s. He was close friends with Hampton’s uncle Ambrose E. Gonzales, one of the founders of the newspaper, to whom he dedicated *Glories of the Carolina Coast*.

⁹⁰ Harry Hampton, *Woods and Waters and Some Asides* (Columbia, S.C.: State Printing Company, 1979), 18–24, 31–38, 67, 209–226, 320.

⁹¹ Hampton, *Woods and Waters*, *State*, October 25, 1939. On Moultrie, see also Hampton, *Woods and Waters and Some Asides*, 20, 22–23. In addition, Moultrie is likely the “Jim”—“the same Jim of duck hunts of long ago”—referenced in “Duck Hunting in ‘the Titi,’” *State*, December 20, 1908. Although unattributed, this article may have been written by Hampton’s uncle, Ambrose E. Gonzales, the long-time president of the newspaper.

observed Alexander Salley in 1923.⁹² Clinch Heyward made a similar observation fourteen years later about Robert Baker's former ducking grounds. "Duck shooting," Heyward remarked, "today would be considered the finest sport . . . on the Combahee River."⁹³ Earlier generations' distaste for duck shooting and its acceptance by native white sportsmen in his lifetime left Hampton looking for answers. Part of it, of course, was that there were fewer ducks on the plantations than there used to be, so shooting them seemed more sporting. But did scarcity alone explain the break with the past? "Some day," Hampton said, "I hope to find out how, when and where shooting ducks for sport originated [in South Carolina]. I must have inherited this pernicious fever from somewhere."⁹⁴

The answers that eluded Hampton were the end of the rice-growing industry and the cultural impact of sportsmen from the North. Northern and southern hunting cultures blended on the old rice plantations after the turn of the twentieth century. The former planters and their sons who made up the low country's new professional class of plantation managers initiated their employers in the age-old sport of deer driving, while the northerners who owned the plantations introduced the Carolinians to the modern sport of shooting ducks over decoys. As both activities became hallmarks of hunting on the neo-plantations,

⁹² Salley, "Breeds His Own Decoys."

⁹³ Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar*, 122. When Heyward gave up rice planting around 1915, he found investors and formed a corporation to experiment with raising upland crops in his rice fields. The corporation declared bankruptcy after three years, and its largest investor, Delaware industrialist A. Felix du Pont, purchased Heyward's plantations at auction in 1923. See *ibid.*, 246–248; *Northern Money, Southern Land: The Lowcountry Plantation Sketches of Chlotilde R. Martin*, ed. Robert B. Cuthbert and Stephen G. Hoffius (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 205–208.

⁹⁴ Hampton, Woods and Waters, *State*, October 25, 1939.

the racial stigma that had been associated with duck shooting in the region gradually faded. By the time of Henry Rice's death in 1935, it was all but forgotten.

Rice even seemed to come around in the end. He only admitted to using decoys once. "My first experience in shooting over decoys cured me for all time," he wrote in 1910, "and although I have belonged to hunting clubs that had abundant duck shooting, and had entrée besides to scores of plantations on which ducks were plentiful, the sport has never appealed to me, if sport it may be called." In the same piece, he affirmed that "for my part the old rice planter's verdict expresses my sentiment."⁹⁵ However, in an essay entitled "Reminiscences on Duck Shooting," which was published one year prior to his death, Rice repackaged the story of his first (and last) experience with decoys for a new generation of low-country duck hunters like Hampton, for whom decoy shooting was second nature. This time he concluded: "The aftermath of a successful hunt is one of its splendors, a joy second only to the hunt itself. Long after, often years later, one lives again these days on the marshes, in the after-glow of a delicious memory."⁹⁶ If northerners could cause Rice to set aside his

⁹⁵ Rice, "Hunts That Were Hunts" (December 28).

⁹⁶ James Henry Rice Jr., *The Aftermath of Glory* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell Company, 1934), 209.

inherent disdain for decoying ducks, then they truly must have been a potent force in transforming the traditional sport-hunting culture of the low country.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Rice was unwilling to break with tradition completely. Another example of northern influence on the neo-plantations involved partridge shooting, which had deep historical roots among the rice-plantation gentry. Clinch Heyward said that the planters preferred shooting partridges to every field sport except driving deer. See Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar*, 123. After generations of shooting what they called partridges, though, Carolinians adopted the northern name for the bird, quail, in deference to the newcomers. This break from tradition did not sit well with Rice. See, for example, James Henry Rice Jr., "The Partridges' Economic Value," *News and Courier*, May 26, 1908; Rice, "The Partridge," *State*, May 11, 1910; Rice, "Partridge and Quail"; Rice, *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, 187–188; Rice, "The Case of the Pheasant," *State*, March 16, 1930; South Carolina Forest, Game and Fish Association and Conservation Society of South Carolina, "Facts on Conservation," *ibid.*, January 13, 1932.

CHAPTER 5

STAKING CLAIM TO THE OLD RICE COAST

Northern sportsmen in search of untrammelled shooting grounds south of Chesapeake Bay had started moving into eastern North Carolina by about 1854. They initially came to the Outer Banks as tourists, and by 1857 there was enough demand for accommodations during the ducking season to support a locally owned hotel in the vicinity of Currituck Sound, located just across the Virginia border. In light of the earlier history of waterfowling on the Chesapeake, the next stage of development at Currituck Sound was predictable. A group of fifteen sportsmen-tourists from New York City wanted to lay exclusive claim to their new favorite ducking grounds, so they purchased thirty-one hundred acres of marsh and beach from the hotel's proprietor, Abraham Baum, for use as a private preserve. They formed the Currituck Shooting Club in June 1857, hired Baum to manage the grounds, and had a clubhouse built in time for the 1857–1858 gunning season. The tourists stayed away and the Currituck Shooting Club closed temporarily during the Civil War, but it did not take long after the cessation of hostilities for the Outer Banks to become the new mecca of amateur

waterfowlers on the East Coast.¹ “The fact is,” one resident of Currituck County stated in 1885, “that most of the ducking shores of North Carolina are now owned by shooting organizations composed by Northern gentlemen.”²

Once wealthy northern clubs controlled the shooting in North Carolina, sportsmen without a stake looked for a fresh start in the next state to the south, and the same pattern of development—that is, tourists hunting either the property of their hosts or the wetland commons followed by clubs and individuals acquiring preserves and posting them against trespass—slowly started to repeat itself in South Carolina. The plantations and waterways of Georgetown County and the Santee River delta, on the northern end of the rice coast, were the first part of the state to attract outside attention. In the 1890s and early 1900s, the Georgetown region became the premier destination for eastern duck hunters, who benefited from a unique set of historical circumstances. The local rice-growing industry was dying but not dead. Planters with the hardest luck sold out to sportsmen in the beginning, while many of the surrounding plantations remained in operation. The profusion of ducks wintering in the area and the abundance of superb habitat available on the plantations created a true

¹ Elizabeth Baum Hanbury, *Currituck Legacy: The Baum Family of North Carolina* (Chesapeake, Va: E. B. Hanbury, 1985), 153–155; “An Act to Incorporate the ‘Currituck Hotel Company’ ” (1857), in *Private Laws of the State of North-Carolina, Passed by the General Assembly, at Its Session of 1856–’57* (Raleigh, N.C.: Holden and Wilson, Printers to the State, 1857), 171; John Bronson, “Atlantic Coast Shooting Grounds,” *The Sportsman Tourist, Forest and Stream*, October 20, 1881, 225; [George Bird Grinnell], “Routes to the Ducking Grounds,” *ibid.*, October 13, 1881, 205; [Grinnell], “The Shooting,” *ibid.*, November 10, 1881, 283; “The Canvasback Duck; The Currituck Clubs,” *New York Herald*, November 4, 1888; Charles Hallock, “Winter Sports in North Carolina: Letter III, Waifs from Currituck,” *The Sportsman Tourist, Forest and Stream*, December 10, 1891, 406–407.

² [George Bird Grinnell], “North Carolina Batteries,” *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, February 19, 1885, 66.

waterfowler's paradise. This paradise for duck shooting did not last long, however, as both the birds and the rice fields started to disappear soon after the turn of the century.

The earliest sportsmen-tourists who paid to shoot ducks on the rice plantations around Georgetown were members of the emerging southern "town class."³ They usually arrived from inland by train in small groups and boarded with planters for a few days or a week. Baptist minister C. C. Brown of Sumter, a county seat in central South Carolina that was prospering as a cotton market and railroad hub, typified these hunters. "About Dec. 1," Brown wrote in an 1886 letter to *Forest and Stream*, "a party of us go down to the waters around Georgetown after ducks. . . . We do not need camping outfits, as we are always able to find lodging with the rice planters, and in the rudely constructed watchmen's houses in the fields."⁴ Brown did not name any of the planters from whom he rented rooms, only saying that he hunted "up the Waccamaw River," where "ducks of all sorts congregate—shall I say it?—in millions. I have seen ten acres of water so completely covered that one could not throw an apple among the ducks without striking one." Brown recounted that "in two days last hunting season a friend and myself bagged 152."⁵

³ On postbellum industrialization and middle-class townspeople, see David L. Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880–1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 6–39.

⁴ C. C. Brown, "South Carolina Game," *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, November 11, 1886, 307.

⁵ C. C. Brown, "On the Coast of South Carolina," *ibid.*, October 14, 1886, 224.

Two examples of Georgetown County rice planters who profited from tourists like Brown were William Lowndes and Elizabeth Allston Pringle. Before income from her writing helped to make ends meet, the author of *The Woman Rice Planter* (1913) took in sportsmen “as paying guests” at her plantation on the Great Pee Dee River, fourteen miles north of Georgetown. The price of room and board came with permission to shoot ducks in Pringle’s rice fields. As a courtesy, she also had the hands on her plantation hoe paths along the tops of the banks “so that a sportsman could go through unseen by the ducks in the field.”⁶ In 1907 Lowndes was charging visiting hunters ten dollars per day for shooting privileges and three dollars per day for board (260 and 78 in 2014 dollars, respectively) at his plantation on Cat Island, situated south of Georgetown, between the mouths of Winyah Bay and the North Santee River.⁷

When he was not shooting ducks at one of the Waccamaw River plantations, C. C. Brown enjoyed hunting at North Inlet, known to natives of the area as “the Big Marsh,” a tidal estuary located on the eastern shore of Waccamaw Neck, near Winyah Bay.⁸ Sportsmen-tourists who ventured off of the plantations often hired local market hunters as guides. In a county where 82 percent of the population was black in 1880, these guides were predominantly

⁶ Patience Pennington [Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle], *A Woman Rice Planter*, Southern Classics Series (1913; repr., Columbia: Published by the University of South Carolina Press in cooperation with the Institute for Southern Studies and the South Caroliniana Society of the University of South Carolina, 1992), 429 (first quotation), 55 (second quotation).

⁷ “Great Revenue in Leasing Lands,” *State* (Columbia, S.C.), April 20, 1907.

⁸ Brown, “On the Coast of South Carolina,” 224. See also James Henry Rice Jr., “Duck Hunting on the Big Marsh,” *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), October 23, 1921.

African American.⁹ They provided individual clients with transportation to remote ducking grounds by means of dugout canoes. They also could supply decoys, though Brown preferred to bring his own.¹⁰

According to an article about duck shooting in Georgetown that appeared in the New York *Sun* in 1899, “the method employed by the average hunter is full of discomforts. He has to risk his life in a crazy dugout with two or three inches of water ballast in the bottom, swarms of mosquitoes and a chance of turning over and having to dive through twenty feet of mud and water for his gun.”¹¹

Experienced guides were a necessity for tourists, however. “The rivers and sounds are so intricate,” the *Sun* reported, “that it is dangerous to venture into them without a pilot. The negro paddlers consequently charge exorbitant prices for a single afternoon paddled.” These outings could be perilous for the guides too, especially when the sportsmen in their canoes were “green.”¹² Pringle told the story of a guide named Zebedee Barron, who perished while attempting to save his client, William G. Catlin Jr. of Charlotte, North Carolina, from drowning in the Black River on a bitterly cold day in February 1905. “It was surmised by those who knew the circumstances that the sportsman, not being familiar with a dugout canoe, and not knowing that it is dangerous to stand up in one, rose to put on his overcoat, lost his balance and fell overboard, and Zeb plunged in to

⁹ The racial breakdown of the population comes from George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 474.

¹⁰ Brown, “South Carolina Game,” 307; Brown, “On the Coast of South Carolina,” 224.

¹¹ “Georgetown Duck Shooting,” *Sun* (New York), March 12, 1899.

¹² *Ibid.*

rescue him.” Barron’s body was found two days after the pair went missing.

“Nearby was the boat, not capsized,” related Pringle, “and the things in it except the overcoat.” Catlin’s body was not recovered for nearly a month.¹³

Beginning in 1888, C. C. Brown and other sportsmen-tourists lost access to a large section of North Inlet when rice planter Robert J. Donaldson leased the shooting rights to the thirty-eight hundred acres of marsh between Jones Creek, Town Creek, and Muddy Bay along with fifty acres of high ground to a northern ducking club, the first of its kind in South Carolina. The term of the lease was twenty years, and the consideration was a lump-sum payment of \$3,000 (77,000 in 2014 dollars).¹⁴ On December 12 of that year, sandwiched between two advertisements for Iseman’s Drug Store in the “Local Items” column, the *Georgetown Enquirer* announced that the lessees, “the ‘Annandale Club,’ composed of gentlemen from New York and Philadelphia,” had arrived. The club got its name from William Miles Hazzard’s rice plantation, Annandale, on the North Santee River, where the group “quartered” until they could “erect a club house for their convenience at an early day.”¹⁵ From Annandale Plantation, they

¹³ Pennington [Pringle], *Woman Rice Planter*, 172–173 (quotations on p. 173). Pringle’s account is supplemented here with details from “Drowned While Hunting,” *News and Courier*, February 5, 1905; “W. G. Catlin, Jr., Missing,” *Charlotte Daily Observer* (Charlotte, N.C.), February 5, 1905; “The Catlin Tragedy,” *ibid.*, February 9, 1905; “Finding of Catlin’s Body,” *ibid.*, March 4, 1905.

¹⁴ James Henry Rice Jr., “Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands at Georgetown,” *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), May 20, 1905; Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks,” *News and Courier*, December 18, 1904; Rice, “Duck Hunting on the Big Marsh”; “They Are after Ball Caines,” *News and Courier*, December 21, 1897; “About Riparian Rights,” *ibid.*, February 2, 1894.

¹⁵ [Walter Hazard], “Local Items,” *Georgetown Enquirer* (Georgetown, S.C.), December 12, 1888. Hazzard’s plantation on the North Santee should not be confused with the Alston family’s Waccamaw River plantation of the same name. On the latter, see Alberta Morel Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, rev. ed. (1961; repr., Columbia, S.C.: State Printing Company, 1967), 11–13.

more than likely reached North Inlet by private steamboat via the recently opened Mosquito Creek Canal, which connected the North Santee to Winyah Bay.¹⁶

Attorney Walter Hazard, the publisher-editor of the *Enquirer* and a leading civic booster in Georgetown, extended “to these gentlemen a cordial welcome.” He also predicted that “these are only the advanced couriers; others will follow.”¹⁷

Sixteen years later, writing about changes in the Georgetown duck-hunting scene since the founding of the Annandale Club, journalist James Henry Rice Jr., the noted sportsman and early voice for conservation in South Carolina, stated, “These people were the forerunners of many others, until now every piece of marsh fit to shoot over has been taken up.”¹⁸ This included one of the largest ducking preserves in the country, which a sportsman from New York City, Hugh R. Garden, pieced together along the Georgetown County-Charleston County line in 1897. His party reached Georgetown for the first time aboard the steam yacht *R. C. Barkley* on Sunday, December 12, 1897.¹⁹ The following Wednesday, editor Josiah Doar of the *Georgetown Semi-Weekly Times* announced that “these gentlemen and several other wealthy Northerners, we understand, have

¹⁶ On the canal, see “Carolina’s Water Ways,” *Augusta Chronicle* (Augusta, Ga.), January 26, 1888. See also Ronald E. Bridwell, “*Gem of the Atlantic Seaboard*”: Part 2 of “*That We Should Have a Port*”: A History of the Port of Georgetown, South Carolina (Georgetown, S.C.: Georgetown Times, 1991), 19.

¹⁷ [Hazard], “Local Items.” Despite the similar spellings of their last names, Hazard and Hazzard were no relation. For more on their backgrounds, see Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 447, 471, 473–475. Hazzard’s relationship with the Annandale Club will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

¹⁸ Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks.”

¹⁹ “Mr. Cleveland’s Luck,” *News and Courier*, December 13, 1897; “Waiting for Wind,” *State*, December 13, 1897.

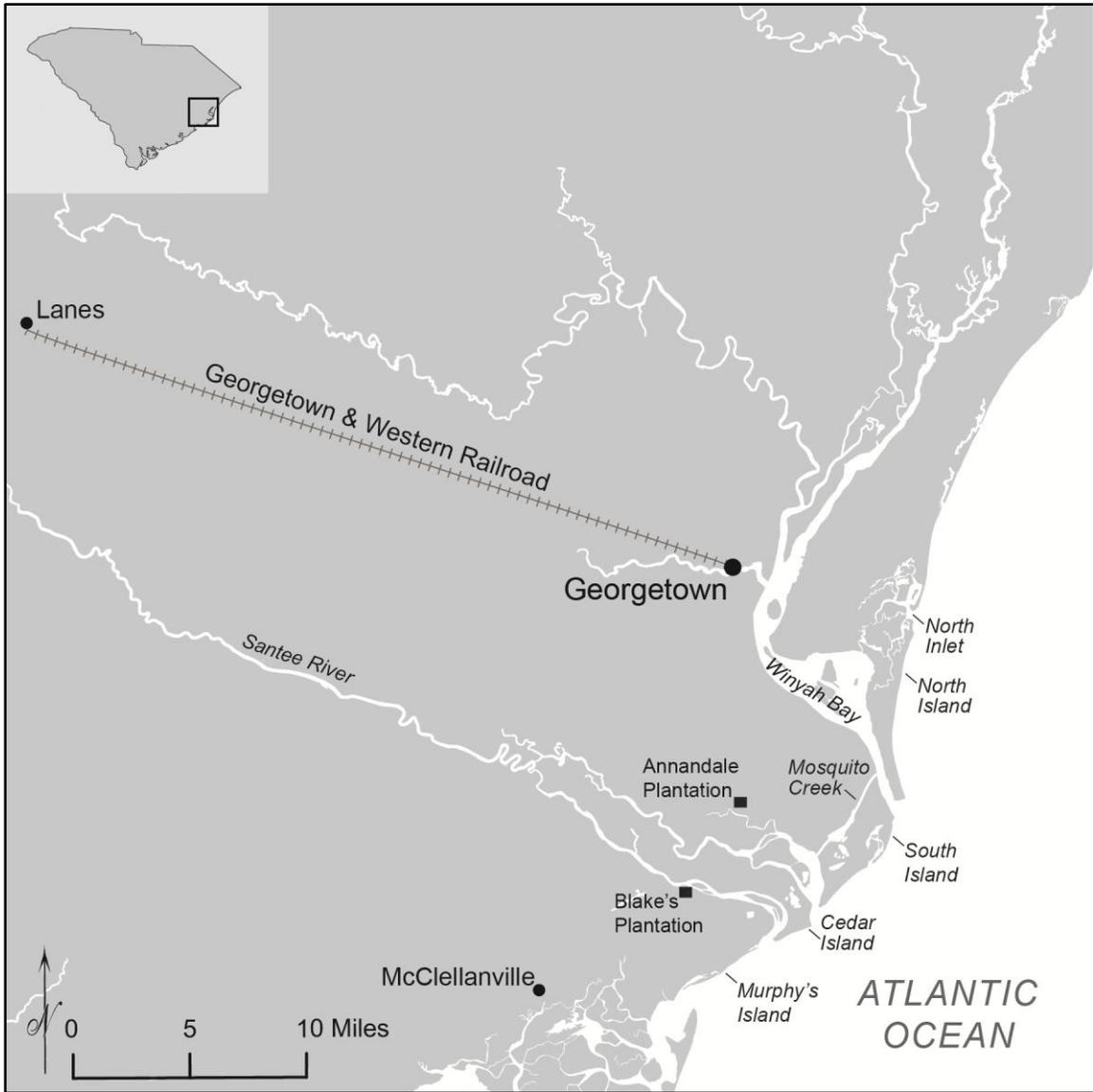


Figure 1.1. The north-central South Carolina coast, 1938. Map by Elbie Bentley.

purchased large tracts of marsh lands on the South Santee and have formed what is to be known as the Murphy Island Gun Club.” Doar added, “We already have the Annandale Gun Club, composed of wealthy New York and Philadelphia

gentlemen, and now we are to have another hunting club of millionaires, making Georgetown their headquarters.”²⁰

Garden formally organized the Murphy Island Gun Club in 1898 as the Santee Club with eleven charter members. Its membership grew gradually until leveling off ten years later at around thirty-five. The Annandale Club started with just five members and still had only five in 1897, including three of the founders, Alexander R. Chisolm of New York City along with Joseph M. Fox and John Wister of Philadelphia.²¹ For this select group of sportsmen, Georgetown’s early club era of the long 1890s was a golden age. They controlled some of the best ducking grounds left anywhere in the United States, transportation from the Northeast to Georgetown was efficient, the modern shotgun was nearing perfection, and the supply of wintering waterfowl coming to the preserves each

²⁰ [Josiah Doar], “Yankee Sporting,” *Georgetown Semi-Weekly Times* (Georgetown, S.C.), December 15, 1897. On Garden, see “Capt. Hugh R. Garden to Speak Tonight,” *State*, January 20, 1905; Mitchell C. Harrison, comp., *New York State’s Prominent and Progressive Men: An Encyclopedia of Contemporaneous Biography*, vol. 3 (New York: New York Tribune, 1902), s.v. “Hugh Richardson Garden”; “Garden, Hugh Richardson,” in *The National Cyclopedic of American Biography*, vol. 2 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1892), 156.

²¹ Henry H. Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club* ([Boston?]: privately printed, [1934?]), 3–4; L. A. Beckman, letter to editor, *News and Courier*, January 31, 1908; Robert Ober v. Santee Club, *Case on Appeal, State of New York, Supreme Court, Appellate Division—First Department* (Cooperstown, N.Y.: Printed by the Arthur H. Crist Co., [1910?]), 78 (hereafter cited as *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript); Rice, “Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands”; “They Are after Ball Caines.” On Chisolm, see “Chisolm, Alexander Robert,” in *National Cyclopedic of American Biography*, 2: 119; William Garnett Chisolm, *Chisolm Genealogy, Being a Record of the Name from A.D. 1254* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1914), 29–30; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. “Chisolm, Alexander Robert,” available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310016111 (accessed May 19, 2014). On Fox, see Joseph M. Fox, *Growing with America: The Fox Family of Philadelphia, 1686–2006* ([Philadelphia]: Joseph M. Fox, 2006), 110–120, 286. On Wister, see “Wister, John,” in *The National Cyclopedic of American Biography, Being the History of the United States*, vol. 34 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1948), 270–271. The roles of Garden and Chisolm in the development of their respective clubs will be treated more fully later in this chapter.

morning from the nearby rice plantations seemed inexhaustible. Their only worry was warding off poachers.

The remainder of this chapter will study the rise and decline of this golden age. Along the way, we will find out what we can from scant sources about who shot at the clubs during the glory days and the kind of sport they enjoyed. The Santee Club had not even gotten its start when a special dispatch to the *Washington Post* in 1897 with the headline “Disappearance of Wild Fowl” and the dateline “Columbia, S.C., Dec. 15” noted, “The diminution in the number of wild ducks that came South annually is . . . very marked.” The article stated that “their absence can be partially accounted for, first, by the invasion of the breeding places in the far North . . . and second, by the decrease of the area planted in rice—the chosen food of the duck.” It continued, “According to the stories told by those who were on the coast of South Carolina prior to the war, there were 200 ducks then where one now flies.”²² As we shall see, however, the effects of the general decline of the waterfowl population and the reduced acreage devoted to rice planting around Georgetown would not be felt at the Annandale and Santee Clubs for several years to come. In the meantime, if weather conditions were right, then club members and their guests could expect epic duck-shooting adventures that would have been the envy of any waterfowler on the East Coast.

The Annandale Club left behind very little in the way of documentation, so despite being the progenitor of northern ducking clubs in South Carolina, it has gone virtually unnoticed by local historians. No historian has identified when the

²² “Disappearance of Wild Fowl,” *Washington Post*, December 16, 1897.

club was created or how long it continued in existence, much less a single one of its members. This includes the preeminent George C. Rogers Jr. as well as Alberta Morel Lachicotte, whom Rogers cites extensively in *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina*. As a matter of fact, Rogers does not even acknowledge the Annandale Club's presence in his chapter on "The Rich Yankees." Lachicotte mentions the club once in passing in *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, but only to impart an anecdote. In so doing, she confuses its location.²³

The principal primary sources on the life of the Annandale Club are accounts in contemporary newspapers, beginning with a letter written by Alexander Chisolm in 1889 that was subsequently published in the *Georgetown Enquirer*. Three months after Walter Hazard first took notice of the Annandale Club in the *Enquirer*, he ran "by request" a communication dated February 26 from Chisolm to the chairman of Georgetown's Board of County Commissioners complaining about the "deplorable condition" of "the road from Georgetown via Sampit Ferry, thence to Annandale and South Island" and offering to contribute fifty dollars (1,330 in 2014 dollars) over two years to the county toward its improvement.²⁴ This letter is significant in two respects. First, it appears to be the sole writing by a member of the Annandale Club still in existence that concerns club business, and second, it is the only source that contains the names of the

²³ See Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 14–15. Another brief, anecdotal reference to the Annandale Club appears in Lee G. Brockington, *Plantation between the Waters: A Brief History of Hobcaw Barony* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2006), 39.

²⁴ Alex. Robert Chisolm, "Our Public Highways," *Georgetown Enquirer*, March 13, 1889.

original club members. Joining Chisolm, Fox, and Wister for that inaugural season of ducking at North Inlet were Chisolm's business partner, William F. Carey, and Wister's brother, Langhorne. Joseph Fox and the Wisters were half-first cousins.²⁵

Both Chisolm and Fox had family in South Carolina and were well positioned through relatives to take advantage of the excellent waterfowling in the state ahead of other northern sportsmen. Fox, who was the heir to extensive, oil-rich landholdings in western Pennsylvania, had married Emily A. Read, the daughter of a Georgetown rice planter, in 1883, and Chisolm was actually a native of Beaufort.²⁶ Born in 1834 and orphaned at four years old, Chisolm lived with an aunt and uncle in New York City until the age of eighteen, when he returned to Chisolm's Island in Beaufort District and assumed responsibility for his father's two plantations and 250 slaves. During the Civil War, Chisolm was a lieutenant colonel on the staff of Confederate general Pierre G. T. Beauregard. He sold his plantations soon after returning from the army and by 1869 was back

²⁵ On Carey, see "Once Rich, Dies Unnoticed," *New York Times*, October 2, 1907. On Carey's partnership with Chisolm, see "Suing His Brokers for Profits," *New York Herald*, January 30, 1890; "Charges against Two Brokers," *New-York Tribune*, March 5, 1895; "A. R. Chisolm & Co. Won the Suit," *ibid.*, March 7, 1895. On Langhorne Wister, see Anna Wharton Smith, *Genealogy of the Fisher Family, 1682 to 1896* (Philadelphia, 1896), 99–101. On the kinship of Fox and the Wisters, see *ibid.*, 63–64, 99, 101.

²⁶ On Fox's marriage to Read, see John W. Jordan, ed., *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania: Genealogical and Personal Memoirs* (1911; repr., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), 1: 335. On Read's father, Dr. Benjamin H. Read, see "Rice Hope Plantation Inn: History," Rice Hope (Berkeley) folder, Vertical Files, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston; Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 139–141; Suzanne Cameron Linder and Marta Leslie Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County and the Santee River* (Columbia: Published by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for the Historic Ricefields Association, Inc., [2001?]), 556, 558. See also Benjamin H. Read Legal Papers, 1855–1870, South Carolina Historical Society; Read Family Legal Papers, 1841–1879, South Carolina Historical Society.

in New York City, where he made a fortune as a stockbroker.²⁷ Rice planter Miles Hazzard, owner of Annandale Plantation, was Chisolm's half-first cousin.²⁸

Most of the rest of what we can learn about the Annandale Club from the newspapers is a result of three non-members having hunted there. One was journalist-marksman Henry Rice, another was notorious poacher Edmund A. "Ball" Caines, and the third was Grover Cleveland, the twenty-second and twenty-fourth president of the United States. Rice, who only knew Cleveland by reputation, labeled him "an enthusiastic and tireless duck hunter."²⁹ The two of them were invited guests of the club. Needless to say, Caines was not.

Between 1904 and 1921, Rice wrote several pieces for the Charleston papers detailing his experience on the Big Marsh.³⁰ As far as we can tell from these articles, he shot ducks at the Annandale Club just once in the late 1890s or early 1900s, by which time local African Americans were referring to the northerners' North Inlet preserve as "the Yankee marsh."³¹ A deadeye with a shotgun, Rice's distaste for waterfowling is well documented in chapter 4, but he

²⁷ "Chisolm, Alexander Robert," in *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 2: 119; Chisolm, *Chisolm Genealogy*, 29–30; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Chisolm, Alexander Robert."

²⁸ Chisolm's mother and Hazzard's father were half-siblings. See Virginia Fripp Shaffer, *Captain William Fuller of Maryland and South Carolina and His Descendants* (Greenville, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 2002), 59–60; Cecil Hampden Cutts Howard, comp., *Genealogy of the Cutts Family in America* (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1892), 212, 352.

²⁹ Rice, "Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks."

³⁰ See *ibid.*; Rice, "Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands"; James Henry Rice Jr., "Hunts That Were Hunts," *News and Courier*, December 28, 1910; Rice, "Duck Hunting on the Big Marsh." See also James Henry Rice Jr., *The Aftermath of Glory* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell Company, 1934), 207–209. Although the last source does not mention the Annandale Club by name, its particulars are similar enough to those of the articles that the location of the hunt can be deduced.

³¹ Rice, "Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks"; Rice, "Duck Hunting on the Big Marsh."

was flattered to receive an invitation to the club, which he said was “very rarely” forthcoming to South Carolinians, and graciously accepted.³² Fortunately for those interested in the history of the Annandale Club, Rice was not only a gracious recipient but also a good reporter.

The newspaperman informed readers that the Annandale Club had a “shooting lodge” at Michau’s Plantation on the shore of Muddy Bay, a shallow embayment on the northeastern side of Winyah Bay. This clue leads us to a deed from early 1889, one of the only official documents associated with the Annandale Club that survives. The deed records that Chisolm, Fox, and Langhorne Wister leased the two adjacent houses on Muddy Bay “now occupied by the Cain[e]s” from Robert Donaldson’s eldest son and two other men for twenty years in consideration of the sum of three hundred dollars (7,960 in 2014 dollars). The club used one of these houses as its lodge. The Annandale lodge was located within a mile of the mouth of No Man’s Friend Creek, which linked Muddy Bay to the ducking grounds in North Inlet.³³

Rice evidently came at a time when the lodge was not in use by the Annandale Club members, as he gave no indication that he ever met any of them. Instead, he appears to have interacted solely with the Donaldsons and the club staff. He depicted the lodge as “a one-storied affair, with several sleeping

³² Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks.”

³³ *Ibid.* (first quotation); Rice, “Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands”; lease, J. G. Eddy, H. J. Davenport, and S. T. Donaldson to J. M. Fox, A. R. Chisolm, and Langhorne Wister, recorded March 8, 1889, Deed Book K, pp. 526–528 (second quotation on p. 526), Registrar of Deeds, Georgetown County Courthouse, Georgetown, S.C.; Hobcaw Barony National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1994, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia.

rooms, large fireplaces, a kitchen and a dining room, all in charge of Mrs. Caines.” The Caineses were a family of white squatters on the Donaldson land. Rice commented that they “had camped there so long they claimed the proprietary rights.” The club employed Sarah Britton Caines’s four “stalwart” sons, “who have done nothing all their lives but hunt ducks and build boats,” as guides. The eldest, Richard R. “Sawney” Caines, was the “leader of the duckermen.” He transported Rice from Georgetown to the lodge in the club launch and accompanied him on his hunt the next day.³⁴

The second non-member of note who shot ducks at the Annadale Club was market hunter “Ball” Caines. Rice’s guide, “Sawney,” and Sarah Caines’s three other sons were the younger half-brothers of “Ball.”³⁵ Upon acquiring the lease to the Donaldson marshes in North Inlet, staking the boundaries of the tract, and posting them against trespass, the Annadale Club offered jobs to the Caines boys as “gamekeepers and attendants.” While the younger Caineses accepted positions with the club, “Ball” demanded the right to shoot on the preserve three days a week and sell all of the ducks he killed as a condition of

³⁴ Rice, “Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands”; Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks” (first, third, and fourth quotations); Rice, “Duck Hunting on the Big Marsh” (second and fifth quotations). While there are very few inconsistencies in Rice’s various accounts of duck hunting at the Annadale Club, one concerns who brought him to the lodge. In his earliest article on the subject, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks,” published in 1904, he stated that “Sawney Caines usually comes for distinguished visitors and his handling of a boat leaves nothing to be desired.” Rice’s last article about the Annadale Club, “Duck Hunting on the Big Marsh,” came seventeen years later. In it, he said that he arrived at the lodge in the company of John H. “Harry” Donaldson, the youngest son of the lessor, who took him over from the Donaldson’s plantation house on Fraser’s Point. Sarah Caines had six sons, but only four survived to adulthood. In addition to “Sawney,” they were Moultrie J. L. “Pluty” Caines, Joseph J. “Hucks” Caines, and Robert J. D. “Bob” Caines. On this branch of the Caines family tree, see Jerry Wayne Caines, *A Native Son’s Story of Fishing, Hunting and Duck Decoys in the Lowcountry: A Caines Family Tradition* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2007), 122–123.

³⁵ See Caines, *Native Son’s Story*, 122–123.

his employment. When the club refused his terms, “Ball,” who had such a fierce independent streak that the press referred to him on one occasion as “the Daniel Boone of Georgetown County,” indignantly declared that he “would shoot on the premises anyway.” “Ball” made good on his threat, repeatedly poaching on the club grounds in spite of warnings and cease-and-desist notices. Seeing that the admonitions were having no effect, the club pursued criminal charges against Caines. He was prosecuted in the state courts, convicted, and fined, but the poaching persisted.³⁶ In 1894 the club obtained an injunction against Caines and several accomplices in federal district court, which he subsequently spent some time in jail for violating.³⁷

The Caines saga played out in the South Carolina papers, garnering unwanted publicity for the Annandale Club. However, the articles connected to the court cases now provide the only proof of changes in the club membership during the 1890s. After Langhorne Wister died in 1891, John Wister and Joseph Fox’s distant cousin William Fisher Lewis, the son of a wealthy Philadelphia merchant, took his place.³⁸ By 1894 New Yorker George H. Penniman had

³⁶ “About Riparian Rights” (first and third quotations); “Ball Still on the Tenter-Hooks,” *News and Courier*, December 22, 1897; “Ball Caines Is Safe,” January 30, 1898 (second quotation).

³⁷ “Arguing for an Injunction,” *News and Courier*, December 22, 1893; “About Riparian Rights”; “Navigable Streams,” *Charleston Evening Post*, January 25, 1895; “They Are after Ball Caines”; “Ball Caines Is Safe”; “‘Ball’ Caines Approved,” *News and Courier*, January 3, 1903; “Ball Gaines [sic] Is in Trouble,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 5, 1903; “Two Mighty Duck Hunters,” *News and Courier*, January 17, 1903; “He Has Been at It Again,” *ibid.*, February 15, 1903; “In Contempt of Court,” *Charleston Evening Post*, December 30, 1903; “The Caines [sic] Quit Jail Next Week,” *ibid.*, May 2, 1905; “Duck Hunters Out of Prison.” These news items indicate that by 1903 “Hucks” Caines had gone from working for the Annandale Club to poaching on its preserve alongside his half-brother.

³⁸ On Lewis, see “Will Discloses Ideal Bachelor’s Secret Wedding,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 12, 1908; J. St. George Joyce, ed., *Story of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Rex Printing House,

replaced William Carey. Penniman, whose wealth came mostly from dealings in real estate, moved in the same social circles as Chisolm, and both belonged to the prestigious Union Club of the City of New York.³⁹ In 1905 Rice named two other men, Edward D. Toland and William D. Windsor of Philadelphia, as having been among the earliest members of the Annandale Club, but an absence of corroboration in the documentary record casts doubt on this assertion. Chisolm's 1889 letter concerning the state of the South Island Road cited neither, and the 1894 and 1897 trespassing lawsuits listed neither as a plaintiff. If Windsor was a member of the club, then it was most likely during the last years of the lease, after John Wister passed away in 1900. One original document identifies Toland as a member in 1904.⁴⁰

1919), 530–532. Wister, Fox, and Lewis shared the same great-great-grandfather. See Smith, *Genealogy of the Fisher Family*, 22–34, 43–46, 49–52, 63–64, 68–69, 99–101, 110.

³⁹ On Penniman, see George Wallace Penniman, with additions by Paul Bigelow, *The Penniman Family, 1631–1900*, ed. George Dobbin Penniman Jr. and his family (Walpole, Mass.: Penniman Family, 1981), 339–341, 413, 469–471; Sidney Ratner, ed., *New Light on the History of Great American Fortunes: American Millionaires of 1892 and 1902* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Inc., 1953), 75. On Chisolm and Penniman as members of the Union Club, see *Officers, Members, Constitution and Rules of the Union Club, of the City of New York* (New York: Club House, 1892), 24, 55. Eric Homberger calls the Union Club “the most thoroughly aristocratic private institution in the city.” See Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 86.

⁴⁰ Rice mistakenly believed that Toland, Windsor, Joseph Fox, George Penniman, and John Wister constituted the original membership of the Annandale Club. See Rice, “Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands.” On Toland's membership in 1904, see “South Island Log,” 1890–1910, rear flyleaf, microfilm copy in the Edward Porter Alexander Papers, 1852–1910, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as SIL). Toland later became a member of the Santee Club. See B. Brannan Reath II, *Santee Club—A Legend* (Philadelphia: Printed by the Winchell Company, 1971), 13. Another Philadelphian whose membership in the Annandale Club cannot be confirmed by either the Chisolm letter or the trespassing suits is Ellicott Fisher, Wister's first cousin and Fox's half-first cousin. Fisher was named as a member in “Cleveland at Georgetown,” *News and Courier*, December 23, 1894. On Fisher, an iron merchant, see John W. Leonard, ed., *Who's Who in Pennsylvania: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporaries*, 2nd ed. (New York: L. R. Hamersly and Company, 1908), s.v. “Fisher, Ellicott.” On Fisher's kinship with Wister and Fox, see Smith, *Genealogy of the Fisher Family*, 46, 63–64, 98.

The preponderance of the evidence in the newspapers points to the Annandale Club having been composed exclusively of sportsmen living in the North, but two Georgetown County rice planters were so closely associated with it during the early years that the local press sometimes mistakenly identified them as members.⁴¹ Not surprisingly, Miles Hazzard was one of these planters. Hazzard's neighbor and close friend Edward Porter Alexander, who owned a large tract adjoining the club marshes to the south, was the other. Hazzard and Alexander had a good deal in common. Both were originally from Georgia, both came from privileged backgrounds, both were Confederate veterans, and neither had been rice planters before the war.

In surveying the economic leadership of post-Reconstruction Georgetown County, George Rogers refers to the Hazzards—William Miles, born in 1835, and his younger brother Elliot Waight, born in 1842—as “scions of a Beaufort rice-planting family.”⁴² This is a little misleading, however. Although the Hazzard family's roots in the Beaufort area stretched back to the turn of the eighteenth century, the brothers were raised on their father's Saint Simon's Island cotton plantation. In January 1864, while serving as a captain in the Confederate army, Miles Hazzard married the eldest surviving daughter of Charleston merchant and financier George A. Trenholm, a self-made businessman who was one of the wealthiest individuals in the antebellum South. Six months later, Trenholm was

⁴¹ See, for example, “Northern Visitors,” *Georgetown Semi-Weekly Times*, March 17, 1894; F. S. Ravenel, “The President's Hunt,” *News and Courier*, December 19, 1894; “Bagged Twenty-Nine,” *State*, December 19, 1894; “Why He Went to Georgetown,” *News and Courier*, December 23, 1894.

⁴² Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 471.

appointed the Confederate secretary of the treasury. He had profited handsomely from his involvement in blockade running during the war and purchased several rice plantations near Georgetown in 1863 and 1864 as investments, including Annandale, which he conveyed to his new son-in-law in 1865. Hazzard prospered at Annandale and eventually acquired additional plantations on the North Santee and Black Rivers.⁴³

Chisolm stated in the *Georgetown Enquirer* in early 1889 that he and his friends had “recently leased a house at Annandale, So. Ca., together with other property on Winyah Bay,” the latter being a reference to the lodge.⁴⁴ Less isolated than the lodge, the clubhouse at Annandale Plantation was the focus of the Annandale Club’s social activities, such as in January 1899 when Joseph Fox gave “a swell german” for the young white people from the neighborhood plantations. Hazzard, whom Porter Alexander esteemed as “the prince of entertainers,” acted as the northern sportsmen’s host when they were staying at

⁴³ On Hazzard, see William Hazzard (1684–1757) family tree, Hazzard folder, Vertical Files, South Carolina Historical Society; Walter B. Edgar and N. Louise Bailey, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly, 1692–1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 311–312; Bailey, Mary L. Morgan, and Carolyn R. Taylor, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina Senate, 1776–1985* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986), 1: 707; Burnette Vanstory, *Georgia’s Land of the Golden Isles*, new ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), 191–192; A. R. Chisolm [sic], “Raid of Captain Wm. Miles Hazzard on St. Simon’s Island,” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, June 1881, 282–284; George Alexander Heard, “St. Simons Island during the War between the States,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 22 (September 1938): 262–265, 268–270; “Capt. William Miles Hazzard,” *The Last Roll, Confederate Veteran*, February 1905, 84–85; Henry Schulz Holmes, comp., “The Trenholm Family,” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 16 (October 1915): 153–155; Walter J. Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 220–222, 261–262, 267; Agricola [pseud.], “The Labor Question,” *Southern Cultivator*, July 1869, 206–207; Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 75, 87–88, 169; Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 471; Linder and Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County*, 444, 464, 608, 614, 620.

⁴⁴ Chisolm, “Our Public Highways.”

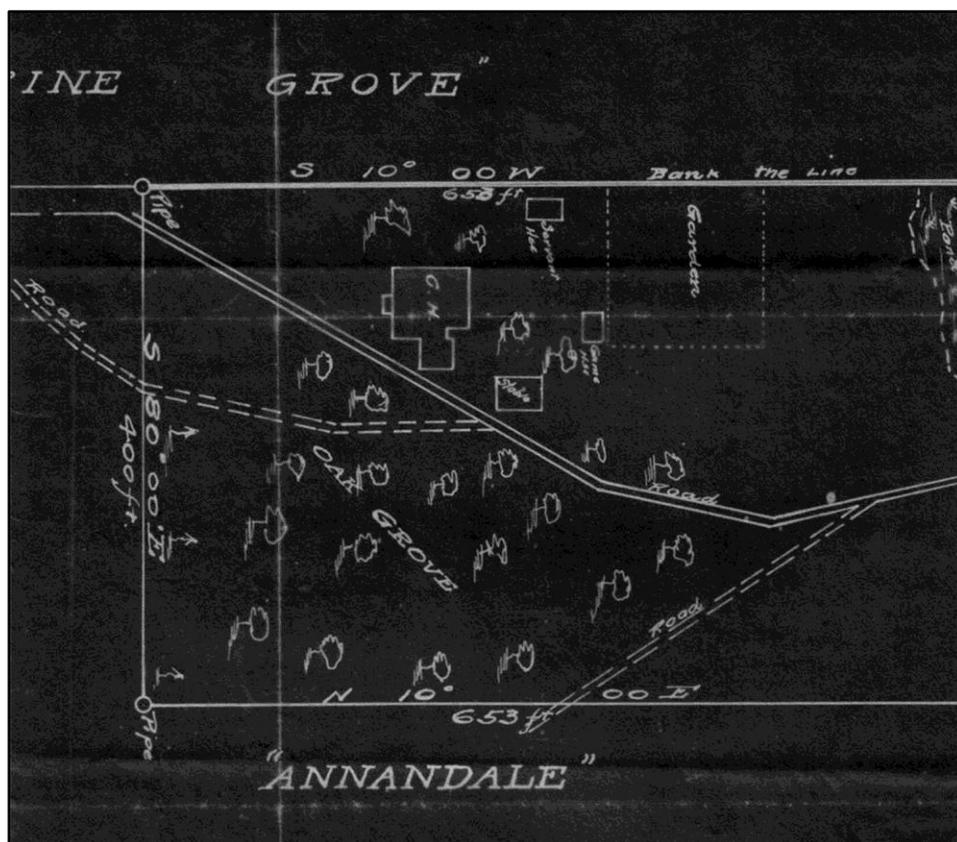


Figure 5.2. Plat of the Annandale clubhouse tract, 1914. After the Annandale Club's North Inlet lease ended in 1908, founding member Joseph M. Fox bought the clubhouse near the North Santee River and six surrounding acres from the Trenholm family. The tract bordered Annandale Plantation on the east and Pine Grove Plantation on the west. In addition to the clubhouse, it contained separate servant quarters, a cold-storage "game house," and a stable. *Source:* box 2, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (September to December)" folder, Kinloch Gun Club Papers, 1906–1935, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del.

the clubhouse and their go-between with locals and tourists when they were away until his death in 1904.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ "A German at Georgetown," *Charleston Evening Post*, January 19, 1899 (first quotation). For evidence of Hazzard entertaining members of the Annandale Club at his plantation, see Alexander's SIL, pp. 54, 57–59, 94, 103, 135, 149, 221, 265. Alexander's opinion of Hazzard as a princely host (second quotation) comes from *ibid.*, 13.

A Civil War hero and powerful railroad executive, Alexander was known throughout the nation. Upon graduating from the U.S. Military Academy in 1857, this son of a prosperous cotton planter and banker from Washington, Georgia, had been commissioned a brevet second lieutenant in the army's Engineer Corps. He entered Confederate service in 1861 as a captain of engineers. By 1864 he had attained the rank of brigadier general and was chief of artillery in the Army of Northern Virginia's First Corps. Alexander participated in every major action of the eastern theater and came to be regarded by many as the Confederacy's top artillery officer. In 1866 he was appointed professor of mathematics and engineering at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. After four years of teaching, Alexander decided to leave the academy and try his hand at business. As president of the newly formed Columbia Oil Company, he oversaw construction of South Carolina's first cottonseed mill. With the mill struggling, his career took a major turn in 1871 when he was offered the superintendency of the Charlotte, Columbia & Augusta Railroad through the influence of his brother-in-law, the president of the railroad. Over the next twenty-one years, Alexander held a series of senior management positions with rail lines in several southern states, capped by two stints as president of the Central Railroad of Georgia.⁴⁶ The *Augusta Chronicle* called the Central, which had two

⁴⁶ On Alexander, see Maury Klein, *Edward Porter Alexander* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971); Michael Golay, *To Gettysburg and Beyond: The Parallel Lives of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and Edward Porter Alexander* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1994). See also "Alexander, Edward Porter," in *The National Cyclopedic of American Biography, Being the History of the United States*, vol. 8 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1924), 271; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Alexander, Edward Porter," available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310018961 (accessed May 21, 2014); Gary W. Gallagher, "Alexander, Edward Porter," in *American National Biography*, ed. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1: 264–266.

thousand miles of track in 1887 when Alexander was elected its president for the second time, “the greatest system of roads in the South.”⁴⁷ Eight days later, the *Georgetown Enquirer’s* headline about Alexander’s election as president of the Central read “The New Railroad King.”⁴⁸

Alexander’s ties to the Georgetown area went back to his days in Columbia. He had earned a relatively good living as a professor. He did well enough at the university, in fact, to purchase North Island, located south of North Inlet and north of the mouth of Winyah Bay, with the high bid of \$600 at a sheriff’s sale in 1869 (10,800 in 2014 dollars). Alexander jokingly referred to the 3,448 acres of dunes, maritime forest, and salt marsh as his “Barreny,” fit only for “cattle range, live oak timber & fishing grounds—sea bathing, hunting, etc.” Still, he believed that he might be able to sell it one day to northern interests for a profit.⁴⁹ North Island had been a summer resort for antebellum rice planters and their families, and judging from the pages of the *Georgetown Enquirer*, which tracked Alexander’s comings and goings, he used it for the same purpose while living in Augusta and Savannah during the 1880s. He traveled in a special railcar to Georgetown and from there chartered a steamboat to the island, where a

⁴⁷ “End of the Great Fight,” *Augusta Chronicle*, January 4, 1887.

⁴⁸ “The New Railroad King,” *Georgetown Enquirer*, January 12, 1887.

⁴⁹ Alexander quoted in Klein, *Edward Porter Alexander*, 146 (second quotation), 153 (first quotation). In the deed executed after the sheriff’s sale, North Island was “said to contain ten thousand acres.” See conveyance, S. R. Carr, sheriff, to Edward P. Alexander, recorded January 13, 1869, Deed Book B, pp. 379–380, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds. The acreage cited here, which Alexander recorded himself in the SIL on p. 358, is more accurate. Alexander did not purchase the eight-hundred-acre section of North Island west of Jones Creek and south of Noble Slough until twenty years later. See conveyance, Sidney T. Donaldson to E. P. Alexander, recorded March 28, 1889, Deed Book K, pp. 556–558, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds.

visitor remarked in 1887 on his “comfortable residence.”⁵⁰ By the time he retired from railroading in March 1892, Alexander had added over forty-five hundred acres on South Island, across the mouth of Winyah Bay from North Island, to his holdings. This included the marshes east of Mosquito Creek and a rice plantation on the North Santee River, Ford’s Point, at the southern end of the island. Alexander produced his first rice crop and built a threshing mill at Ford’s Point in 1892. He later purchased extensive marshlands west of Mosquito Creek as well as adjacent Cat Island, taking in part or all of six rice plantations.⁵¹ The size of Alexander’s crops increased with his expanded landholdings. Between 1895 and 1902, the area that he planted in rice nearly doubled, going from sixty-three acres to 106 acres.⁵²

Given that his seasonal migrations to North Island rarely coincided with those of the wintering ducks, it is unlikely that Alexander did much waterfowling before 1890. That year, though, he moved into the “Barnwell House” on South

⁵⁰ See, for example, M. L. Bonham, “An Enthusiastic Knight,” *Georgetown Enquirer*, May 5, 1886; “Georgetown’s Hospitality,” *ibid.*, May 18, 1887 (quotation); [Walter Hazard], “Local Items,” *ibid.*, August 17, 1887; [Hazard], “Local Items,” *ibid.*, July 4, 1888; [Hazard], “Local Items,” *ibid.*, July 18, 1888; [Hazard], “Local Items,” *ibid.*, August 8, 1888; [Hazard], “Local Items,” *ibid.*, August 22, 1888. See also Klein, *Edward Porter Alexander*, 183–184.

⁵¹ Conveyance, L. P. Miller to E. P. Alexander, recorded November 19, 1887, Deed Book K, pp. 148–150, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds; conveyance, Stephen E. Barnwell to Edward P. Alexander, recorded April 25, 1889, Deed Book K, pp. 603–604, *ibid.*; conveyance, Arthur Middleton, trustee, to Edward P. Alexander, recorded July 25, 1889, Deed Book K, p. 656, *ibid.*; quit claim, Eliza Toomer Wilson and Hamilton Wilson to Edward P. Alexander, recorded February 7, 1893, Deed Book O, pp. 130–131, *ibid.*; conveyance, Susan C. Brown to Edward P. Alexander, recorded February 7, 1893, Deed Book O, pp. 132–133, *ibid.*; quit claim, R. E. Fraser, guardian of G. Fraser Wilson, to Edward P. Alexander, recorded February 7, 1893, Deed Book O, p. 134, *ibid.*; conveyance, Wm. D. Johnson and A. McQueen, trustees, to Edward P. Alexander, recorded January 26, 1899, Deed Book R, pp. 208–210, *ibid.*; conveyance, H. S. Cordes to E. P. Alexander, recorded April 15, 1903, Deed Book W, pp. 110–111, *ibid.*; SIL, 7, 18–19, 358.

⁵² SIL, 75, 205.

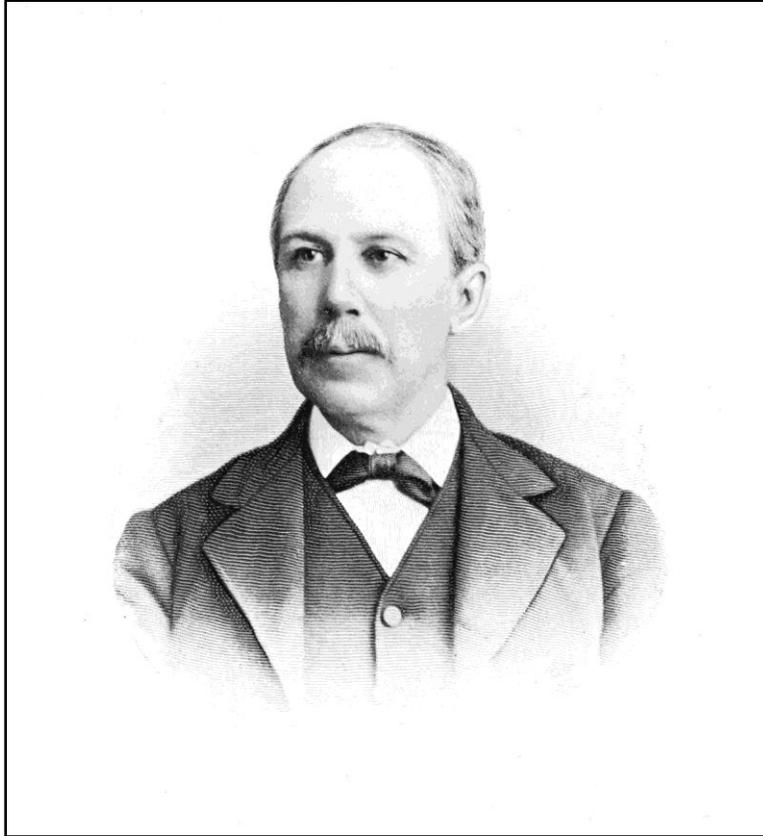


Figure 5.3. Edward Porter Alexander (1835–1910). Even before introducing Georgetown County duck shooting to numerous out-of-state sportsmen in the 1890s, Alexander indirectly contributed to the establishment of South Carolina’s oldest northern hunting club, Pineland. Most sources give 1887 as the founding date for the Pineland Club, making it one year older than the Annandale Club. In early 1887, with the backing of a northern syndicate, Alexander was elected president of the Central Railroad for the second time. When two members of the syndicate, bankers Harry B. Hollins and Edward E. Dennison, came to Savannah to inspect the railroad soon afterward, Alexander arranged for them to go on a short hunting expedition in adjacent Jasper County, South Carolina, as guests of one of the Central’s directors, John K. Garnett. Later that year, Hollins, Dennison, and Garnett joined with several others to form the Pineland Club on fifteen thousand acres in Jasper County near Robertville. The principal sport at Pineland was quail shooting in upland clearings and piney woods. *Source: James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America* (1896), p. 388f.

Island.⁵³ Additionally, in 1891 he built a summer place in the mountains of western North Carolina at Flat Rock and started spending more time on the coast during the cooler months.⁵⁴ Alexander kept a journal during stays on South Island that reflects his blossoming interest in shooting ducks, especially after he retired from the Central Railroad. This “log book,” which is preserved in Alexander’s personal papers at the University of North Carolina’s Wilson Library in Chapel Hill, contains a table entitled “Record of Ducks Killed” that begins with the 1889–1890 season. Occupied by railroad work, he went waterfowling only three days that season, two days during the 1890–1891 season, and six days in 1891–1892. With plenty of leisure time on his hands during the 1892–1893 season, the recently retired Alexander shot ducks on thirty-four days. The next season, he spent forty-four days on the ducking grounds.⁵⁵

Alexander was a generous host too, welcoming numerous friends as well as comrades-in-arms from the Civil War, erstwhile business associates, and eminent politicians to enjoy the sport at South Island.⁵⁶ Indeed, thanks to his

⁵³ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁴ R. Izard Middleton, “Flat Rock, Past and Present,” *News and Courier*, September 7, 1891.

⁵⁵ SIL, 347.

⁵⁶ The personages who shot ducks at Alexander’s preserve over the years included Cecil Gabbett of Savannah, general manager of the Central Railroad; Confederate major Wade Hampton Gibbes of Columbia, a West Point graduate and fellow artillery officer in Longstreet’s Corps; Frank Hampton, also of Columbia, the nephew of eminent South Carolina soldier and statesman Wade Hampton III; Dr. John A. Wells, a physician from Englewood, N.J.; West Point graduate, Confederate brigadier general, past president of the American Bar Association, member of the Central Railroad’s board of directors, and Alexander’s brother-in-law, Savannah attorney Alexander R. Lawton; railroad magnate Frederic W. Huidekoper of Washington, D.C.; Governor Elias Carr of North Carolina; California senator Charles N. Felton; world-famous actor Joseph Jefferson III; Georgetown attorney Walter Hazard; financier Charles R. Flint of New York City, the so-called “Father of Trusts”; and Rear Admiral Willard H. Brownson, a former superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy. See SIL, 3–4, 11–15, 32, 50–52, 66, 76, 133–134, 150, 209, 301–302.

hospitality and connections, he quickly became the most influential gentleman duck hunter in South Carolina, leading the *Georgetown Semi-Weekly Times* to declare in March 1894 that “Genl. E. P. Alexander . . . has done a great deal towards making the hunting advantages of this place known to prominent persons outside.”⁵⁷ Foremost among the public figures to hunt waterfowl on Alexander’s preserve was President Grover Cleveland, a serious sportsman who was once called “the greatest duck shooter on the face of the earth.”⁵⁸ Acting on a third party’s recommendation, Cleveland had appointed Alexander to a minor office, one of the government directors of the troubled Union Pacific Railroad, in 1885, and three years later, Alexander had been part of the delegation that escorted the president around Savannah during a brief stopover.⁵⁹ The two were on friendly enough terms by March 1890 for Alexander to invite the then ex-president down for some duck hunting and feel reasonably confident, according to the *Georgetown Times*, “that probably he will accept.”⁶⁰ However, Cleveland did not come until December 1894, over a year and a half into his second term as president. In the interim, in January 1894, Alexander had permitted a party from Washington, D.C., that included U.S. Navy commander (later rear admiral)

Flint was best known locally for having organized the Atlantic Coast Lumber Company. Flint and Atlantic Coast Lumber will be discussed further in chapter 6.

⁵⁷ “Northern Visitors.”

⁵⁸ James Barton, “President’s Sport,” *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), March 2, 1896.

⁵⁹ The third party was the newly installed president of the Union Pacific, Charles Francis Adams Jr., a railroad regulator from Massachusetts and the grandson of President John Quincy Adams. On Alexander’s relationship with Adams, see Klein, *Edward Porter Alexander*, 163, 184; Golay, *To Gettysburg and Beyond*, 298–300. On Alexander’s role while Cleveland was in Savannah, see “To the Land of Flowers,” *Augusta Chronicle*, February 22, 1888.

⁶⁰ “Local Items,” *Georgetown Times* (Georgetown, S.C.), March 8, 1890.

Robley D. Evans, one of Cleveland's regular hunting companions, to shoot on the South Island marshes.⁶¹ The *Charleston News and Courier* reported that Cleveland went to Georgetown in late 1894 at the insistence of Evans, "who came here last January and was so favorably impressed with the duck shooting that he determined to induce the President to come down early in this season."⁶² Cleveland liked the shooting and Alexander's warm reception so much that he came back to South Island eleven times in the next thirteen years.⁶³

On Cleveland's first two visits to South Island, the second one occurring in December 1896, Alexander arranged for him to shoot at the Annandale Club as well. Alexander's connection to the Annandale Club was through Hazzard. As Chisolm's relative and a longstanding friend of the club, Hazzard apparently had permission to invite guests to shoot on its marshes and could even direct the Caineses to accommodate them. Alexander's logbook reveals that Hazzard extended the hospitalities of the club to him for the first time in January 1892 and asked him back regularly thereafter. The logbook also shows that Alexander traveled to Washington for a meeting of the board of the Delaware & Chesapeake Canal on November 1, 1894. Upon returning home to South Island

⁶¹ SIL, 66, 52. On Evans, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Evans, Robley Dunglison," available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310013912 (accessed September 11, 2014); "Evans's Georgetown Visits," *News and Courier*, January 6, 1912.

⁶² "Why He Went to Georgetown." See also "The President's Stolen March," *News and Courier*, December 18, 1894.

⁶³ Alexander documented visits from Cleveland in December 1894, December 1896, November 1898, January 1900, December 1900–January 1901, January 1902, December 1902, December 1903, May 1905, and March 1907. See SIL, 66, 94–96, 129–131, 149, 191–193, 212–213, 235–236, 270, 292–294. Cleveland spent time at South Island on at least one other occasion. See "Mr. Cleveland in Georgetown," *News and Courier*, December 12, 1897; "Grover in Georgetown," *State*, December 12, 1897. The reason Cleveland's 1897 Georgetown expedition was left out of the Alexander logbook will be taken into account later in the text.

two and a half weeks later, Alexander “rode over to see Miles Hazzard about Presdts coming & shooting at Club” during his upcoming stay from December 17 to 22.⁶⁴ A similar scene played out on November 19, 1896, when Alexander “drove to Capt Hazzards to make arrangements for visit from Prest Cleveland on [December] 14th to 20th.”⁶⁵

Cleveland described himself as a “serene duck hunter,” by which he meant that he wanted to secure “a place for duck hunting among recreations which are rational, exhilarating and only moderately fatal.” He did not “claim the ability to kill ducks as often as is required by the highest averages,” instead finding “pleasure in the cultivation of the more delicate and elevating susceptibilities which ducking environments should invite.”⁶⁶ Cleveland’s creed was “that a duck has . . . rights that a hunter is bound to respect.” Furthermore, he refused to hunt with anyone who reveled in “inordinate killing,” believing that this “sordid and sanguinary behavior” would reflect poorly on him and the “serene brotherhood” of honorable, abnegating sportsmen.⁶⁷

President Cleveland, who had been invited to shoot ducks from some of the most coveted blinds in the country, considered “a fair day’s shooting” to be “from ten to twenty ducks. A very good shoot is thirty-five ducks, but this is

⁶⁴ SIL, 93, 12, 64 (quotation). See also “The President’s Stolen March.” A contemporary newspaper article stated, “During the four days that Mr. Cleveland shot ducks in the Annandale Club marshes he was the guest, as far as the invitation to shoot in the marshes was concerned, of Mr. Ellicott Fisher, of Philadelphia, a member of the Annandale Club.” See “Cleveland at Georgetown,” *News and Courier*, December 23, 1894.

⁶⁵ SIL, 93.

⁶⁶ Grover Cleveland, *Fishing and Shooting Sketches* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1907), 56–57.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 50 (first quotation), 54 (second quotation), 56 (third quotation), 64 (fourth quotation).

seldom attained.”⁶⁸ Newspaper reports indicate that head guide “Sawney” Caines treated Cleveland to rare sport on this first visit to the Annandale Club in 1894. Still, the president barely relaxed his strict personal standard, bagging no more than thirty-nine in a single outing.⁶⁹ However, when Cleveland returned to the club two years later to find “flocks of ducks too vast for calculation,” even he had trouble maintaining self-control.⁷⁰ On Thursday, December 17, 1896, Cleveland downed fifty-eight ducks.⁷¹ “In speaking of his shooting on Thursday in the

⁶⁸ Barton, “President’s Sport” (quotation). Cleveland was an all-around outdoorsman, devoted as much to the rod as the gun. See “Cleveland as Sportsman,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1895. There were excellent opportunities for fishing in the bays, creeks, and canals that surrounded South Island, but when Cleveland came to visit Alexander, he apparently only brought his shotgun. See the SIL entries cited in note 63. “Ducks—with deer as incidentals” was how one newspaper described the objects of the president’s sport while in Georgetown County. See “Big Game in Georgetown,” *State*, December 17, 1894.

⁶⁹ South Carolina’s leading daily, the *Charleston News and Courier*, offered the most comprehensive coverage of Cleveland’s 1894 trip to Georgetown, which lasted from Monday, December 17, to Saturday, December 22. While most major newspapers across the nation carried updates on the president’s “luck” in the Palmetto State, the *News and Courier* was the only one to publish the day-by-day results of his shooting at South Island and North Inlet. His party spent the first and last days at Alexander’s preserve, and the rest, at the Annandale Club. Cleveland’s totals were tabulated twice in the *News and Courier*, in “Cleveland at Georgetown” on December 23 and four days later in “The Presidential Hunt.” The first article stated that “the President’s bag” was “furnished [to] your correspondent by a gentleman who was with him daily,” while the second presented an extract “from a diary kept by one of the members of the recent Presidential ducking jaunt” and included not only Cleveland’s takes but also “the following record of the bags of the different sportsmen.” Although the two tallies in the *News and Courier* contained several inconsistencies, both were in agreement that Cleveland’s best day was Thursday, December 20, when his gun, one of three, accounted for thirty-nine of the ninety-six ducks bagged at the Annandale Club. The member of the “jaunt” referenced in “The Presidential Hunt” was not Alexander. On February 21, 1895, about two months after the Cleveland party departed for Washington, Alexander made his first journal entry since before their arrival. “There has been too much to occupy me every day to keep up the log,” Alexander jotted. He added only that the president’s group had “generally good luck but details too much to record.” See SIL, 66. Citing a source who was further removed from the president, the *News and Courier* had initially reported on December 22 in an article entitled “Georgetown in Its Glory” that Cleveland bagged fifty ducks on the 20th.

⁷⁰ “Still More Ducks,” *State*, December 17, 1896.

⁷¹ “The President’s Hunt Is Over,” *News and Courier*, December 19, 1896. The *News and Courier* quoted a reliable eyewitness, Cleveland’s personal physician, U.S. Army surgeon Dr. Robert M. O’Reilly, who had come to Georgetown on the 18th to deliver a letter from the president to the mayor and express several bags of ducks to the sportsmen’s friends and relatives in the North. The article reads, “Dr. O’Reilly said to-day [sic] that the President was perfectly well and enjoying

marshes of the Annandale Club” to the *News and Courier*, “the President said it was the ‘finest of his life’; that ‘the ducks literally swarmed around him.’ ”⁷²

Not all members and guests of the Annandale Club exercised as much restraint as Cleveland when shooting. Henry Rice, for one, whose articles provide the most thorough account of waterfowling on the club marshes, claimed to have nearly doubled Cleveland’s bag without half-trying. The day of Rice’s Annandale hunt started early. He said that the Caineses roused him from bed at a “funereal hour.” After putting “on the hip boots, rubber shooting coat and other diving paraphernalia that the sport requires,” he was hurried through breakfast and “tumbled into a boat” by 4 A.M. Immediately thereafter, “the pull to the grounds begins,” a five-mile tow behind the rowboat of the guide.

Just as day is breaking the duckerman lands you in a small run [creek] after putting out his decoys and he immediately puts up his blind of palmetto leaves—none too soon, for they hardly are down when the ducks begin to come. One, two, three, sometimes more, and the work of the day begins in earnest. The shooting is easy and when one becomes accustomed to the surroundings and to the motion of the boat, it is decidedly tame. The decoys are placed within fifty feet, and the incoming ducks hover over them; indeed they will often light among the decoys. At this short range it would be a poor shot who failed to get a large bag. For a couple of hours there is nothing but shooting, fast and furious, varied when some wounded duck attempts to get away or some dead one is going to float off on the tide. Then, before you can realize it the

himself to the fullest extent in his favorite sport, that yesterday the party killed eighty ducks, of which number the President killed fifty-eight.” Ibid. The *Georgetown Semi-Weekly Times* confirmed the same total from the same source when “he came up from the marshes by the steam launch *Water Lily* yesterday morning.” See “Thrice Welcome,” *Georgetown Semi-Weekly Times*, December 19, 1896. After reaching Georgetown, the president and his entourage had stopped first at South Island, where they shot from Monday, December 14, to Wednesday, December 16. When the hunting party moved to the Annandale Club marshes on Thursday, the 17th, Alexander wrote in his logbook that he “stayed at house.” Somehow he got word that Cleveland bagged fifty-four on Thursday, thirty-three on Friday, and twenty-eight on Saturday at the Annandale Club. See SIL, 96.

⁷² “The President Departs,” *News and Courier*, December 20, 1896.

duckerman shoots out in his boat, retrieves the duck and is back in his place ready for the next lot.⁷³

A brief lull in the action allowed for coffee, a bite to eat, or a smoke, but soon, “the sport begins again and lasts, if the wind holds, until the tide turns. In order to escape being left in the marshes, there is not a minute to lose getting out and the duckerman strikes it to a minute,” a feat made all the more impressive considering that his skiff was laden with the day’s take.⁷⁴

Rice noted that the waterfowl shot at the Annandale Club were “nearly always” the “big ducks”—that is, mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and American black ducks (*Anas rubripes*). During his morning on the marsh, “the shooting was so incessant that the gun barrels were too hot to hold and the glove came in handy.” Rice recalled bagging 110 birds before eleven o’clock, all mallards and black ducks. “To the man who loves to shoot ducks, and most hunters do, this is a ‘hunter’s paradise,’ ” he proclaimed. Rice was not like most hunters, however. After his time at the club, he confessed that “my soul was sick of duck shooting.”⁷⁵

Rice may have easily topped Cleveland’s total, but his 110 ducks before eleven o’clock was not close to a record at the Annandale Club. Evidence of even more spectacular duck shooting is found in Alexander’s logbook. We know

⁷³ Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks” (quotations); Rice, “Hunts That Were Hunts.” In Rice’s words, the guide was “an indispensable factotum” at the Annandale Club, not only for rowing and calling but also for retrieving. The shallow creeks of North Inlet were lined with beds of jagged oyster shells that would have cut a dog’s feet. See *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks.”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* (first and second quotations); Rice, “Hunts That Were Hunts” (third and fifth quotations); Rice, “Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands” (fourth quotation).

from Alexander's writings that the club maintained a shooting register and that he had access to it. Although this register seems to have been lost, Alexander noted several of the largest one-day bags. On a morning in 1903, a guest of the club, possibly Louis A. Biddle of Philadelphia, bagged 226 ducks before eleven o'clock. According to Alexander, "Biddle's 226 holds the [individual] record."⁷⁶

What is likely the last reference to the Annandale Club shooting register in the historical record dates to 1907, one year before the club's lease expired and it ceased to exist, and we have Alexander to thank for it too. In April, T. Gilbert Pearson, secretary of the National Association of Audubon Societies, traveled to South Carolina in search of egret colonies that had not yet been decimated by plume hunters. He intended to assess conditions for ducks in Georgetown County and quail in Aiken County as well. After concluding his "trip of investigation," Pearson passed through Columbia, where he gave an interview to a reporter from the *State*. He told the *State* that "he visited Gen. E. P. Alexander while on this trip and while at the Annadale club [*sic*] studied all of the records available." This private archive, which at the time would have encompassed nineteen seasons of shooting at the club, evidently made quite an impression on the seasoned ornithologist. "Prof. Pierson [*sic*] continued that he is familiar with the shooting records on the Currituck, Rappahannock, and Havre de Grace, but nowhere are there records which will excel those at Annandale club." For

⁷⁶ SIL, rear flyleaf. Market hunter "Ball" Caines doubtless killed far more ducks on North Inlet than anyone connected with the Annandale Club. Lawyers for the club alleged in court that Caines killed over three thousand ducks on the Annandale preserve in 1902 alone. See " 'Ball' Caines Approved"; "Ball Gaines [*sic*] Is in Trouble."

example, the article explained, “Nowhere else has he seen a record of 145 ducks before 9 A.M.”⁷⁷

In the estimation of Pearson, then, a highly credible authority who had studied data on shooting from the top preserves in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, Annandale was the premier turn-of-the-century ducking club on the East Coast. Pearson did not have occasion to inspect the shooting records of the Santee Club during his time in Georgetown. If he had, then he might have changed his mind about which ducking club was preeminent. The record of 145 ducks before 9 A.M. at the Annandale Club that had so impressed Pearson was eclipsed by the 176 before 9 A.M. recorded at the Santee Club on November 25, 1901.⁷⁸

Cleveland, one of just a handful of individuals known to have shot ducks at both Annandale and Santee, was too tactful to have ever weighed the sport at one club against the other when speaking to the press. Be that as it may, his second trip to the Annandale Club was his last. Thenceforth on his excursions to Georgetown, the president shot exclusively at Alexander’s preserve, where the biggest attraction was seeing his good friend, and the Santee Club. Cleveland quickly became a fixture at the Santee Club. He hunted ducks there six times

⁷⁷ “Great Revenue in Leasing Lands.” On Pearson’s path to becoming secretary and later president of the National Association of Audubon Societies, see Oliver H. Orr Jr., *Saving American Birds: T. Gilbert Pearson and the Founding of the Audubon Movement* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992).

⁷⁸ Santee Club Bag Records, vol. 1, 1901–1909, p. 14, South Carolina Historical Society (hereafter cited as SCBR).



Figure 5.4. Ex-President Grover Cleveland shooting ducks at Alexander's preserve on South Island in March 1907. The other person in the boat cannot be identified. James Henry Rice Jr. reported that Alexander always sent Cleveland into the marshes with two African American boys, one to attend to the boat and the other to retrieve downed ducks as well as anything that Cleveland might desire from his well-supplied camp onshore. *Source*: Grover Cleveland, "Shooting in Season," *Independent*, June 6, 1907, p. 1311.

between December 1897 and January 1901, plus a seventh in March 1907.⁷⁹ He had plans for an eighth trip to the Santee Club as well. In January 1902, Cleveland, in the company of Evans and four others, made it as far as South Island before falling ill. He stayed behind with Alexander, "not well enough to go

⁷⁹ Cleveland spent time at the Santee Club in December 1897, November 1898, March 1899, January 1900, March 1900, December 1900–January 1901, and March 1907. Alexander documented three of these excursions in the SIL. See pp. 129–130, 131, 294. The Charleston and Columbia press covered all of them extensively. Cleveland's name does not appear in the SCBR.

out to [the] blinds,” while the lighthouse tender *Water Lily*, which served as Cleveland’s personal pleasure craft each time he came to Georgetown after 1898, took Evans on to Santee. Alexander jotted in his logbook that Evans returned from the Santee Club three days later with 120 dead ducks.⁸⁰

Compared to the Annandale Club, the history of the Santee Club is much better documented. The earliest seasons, when Cleveland was a regular at the club, are an exception to this rule, however. For example, among the extant sources produced by the club are seven volumes of fairly comprehensive bag records, but the oldest goes back only to 1901, with an isolated entry from 1898.⁸¹ Such also is the case for club member Henry H. Carter’s *Early History of the Santee Club*, a generously illustrated, twenty-two-page pamphlet from 1934. As a starting point for studying the development of the club, Carter’s short narrative is invaluable. Nevertheless, the author lamented, “There are no records of shooting or other doings of the Club for the three years from 1898 to 1900.”⁸² More records from this period are available than Carter realized, but not many. The Santee Club is similar to the Annandale Club in that contemporaneous newspaper accounts and court cases provide important details about its origins. Unlike the Annandale Club, though, Carter’s pamphlet and some items preserved in manuscript collections at the University of South Carolina’s South Caroliniana

⁸⁰ SIL, 191–193 (quotation on p. 191).

⁸¹ See SCBR, vol. 1, pp. 1–3, 9.

⁸² Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 4.

Library, the Charleston Museum, and the South Carolina Historical Society fill significant gaps in the press coverage and legal records.

The timing of Cleveland's introduction to the Santee Club looks from the newspapers to have been coincidental. Alexander was absent for Cleveland's third South Island jaunt, which took place in December 1897, because he was in Central America serving as arbiter in the Nicaragua-Costa Rica boundary dispute. Cleveland had appointed the old engineer to this position the previous February, one month before the end of his second presidential term.⁸³ It seems, then, that with Alexander out of the country, no preparations had been made for Cleveland at the Annandale Club. On the morning of December 12, relayed the *News and Courier*, the *Water Lily* brought some of Cleveland's party from the "shooting camp" at Ford's Point to Georgetown "for mail and dispatches."⁸⁴ That same morning, a small group led by Hugh Garden of New York City came into port. "These gentlemen are on a hunting expedition and are fully equipped for the sport of duck shooting, and came up to town for the purpose of extending to Ex-President Cleveland an invitation to hunt on their preserves on South Santee," the *Georgetown Semi-Weekly Times* recounted.⁸⁵ Garden and Cleveland were already acquainted, so when word of the former's offer reached the latter, he

⁸³ On Alexander's diplomatic work, which concluded in August 1900, see Klein, *Edward Porter Alexander*, 202–213; Golay, *To Gettysburg and Beyond*, 317–325.

⁸⁴ "Mr. Cleveland's Luck."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; "Waiting for Wind"; "Yankee Sporting" (quotation).

accepted.⁸⁶ After two days at Garden's preserve, Cleveland reportedly said that he had "never enjoyed finer shooting in his life."⁸⁷

Garden had started assembling his preserve earlier that year. In a letter dated January 9, 1897, he informed his half-first cousin Thomas E. Richardson, a down-on-his-luck former Georgetown rice planter who had turned to selling insurance and real estate in Sumter, that "there is a matter of business coming up, in which I would like you to make a fee."⁸⁸ Born in Sumter in 1840, Garden's distinguished ancestry in the Palmetto State stretched back to the seventeenth century. An 1860 graduate of South Carolina College, Garden enlisted in the Confederate army the following year. He saw extensive action from Fort Sumter

⁸⁶ Ever since West Virginia separated from Virginia and was admitted to the Union in 1863, the two states had at been at odds over their respective obligations to the mother state's pre-Civil War debt. Before the matter could be resolved, Virginia had to reach an agreement with the state bondholders over its share of the debt. In the early 1890s, Garden, on the Bondholders' Committee, and Cleveland, on the committee's Advisory Board, had worked with the state to formulate a plan for readjusting and settling Virginia's debt. For a concise overview of the Virginia-West Virginia debt dispute, see John V. Orth, "Virginia v. West Virginia," in *The Oxford Guide to United States Supreme Court Decisions*, ed. Kermit L. Hall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 320. On Garden and Cleveland's roles in the negotiations between the creditors and the state of Virginia, see *Special Message of the Governor of Virginia Transmitting Report of the Commission Appointed on the Public Debt* (Richmond, Va.: James E. Goode, Printer, 1892). Both men also were members of the Manhattan Club in New York City, an elite political club for devotees of the Democratic Party. On Garden and Cleveland as members of the Manhattan Club, see Henry Watterson, *History of the Manhattan Club: A Narrative of the Activities of Half a Century* (New York: Manhattan Club, 1915), xl. In May 1892, Garden hosted a dinner for Cleveland and the other members of the bondholders' Advisory Board to celebrate the Virginia debt settlement. See "To Celebrate Virginia's Debt Settlement," *New York Herald*, May 18, 1892.

⁸⁷ "Cleveland Hunting Party," *News and Courier*, December 18, 1897.

⁸⁸ [Thomas E. Richardson], "Index to H. R. Garden's Letters to Thos. E. Richardson," n.d., box 2, folder 182, Santee Club Papers, 1897–1902, Thomas Eveleigh Richardson Collection, ca. 1683–1933, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia (hereafter cited as SCP). All extracts from the index are either direct quotes from Richardson or his paraphrases of Garden. When Richardson was a young man, probably in the late 1860s, he inherited two rice plantations on Winyah Bay from his grandmother. He sold the plantations in 1887. See Linder and Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County*, 565; Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 152. Garden's mother and Richardson's father were half-siblings. See Edward Lining Manigault and Horry Frost Prioleau, *Register of Carolina Huguenots: Partial Listing of 81 Refugee Families* (Piedmont, Calif.: [printed by the authors?], 2007), 1: 170, 172. See also James Henry Rice Jr., "Thomas E. Richardson," *State*, August 10, 1933.

to Appomattox, serving after 1862 as captain of a company of light artillery. When the war ended, Garden left South Carolina to attend law school at the University of Virginia, and since 1883 he had practiced corporate law in New York.⁸⁹ His business with Richardson in early 1897 did not concern business at all, but pleasure: the well-to-do, well-connected attorney also was an outdoor enthusiast. Garden descended from a long line of southern sportsmen. In fact, his great-uncle Dr. Alexander Garden had been a member of the venerable Saint Thomas's Hunting Club, referenced in chapter 4, in the 1790s.⁹⁰ Hugh Garden now sought his cousin's assistance in establishing a private hunting preserve on the coast of his home state—"a real Sportsmans paradise," he wrote—where beginning the next winter, he and some of his friends might partake in lively duck shooting and an occasional, old-fashioned deer drive like the ones he remembered from his youth. In all probability, Garden did not take up waterfowling in earnest until after he settled in the North.⁹¹

It appears from Richardson's papers that Garden fancied one of South Carolina's numerous barrier islands for his preserve, a predictable choice for a

⁸⁹ On Garden and his illustrious South Carolina ancestors, which included a colonial governor, a Church of England commissary, a renowned naturalist, war heroes of the American Revolution, and a state-court chancellor, see "Garden, Hugh Richardson," in *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 2: 156; "Hugh R. Garden," in *Contemporary American Biography*, vol. 1, pt. 1 (New York: Atlantic Publishing and Engraving Company, 1895), 197–200; Harrison, *New York State's Prominent and Progressive Men*, vol. 3, s.v. "Hugh Richardson Garden"; "Capt. Hugh R. Garden to Speak Tonight."

⁹⁰ J. H. Easterby, ed., "The St. Thomas Hunting Club, 1785–1801: Its Rules, Excerpts from Its Minutes, and a List of Members," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 46 (October 1945): 210. On the kinship of Hugh Garden and Alexander Garden, see "Garden, Hugh Richardson," in *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 2: 156; "Hugh R. Garden," in *Contemporary American Biography*, vol. 1, pt. 1, 197–198.

⁹¹ [Richardson], "Index to H. R. Garden's Letters," n.d., box 2, folder 182, SCP.

native Carolinian. Separated from each other and the mainland by a maze of tidal marshes, creeks, and inlets, these narrow, low-lying ridges of sand dunes fringed the length of the shoreline southward from the Horry County strand. Generations of sportsmen such as William Elliott III had referred to those too small and infertile to support cultivation of Sea Island cotton as “hunting islands.” The luxuriant maritime forests of the islands teemed with whitetail deer and other upland game all year round, and during winter throngs of migratory waterfowl descended on the shallow brackish ponds sheltered in natural depressions of the adjacent salt marshes to rest after foraging in the nearby rice fields.⁹²

In a subsequent letter to Richardson, Garden said that he thought remote and uninhabited Bull’s Island, twenty miles northeast of Charleston, would suit his purposes. In May, though, after investigating sites further up the coast, Richardson recommended Murphy’s Island, situated twenty miles northeast of Bull’s Island and fifteen miles south of Georgetown, not far from the village of McClellanville.⁹³ Murphy’s Island was part of the fertile Santee River delta, a large, freshwater-dominated estuary with a strong tidal pitch that had long been one of the hubs of rice production in South Carolina.

⁹² On the historical distinction between “sea islands” and “hunting islands,” see Benjamin Reynolds to David Ramsay, December 1, 1808, quoted in David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina, from Its First Settlement in 1670, to the Year 1808* (Charleston, S.C.: Published by David Longworth, for the author, 1809), 2: 281–283 (n.). See also “The Huntsman’s Paradise,” *News and Courier*, December 30, 1885; William Elliott, *Carolina Sports by Land and Water; Including Incidents of Devil-Fishing, Wild-Cat, Deer, and Bear Hunting, Etc.*, Southern Classics (1846; repr., Columbia: Published by the University of South Carolina Press in cooperation with the Institute for Southern Studies and the South Caroliniana Society of the University of South Carolina, 1994), 132 (quotation).

⁹³ [Richardson], “Index to H. R. Garden’s Letters,” n.d., box 2, folder 182, SCP.

The fertility of the Santee delta came from its rich alluvial soil. The mighty Santee River formed at the confluence of the Congaree and Wateree Rivers, fifty-one river miles southeast of Columbia, near the geographical center of South Carolina. The Santee was only 143 miles in length, but it and its tributaries drained an area of 15,700 square miles in the Carolinas, making the Santee watershed the third largest on the Atlantic Coast between the Saint Lawrence River and the Gulf of Mexico. The headwaters of this system rose on the lush slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the wettest region in the eastern United States. Erosion from abundant precipitation and rapid surface runoff filled mountain streams with fine sediment. These swift-moving tributaries picked up additional silt and clay as they flowed generally southeastward across the piedmont plateau toward the coastal plain. Below the rocky shoals of the fall line, the terrain flattened, the current slowed, and the channels of the Congaree, Lower Wateree, and Upper Santee Rivers wound tortuously through broad floodplain swamps. Periodically, after heavy rains in the Blue Ridge and piedmont, these rivers overflowed their banks and filled the swamps with muddy floodwaters. The Upper Santee deposited some of its sediment load in the Santee Swamp during floods, but most of the silt, clay, and mud continued downstream to the delta. The Lower Santee became influenced by tidal action about thirty-eight river miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Where the turbid freshwater and denser saltwater mixed, the suspended particles finally settled to the bottom. Approximately eighteen river miles from the ocean, the Lower Santee divided into

roughly parallel northern and southern branches. The North Santee and South Santee distributed the nutrient-rich alluvium throughout the delta.⁹⁴

Rice plantations lined the North Santee and South Santee Rivers for almost their entire lengths. Murphy's Island was located at the mouth of the South Santee. What led Richardson to fix on this location is unclear. While it could have been the island's proximity to the Santee rice plantations or its reputation locally as "the heart of the duck country," a more probable explanation was economic expedience.⁹⁵ The owner of Murphy's Island, Robert H. Lucas of San Francisco, was offering it for sale or lease at the time, and he was highly motivated to make a deal.

Like Garden, Lucas was a Confederate veteran and displaced South Carolinian. Historians consider his grandfather Jonathan, an English millwright and inventor who immigrated to Charleston around 1786, to be "the Eli Whitney of the American rice industry," and his father, William, flourished as a rice planter on the South Santee. Robert Lucas grew up in a world of wealth and privilege

⁹⁴ Like all rivers, the Santee has constantly changed course, so measurements of its length vary from source to source and year to year. Measuring the area of its drainage basin also is problematic since the origins of some of the headwaters are difficult to pinpoint. My sources were two reports by the Army Corps of Engineers: U.S. War Department, Army, Corps of Engineers, *Santee River, N.C. and S.C.: Letter from the Secretary of War Transmitting Pursuant to Section 1 of the River and Harbor Act Approved January 21, 1927, a Letter from the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, Dated March 2, 1933, Submitting a Report, Together with Accompanying Papers and Illustrations, Containing a General Plan for the Improvement of Santee River, N.C. and S.C., for the Purposes of Navigation and Efficient Development of Its Water Power, the Control of Floods, and the Needs of Irrigation*, 73d Cong., 1st sess., House of Representatives Document no. 96 (Washington, [D.C.]: [U.S. Government Printing Office], 1933); U.S. Engineer Office, Charleston, S.C., "Survey Report on Lower Santee River, South Carolina, to Determine the Effects of Diversion on Navigation, Irrigation, and Wildlife," September 30, 1942, box 136, "Santee Cooper, 1939–1944" folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, General Correspondence, 1890–1956, Reservations, National Archives II, College Park, Md.

⁹⁵ Rice, "Thomas E. Richardson."



Figure 5.5. This map illustrates the extent of the rice-production grid in the Santee River delta during the mid-nineteenth century. The map is oriented with west-northwest at the top. The Atlantic Ocean is at the bottom. *Source: U.S. Coast Survey, Map of Part of the Santee Rivers and Vicinity, South Carolina (1873).*

that quickly crumbled following the Civil War. He was so deeply in debt by 1867 that he sold his plantation, Egremont, and at the age of forty-two struck out for California with his family.⁹⁶ Since leaving home, Lucas had known mostly personal disappointments and professional frustrations. “I simply long to be back in So[uth] Ca[rolina],” he wrote in 1888, disheartened by a string of fleeting, dead-end jobs and futile get-rich-quick schemes on the West Coast, “but I cannot go back as a failure.”⁹⁷

Three years after William Lucas’s death in 1878, Robert inherited Murphy’s Island. As a youth, he had spent significant time there. In those days, the island bustled with activity. His father operated a steam-powered rice-

⁹⁶ Jonathan Lucas genealogy (typescript), n.d., 1–2, Lucas Scrapbook, Lucas Family Vertical File, South Carolina Historical Society; Anne Baker Leland Bridges and Roy Williams III, *St. James Santee Plantation Parish: History and Records, 1685–1925* (Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Company, 1997), 236, 249, 281; William Baldwin, *Inland Passages: Making a Lowcountry Life* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2004), 113; R. H. Lucas to “Oly” [Alexander H. Lucas], December 6, 1870, box 13, Personal Correspondence folders, Lucas Family Papers, 1796–1903, Charleston Museum, Charleston, S.C. (hereafter cited as LFP); Robert [H. Lucas] to “My dear Father” [William Lucas], December 21, 1873, *ibid.* On Jonathan Lucas, see “Pioneer in Rice Culture,” *News and Courier*, May 15, 1910; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. “Lucas, Jonathan,” available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310008671 (accessed May 25, 2011); Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 165; Henry C. Dethloff, *A History of the American Rice Industry, 1685–1985* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988), 29–36 (quotation on p. 29); Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730–1815* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 253–258; Tom Downey, “Lucas, Jonathan,” in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 573; Richard Dwight Porcher Jr. and William Robert Judd, *The Market Preparation of Carolina Rice: An Illustrated History of the Innovations in the Lowcountry Rice Kingdom* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), 202–208, 216–220. On William Lucas, see J. M. L. Jr. [John M. Lofton Jr.], “The Wedge, Santee River Symbol of Rice Planting,” *Do You Know Your South Carolina*, *News and Courier*, December 9, 1957; Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 296, 320–322; Bridges and Williams, *St. James Santee Plantation Parish*, 168, 281; Linder and Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County*, 741–742. Robert Lucas was not the only bankrupt rice planter who emigrated. See Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 454–456.

⁹⁷ Robert [H. Lucas] to “My dear Father” [William Lucas], December 21, 1873, box 13, Personal Correspondence folders, LFP; R. H. Lucas to “My dear Oly” [Alexander H. Lucas], June 17, 1881, *ibid.*; R. H. Lucas to “My Dear Brother” [Alexander H. Lucas], March 30, 1888, *ibid.* (quotation).

pounding mill on its northern end and a 650-acre rice plantation, farmed by a community of resident slaves and capable of producing thirty thousand bushels of grain per year at its peak, in the western marshes. There also was an airy summer cottage near the beach, where the Lucas family resorted during the malarial season.⁹⁸

When it passed to Robert, however, the island was more liability than asset. The last Lucas to plant rice on Murphy's Island, one of Robert's brothers, gave up for good about this time, and the mill, which had been abandoned after the war, burned in 1887. A settlement of freedmen remained as squatters with the permission of the owner, growing rice in small quantities and raising livestock, until at least 1893, when a severe hurricane hit the island. Save for a watchman, whom Lucas retained to discourage poachers—"shotgun bummers," he called them—Murphy's Island likely was deserted when Richardson inquired about it through Charleston attorney Theodore D. Jervy Jr., Lucas's cousin and agent. Lucas struggled each year to pay the twenty-five-dollar tax on the property (approximately 663 in 2014 dollars), sometimes even having to borrow the money, and would have preferred to sell all 4,732 acres outright. Instead, with no other prospects, he entered into a three-year hunting lease with Garden commencing on December 1, 1897. The annual rent on the property was \$300 (8,830 in 2014 dollars).⁹⁹

⁹⁸ "Deed of Partition, Heirs of William Lucas," December 17, 1880, box 14, LFP; Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 400; Baldwin, *Inland Passages*, 112; Linder and Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County*, 742.

⁹⁹ Baldwin, *Inland Passages*, 112–117; Robert Lucas Jr. to "Uncle Alex" [Alexander H. Lucas], June 27, 1882, box 13, Personal Correspondence folders, LFP; R. H. Lucas to "My dear Brother" [Alexander H. Lucas], January 16 (quotation) and April 20, 1887, *ibid.*; R. H. Lucas to "My dear

Murphy's Island also made sense as the centerpiece for a hunting preserve because it was surrounded by other available properties. Two of the tracts were neighboring islands: Little Murphy's, located immediately to the south of Murphy's, and Cedar, which was across the river at the foot of the delta. Within a year of reaching out to Richardson, Garden had acquired all three of the islands, including large sections of tidal marsh and abandoned rice fields in back of them. In addition to the lease on Murphy's Island, Garden arranged to lease Fanny Meade Plantation in the delta, "which includes the lower portion of Cedar Island," from retired rice planter Thomas Pinckney at \$150 per year (4,420 in 2014 dollars) for five years beginning on December 1, 1897.¹⁰⁰ Two weeks after the Cedar Island lease took effect, Garden paid the heirs of Arthur M. Blake \$15,000 (442,000 in 2014 dollars) for the title to Little Murphy's Island together with several depreciated rice plantations along the South Santee and Alligator Creek, a meandering tributary that cut off Murphy's Island and Little Murphy's Island from the mainland. Before the war, the old Arthur Blake plantations—Washo, the Cape, and Ormond Hall—had produced over sixty thousand bushels of rice annually. As its name implies, the Cape and the adjoining Blake tracts, often spoken of collectively as "Blake's Plantation," represented the eastern

Brother" [Alexander H. Lucas], February 20, 1889, March 3 and 25, 1891, December 2 and 20, 1892, February 7, 1893, August 31, 1894, July 27, 1895, box 12, Personal Correspondence folders, LFP; Theodore D. Jervy [Jr.] to Thomas Richardson, January 26, 1898, Jervy Letter Book, 1895–1898, p. 476, box 254, folder 3, Theodore Dehon Jervy Papers, 1871–1892, South Carolina Historical Society (hereafter cited as TDJP); lease, Robert H. Lucas to Hugh R. Garden, recorded January 24, 1898, Deed Book Z-22, pp. 224–225, Register of Mesne Conveyances, O. T. Wallace County Office Building, Charleston, S.C.

¹⁰⁰ Lease, Thos. Pinckney to Hugh R. Garden, recorded December 29, 1897, Deed Book L-23, pp. 12–13, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyances (quotation). See also lease, Thomas Pinckney to Hugh R. Garden, recorded February 10, 1898, Deed Book Q, pp. 472–474, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds.

extent of the mainland. Through the acquisition of Murphy's Island, Little Murphy's Island, and Blake's Plantation, Garden linked the wide expanse of marshes and rice fields on either side of Alligator Creek to form a contiguous ducking ground at the heart of the preserve that members of the Santee Club in later years would call "the Big Marsh." In all, he amassed almost forty square miles. Richardson, who accompanied Garden on the initial exploration of his South Santee holdings in December 1897, believed that the far-reaching preserve possessed "the best Ducking Grounds on the Atlantic Coast, if not in America."¹⁰¹

For lodging, Garden leased Fairfield Plantation on the South Santee. Fairfield was located about seven miles upriver from the islands. It belonged to the owner of Cedar Island, Thomas Pinckney, and had been in his family since the mid-1780s. The term of the lease for Fairfield was the same as for Cedar Island—that is, it commenced on December 1, 1897, and ended on November 30, 1902—but the yearly rent of \$250 (7,360 in 2014 dollars) was \$100 higher. Richardson described the two-story house with a basement at Fairfield, which was built circa 1730, as "an old mansion." The stately building had been sitting

¹⁰¹ Conveyance, F. R. Blake and R. B. Blake, agents, and B. H. Rutledge and H. E. Young to Hugh R. Garden, recorded April 9, 1898, Deed Book R-22, pp. 694–697, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyances; conveyance, heirs of Arthur Blake to Hugh R. Garden, recorded April 9, 1898, Deed Book C-23, pp. 232–236, *ibid.*; conveyance, Arthur R. Young to Hugh R. Garden, recorded May 16, 1898, Deed Book H-23, p. 163, *ibid.*; Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 29 ("Big Marsh" quotation), 36; John Vavasour Noel, "Santee Gun Club Conserves Game," *News and Courier*, February 28, 1932; Thomas E. Richardson to A. H. Hayden, September 25, 1900, box 2, folder 177, SCP ("best Ducking Grounds" quotation). Prior to the Garden purchase, Washo was sometimes spelled with an e at the end. See "Archie" [Archibald Rutledge] to Herbert [R. Sass], July 19, [1947?], box 24/101, folder 27, Herbert Ravenel Sass Papers, South Carolina Historical Society.

vacant for some time, and as Garden and Richardson soon learned, its roof leaked.¹⁰²

Richardson's notes seem to indicate that Garden was back in New York several days before Christmas. He returned in mid-January, though, this time with a group of unidentified "friends," whom he advised Richardson in advance that he was "going to turn . . . over to Capt Pinckney Col R & you to entertain and I will look around and make arrangements for the year."¹⁰³ By "Col R," Garden was referring to South Santee rice planter Henry M. Rutledge. Rutledge owned Hampton Plantation, which was situated two miles northwest of Fairfield, and as explained in the previous chapter, he was himself an aficionado of duck shooting. While Richardson, Pinckney, and Rutledge were looking after his friends from New York, Garden arranged for repairs at Fairfield and a means of reliable transportation for the party to and from the plantation. In late January, the *Charleston Evening Post's* "In McClellanville" column contained news that "the old Fairfield house and grounds on the river have been thoroughly renovated and the sportsmen are enjoying the delights of the South Carolina shooting season.

¹⁰² Lease, Thos. Pinckney to Hugh R. Garden, recorded December 29, 1897, Deed Book L-23, pp. 12–13, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyances; Linder and Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County and the Santee River*, 725–731; Fairfield Plantation National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1974, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Thomas E. Richardson to A. H. Hayden, September 25, 1900, box 2, folder 177, SCP (quotation); Thomas Pinckney to Thomas E. Richardson, June 12, 1899, box 2, folder 176, *ibid.*

¹⁰³ [Richardson], "Index to H. R. Garden's Letters," n.d., box 2, folder 182, SCP.

Ducks are being bagged by the hundred and the little launch 'Beulah' is kept busy plying between the happy hunting ground and the city."¹⁰⁴

The announcement in the same column that "the South Santee sporting club has become an established fact" was a bit premature.¹⁰⁵ It was not until the following autumn that the "Santee Club of South Carolina" received its charter under the state of New York's Membership Corporation Law.¹⁰⁶ In the absence of minutes and account books, we are dependent on Henry Carter for the names of the Santee Club's original members. He stated that Garden "enlisted" five South Carolinians and five New Yorkers to join him in the club. From South Carolina were Richardson, Pinckney, Rutledge, Porter Alexander, and Charleston attorney Henry E. Young.¹⁰⁷ Again, Richardson and Garden were half-first cousins, and Pinckney, Rutledge, and Young's family ties were interwoven in the fabric of the low country's "vast cousinage."¹⁰⁸ The five charter members from New York were all connected with Garden through membership in the New York Southern Society, an elite social and cultural organization for expatriate southerners living in the city. They were attorney Burton N. Harrison, originally from Louisiana;

¹⁰⁴ "In McClellanville," *Charleston Evening Post*, January 28, 1898. Later in the year, the Charleston press noted that "a first-class hunting lodge was established last winter by a club composed of wealthy Northern sporting men at Fairfield on the South Santee. They were present in force for some months at the lodge and expressed themselves as highly delighted with the fine shooting afforded by this country." See H. S. McG., "Charleston's Hinterland," *News and Courier*, August 20, 1898.

¹⁰⁵ "In McClellanville."

¹⁰⁶ *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript, 24; Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 3 (quotation); Thomas E. Richardson to A. H. Hayden, September 25, 1900, box 2, folder 177, SCP.

¹⁰⁷ On Young, see "Col. H. E. Young Has Passed Away," *News and Courier*, April 10, 1918.

¹⁰⁸ Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House*, 2: 5.

financier Dr. James H. Parker and attorney George Gordon Battle, both of North Carolina; attorney James Lindsay Gordon of Virginia; and railroad contractor Joseph W. Woolfolk of Georgia. Battle was a cousin of Garden's wife, and Gordon was Battle's cousin.¹⁰⁹ The first organizational meeting of the Santee Club likely took place in New York City on November 10. Nothing definitive is known about the meeting, though one can assume that the club's southern contingent did not attend. Additionally, circumstances suggest that this was when Garden officially assumed the offices of president and treasurer of the Santee Club and Battle was installed as secretary. At the next meeting, which occurred on December 30, 1898, the club adopted a constitution and by-laws.¹¹⁰

Clearly, Garden was the Santee Club's driving force. In addition to individually acquiring all of its land titles and leases, he bought a fifty-three-foot steamboat, the *Natoma*, in time for the start of the 1898–1899 season, which Cleveland rechristened the *Santee* during his visit to the club in late

¹⁰⁹ Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 4. On Harrison, see "Burton N. Harrison Dead," *New York Times*, March 30, 1904. On Parker, see "Dr. Jas. H. Parker, Financier, Dead," *ibid.*, January 28, 1915. On Battle, see "George G. Battle, Lawyer, 80, Dead," *ibid.*, April 30, 1949. On Battle's kinship with Garden, see Thomas E. Richardson to George Gordon Battle, March 7, 1900, box 2, folder 177, SCP. On Gordon and his kinship with Battle, see "James L. Gordon Passes Away," *Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), December 1, 1904. On Woolfolk, see "Capt. Joseph W. Woolfolk," *New York Times*, November 2, 1915. On these men and Garden as members of the New York Southern Society, see *Year Book of the New York Southern Society for the Years 1901 and 1902* (New York: [New York Southern Society?], 1902), 7–8, 59–60, 63, 67; *Year Book of the New York Southern Society for the Year 1910–11* (New York: [New York Southern Society?], 1910), 89, 114. "Located in the city with the largest and wealthiest concentration of displaced southerners," the New York Southern Society became, Daniel E. Sutherland writes, "the largest, most famous, and best-financed southern organization in the North." See Sutherland, *The Confederate Carpetbaggers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 134.

¹¹⁰ *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript, 24–25, 45; "Until Death Them Do Part," *News and Courier*, December 7, 1898.

November.¹¹¹ At some point in 1898, Garden also secured the services of a local white man, a veteran market hunter named Charles H. Mills, as the Santee Club's head guide. Mills was living in a house on Murphy's Island by mid-November.¹¹²

Mills made Cleveland and Evans's second time shooting at Murphy's Island even more memorable than their first about a year earlier. "The large mallard specimens fairly darken the sky over the hunters and each day's sport results in several hundred being bagged," reported the *News and Courier* on November 25.¹¹³ On the morning of the 22nd, Evans and several other gunners had brought down a total of three hundred mallards, and on the 24th, Cleveland together with two others had bagged 160 mallards. "Mr. Cleveland is having his usual good luck at shooting ducks at the Santee Gun Club preserve," read a special dispatch from Georgetown in the November 25 edition of the *Baltimore Sun*. It closed, "They all express the opinion that Murphy's Island is the finest hunting grounds on the Atlantic coast."¹¹⁴

Garden's plan was to turn over ownership of the real and personal property that he had been accumulating to the Santee Club after incorporation in exchange for membership stock. Once the club was in a secure financial

¹¹¹ "Yachting Notes," *New York Herald*, November 25, 1898; "Until Death Them Do Part." Garden spelled the boat's name with a terminal *h*. See Hugh R. Garden to Thomas E. Richardson, November 13, 1899, box 2, folder 176, SCP. Carter was under the mistaken impression the yacht was called the "Nakoma." See Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 3.

¹¹² Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 11; SCBR, vol. 1, p. 1.

¹¹³ "Mr. Cleveland's Duck Party," *News and Courier*, November 25, 1898.

¹¹⁴ "Mr. Cleveland Bound South," *ibid.*, November 20, 1898; "Mr. Cleveland's Duck Party"; "Mr. Cleveland's Luck in Hunting Ducks," *Baltimore Sun*, November 25, 1898 (quotation).



Figure 5.6. “Captain Hugh R. Garden and His Servant in the Deer Forest near the Santee Club.” *Source*: “Hunting Ground in Dixie,” *New-York Tribune*, December 9, 1900.

position, he also planned to sublease Murphy’s Island and the other rented holdings to it.¹¹⁵ For the convenience of the members, Garden built a lodge on Little Murphy’s Island sometime in 1899.¹¹⁶

Unfortunately for Garden, the rest of the original members did not share his enthusiasm about investing their fortunes in the club, and even if they had

¹¹⁵ See *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript, 25, 70; Hugh R. Garden to Thomas E. Richardson, December 6, 1899, box 2, folder 176, SCP; conveyance, Hugh R. Garden to the Santee Club, recorded March 12, 1901, Deed Book Y-23, p. 76, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyances; Theodore D. Jervey [Jr.] to Eben D. Jordan [Jr.], January 15, 1901, Jervey Letter Book, 1900–1904, pp. 12–14, box 255, folder 2, TDJP.

¹¹⁶ H. C. Guzman to Thomas E. Richardson, August 18, 1899, box 2, folder 176, SCP; Hugh R. Garden to Thomas E. Richardson, November 13, 1899, *ibid*.

wanted to, most of the South Carolinians, with the possible exception of Pinckney, were not well off enough financially to have pulled their weight in such a grandiose venture. Apart from Richardson and Pinckney, there is no indication that any of the charter members from South Carolina ever paid dues or actively participated in club business, and Richardson's involvement was purely speculative. For having helped Garden with the legwork, he received two shares of stock in the club, which he expected to sell later at a considerable profit. Richardson was in over his head, though, and within in a few months of receiving them, he had already pledged one of his shares as collateral for a sizable loan—something he would do repeatedly over the next few years.¹¹⁷ Garden's decision to form a club with his friends was putting a strain on both his relationships and his pocketbook.

Within a year of purchasing the *Natoma*, Garden was in real financial trouble. "My expenditures . . . in order to get the Club on its feet," Garden wrote to Richardson, "far exceed any sum of money which I could possibly borrow even

¹¹⁷ Hugh R. Garden to Thomas E. Richardson, November 13, December 6, December 13, 1899, box 2, folder 176, SCP; [Thomas E. Richardson] to B. H. Rutledge, May 22, 1901, box 2, folder 177, *ibid.* The loan that Richardson discussed in the letter to Rutledge, which seems to have been of a personal nature, was for four hundred dollars and had not been discharged after a year. See also the promissory notes in the amounts of \$360, \$366.65, \$366.65, and \$366.65 issued to Richardson by the First National Bank of Charleston on March 7, June 8, September 9, and November 11, 1901, respectively, with one proprietary share in the Santee Club deposited as collateral in each instance. The notes are in box 2, folders 178–180, SCP. Andrew Simonds, a member of the Santee Club, was president of the First National Bank. In a letter to his brother, Richardson mentioned an additional "two Notes which will soon fall due—each one for a hundred dollars: one in Charleston and the other in Columbia. Can you not try and arrange to have the one in Columbia renewed for sixty days and I will try to go to Charleston tomorrow and see what can be done down there." See Richardson to A. M. Richardson, November 26, 1900, box 2, folder 178, *ibid.* For evidence of Pinckney's involvement with club affairs, see Pinckney to Thomas E. Richardson, June 12, 1899, box 2, folder 176, *ibid.*

by pledging the entire property.”¹¹⁸ Garden had aimed to recoup his initial outlay (and then some) by selling shares in the club. He would retain twenty of the thirty memberships himself and sell the remaining ten for \$5,000 each (147,000 in 2014 dollars). Garden commissioned George S. McAlpin of New York City, a real-estate broker and well-known wing shooter, to promote the Santee Club among his wide circle of sporting associates. McAlpin’s compensation would be one share of the stock. McAlpin showed the club to “several distinguished parties” in late 1898, one newspaper noted, but he only managed to make a single sale—John W. Mackay, a silver-mining tycoon who had struck a second bonanza in the cable-telegraph industry, bought one share for his son Clarence.¹¹⁹ In the constitution and by-laws that were ratified at the end of the year, Garden and the other directors of the club made a change to its organization, substituting the thirty shares valued at \$5,000 apiece with two less expensive options—fifty “proprietary” memberships at \$1,500 each, and fifty “privilege” memberships at \$1,000 each (44,200 and 29,400 in 2014 dollars, respectively).¹²⁰ Sales of shares remained slow, however, and the income from annual membership dues and per-diem usage fees did not come close to meeting the club’s expenses, forcing Garden to refinance its debt and advance it additional cash. “The Club, on that basis, is an absolute failure” and “an

¹¹⁸ Hugh R. Garden to Thomas E. Richardson, November 13, 1899, box 2, folder 176, SCP.

¹¹⁹ “Lawsuit in Santee Club,” *News and Courier*, February 7, 1907. On John Mackay, see Michael J. Makley, *John Mackay: Silver King in the Gilded Age*, Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in Nevada History (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2009). On Clarence Mackay, see note 28 of chapter 1.

¹²⁰ “Lawsuit in Santee Club”; *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript, 25.

intolerable burden on me, a thousand times more than any other,” Garden told Richardson on November 13, 1899. Richardson was in dire financial straits himself. Unable to pay dues and borrowing money against his shares, he was desirous of Garden (or anyone else) buying out half or all of his interest in the club.¹²¹ “If I had any money I would gladly send you some, without regard to the Club, and its affairs; but as a matter of fact, my funds were exhausted last spring, and I have not collected enough this year to pay my office rent or my board,” complained Garden to his cousin. “The unfortunate purchase of Blakes and the other property and the effort to build up a Club,” he went on to say, “was simply a foolish piece of business on my part. I am trying to get out of it, and get you out of it also as best I can.” In the meantime, Garden offered Richardson the shotgun, rifle, and cartridges that he had left behind last season, as “I do not see any prospects of my going down there at all this winter, for the simple reason that I have no money to spend on any recreation whatever.”¹²²

Garden’s office rent and board were not the only payments in arrears. The Santee Club also was late in paying the rent on their preserve’s linchpin tract, Murphy’s Island, which was due each year on December 1. The person in charge of collecting the rent on the property was Theodore Jervey, the attorney for the

¹²¹ Hugh R. Garden to Thomas E. Richardson, December 6, 1899, box 2, folder 176, SCP; Garden to Richardson, November 13, 1899, *ibid* (quotations). Richardson’s money problems and desire to cut ties with the Santee Club by selling his shares dominate the correspondence in the SCP. For an example of Richardson reaching out to a prospective buyer concerning his shares, see Richardson to A. H. Hayden, September 25, 1900, box 2, folder 177, *ibid*. Richardson’s relationship with the club progressively deteriorated, especially after he defaulted on a one-thousand-dollar assessment in 1902. He interpreted the club’s handling of the matter as an attempt “to Rob Swindle and Freeze me out in violation of all Laws of decency and Honor.” See Thomas E. Richardson to B. H. Rutledge, October 14, 1902, box 2, folder 181, *ibid*.

¹²² Hugh R. Garden to Thomas E. Richardson, November 13, 1899, box 2, folder 176, SCP (quotations); Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 6.

owner of the island, Robert Lucas. Jervey found dealing with the club to be a frustrating ordeal. “I received a great deal of interesting information by letter, as to the immense worth of many of the members of the Santee Club,” Jervey later remarked, “but extracted my rent considerably after it was due.” And this was “unreasonably exacted,” he added, “with all expenditure of postage stamps, by me.” Jervey notified Lucas in April 1900, five months after Garden said he was out of money, that the rent on Murphy’s Island was unpaid.¹²³

Jervey doubtless was unaware that the Santee Club was then in the midst of another reorganization. More than a few shares had sold since the first reorganization, but the club remained insolvent. Carter listed sixteen active members of the club in 1900, though only two were left from the charter group, Garden and Woolfolk.¹²⁴ Brought on by the club’s “pressing obligations,” this latest reorganization reduced the number of memberships from one hundred to forty and increased the par value of each share to \$2,000 (58,200 in 2014 dollars). The annual dues on each membership were set at \$125 (3,640 in 2014 dollars). Garden, who had held sixty of the one hundred memberships, surrendered all but eight in the restructuring. His reaction is preserved in a printed excerpt of the minutes from the March 30, 1900, meeting in which the

¹²³ Lease, Robert H. Lucas to Hugh R. Garden, recorded January 24, 1898, Deed Book Z-22, pp. 224–225, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyances; Theodore D. Jervey [Jr.] to Eben D. Jordan [Jr.], January 15, 1901, Jervey Letter Book, 1900–1904, pp. 12–14, box 255, folder 2, TDJP (quotations); Jervey to R. H. Lucas, April 2, 1900, Jervey Letter Book, 1898–1900, p. 385, box 255, folder 1, *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 4. Carter left out Richardson, but correspondence from Battle to Richardson indicates that the latter was still a member in 1902, though not in good standing. See George Gordon Battle to Thomas E. Richardson, January 17, 1902, box 2, folder 181, SCP. Richardson may have paid dues for the last time in the first quarter of 1901. See the notation at the bottom of George Gordon Battle to Thomas E. Richardson, November 19, 1900, box 2, folder 178, *ibid.*

Reorganization Committee, chaired by Woolfolk, presented its suggested plan: “This surrender entailed a heavy loss to him,” but “the President stated that he would make any sacrifice desired by his associates, which would assure a satisfactory membership and a sufficient income for the Club.”¹²⁵ Other notable changes that came out of the 1900 reorganization were the election of Pinckney and Cleveland as honorary members, the sale of the club yacht, and the hiring of a part-time local manager to look after the preserve. The club replaced the *Santee* with the seventy-five-foot *Gardenia*, an older, slower stern-wheeled steamer, in time for the opening of the 1900–1901 season. The first manager of the Santee Club was neighboring rice planter John Y. DuPre, whose Palmetto Plantation abutted the southern boundary of Ormond Hall. Despite this shakeup, the club’s lease on Murphy’s Island lapsed on December 1, 1900, with it still owing Lucas at least one year’s back rent. Carter stated that “the Club seemed to be on its last legs.”¹²⁶

Enter Eben D. Jordan Jr. Garden, the founder of the Santee Club, had almost single-handedly kept it afloat, in Carter’s words, “through three years of strenuous existence,” and he would continue as president of the club until

¹²⁵ *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript, 67–71 (first quotation on p. 68, second on p. 70). A typescript of the excerpt referenced here is in box 2, folder 177, SCP.

¹²⁶ *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript, 68, 70; George Gordon Battle to Thomas E. Richardson, October 18, 1900, box 2, folder 177, SCP; “Special Notices,” *News and Courier*, November 22, 1900; Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 6–7, 10–11 (quotation on p. 6); Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 9; Thomas E. Richardson to A. H. Hayden, September 25, 1900, box 2, folder 177, SCP; Theodore D. Jervey [Jr.] to Eben D. Jordan [Jr.], January 15, 1901, Jervey Letter Book, 1900–1904, pp. 12–14, box 255, folder 2, TDJP. DuPre is first referenced in the SCBR on February 26, 1902. See vol. 1, p. 47.

1908.¹²⁷ Unquestionably, though, the man most responsible for the club's ultimate success was Jordan, a millionaire dry-goods merchant from Boston. Jordan was born in Boston in 1857. After touring Europe, he matriculated at Harvard College in the same class as future U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt, but a recurring eye condition forced him to withdraw during his freshman year. Upon regaining his health, Jordan went to work as a "lumper" in the packaging department of his father's retail firm, Jordan, Marsh & Company. He swiftly rose through the ranks until made a partner in 1880. After the senior Jordan died in 1895, he became president of the company.¹²⁸

Jordan was an extravagant sportsman who thought nothing of leasing a Scottish castle, Inveraray, for grouse shooting in 1905. When questioned about the castle by a reporter from the *Boston Herald*, Jordan replied, "I see no need of making anything over this matter. I have simply rented this estate just as one would rent any summer home, for an attractive place to spend the hunting season." B. Nason Hamlin, a fellow Bostonian who would become a member of the Santee Club in 1908, was one of Jordan's first guests at Inveraray. Despite Jordan's downplaying, the *Herald* figured that after accounting for the costs of traveling, staffing and provisioning the house, entertaining, and ammunition, "the American who rents a grouse moor in Scotland, with a castle or two thrown in,

¹²⁷ Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 6 (quotation); *Ober v. Santee Club* Appellate Transcript, 51.

¹²⁸ On Jordan, see note 28 of chapter 1.

should be prepared to spend not less than \$100,000,” an astounding 2.78 million in 2014 dollars.¹²⁹

According to Carter, Jordan first came to know about the Santee Club from a member—Carter was unsure of which one—whom he met on a steamship bound for Europe in the summer of 1900. The unknown member spoke in such glowing terms of the “shooting and pleasures of the Santee Club” that Jordan bought a share. Bringing along Carter and three other Bostonians as his guests, Jordan arrived in Georgetown in December with high expectations, only to find the clubhouse at Fairfield in disrepair and the lease on Murphy’s Island expired. On the first morning’s hunt, Mills divided the party among three blinds in three ponds on Cedar Island, but the ducks were scarce. They tried three ponds on Little Murphy’s Island the next morning with the same poor result. Carter stated that “Mr. Jordan was very disconsolate over the whole proceedings” and “mention was made of the advisability of starting for home.” Carter called to mind what happened next:

At about this stage of the game, Chief Guide Mills (who was stone deaf) spoke up and said that he was sorry the party were so disappointed with the shooting; that there were plenty of ducks in the vicinity, on Big Murphy Island, but as the rent of the island had not been paid for two years, no Santee Club man was allowed to shoot there. He thought we might be interested however to just see the ducks. The party accordingly went in the “Gardenia” down the river to opposite Black Point Pond. Going ashore in the skiffs and landing on the beach, the party was met by an armed guard named Pepper who ordered us off. Guide Mills explained the situation and said the gentlemen had seen no ducks and did not believe there were any in the country and he just wanted to give them a view of

¹²⁹ “Boston Merchant Leases Noted Castle,” *Boston Herald*, January 31, 1905 (first quotation); *Social Life*, *ibid.*, April 16, 1905; “Bagging Grouse, and Society, at \$15 a Bird,” *ibid.*, September 17, 1905 (second quotation); Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 11.

the ducks. Pepper agreed we could see them but on no account to make any noise to disturb them, and we all crawled up the beach to its crest. We carefully peeked over the crest and the water surface of what creeks we could see was black with ducks. Guide Mills, who had brought his paddle on shore, dropped it accidentally (?) on a log. The nearest ducks arose with a roar and the scare was communicated to all the ducks in Black Point Marsh. It is no exaggeration to state there were several hundred thousand. None of us, although we had shot in North Dakota, North Carolina, Texas, etc., had ever seen such a sight.¹³⁰

Being this close to so many ducks, Carter said that Jordan was determined to “give his guests some shooting.” After a futile attempt to bribe Lucas’s watchman, the group learned that Theodore Jervey handled the lease on Murphy’s Island. Jordan immediately sent Francis Peabody Jr., an attorney who would join the Santee Club in 1906, to look up Jervey in Charleston and pay the back rent, which probably came to \$300 (8,720 in 2014 dollars).¹³¹ Peabody returned one day later with written permission from Jervey for the Bostonians to hunt on the island. Carter recollected:

We at once made preparation for a big shoot the next day. We went ashore and all five of us shot in Ocean Pond in three blinds, two in two blinds and one in the third. It was a constant cannonade and each blind spoiled the shooting of the others every time a gun was fired. Nevertheless, each blind produced about fifty ducks and between 150 and 200 birds were killed—all mallards.¹³²

¹³⁰ Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 6 (first quotation), 8 (second, third, and fourth quotations) (emphasis in original).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 8 (quotation); Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 12. Carter remembered the back rent being eight hundred dollars. This seems too high. The total consideration of the lease was nine hundred dollars, which was payable over three years in three installments of three hundred dollars. Garden’s payment of the first year’s rent is documented in the deed, and correspondence from Jervey to Jordan suggests that the former collected the rent for the second year, likely leaving three hundred dollars of unpaid rent in December 1900.

¹³² Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 9.

Back in Boston a few weeks later, Jordan wrote Jervy on January 13, 1901, to inquire further about the island. “Mr. Lucas is willing to sell the property,” Jervy replied.¹³³ Jordan showed his interest by locking up Murphy’s Island with a one-year lease that ran from January 17, 1901, to January 16, 1902, for which he paid \$616 (17,700 in 2014 dollars). By early March, Jordan was ready to take the next step. Carter observed that “Mr. Jordan had the feeling that Santee Club matters had been misrepresented to him,” and “under the circumstances he felt no compunction in buying the Big Murphy property for himself, which he did.” The selling price was \$20,584 (591,000 in 2014 dollars).¹³⁴

Jordan then promptly made a proposition to the other members of the Santee Club. He would convey Murphy’s Island to the club at cost—that is, \$20,584 for the sale, plus \$616 for the 1901–1902 lease and \$300 owed on the original lease, bringing the total cost to \$21,500—in return for ten of the unsold memberships in the treasury, which he “would make use of . . . in introducing to the Club ten acceptable [new] members.” Jordan’s proposal came with two conditions: first, the club must settle its debts, which amounted to \$12,000 in April 1901 (nearly 345,000 in 2014 dollars); and second, it must abandon the Fairfield lease and build a clubhouse on land that it owned. Garden and the rest of the members took Jordan’s proposal under consideration, and as Battle explained to Richardson, “it was found that by assessing the eighteen

¹³³ Theodore D. Jervy [Jr.] to Eben D. Jordan [Jr.], January 15, 1901, Jervy Letter Book, 1900–1904, pp. 12–14, box 255, folder 2, TDJP.

¹³⁴ Lease, Robert H. Lucas to Eben D. Jordan Jr., recorded January 23, 1901, Deed Book L-23, pp. 307–308, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyances; conveyance, Robert H. Lucas to Eben D. Jordan Jr., recorded March 7, 1901, Deed Book Y-23, p. 75, *ibid.*; Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 9 (quotation).

memberships now held the sum of \$500.00 each, so as to raise those shares to the value of \$2,500.00, placing them on a footing with the ten memberships to be taken by Mr. Jordan, and that in addition thereto, by selling two memberships, and collecting one membership fee outstanding, the terms suggested in the proposition of Mr. Jordan would be fully complied with.” The club had sold the two new memberships and collected the overdue membership fee prior to the annual meeting in May, when the members voted unanimously to accept the terms of the assessment.¹³⁵

Thanks to Jordan’s overture, the Santee Club finally gained a sound financial foothold, inspiring renewed confidence among the old members and opening the door to rapid land acquisition. Demonstrating his assurance in its stability going forward, Hugh Garden transferred Blake’s Plantation and Little Murphy’s Island to the club in February 1901 for a nominal consideration, and in December, the club received the title to Murphy’s Island from Jordan. That same month, Thomas Pinckney deeded Fanny Meade Plantation and all of Cedar Island to the club, deferring compensation until the present lease expired at the end of 1902. In January 1903, the club entered into an agreement with Pinckney

¹³⁵ George Gordon Battle to T. E. Richardson, April 24 and May 15, 1901, box 2, folder 178, SCP (quotations); memorandum, Battle to the members of the Santee Club, n.d., box 2, folder 182, *ibid*; Richardson to Battle, May 25, 1901, box 2, folder 179, *ibid.*; Battle to Richardson, October 7, 1901, box 2, folder 180, *ibid.* The deed gives \$22,500 as Jordan’s price to the Santee Club for Murphy’s Island, while Battle, the club secretary, quotes \$21,500 as the asking price in his correspondence with the membership. If Jordan did indeed sell the island to the club for what he paid, then the lower number seems right, as his costs that can be documented and deduced add up to \$21,500.

to pay him \$15,000 (416,000 in 2014 dollars) for Fanny Meade and Cedar Island—five thousand down, and the rest in three annual installments.¹³⁶

Both Eben Jordan and the Santee Club kept their ends of the bargain. The club completed construction of a “comfortable Club House amongst the live oaks at Blakes” before the start of the 1902–1903 season. Meanwhile, Jordan recruited new members in Boston. The first new member that he introduced to the club was Carter, an 1877 graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who had worked as a civil engineer for the city of Boston until starting his own contracting company in 1895.¹³⁷

Shooting at Murphy’s Island on November 21, 1903, Carter downed 152 birds before 11 A.M., all but two of which were mallards. As far as can be determined from the existing documentation, this set a new individual record for the most ducks killed in a single day at the club.¹³⁸ Except for a 1905 statute requiring a license to hunt wild ducks on navigable streams, the state of South Carolina had no law whatever governing the shooting of migratory waterfowl until 1913, when Congress passed the Weeks-McLean Act, which gave the federal

¹³⁶ Conveyance, H. R. Garden to the Santee Club, recorded March 12, 1901, Deed Book Y-23, p. 76, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyances; conveyance, Eben D. Jordan to the Santee Club, recorded February 4, 1902, Deed Book Y-23, p. 332, *ibid.*; memorandum of agreement, Thomas Pinckney with the Santee Club, recorded February 19, 1903, Deed Book V, pp. 292–293, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds.

¹³⁷ George Gordon Battle to Thomas E. Richardson, October 17, 1901, box 2, folder 180, SCP (quotation); SCBR, vol. 1, p. 59. On Carter, see John William Leonard, *Who’s Who in Engineering: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporaries, 1922–1923* (New York: John W. Leonard Corporation, 1922), s.v. “Carter, Henry Hall”; “Henry Hall Carter,” *Boston Herald*, October 7, 1934. Carter served with Hugh Garden and John W. Cox on the Building Committee that contracted for the construction of the clubhouse. See George Gordon Battle to Thomas E. Richardson, October 29, 1901, box 2, folder 180, SCP.

¹³⁸ SCBR, vol. 1, pp. 98–99.

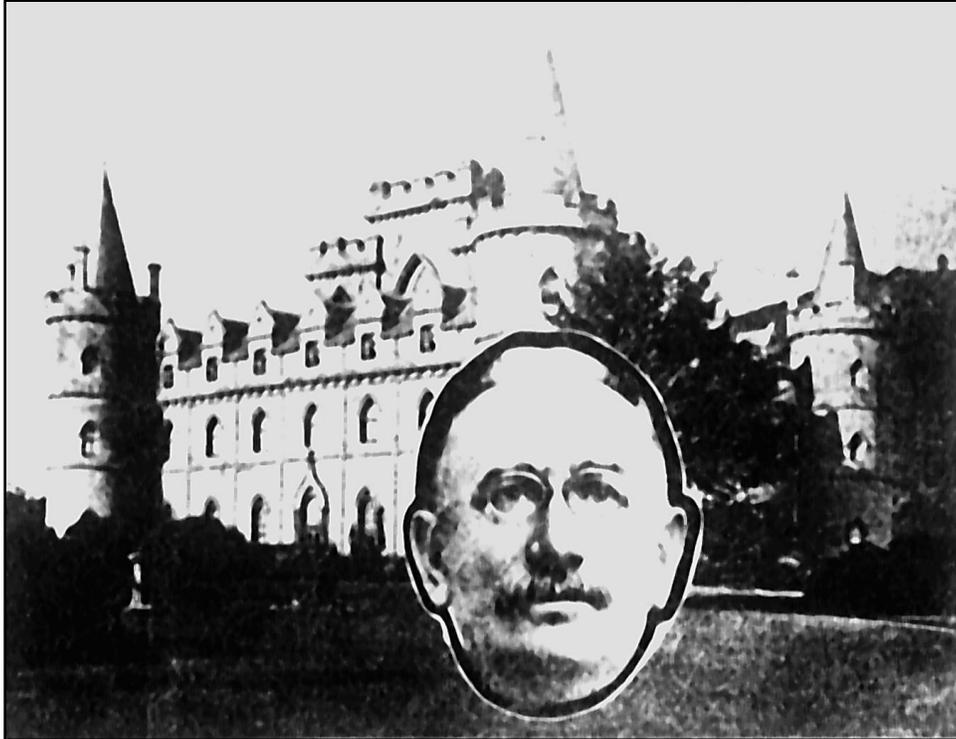


Figure 5.7. Head shot of Eben D. Jordan Jr. (1857–1916) superimposed on a photograph of Inveraray Castle, the hereditary seat of the dukes of Argyll. Six times between 1905 and 1914, Jordan spent the late summer and fall hunting grouse and deer in aristocratic style as the lord of leased Scottish manors—one season at Inveraray Castle, one at Glencoe Castle, one at Invercauld Castle, and three at Drummond Castle. Then he would take a steamship back to Boston and charter a special train south in time to meet the migrating ducks at the Santee Club, where he usually spent ten days in December and another ten in January. His last trip to Scotland was cut short following the United Kingdom’s declaration of war on Germany. After visiting Paris in June and touring Spain by car in July, Jordan and his family reached Drummond Castle in the Perthshire Highlands in early August. The Jordans had planned to remain in Scotland until November, but with the situation in western Europe growing increasingly unsettled, they returned to Boston in mid-October. Santee Club records show that Jordan’s first morning in a blind of the 1914–1915 ducking season was December 10, when he brought down seventy-six mallards and four teal. *Source*: “Eben D. Jordan to Chase Stags over Inverarry [sic] Castle, Scotland, Estates,” *Boston Journal*, January 31, 1905.

government authority to set closed seasons in the individual states.¹³⁹ For all practical purposes, the Santee Club did not impose restrictions on its members at this time either, the rules from 1900–1901 merely stating that for a day’s shooting, “there shall be no limit in hours, nor a limit in amount of game which may be killed, provided it can be utilized.”¹⁴⁰ Thus, as was often the case with sportsmen at the Annandale and Santee Clubs in the 1890s and early 1900s, Carter’s record-setting tally could have been much higher if his supply of shells had lasted. The entry for that day in the Santee Club shooting register notes that “there was a splendid flight at Point Stand and at 10:30, when Carter’s shells gave out, the mallards were still ‘pouring in.’ ”¹⁴¹

Another instance of the “flight” outlasting a Santee sportsman’s ammunition is recorded in the log on January 17, 1902. Joseph Woolfolk had bagged eighty-one ducks and killed at least twelve more that were not recovered when he fired his only remaining shell about eleven o’clock at Ocean Pond on

¹³⁹ “License to Enter Public Lands to Hunt Wild Duck” (1905), in Andrew J. Bethea, ed., *Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1912, in Two Volumes* (Charlottesville, Va.: Michie Company, 1912), 2: 414–415 (sec. 753); James Henry Rice Jr., “New Game Laws Give Protection,” *State*, October 26, 1913. On the Weeks-McLean Act, see James B. Trefethen, *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (New York: Winchester Press and Boone and Crockett Club, 1975), 148–153; Kurkpatrick Dorsey, *The Dawn of Conservation Diplomacy: U.S.-Canadian Wildlife Protection Treaties in the Progressive Era*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Book (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 183–188, 191; John Paul Morton, “Duck Diplomacy: U.S.-Canadian Migratory Waterfowl Management, 1900–1961” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1996), 51–69; Guy A. Baldassarre and Eric G. Bolen, *Waterfowl Ecology and Management*, 2nd ed. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing Company, 2006), 472–473.

¹⁴⁰ “Extract from the Rules and Regulations of the Santee Club for the Season on 1900–1901,” box 2, folder 176, SCP.

¹⁴¹ SCBR, vol. 1, p. 99.

Murphy's Island. Afterwards, someone wrote in the record book that "the sport ceased, but not the coming of the ducks. They continued to come in pairs & groups of five or more long after the deadly Winchester was quiet."¹⁴²

These flights, which were the lifeblood of duck shooting on both the Santee and the Annandale marshes, depended on the proximity of the rice plantations. "Clubmen had a riotous time, shooting ducks which planters fed," quipped Henry Rice.¹⁴³ Around daybreak, after having spent the night foraging in the rice fields, ducks began to take wing in countless flocks and follow the river basins to daytime resting grounds on the coast. The weather determined their destinations. "In all conditions," Rice explained, "wind is essential." If it was fair and calm, the ducks might head for the bays, the offshore sandbars, or even the placid ocean beyond the breakers, "where they cannot be approached close enough to get a shot. . . . But when the wind blows hard and the water becomes rough they cannot remain on the open water and are forced into the marshes, the only other shelter remaining." On the Annandale marshes, where hunters shot from boats in sloughs, ideal "duck weather" was mild, clear, and breezy. In contrast, cold fronts that brought blowing rain, sleet, or snow produced some of the best results on the Santee marshes, where most of the shooting was done over ponds from stands. Of course, Rice commented, "When the wind fails the duck shooting is not to be had."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁴³ Rice, "Thomas E. Richardson."

¹⁴⁴ Rice, "Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks" (quotations); Rice, "Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands"; SIL, 25; Rice, "Hunts That Were Hunts"; Archibald Rutledge, *Plantation Game Trails* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 167–169, 256–257.



Figure 5.8. Plat of Murphy's Island drawn by architect Henry McGoodwin of Charleston in January 1901 showing the old Lucas rice lands in the middle of the marsh. Source: Plat Book D, p. 126, Register of Mesne Conveyances, O. T. Wallace County Office Building, Charleston, S.C.

The morning flight could last for several hours, but the stream of birds was not always continuous. Rice learned from hunting at Annandale that there often “comes a time when the flight of ducks stops short.” At this point, “the duckerman will fold his arms, light his pipe and tell you that there is no need of concealment. This is true. The cause is probably that the first flight of ducks from the rice fields

is now over and it will be about half an hour before the next one begins.”¹⁴⁵ When the flights from the rice fields ceased, the day’s sport was usually done. Only a “driving wind” might keep the ducks moving around the marsh and coming to decoys.¹⁴⁶

After resting all day either on the open coastal waters or in the sheltered marshes, the ducks would begin their migration back to the feeding grounds in the river rice fields just before nightfall, though the timing of the evening flight could vary based on the tide and the weather, even the brightness of the moon. Overlooking miles of rice fields across the South Santee River from a thirty-foot bluff at Fairfield Plantation on November 16, 1898, Garden and two of his guests were awed by the sight of the ducks returning en masse: “We decided that we had never seen a finer flight of wild fowl than on that evening, just as daylight had nearly failed. The air was full of the whigs [whirs?] of wings and as far as the eye could reach in the uncertain light, could be seen myriads of birds whirling in short circles or with set wings dropping into the marsh while the quacking has never been equaled on a Long Island duck farm.”¹⁴⁷

Standing on the riverbank at Fairfield and watching clouds of ducks descend on the sea of flooded rice stubble in the twilight, Garden doubtless would have had a difficult time believing the allegation published in the *Washington Post* one year prior that the number of migratory ducks wintering on

¹⁴⁵ Rice, “Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks.”

¹⁴⁶ Rice, “Hunts That Were Hunts.”

¹⁴⁷ SCBR, vol. 1, p. 3. See also Archibald Rutledge, *Wild Life of the South* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1935), 192–197; Rutledge, “Birds and Ricefields,” *Nature Magazine*, July 1937, 11.

the coast of South Carolina had decreased by 100 percent since the start of the Civil War. The trend addressed in the 1897 *Post* article would only accelerate over the course of the next decade, however. Garden's stepping down as president of the Santee Club in 1908 and the dissolution of the Annandale Club the same year marked the beginning of the end of the golden era of amateur waterfowling in Georgetown County. Fewer ducks returned to the preserves with every passing season not only in consequence of far-reaching factors like degradation of the northern breeding grounds and overhunting up and down the migration corridors, but also because the Georgetown rice fields were disappearing at a rapid rate. Planters grew rice on 39,482 acres in Georgetown District in 1859. Ten years later, they planted only 16,100 acres of rice in the county, a decrease of nearly 60 percent.¹⁴⁸ In 1888, when planter Robert Donaldson leased his holdings in North Inlet to the Annandale Club, the county's rice acreage had dropped to 11,495, though several successful harvests later, it was back up to approximately fourteen thousand on the eve of disastrous hurricanes in August and October 1893.¹⁴⁹ Despite sustaining additional damage from hurricanes in September 1894, September 1898, and October 1899, many of the plantations—some with new owners—remained viable into the new

¹⁴⁸ William M. Lawton, *An Essay on Rice and Its Culture, Read before the Agricultural Congress, Convened at Selma, Alabama, December 5, 1871* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, Printers, 1871), 8–9.

¹⁴⁹ *Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, at the Regular Session Commencing November 27, 1888* (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by Charles A. Calvo Jr. for James H. Woodrow, State Printer, 1888), 2: 853; H. L. Oliver, "Will Abandon Rice Planting," *News and Courier*, September 15, 1908. On the "Great Sea Island Storm" of August 1893 and the "Flagg Storm" of October 1893, see Walter J. Fraser Jr., *Lowcountry Hurricanes: Three Centuries of Storms at Sea and Ashore*, Wormsloe Foundation Publications (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 165–187. On the former, see also William Marscher and Fran Marscher, *The Great Sea Island Storm of 1893* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2003).

century thanks to relatively high rice prices.¹⁵⁰ In 1900 the crop covered 14,157 acres, which was on a par with 1893.¹⁵¹ Meanwhile, though, competition from rice growers in the Gulf States was getting stiffer. The *News and Courier's* August Kohn reported concerning the 10,200-acre crop of 1904 that "no money was made on it."¹⁵² When the Annandale Club's lease ended in 1908, Georgetown County had just 4,224 acres cultivated in rice, and freshets destroyed most of that crop in the fields shortly before harvest time.¹⁵³ Three years thereafter, the last toll rice mill operating in the county closed, and a soil survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1912 found that Georgetown's rice industry was "practically abandoned."¹⁵⁴ The *Georgetown Times* published the epitaph for the local industry on February 12, 1913, which the *Charleston Evening Post* reprinted three days later under the headline "Passing of Rice at Georgetown."¹⁵⁵

The deaths of many of the notables from what could be called the county's first generation of gentleman duck hunters also marked the end of the golden age of Georgetown duck shooting. Long-time Annandale Club members William

¹⁵⁰ Rogers, *History of Georgetown County*, 487–488; Bridwell, *Gem of the Atlantic Seaboard*, 44; James H. Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 63.

¹⁵¹ State Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Immigration, *Handbook of South Carolina: Resources, Institutions and Industries of the State* (Columbia, S.C.: State Company, 1907), 575.

¹⁵² "The Rice Crop of the United States," *Crop Reporter*, December 1904, supplement, 68–69.

¹⁵³ "Fine Rice Crop in Georgetown," *News and Courier*, August 28, 1908.

¹⁵⁴ Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 35; "Soil Survey of Georgetown," *News and Courier*, December 6, 1912 (quotation).

¹⁵⁵ "The Passing Rice Industry," *Georgetown Times*, February 12, 1913; "Passing of Rice at Georgetown," *Charleston Evening Post*, February 15, 1913.

Fisher Lewis and George Penniman died within fifteen months of one another, the former in 1908 and the latter in 1909. Grover Cleveland died the same year as Lewis, and Porter Alexander, two years after that. Alexander Chisolm and Hugh Garden, the founding fathers of the Annandale Club and the Santee Club, respectively, both passed away in 1910 as well. Robley Evans, at whose insistence Cleveland had first ventured to Georgetown, followed in 1912. On the occasion of Evans's passing, the *News and Courier* paused to remember "when Grover Cleveland and his friends came on their ducking expeditions to the Santee marshes." Those, it said, were "the good old days."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ "Evans's Georgetown Visits."

CHAPTER 6

ADJUSTING TO NEW CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The early years of the Kinloch Gun Club offer a glimpse into the future of duck shooting in the Georgetown region. The Du Pont group from Delaware founded the Kinloch Gun Club in June 1912. This was five months after the death of Robley D. Evans, one of the last survivors from the generation who hunted Georgetown County while it was still virgin territory for northern sportsmen, and eight months prior to the local press announcing the end of “old time” rice planting.¹ Hence, Kinloch’s members, unlike their predecessors at the Annandale Club and the Santee Club, missed out on the heyday when clubmen could rely on planters to feed the ducks, the flights to and from the rice fields fairly darkened the sky, and the shooting was unchecked. Instead, Kinloch came into being aware of the growing threats to North America’s migratory game birds and conscious of the need for conservation. Their commitment to conserving ducks was manifest in the club’s earliest set of rules and regulations, which contained a bag limit for the 1912–1913 season. Nonetheless, Kinloch’s inaugural season was frustrating. The members and their guests encountered fewer ducks on the preserve than they had expected, and their bags were surprisingly small. As it

¹ “Evans’s Georgetown Visits,” *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), January 6, 1912; “The Passing Rice Industry,” *Georgetown Times* (Georgetown, S.C.), February 12, 1913 (quotation).

turned out, this would be the only time in the history of the club when the members were free to shoot ducks at their discretion. Prior to the flocks returning to Kinloch in the fall of 1913, Congress passed a law asserting federal jurisdiction over migratory waterfowl and empowering Washington bureaucrats to set the legal hunting seasons in all forty-eight states. The open season on ducks that they proposed for South Carolina excluded February, the best month of shooting in the state, so members of the Kinloch Gun Club traveled to the national capital to protest the dates at a hearing before a committee from the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey. Additional federal regulations followed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, ensuring that the bags at Kinloch would always remain comparatively small. Another difference between the founders of the Kinloch Gun Club and their counterparts from Annandale and Santee was that they had no personal or family connections to South Carolina. Rather, they became acquainted with the opportunities for duck shooting around Georgetown through contact with northern industrialists like themselves. Their contacts had interests in lumber, an industry that would dominate Georgetown's economy in the twentieth century as rice had in the nineteenth. In all of these ways, Kinloch might be thought of as the county's first truly modern ducking club. What marked off Kinloch's modernity most clearly, though, was the early premium it placed on waterfowl management.

The impetus for the Kinloch Gun Club was a business venture involving E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company and the Atlantic Coast Lumber Corporation. Northern investors led by Charles R. Flint of New York City organized the Atlantic

Coast Lumber Company in 1899. The company, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, immediately began constructing the largest lumber mill on the East Coast at Georgetown and buying up hundreds of thousands of acres of land and timber rights in the surrounding counties. It also acquired control of the Georgetown & Western Railroad and set about building a long network of branches and spurs off of the main line for hauling cut timber from remote logging camps to the mill. This flurry of activity created hundreds of new jobs and stimulated economic growth in Georgetown with an infusion of outside capital. Once fully operational, the mill was capable of turning out six hundred thousand feet of lumber per day, which another of Flint's enterprises, the Atlantic Coast Steamship Company, transported to New York City and Boston, where Flint's Export Lumber Company handled sales and distribution. A tireless businessman with connections all over the world, Flint specialized in corporate consolidation. When he temporarily fell on hard times after a few years, the lumber company became insolvent and went into receivership. Bondholders bought the mill and reorganized it as the Atlantic Coast Lumber Corporation in 1903.²

Disposing of wood waste from such a massive mill, including mountains of slabs and sawdust, was a financial drain on the company. Some of the sawdust

² "The Story of a Great Lumber Enterprise," *American Lumberman*, February 23, 1901, 27–30; "The Greatest Plant on Earth!," *Sunday Outlook* (Georgetown, S.C.), November 2, 1902; William Banks, "Lumber Industry's Great Proportions," *State* (Columbia, S.C.), December 23, 1905. See also Dennis T. Lawson, *Atlantic Coast Lumber Corporation* (Georgetown, S.C.: Rice Museum, 1975); Ronald E. Bridwell, "Gem of the Atlantic Seaboard": Part 2 of "That We Should Have a Port": A History of the Port of Georgetown, South Carolina (Georgetown, S.C.: Georgetown Times, 1991), 32–35, 40–41, 45, 50; Thomas Fetters, *Logging Railroads of South Carolina* (Forest Park, Ill.: Heimburger House Publishing Company, 1990), 44–57; Robert McAlister, *The Lumber Boom of Coastal South Carolina: Nineteenth-Century Shipbuilding and the Devastation of Lowcountry Virgin Forests* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2013), 67–79. On Flint and his varied business career, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Flint, Charles Ranlett," available online in the Gale Biography in Context database, BT2310013465 (accessed March 19, 2016).

went directly into the furnaces of the power house, and some of the slabs were cut to size for locomotive fuel. Still, a tremendous excess remained. Dumping proved prohibitive, so the company simply incinerated the material. For about a year in 1902 and 1903, Atlantic Coast Lumber found a customer for its waste, the Seaboard Product Company, which utilized a newly discovered process to distill ethyl alcohol from wood. Not much information exists about Seaboard Product. The *Columbia State* indicated that “a number of enterprising and clever gentlemen from the north [sic]” established the business. They were “making a success of the undertaking, and had worked up a trade which consumed the product of the mill as fast as it could be put out.” However, a fire destroyed the distillery in September 1903. It was uninsured and the owners did not rebuild, so Atlantic Coast Lumber resumed incinerating its wood waste. The daily cost of incineration had reached about sixty dollars—\$18,000 or more annually (483,000 in 2014 dollars)—when mill executives attracted a new customer, the Du Pont Company.³ On September 16, 1909, Atlantic Coast Lumber contracted with Du Pont to purchase the waste from the mill for approximately forty dollars per day for ten years. As part of the agreement, Du Pont got a free thirty-year lease on a two-acre site adjoining the mill, where it would construct an alcohol plant with a capacity of two thousand gallons per day. The plant—a six-story structure that the *Charleston News and Courier* said “assumes more nearly the proportions of a skyscraper”—went up quickly, and the first shipment of alcohol (350 barrels) left

³ “Greatest Plant on Earth!”; “Alcohol from Wood,” *Scientific American Supplement*, August 15, 1914, 103; H. L. O., “A Fire in Georgetown,” *State*, October 4, 1903 (quotations); “\$200,000.00 to Be Spent in Georgetown!,” *Georgetown Daily Item* (Georgetown, S.C.), March 28, 1910.

Georgetown on September 23 of the following year. Ethyl alcohol was an important ingredient in manufacturing dynamite and smokeless powder, and a 1914 article in the *Scientific American Supplement* stated that Du Pont used “enormous quantities of spirits in its numerous factories scattered over the entire country.” Initially, Du Pont viewed the Georgetown plant as “merely an experiment station,” but it helped the company to fill massive contracts with the Allies during World War I before closing in 1922.⁴

Two days after Du Pont finalized the agreement for the alcohol plant, an attorney representing several individuals associated with the company signed a separate lease for a much larger tract owned by Atlantic Coast Lumber—Hagley Plantation on the Waccamaw River. Atlantic Coast Lumber had purchased Hagley, a narrow “seashore” tract connecting the plantation to Pawley’s Island, and two lots on the island from rice planter W. St. Julien Mazyck in 1901.⁵ The lumber concern had no interest in Hagley’s old rice fields, and its standing timber was incidental. The main reason that the company wanted Hagley was for its landing on the river and convenient access across Waccamaw Neck to Pawley’s Island, long a favorite seaside resort of the rice planters. Planters on the Black,

⁴ Agreement, Atlantic Coast Lumber Corporation to E. I. du Pont de Nemours Powder Company, recorded May 4, 1910, Deed Book M, pp. 572–573, Registrar of Deeds, Georgetown County Courthouse, Georgetown, S.C.; lease and agreement, Atlantic Coast Lumber Corporation to E. I. du Pont de Nemours Powder Company and United States, recorded May 6, 1910, Deed Book M, pp. 574–576, *ibid.*; “Georgetown Happenings,” *News and Courier*, February 5, 1910 (first quotation); “From Georgetown Plant,” *ibid.*, September 25, 1910; “Alcohol from Wood,” 103 (second and third quotations); “Removing Alcohol Plant,” *State*, August 16, 1922; “Alcohol Plant Burns,” *ibid.*, September 27, 1922. See also Bridwell, *Gem of the Atlantic Seaboard*, 50–51.

⁵ Lease, Atlantic Coast Lumber Corporation to Claudian B. Northrop, recorded October 30, 1909, Deed Book M, pp. 505–506, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds; title to real estate, W. St. Julien Mazyck to Atlantic Coast Lumber Co., recorded May 30, 1901, Deed Book V, pp. 87–90, *ibid.*

Pee Dee, and Waccamaw Rivers started migrating to Pawley's Island during the summer to escape the malarial environment of the plantations in the 1840s.⁶ Now, menaced by mosquitoes, those working and living at the lumber mill, which bordered rice fields on the Sampit River west of Georgetown, saw value in Pawley's Island for the same reason. Atlantic Coast Lumber accumulated eighty-five acres on Pawley's—roughly one-quarter of the island's land area—where it maintained a number of boarding houses and beach cottages for its employees. The lumber company also put a steamboat, the *Governor Safford*, into service from Georgetown to Hagley Landing, several miles north of the city, and laid a three-and-a-half-mile railroad track that traversed the neck and the southern causeway to Pawley's Island. Pawley's could be reached from Georgetown via the ferry and the train in less than an hour and a half, making it possible for mill workers to commute to the mild, breezy island for a good night's sleep. This arrangement lasted from June 1901 until September 1905. In September of the next year, a hurricane destroyed the railroad. Meanwhile, a Georgetown boat captain had initiated a new ferry schedule that took seasonal travelers to Pawley's Island by a different route. Bypassed by the beachgoers, Hagley Plantation was a backwater when Atlantic Coast Lumber leased it to the Du Pont interests, headed by Eugene du Pont Jr.⁷

⁶ On the Pawley's Island summer colony in the nineteenth century, see Pawleys Island Civic Association, *Pawleys Island Historically Speaking* (Pawleys Island, S.C.: Pawleys Island Civic Association, 1994), 8–26; Lawrence Fay Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts of South Carolina Low-Country Planters* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1947), 26–27.

⁷ "Greatest Plant on Earth!"; J. W. D., "A Railroad to Pawleys," *State*, May 12, 1901; "Ho, for Pawleys Island!," *Sunday Outlook*, June 8, 1902; Neptune [pseud.], *Pawleys Island News*, *ibid.*, July 13, 1902; "Season on Pawley's Island," *State*, May 20, 1906. See also Fetters, *Logging*

The son of a past president of the company, Eugene du Pont Jr. worked in Du Pont's Sales Department. The *News and Courier* reported that while making the deal for the alcohol plant, he had been "on the ground frequently" in Georgetown and become "aware of the splendid shooting advantages of this section of country."⁸ Numerous Atlantic Coast Lumber officers and executives—all of them northerners—hunted in their leisure time, and they are known to have shot ducks in Georgetown County at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Guests at Edward Porter Alexander's South Island preserve between 1900 and 1902 included Flint, the father of the company, and its president, Freeman S. Farr, as well as Farr's son-in-law Rufus M. Barnes, the assistant general manager.⁹ In addition, Elias C. Benedict, who succeeded Farr as president, was a member of the Santee Club and often hunted there with President Grover Cleveland.¹⁰ After 1901 Hagley Plantation was another ducking ground for the senior management of Atlantic Coast Lumber. Although corporately owned, Barnes along with Farr's son Raymond S. Farr, the general

Railroads of South Carolina, 48–49; Pawleys Island Civic Association, *Pawleys Island Historically Speaking*, 26, 36–39.

⁸ "Georgetown Pleasure Grounds," *News and Courier*, June 23, 1912.

⁹ See "South Island Log," 1890–1910, microfilm copy in Edward Porter Alexander Papers, 1852–1910, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as SIL), 133–134, 150, 209.

¹⁰ On Benedict's membership in the Santee Club, see Henry H. Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club* ([Boston?]: privately printed, [1934?]), 4. For examples of his trips to the club with Cleveland, see "Oneida's Cruise to the Southward," *New York Herald*, November 11, 1898; "Cleveland at Georgetown," *State*, March 4, 1899; "Grover Cleveland's Hunting Trip Over," *New York Times*, January 23, 1900; "Cleveland in Georgetown," *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), March 9, 1900; "Cleveland Bags Ducks," *Washington Post*, March 15, 1907. As in the case of Cleveland, Benedict's name does not show up in the Santee Club Bag Records, 1901–1969, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston (hereafter cited as SCBR). See note 79 of chapter 5.

manager of the company, and their brother-in-law Edgar L. Lloyd, the assistant treasurer, treated it like their private preserve.¹¹

While the link cannot be shown definitively, it is reasonable to assume that the Atlantic Coast lumbermen invited Eugene du Pont Jr. to hunt with them during his visits to Georgetown, and they were the ones responsible for turning him on to the area's fine duck shooting. Further, it can be assumed that some of these hunts took place at Hagley Plantation. The *News and Courier* credited Raymond Farr and Edgar Lloyd with convincing the Du Pont Company to make "an investigation of the advantages of this port and the facilities presented by the big lumber plant for the location of one of its wood alcohol manufactories, with the result that it was decided to build here at once. Mr. Dupont was here himself looking into the matter."¹² Evidently, du Pont was so pleased with the sport at Hagley that he wanted to continue shooting ducks there after completing negotiations for the alcohol plant—and bring his family and friends down from Delaware to join him.

Eugene du Pont Jr. and seven others—a group that included his brother Alexis I. du Pont, their cousin Eugene E. du Pont, Du Pont Company chief engineer William G. Ramsay, and attorney Josiah Marvel, whose firm had offices in the Du Pont Building—leased "all that plantation or tract of land . . . known as 'Hagley' " on September 18, 1909.¹³ The lease was for two years, with the option

¹¹ Evidence of Raymond Farr, Barnes, and Lloyd hunting at Hagley Plantation will be offered later in the text.

¹² "Site for Big Plant Leased," *News and Courier*, September 29, 1909.

¹³ Lease, Atlantic Coast Lumber Corporation to Claudian B. Northrop, recorded October 30, 1909, Deed Book M, pp. 505–506 (quotation on p. 505), Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds.

to renew for up to three additional years, and the annual rent was \$200 (5,370 in 2014 dollars). Calling themselves the “Hagley Gun Club,” the lessees had “the right and privilege *only* of hunting and shooting game” on 2,250 acres and “also the right at all times to the use of the house near the wharf on the Waccamaw River.”¹⁴ They would not have exclusive use of the plantation, however. The lease was made with the “distinct understanding” that “a co-ordinate, co-equal, and co-extensive right and privilege of hunting and shooting game . . . upon said property and the use of said house during the currency of the term hereof . . . shall be reserved to and enjoyed by the General Manager [Farr], Assistant Manager [Barnes] and Assistant Treasurer [Lloyd] of said lesser and such of their friends, not residents of this State, as they shall select.”¹⁵

The next two years in the life of the Hagley Gun Club are virtually undocumented. Sharing shooting rights with the lumbermen must have proved satisfactory, because when the initial term of the lease ended in September 1911, the club renewed for another year. Acting as the club’s agent, chemist J. Stuart Groves, a Delawarean who had relocated from Wilmington to Georgetown

Coincidentally, Hagley was an important name in the history of the Du Pont Company. In 1813 the founder of the company, E. I. du Pont, had made room for expanding the original powder works on the Brandywine River in Delaware by purchasing an adjacent farm called Hagley, which became known under Du Pont ownership as the Hagley Yard. The names of both the farm in Delaware and the plantation in South Carolina dated to around the turn of the nineteenth century, and their owners probably drew inspiration from Hagley Hall in Worcestershire, England, which was famous at the time for its picturesque landscape garden.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 505 (emphasis in original). When St. Julien Mazyck sold it, Hagley contained 732 acres, over fifteen hundred fewer than stated in the lease, so what Atlantic Coast Lumber referred to Hagley Plantation must have taken in additional properties such as neighboring Weehawka Plantation to the north, which it purchased from Mazyck at the same time as Hagley. The bounds of the leased tract are not described in the document, though it specifically excepted Pawley’s Island.

¹⁵ Ibid.

to become manager of the Du Pont Company's alcohol plant, handled the local affairs such as ordering supplies, receiving shipments, and coordinating transportation to Hagley. An inventory he compiled after the club's third year at Hagley shows that the members had made themselves comfortable in the house, moving in everything from beds and lamps to a full assortment of kitchen utensils. They also kept one "Large river boat" and two "Field boats" at Hagley for reaching the duck blinds, plus seventy-three wooden decoys. The 1911–1912 season was the Hagley Gun Club's last.¹⁶ By the time the ducks made their southern migration in the fall of 1912, the sportsmen from the First State had acquired their own place to hunt on the North Santee River. Their man in Georgetown, Groves, set in motion this sequence of events, which culminated in the founding of the Kinloch Gun Club.

After moving to Georgetown, Groves had befriended Philip R. Lachicotte II, a young bachelor like himself.¹⁷ Lachicotte's family was among Georgetown County's most successful postbellum rice planters. As the production of the grain became less profitable in South Carolina after the Civil War, some enterprising planters attempted to achieve economies of scale by forming joint-stock

¹⁶ The only evidence of the Hagley Gun Club renewing its lease for the 1911–1912 season is a few indirect references in correspondence. See [J. Stuart Groves] to William G. Ramsay, October 18, 1912, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912" folder, Kinloch Gun Club Papers, 1906–1935, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del. (hereafter cited as KGCP); [Ramsay] to Alexis I. du Pont, November 14, 1912, *ibid.*; Ramsay to Groves, November 27, 1912, *ibid.* See also "Material Taken from Hagley Club House to the Kinloch Gun Club—October 1, 1912," *ibid.* (quotations).

¹⁷ For references to Groves's friendship with Lachicotte, see [William G. Ramsay] to J. Stuart Groves, February 9, 1912, box 15, "Kinloch—Real Estate, 1912–1915" folder, Papers of Eugene du Pont (1873–1954), 1835–1956, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del. (hereafter cited as PEDP); Ramsay to Groves, November 27, 1912, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912" folder, KGCP.

companies or partnerships that controlled multiple plantations and a mill. Joint ownership and unified management of planting and milling operations made it possible not only to obtain more credit and spread risk but also to reduce costs by sharing assets and lessening competition for labor. In the 1880s, Lachicotte's grandfather, Philip R. Lachicotte I, had led the way in implementing this vertically integrated approach. His company, P. R. Lachicotte & Sons, ran one of the largest rice mills in the state at Waverly Plantation on the Waccamaw River and had planting and lumber interests besides.¹⁸ Following in his grandfather's footsteps, in 1892 Philip II's father, St. Julien M. Lachicotte, became a partner in the rice-planting firm of S. M. Ward & Company, which owned a number of properties on the North Santee River, before inheriting a half interest in P. R. Lachicotte & Sons a few years later.¹⁹

Through Groves's friendship with Philip Lachicotte, the Hagley Gun Club learned that S. M. Ward & Company was interested in divesting its Santee holdings—a 6,702-acre block of plantation lands that bordered both sides of the North Santee, centering on Kinloch Creek. The current owners referred to the property generally as Richfield Plantation, though Richfield was just one of the

¹⁸ See Alberta Morel Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, rev. ed. (1961; repr., Columbia, S.C.: State Printing Company, 1967), 27–36, 49–52, 111, 128, 178; George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 469, 473, 487–488; Suzanne Cameron Linder and Marta Leslie Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County and the Santee River* (Columbia: Published by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for the Historic Ricefields Association, Inc., [2001?]), 130, 138, 144, 150, 170, 304, 308, 316, 324, 332, 354, 626, 632, 638, 643–644, 664. See also James H. Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 61.

¹⁹ Conveyance of real estate, A. A. Springs and St. J. M. Lachicotte, Individually, and Co-Partners as S. M. Ward & Company to Kinloch Gun Club, a Corporation, recorded August 5, 1912, Deed Book E-1, pp. 291–294, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds; Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 35.

numerous plantations that Ward & Company had acquired in the 1890s. Others included Pleasant Meadows, Milldam, Newland, White Oak, Camp Main, Bear Hill, Doar Point, Pine Grove, and Wicklow.²⁰ Only Richfield proper was still producing rice. The rest of the plantations lay idle, in need of repairs to the banks and trunks. Lachicotte visited with members of the club at Hagley and showed four of them the available tracts in February 1912. He even let the four—Eugene du Pont Jr., Eugene E. du Pont, William Ramsay, and Wilmington lumber dealer J. Danforth Bush—do a little shooting. “These gentlemen have had wide experience in hunting over the North American continent, and all of them expressed themselves as very enthusiastic over the conditions existing on the property,” related one of them, probably Ramsay.²¹ This individual went on to say that “the duck shooting [at Richfield] is as fine as any on the Atlantic Coast, and the large area of rice fields affords opportunities for practically any reasonable number of men to shoot on them without in any way interfering with each other.”²² Another advantage of Richfield was its proximity to the Alexander preserve and the Santee Club. “The limit of the bag on these places in the past has practically been controlled by the conscience of the shooters,” extolled the

²⁰ Conveyance of real estate, Springs and Lachicotte as S. M. Ward & Company to Kinloch Gun Club, recorded August 5, 1912, Deed Book E-1, pp. 291–294, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds.

²¹ William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, November 27, 1912, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912” folder, KGCP; Alexis I. du Pont, John Satterthwait, Eugene du Pont, Josiah Marvel, Eugene E. du Pont, Ramsay, J. Danforth Bush, and J. G. Ewing, “General Description of the Richfield Property, South Carolina,” March 21, 1912, p. 2, box 17, “KGC—Annual Reports of President and Treasurer, 1912–21” folder, PEDP (quotation).

²² Du Pont, Satterthwait, Du Pont, Marvel, Du Pont, Ramsay, Bush, and Ewing, “General Description of the Richfield Property,” p. 2.

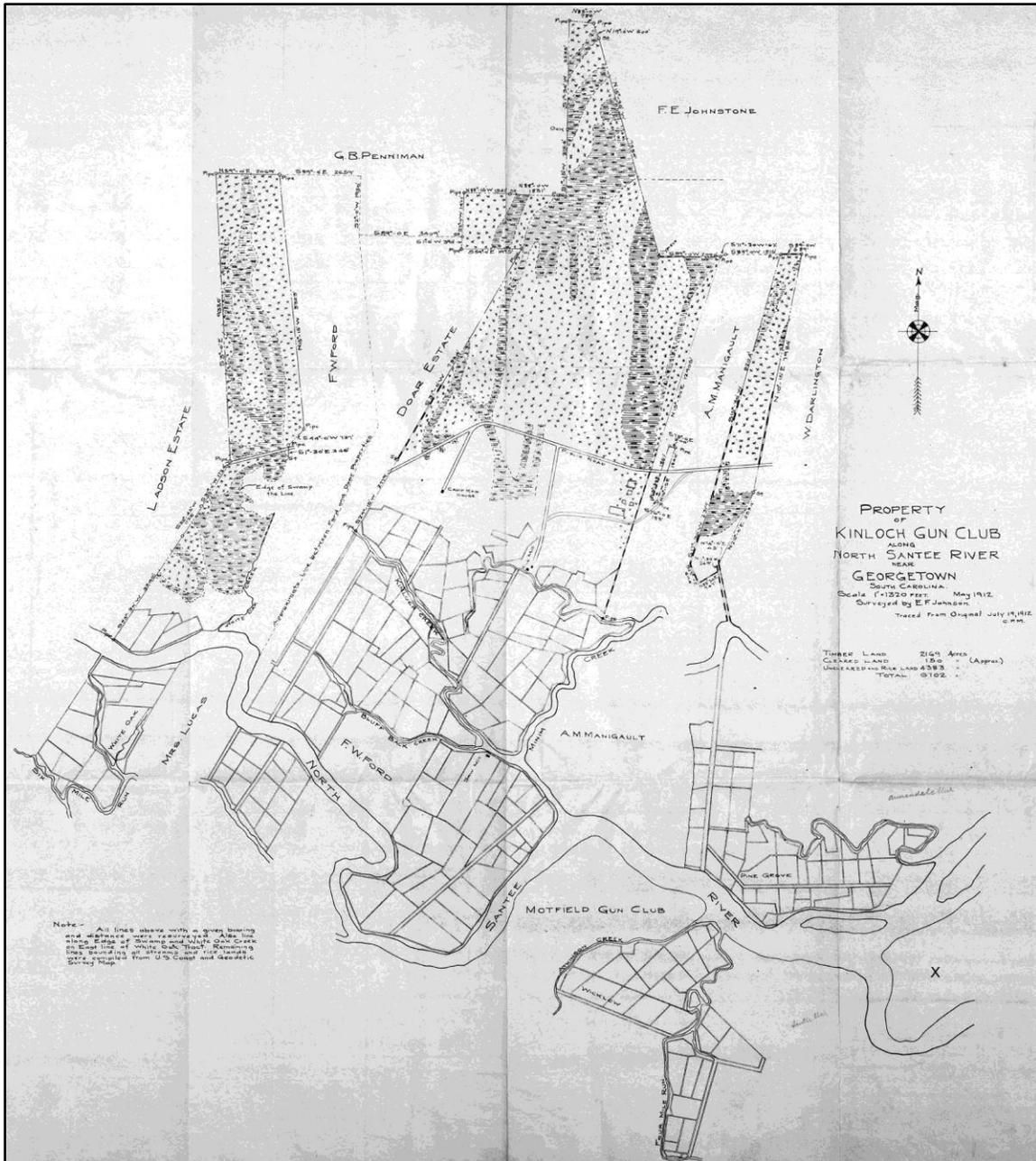


Figure 6.1. Adapted from "Property of Kinloch Gun Club along North Santee River near Georgetown, South Carolina," 1912. Unlike the Santee Club, which owned mostly contiguous tracts, Kinloch's preserve was a patchwork of plantations separated by other private holdings. A second difference was that Kinloch did not span all three of the major waterfowl habitats in the delta—rice fields, open salt marsh, and barrier islands. Its ducking grounds lay entirely within the rice-field zone, several miles upriver from the coast. In 1914 the club purchased Crow Island, nine hundred acres of old rice fields located between the North Santee and Big Duck Creek, from Joseph M. Fox, formerly a member of the Annandale Club. The western half of Crow Island is marked on the map with an X. *Source:* box 26, "Kinloch Gun Club—Crow Island and Annandale Clubhouse Properties, 1912–1918" folder, Papers of Eugene du Pont (1873–1954), 1835–1956, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del.

writer.²³ “I was much pleased with the Santee property,” Ramsay informed Lachicotte on March 6, “and I would very much like to see the club get it.”²⁴ With Ramsay speaking for the Hagley Gun Club, Lachicotte representing the owners, and Groves functioning as the go-between, the two parties agreed on a sale price of \$40,000 (1.01 million in 2014 dollars) on March 18.²⁵

While awaiting an abstract of title, survey, and timber estimation, the Hagley Gun Club immediately set about reorganizing itself as the Kinloch Gun Club. Although nothing exists to prove that the Hagley Gun Club actually had elected officers, Ramsay seems to have acted as its president. In this new endeavor, he took the lead as well.²⁶ One of Ramsay’s first steps was to write B. Nason Hamlin of Boston, the secretary of the Santee Club, asking for direction. In detailed responses to Ramsay’s questions dated May 24, 1912, Hamlin gave an overview of the entire setup at Santee: the acreage, the number of members and shares in the club, the annual dues and daily usage fees, the policies regarding guests and women, the hierarchy of employees and their duties, the clubhouse, the outbuildings, the boats, the blinds, and the decoys. He also sent Ramsay a copy of the Santee Club’s current rules and regulations.²⁷ The Kinloch

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3 (quotation on p. 3).

²⁴ [William G. Ramsay] to Philip R. Lachicotte, March 6, 1912, box 15, “Kinloch—Real Estate, 1912–1915” folder, PEDP.

²⁵ Memorandum, William G. Ramsay to Alexis I. du Pont, J. D. Bush, J. J. Satterthwait, Josiah Marvel, Eugene E. du Pont, J. G. Ewing, and Eugene du Pont, March 18, 1912, *ibid.*

²⁶ Memorandum, William G. Ramsay to Alexis I. du Pont, J. D. Bush, J. J. Satterthwait, Josiah Marvel, Eugene E. du Pont, J. G. Ewing, and Eugene du Pont, March 26, 1912, box 16, H–N folder, PEDP; minutes of the Kinloch Gun Club organizational meeting, March 22, 1912, *ibid.*

Gun Club incorporated in June 1912, authorizing six hundred shares of capital stock with a par value of \$100 each (2,520 in 2014 dollars). It limited the membership to forty—the same number as the Santee Club. The charter members were Ramsay, Eugene du Pont Jr., Eugene E. du Pont, Alexis du Pont, Josiah Marvel, and John J. Satterthwait, a Wilmington industrialist. The two remaining members of the Hagley Gun Club—Danforth Bush and Joseph G. Ewing, manager of Du Pont’s Rifle Smokeless Division—joined Kinloch soon after that. The club elected Ramsay as president, Eugene du Pont as vice president, Marvel as secretary, and Alexis du Pont as treasurer, with Ramsay, Bush, and Eugene du Pont making up the House and Grounds Committee. This core group from the old Hagley Gun Club reached out to sportsmen they respected in their social and business circles, and by July, only thirteen Kinloch memberships were unsold. Fifteen of the new members lived outside of Delaware.²⁸

²⁷ B. Nason Hamlin to William G. Ramsay, May 24, 1912, box 15, “Kinloch—Real Estate, 1912–1915” folder, PEDP; “Santee Club Rules and Regulations for the Season Beginning November 11th, 1911,” September 1, 1911, *ibid.* In late 1919, when Kinloch began “planning to make certain revisions in the By-laws,” the club once again called upon Hamlin for assistance. Kinloch president Eugene du Pont asked him “whether it would be possible to borrow for a week or two a copy of the Santee Club By-Laws, so that we may have the benefit of the Santee’s long experience in Club management to assist us in our task.” See du Pont to Hamlin, December 19, 1919, box 22, “Kinloch Gun Club—General Correspondence, 1919” folder, PEDP. See also Hamlin to du Pont, December 23, 1919, *ibid.*; [du Pont] to Hamlin, December 27, 1919, *ibid.*

²⁸ Josiah Marvel to Alexis I. du Pont, May 10, 1912, box 16, H–N folder, PEDP; draft certificate of incorporation for Kinloch Gun Club, 1912, *ibid.*; memorandum, William G. Ramsay to the members of the Kinloch Gun Club, May 17, 1912, box 18, “Kinloch Gun Club—President’s File, 1912” folder, *ibid.*; memorandum, Ramsay to Alexis I. du Pont, J. J. Satterthwait, Marvel, Eugene E. du Pont, and Eugene du Pont, June 7, 1912, box 16, H–N folder, PEDP; minutes of the Board of Governors, Kinloch Gun Club, June 28, 1912, *ibid.*; memorandum, Ramsay to the members of the Kinloch Gun Club, August 22, 1912, box 16, R folder, *ibid.*; Ramsay to Alexis I. du Pont, May 2, 1913, *ibid.*; Ramsay, President’s Report, Kinloch Gun Club, May 17, 1913, pp. 2–3, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (April to June)” folder, KGCP.

The transfer of title met with delays.²⁹ In the meantime, the situation at Richfield Plantation became unsettled. Dozens of families of African American tenant farmers lived on the plantation, growing rice on shares with S. M. Ward & Company. “The arrangements we have had with the tenants planting rice,” Lachicotte explained to Ramsay, “is that they furnish the seed, do all of the work and give us four bushels of rice per acre, as rent. This I think is about all that we can charge them, as we take no risk or have no outlay. This is what I told them you would do this year.”³⁰ Lachicotte learned from Richfield’s “negro foreman” that the tenants intended to plant 195 acres in early June. However, the preparation of the fields was behind schedule because of severe spring freshets. Rice planting in recent years had produced such meager returns that Ward & Company stopped investing in upkeep of the Richfield infrastructure. Thus, the banks were weak and easily compromised when the river was high. The major rivers of lower South Carolina, already swollen from previous freshets, reached near-record flood stages after more heavy rain fell over the piedmont in the middle of March. As of mid-April, Lachicotte reported that many of the fields at Richfield were still underwater, and he was not optimistic about the rice crop.³¹ Given the problems with flooding and uncertainty surrounding the plans of the new owners, who were hesitant to make decisions affecting the property until

²⁹ William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, July 26, 1912, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912” folder, KGCP.

³⁰ P. R. Lachicotte to William G. Ramsay, April 22, 1912, box 16, H–N folder, PEDP.

³¹ *Ibid.* On the freshets, see “Floods Up-State Working Damage,” *Georgetown Daily Item*, March 16, 1912.

they took title to it, the tenants shared Lachicotte's dubious opinion concerning the prospects of a crop in 1913. Most went looking for work elsewhere, and the plantation grew little, if any, rice that summer.³²

The Kinloch Gun Club finally came into possession of the Ward & Company land in August. At that point, they hired George H. Mitchell as the club's superintendent. He started work on September 1. Mitchell came to Kinloch from Delaware, where he had been employed at the fashionable Wilmington Club, a strictly social organization, and his only qualifications for running a hunting preserve in South Carolina appear to have been that he was acquainted with Ramsay and the du Ponts and available for hire on short notice. The Kinloch Gun Club also put rice planter Stephen F. Coachman, who had managed Richfield for Ward & Company, on salary as assistant superintendent. In mid-September, Ramsay, Bush, and Eugene du Pont Jr. traveled down to make hasty arrangements for the upcoming ducking season. They had Groves and Mitchell furnish the old house at Wicklow Plantation and get it in shape to be used as the clubhouse. Coachman oversaw rebuilding the banks broken by the spring floods so that the rice fields could hold water for the ducks. The last step was for Mitchell to erect blinds and Coachman to clean the ditches leading to

³² Minutes of the Board of Governors, Kinloch Gun Club, June 28, 1912, box 16, H–N folder, PEDP; G. W. Hazzard to W. C. [sic] Groves, January 12, 1913, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)" folder, KGCP. A solid clue as to the lack of a crop on Richfield Plantation in 1912 is that none of the tenants had any seed rice for planting in the spring of 1913. See [J. Stuart Groves] to William G. Ramsay, June 18, 1913, *ibid.*

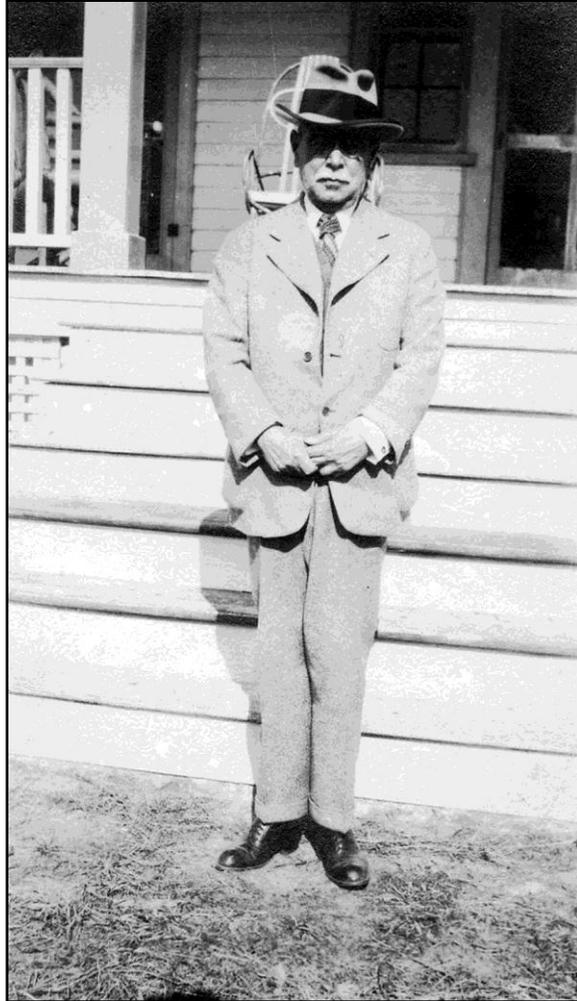


Figure 6.2. Famed bandmaster John Philip Sousa (1854–1932) standing outside of the Kinloch Gun Club’s original headquarters at Wicklow Plantation, circa 1920. “The March King” was a good shot and a loyal member of the club. In 1926, three years after completing construction of a new clubhouse at Milldam Plantation that overlooked “practically the entire ducking ground,” Kinloch deeded the Wicklow house and seven adjoining acres to its third (and last) superintendent, T. Cordes Lucas. *Source:* Kinloch Gun Club Collection, Georgetown County Library, Georgetown, S.C.

them so that a skiff carrying a hunter and a guide could pass.³³ Unfortunately Ramsay stated, “The very limited time at our disposal between September and early November made it very difficult to do this work in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.”³⁴ The twenty-three-foot *Alice Bowen*, a second-hand shad-fishing boat with a seven-horsepower engine that the House and Grounds Committee purchased in Newcastle, Delaware, “for general work on the ditches and for towing skiffs from the landing to the blinds,” arrived in time to transport the first shooting party from Georgetown to the club.³⁵

The Kinloch Gun Club issued its original set of rules and regulations on October 17, 1912. This document duplicated long sections of the Santee Club’s 1911–1912 rules and regulations—a copy of which Hamlin had sent to Ramsay in May—word for word. Kinloch adopted the same opening and closing dates for its clubhouse, booking policies for members and guests, fee structure, procedure for choosing blinds, and number of guns per blind. Both clubs also forbade firing from the skiff on the way to the blind and made it the responsibility of every member to adhere to the game laws of the state of South Carolina while hunting

³³ Ramsay, President’s Report, May 17, 1913, p. 1; memorandum, William G. Ramsay to Alexis I. du Pont and Josiah Marvel, August 13, 1912, box 22, “Kinloch Gun Club—Applications for Positions There and Correspondence, 1912–1920” folder, PEDP; [Ramsay] to S. F. Coachman, August 20, 1912, *ibid.*; memorandum, Ramsay to the members of the Kinloch Gun Club, August 22, 1912, box 16, R folder, *ibid.*; G. H. Mitchell to Ramsay, March 1, 1914, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (January to March)” folder, KGCP; [J. Stuart Groves] to Ramsay, February 19, 1914, *ibid.*; Ramsay to Groves, September 13, 1912, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912” folder, *ibid.*; [Ramsay] to Mitchell, October 4, 1912, *ibid.*; Ramsay to Groves, October 18, 1912, *ibid.*; [Ramsay] to Mitchell, October 18, 1912, *ibid.*; Mitchell to Ramsay, October 22, 1912, *ibid.*; [Groves] to Ramsay, October 25, 1912, *ibid.*

³⁴ Ramsay, President’s Report, May 17, 1913, p. 1.

³⁵ Eugene du Pont to J. Stewart [*sic*] Groves, October 25, 1912, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912” folder, KGCP; [Groves] to William G. Ramsay, November 16, 1912, *ibid.*; “Bookings to Date—Kinloch Gun Club,” November 18, 1912, *ibid.*; Ramsay to Groves, November 27, 1912, *ibid.*

on the property. Kinloch even restricted duck shooting to the same days of the week—Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday—as Santee and set an identical bag limit of one hundred ducks per day or three hundred ducks per season.³⁶

Conservation-minded waterfowlers imposing bag limits on themselves was a recent development in Georgetown County. As described in chapter 5, the freewheeling duck hunts at the Annandale Club in the 1890s and early 1900s were legendary for their excess. Porter Alexander noted that in 1903–1904, there were “hardly ever less than 100” bagged in a day, and although the documentation is sparse, we can point to at least two instances that season when members’ total daily kills were much greater than one hundred—Edward D. Toland and Joseph M. Fox together accounted for three hundred ducks, while George H. Penniman and the “2 Hazzard boys” amassed four hundred between them. Penniman and the Hazzards even sold some of their overkill, an action that many of their sporting contemporaries in other parts of the country where ducks were scarcer would have considered unconscionable. The Annandale Club disbanded in 1908, apparently never having observed a bag limit.³⁷

In all likelihood, the Santee Club was the first to implement a bag limit on ducks. It cannot be determined from available sources whether Santee had one prior to 1911. The only older set of rules and regulations known to exist is from the 1900–1901. At that time, members were simply encouraged not to kill more

³⁶ Eugene du Pont to J. Stuart Groves, October 21, 1912, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912” folder, KGCP; “Rules and Regulations for the Season Beginning November 11th 1912,” October 17, 1912, *ibid.*

³⁷ SIL, rear flyleaf.

game than they could use.³⁸ The 1911–1912 rules and regulations that Hamlin supplied to the Kinloch Gun Club took effect at Santee on November 11, 1911. Six days later, Henry H. Carter of Boston bagged exactly one hundred mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and then stopped shooting for the day. However, the forgetfulness of other gunners in the next several weeks suggests that the bag limit may have been a new addition to the rules. On December 4, fellow Bostonian Eben D. Jordan Jr., a former president of the club, shot 160 mallards and one wigeon (*Anas americana*). As noted in the club’s record book, this enormous bag earned him the “Blue Ribbon.” On December 28, Walter S. Hoyt of New York City, the club’s current president, overshot the limit by an even wider margin, downing 184 mallards. By 1917 Santee had dropped its daily bag limit to forty.³⁹

Drawing on the experience of the Santee Club, the Kinloch Gun Club established a bag limit from the outset. Ramsay, Bush, and the du Ponts had seen “myriads of the finest ducks” when Lachicotte introduced them to the Ward & Company property in February 1912.⁴⁰ Expecting to find ducks similarly concentrated on the preserve when they opened Kinloch’s inaugural season on November 30, the club wanted to ensure that the members, especially those who

³⁸ See “Extract from the Rules and Regulations of the Santee Club for the Season on 1900–1901,” box 2, folder 176, Santee Club Papers, 1897–1902, Thomas Eveleigh Richardson Collection, ca. 1683–1933, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

³⁹ SCBR, vol. 2, 1909–1914, November 17, December 4 and 28, 1911 (quotation on December 4); “The Santee Gun Club,” *Charleston Evening Post*, March 27, 1911; “Splendid Hunting along the Santee,” *News and Courier*, October 12, 1917.

⁴⁰ Du Pont, Satterthwait, Du Pont, Marvel, Du Pont, Ramsay, Bush, and Ewing, “General Description of the Richfield Property,” p. 2.

were not accustomed to having so many birds in their sights, shot responsibly. A limit of one hundred ducks per gunner per day seemed like reasonable self-restraint in view of the circumstances. Very little exists in the way of shooting records from the Kinloch Gun Club, but a July 1913 letter from Groves to Ramsay contains daily totals taken “from our log book” for parties staying at the club during the 1912–1913 season.⁴¹ As it turned out, the club’s concern about excessive kills was unnecessary. From correspondence related to bookings and an early account book, we learn that there were four members at Kinloch on opening day—Ramsay and Eugene E. du Pont along with James A. Buchanan and George H. Myers, both of Washington. Their cumulative bag that day was eleven ducks. All of the members together only managed to bag 102 ducks at Kinloch between November 30 and the last day of shooting on February 23, 1913.⁴² By comparison, on November 18, the first day of the season at Santee, eight gunners got 239 birds and the club’s total for 1912–1913 was 5,055.⁴³ The general frustration with the poor sport at Kinloch showed in a communication from Ramsay to Groves on the eve of the 1913–1914 season. “Duck shooting is the principal shooting on the property,” he remarked, and “last year a good many of our members were disappointed in the duck shooting.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ [J. Stuart Groves] to William G. Ramsay, July 23, 1913, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)” folder, KGCP.

⁴² *Ibid.*; William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, November 27, 1912, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912” folder, *ibid.*; Kinloch Gun Club Account Book, 1913–1917, p. 3, box 25/148, folder 1, Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914–1922, South Carolina Historical Society.

⁴³ SCBR, vol. 2, November 18, 1912, March 19, 1913.

On March 4, 1913, nine days after the last party left the clubhouse and it closed for the season, Congress approved the Weeks-McLean Act, which threatened to make Kinloch's second year of duck shooting even less satisfying than the first. Under the new law, the federal government claimed responsibility for protecting migratory birds. Game laws traditionally had been within the purview of the states. Migratory birds suffered in this system because the states had little incentive to regulate hunting of species like waterfowl that were only temporary residents within their borders. What did conservation measures in one state accomplish if the next state permitted relentless slaughter of the same birds? Many state lawmakers reasoned that they would be needlessly depriving their constituents of food and sport to the benefit of hunters elsewhere. It was a vicious cycle that left wild ducks and geese exposed to extreme hunting pressure over the entire length of their migration circuits. With the seasonal flights diminishing rapidly, professional ornithologists, bird lovers, and sportsmen lobbied Congress to take action before it was too late. The manufacturers of sporting arms and ammunition joined the fight as well, realizing that their future sales depended on waterfowl conservation. The pressure applied by this coalition resulted in the Weeks-McLean Act, a groundbreaking and controversial statute that states' rights advocates argued was unconstitutional. The act authorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Bureau of Biological Survey, to fix closed seasons for migratory game birds in every state, "having due regard to the

⁴⁴ William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, October 4, 1913, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (August to December)" folder, KGCP.



Figure 6.3. Undated photograph of a guide paddling a gunner through the marsh at the Kinloch Gun Club. Neither man can be identified. *Source:* Kinloch Gun Club Collection, Georgetown County Library, Georgetown, S.C.

zones of temperature, breeding habits, and times and line of migratory flight.”⁴⁵

One of the main objectives of this legislation was to end spring waterfowl shooting—a particularly destructive practice due to its negative impact on breeding. Migratory waterfowl formed mating pairs mostly during fall and winter. If either the female or the male was killed en route to the summer breeding grounds, then neither would reproduce that year.

On the whole, the Weeks-McLean Act met with approval from both southern and northern sportsmen in South Carolina. National Association of Audubon Societies field agent James Henry Rice Jr., the state’s former chief

⁴⁵ On the Weeks-McLean Act, see note 139 of chapter 5. Act quoted in James Henry Rice Jr., “National Government Protecting the Birds,” *State*, March 19, 1913.

game warden and its leading voice for conservation, praised Congress for enacting “the most drastic and comprehensive piece of legislation for the protection of birds, recorded in human history.”⁴⁶ Rice’s only reservation concerned the timing of the duck season put forward for South Carolina. The Biological Survey grouped the states into two zones—northern and southern—and released the dates of the open seasons in each zone, with exceptions, for public review on June 23. As proposed by the survey, the South Carolina season would extend from November 1 to February 1. “The inclusion of November is an error,” declared Rice. In that month, the ducks, “wearied from a flight of thousands of miles and uncertain as to winter feeding grounds,” were in “poor condition,” making them easy prey for “idle and vagrant pot hunters.” This early opening date was bad not only for the ducks but also for the sportsmen. “As most of the birds do not arrive until late in November, this subtracts substantially from the length of the open season and will bear heavily on owners of hunting preserves who go to great expense to protect their birds. From a sportsman’s point of view,” Rice pronounced, “February would have been a better month by far than November.”⁴⁷

The Weeks-McLean Act provided for a three-month window “in which said regulations may be examined and considered before final adoption, permitting, when deemed proper, public hearings, thereon.”⁴⁸ Right away obtaining a hearing became the goal of ex-governor of South Carolina Duncan Clinch

⁴⁶ Rice, “National Government Protecting the Birds.”

⁴⁷ James Henry Rice, “New National Bird Law,” *State*, July 9, 1913.

⁴⁸ Act quoted in Rice, “National Government Protecting the Birds.”

Heyward, who strongly agreed with Rice regarding the erroneousness of the Biological Survey's recommendation for the state. Heyward petitioned T. S. Palmer of the Biological Survey, chair of the committee that prepared the regulations, about the need for a hearing to discuss the South Carolina dates, and he began encouraging other sportsmen to do likewise. Heyward sent William D. Morgan, president of the Bank of Georgetown and a past mayor of the city, a copy of his letter to Palmer and asked him to circulate it. Morgan, in turn, wrote Stuart Groves, forwarding a copy of Heyward's letter to Palmer and requesting that as the local representative of the Kinloch Gun Club, he express his "views on the subject of this new game law" to Heyward.⁴⁹

Members of the Kinloch Gun Club who had previously belonged to the Hagley Gun Club were somewhat familiar with shooting conditions in South Carolina. The members also had learned a great deal in the last year about the wintering behavior of ducks on the Santee delta from Kinloch's assistant superintendent, rice planter Stephen Coachman, and he became a trusted advisor on matters pertaining to the plantation. Groves got Coachman's thoughts as to the suitability of a November 1-to-February 1 duck season and passed them along to Heyward. In a July 24 letter, Groves described Coachman as "a gentleman of the first class . . . [who] comes from one of the oldest families in South Carolina. He is 66 years old and all his life he has practically lived along

⁴⁹ [J. Stuart Groves] to D. C. Heyward, July 24, 1913, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)" folder, KGCP. On Morgan, see Ronald E. Bridwell, "Biography of William Doyle Morgan," in *A View of Our Past: The Morgan Photographic Collection Depicting Georgetown, South Carolina, c. 1890–1915* (Georgetown, S.C.: Georgetown County Library System, 1993), 6–13.

the rice fields of this country.” Groves added that Coachman had “consistently shot ducks nearly every year of his life” since he was a boy in the 1850s. Based on decades of observations, “Mr. Coachman states that the ducks seldom reach this section of the country before November 15th. . . . At this time they are very thin and show the effects of their flight from the North.” Believing the ducks needed at least two weeks to rest and get “settled in their new home,” Coachman objected to opening the season before December 1. “He further states,” continued Groves, “that February is the best month for duck shooting and always has been to his general knowledge.”⁵⁰ Therefore, Coachman was of the same mind as Rice and Heyward—a season extending from December 1 to March 1 would be preferable. “If there is anything further which I can do to aid this cause I wish you would write me,” Groves concluded.⁵¹ He mailed copies of this missive to both Heyward and Ramsay.

With the threat of a shortened season looming, the Kinloch Gun Club spent the regulation-review period in the summer of 1913 busily developing its ducking grounds. “One thing that should surely be most carefully taken care of is the careful location and thorough building of the duck blinds, together with the preparation of ponds, ditches, portages and everything else connected with first-class duck shooting,” Ramsay directed Groves, “as if the present proposed federal legislation goes through limiting the duck season . . . the members surely should have every opportunity to get some duck shooting when on the Club’s

⁵⁰ [J. Stuart Groves] to D. C. Heyward, July 24, 1913, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)” folder, KGCP.

⁵¹ Ibid.

property during the open season.”⁵² For guidance, Ramsay instructed Mitchell and Coachman to consult superintendent Ludwig A. Beckman of the Santee Club, “and while there to get an opportunity to see all their various devices for shooting, including the method by which they control the water on fields, flooding, etc.” and the “exact construction of their duck blinds.”⁵³ The Kinloch staff met with Beckman on June 19, and two days later, Mitchell sent Ramsay a “full and interesting report” outlining all they had learned on their visit to Santee.⁵⁴ Ramsay requested that Mitchell and Coachman “follow as nearly as possible the suggestions made by Mr. Bachman [*sic*],” and his wish was that “all the work that we possibly can do on the riverbanks, blinds, etc., be positively completed by August 31, leaving simply the thatching up of the blinds, with rushes until a later period.”⁵⁵

In late August, while the improvements to the ducking grounds at the Kinloch Gun Club were in full swing, Ramsay contacted Palmer, introducing himself and offering his support of the Biological Survey’s work. His letter started, “The Kinloch Gun Club, of which I have the honor to be President, is very much interested in the present Federal legislation with regard to migratory birds.” In fact, he explained, “The entire policy of the Club from its inception has been

⁵² William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, July 30, 1913, *ibid.*

⁵³ Memorandum of conversation between William Ramsay and Stuart Groves, May 31, 1913, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)” folder, KGCP.

⁵⁴ [J. Stuart Groves] to William G. Ramsay, June 18, 1913, *ibid.*; [Ramsay] to George H. Mitchell, July 11, 1913, *ibid.* (quotation). Mitchell’s report seems to be lost.

⁵⁵ William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, July 11, 1913, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)” folder, KGCP (first quotation); memorandum of conversation between Ramsay and Groves, May 31, 1913, *ibid.* (second quotation).

conservation of bird and animal life.” He went on to relate that “our membership is composed principally of men from New England and the middle Eastern States, and our position with regard to Federal Legislation on migratory birds is that anything that can protect bird life meets with our most hearty approval.” Even so, Ramsay stated, “It is only fair that all true sportsmen, including the members of a Club of this kind, should be given a certain amount of sport,” and “they feel that some of the provisions in the present Federal program are unfair.” He closed by inquiring about the date and location of the hearing on the South Carolina regulations.⁵⁶

The hearing took place in Washington on September 22. Ramsay, Eugene du Pont Jr., Eugene E. du Pont, and Joseph Ewing appeared before Palmer’s committee as part of a large delegation of South Carolina residents and non-resident property owners that included a number of prominent public figures such as Rice, Heyward, U.S. senator Ellison D. Smith, four of the state’s seven congressmen, chief game warden Alfred A. Richardson, and Charleston Museum director Paul M. Rea. Notable sportsmen at the hearing in addition to the members of the Kinloch Gun Club were one-time Santee Club member Isaac E. Emerson of Baltimore, now the sole owner of an immense hunting preserve on the Waccamaw River, and Marion lumberman Joseph L. Wheeler, a transplanted Pennsylvanian who had purchased Alexander’s famous preserve on South Island in 1909. Rice and the others made their case for February instead of November—“more particularly for the life of the species of the bird we are now

⁵⁶ William G. Ramsay to T. S. Palmer, August 27, 1913, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (August to December)” folder, KGCP.

discussing, and incidentally for the man who obtains recreation by its pursuit.”⁵⁷ Afterwards, Palmer read a letter from Francis Peabody Jr. of Boston, the vice president of the Santee Club, in which he suggested a compromise season beginning on November 15 and ending on February 15. Once Palmer opened the floor to comments, the Santee Club’s influence became clear. Ramsay recounted, “I for the Kinloch Gun Club advised him that we were willing to accept November 15 to February 15. Others seconded the motion in similar manner.”⁵⁸ When a presidential proclamation on October 1 established the new federal regulations as the law of the land, South Carolina’s 1913–1914 ducking season was set for November 20 to February 16.⁵⁹

In 1913 the Kinloch Gun Club had tried, as its president said, “not to leave a stone unturned to have the best possible duck shooting we can during the coming season.”⁶⁰ It sent its superintendents to the Santee Club to learn strategies and techniques for developing its “shooting facilities.”⁶¹ The club also

⁵⁷ P. H. McGowan, “Change the Time for Duck Season,” *State*, September 23, 1913; SIL, 310. On Emerson, see note 27 of chapter 1. On Emerson’s preserve, which consisted of eight plantations, see Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 18–26; Linder and Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County*, 57–98. On Wheeler, see “J. L. Wheeler, 64, Dies at Florence,” *News and Courier*, July 30, 1932.

⁵⁸ Memorandum, William G. Ramsay to the members of the Kinloch Gun Club, September 26, 1913, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (August to December)” folder, KGCP.

⁵⁹ Executive proclamation of October 1, 1913, in *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, vol. 38, *From March, 1913, to March, 1915, Concurrent Resolutions of the Two Houses of Congress, and Recent Treaties, Conventions, and Executive Proclamations* (Washington, D.C.: [Government Printing Office], 1915), pt. 2, p. 1963.

⁶⁰ William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, October 4, 1913, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (August to December)” folder, KGCP.

⁶¹ William G. Ramsay, Eugene du Pont, and J. Danforth Bush, Report of House Committee, March 31, 1914, p. 3, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (April to June)” folder, *ibid.*

succeeded in its efforts to persuade the Committee on Regulations on Migratory Birds to preserve February duck hunting in South Carolina. However, the most important move that Kinloch had made to enhance sporting opportunities on its preserve since the end of the 1912–1913 season was to begin a sustained program of waterfowl management. Initially, this took the form of rice planting and baiting.

In 1905, while on assignment in Georgetown, August Kohn of the *News and Courier* saw signs that the local rice industry was on its last legs. He also detected a feeling of trepidation on the part of Georgetown's waterfowling community, professionals and amateurs alike. "The fear," Kohn wrote, was "that the crippling of the rice industry is collateral to the condition of the ducks." Some even suggested to him that "the game clubs will in time have to plant rice for the support of the birds."⁶² The Santee Club started planting rice soon thereafter, and other sportsmen gradually followed suit. The Kinloch Gun Club's House and Grounds Committee made plans for the 1913 growing season while hunting at the club in December 1912. In early 1913, Groves ordered seed rice, and the superintendents arranged leases with tenants. Kinloch harvested its first rice crop in October 1913, fourteen months after it came into possession of the Ward & Company plantations. The difference between the first ducking season at Kinloch, when the club had planted no rice, and the second, when it planted over

⁶² August Kohn, "Georgetown and Vicinity," *News and Courier*, July 11, 1905.

one hundred acres, was dramatic. “The planting of the ricefields greatly improved our shooting,” the House and Grounds Committee observed in March 1914.⁶³

⁶³ William G. Ramsay to J. Stuart Groves, November 27, 1912, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912” folder, KGCP; Ramsay, Eugene du Pont, and J. Danforth Bush, Report of the House Committee, Kinloch Gun Club, March 31, 1914, p. 3, box 1, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (April to June)” folder, *ibid.*

CHAPTER 7

REPURPOSING THE RICE PLANTATIONS

It did not take long after the founding of the Santee Club in 1898 for members to learn the feeding and resting habits of migratory ducks on the Santee River delta and how that behavior affected their daily flight pattern. Several years passed, however, before the club began manipulating local environmental conditions to maximize their shooting opportunities. For the better part of the next quarter-century, managing wetlands and waterfowl at the Santee Club chiefly meant sowing, tending, and reaping rice in a manner no different than Carolinians had been practicing for generations, except that the sportsmen's grain was not milled and did not go to market. Instead, most was consumed in rough form by ducks where it had been strategically scattered as bait on the shooting grounds. Historians who have studied the end of rice planting in South Carolina approach the topic strictly from the standpoint of commercial production.¹ In reality, a number of the old plantations continued to produce rice for years, sometimes decades, after the last crop was sold. The Santee Club

¹ See, for example, George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970); Dennis T. Lawson, *No Heir to Take Its Place: The Story of Rice in Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Georgetown, S.C.: Rice Museum, 1972); James M. Clifton, "Twilight Comes to the Rice Kingdom: Postbellum Rice Culture on the South Atlantic Coast," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 62 (Summer 1978): 146–154; Lawrence S. Rowland, "'Alone on the River': The Rise and Fall of the Savannah River Rice Plantations of St. Peter's Parish, South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 88 (July 1987): 121–150; Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the*

conducted the largest and longest-running rice-planting operation on a ducking preserve in South Carolina. Through examinations of it and the Kinloch Gun Club, which likewise grew rice for bait over an extended period, we can learn more not only about northern sportsmen's entrée into active waterfowl management but also about a chapter of low-country rice culture that has been virtually ignored by historians.

Although the Santee Club's 1898 constitution stated that one of their objects was "to raise such plantation, farm and garden products upon the real estate owned by the Club, as the Club may desire," members did not start out to become rice planters.² A little over a year after the constitution was adopted, Charleston attorney Theodore D. Jervey Jr., who had brokered the deal for the club's keystone Murphy's Island tract, remarked, "In purchasing Blake's [Plantation] to a great extent, they got a white elephant; for they have no desire to cultivate the land and that is where its value lies."³ In 1850 thirty-nine Santee River plantations had grown rice on 16,660 acres, representing practically the entire delta from its head, where the North Santee and South Santee diverged about fifteen miles inland, to the marshes of South Island, Cedar Island, and

South Carolina Low Country, 1670–1920 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); James H. Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010).

² *Robert Ober v. Santee Club, Case on Appeal, State of New York, Supreme Court, Appellate Division—First Department* (Cooperstown, N.Y.: Printed by the Arthur H. Crist Co., [1910?]), 65.

³ Theodore D. Jervey [Jr.] to R. H. Lucas, May 7, 1900, Jervey Letter Book, 1898–1900, pp. 432–433, box 255, folder 1, Theodore Dehon Jervey Papers, 1871–1892, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

Murphy's Island, where the rivers emptied into the Atlantic Ocean.⁴ A half-century later, the area of the delta still covered in rice fields was substantial. "In 1900 and for many years after, there were very large rice plantations on both Santee rivers," recalled Santee Club member Henry H. Carter.⁵ Speaking specifically of the South Santee, which formed the spine of the club's holdings, Carter stated: "Beginning at about our Club House [at Blake's Plantation, approximately five miles west of the islands] on the south side of the river, the rice fields extended up river for miles. Messrs. Doar, Lucas, Lowndes, Rutledge, Seabrooke, Graham and many others raised rice. On the north side of the river Mr. Beckman and others raised rice at Blackwood, Fanny Meade, Tranquility and many other plantations."⁶

As mentioned in chapter 5, duck shooting at the Santee Club was mainly done over ponds in the Cedar Island, Murphy's Island, and Little Murphy's Island marshes. In the early years, the sport at the marsh ponds was a by-product of the rice plantations. Each day, ducks wintering on the lower Santee, predominantly mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), migrated en masse from their nighttime feeding grounds on the delta plantations to their daytime resting grounds on the coast and back again. "Thousands and thousands of ducks passed down the river at daybreak and returned up river at night," related Carter. Gunners got to their stands in the marsh before dawn, and as Carter

⁴ David Doar, *Rice and Rice Planting in the South Carolina Low Country*, Contributions from the Charleston Museum, no. 8 (1936; repr., Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Museum, 1970), 41.

⁵ Henry H. Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club* ([Boston?]: privately printed, [1934?]), 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11, 14.



Figure 7.1. Black Point Pond on Murphy's Island, site of some of the largest concentrations of ducks ever recorded at the Santee Club, January 1929. *Source:* private collection.

remembered, "It was seldom one saw any ducks on entering a pond."⁷ Once the morning flight commenced, pairs and small flocks of ducks descended on the ponds, one after another, for several hours. After it ceased, according to Carter, one could expect "Ocean Pond, Black Point, Beach Pond, Wood's Pond, Graveyard, Coy, Peter and many others" to be "crowded with ducks during the day."⁸ On November 25, 1904, the steamboat carrying Carter and four other Santee Club members and their guides from the clubhouse to Murphy's Island

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14–15.

broke down two miles from the wharf, and the party took the rowboat the rest of the way. "This made the crowd late," one of them wrote in the log, "and the ducks were all in Black Point to the extent of 100,000 or more."⁹ Three years earlier, while the club was experimenting with a short-lived rule that prohibited shooting before eight o'clock, Carter and a guest had arrived late at Black Point and observed twice as many ducks. On November 19, 1901, they "reported that Black Point was simply alive with ducks, mostly mallards. It was no exaggeration to estimate the number of ducks at 200,000, as the whole pond was covered."¹⁰

Until the mid-1880s, most of the Santee delta remained planted in rice, and the largest crop since the war was ripening in the fields when two devastating hurricanes swept across the region within seven weeks of each other in 1893. By 1907 the total acreage on the North and South Santees devoted to rice planting had dwindled to fourteen hundred. The last substantial crop was planted the next year, and a freshet destroyed much of it in September, just weeks from harvest time.¹¹ As commercial rice growing was abandoned at

⁹ Santee Club Bag Records, vol. 1, pp. 135–136 (quotation on p. 135), South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston (hereafter cited as SCBR).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9–10 (quotation on p. 10).

¹¹ River Basin Studies Staff, Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 4, "A Report on the Lower Santee River, South Carolina to Determine the Effects of Diversion on Waterfowl Resources," July 1947, p. 11, box 447, Santee folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of River Basin Studies, General Project Files, 1946–1970, National Archives II, College Park, Md.; Louis S. Ehrich to Reid Whitford, May 17, 1894, quoted in "Appendix M: Improvement of Waccamaw and Lumber Rivers, North Carolina and South Carolina, and of Certain Rivers and Harbors in South Carolina," in *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, to the Secretary of War for the Year 1894* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), pt. 2, p. 1088; "Rice Culture Declining," *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), August 7, 1907; H. L. Oliver, "Will Abandon Rice Planting," *ibid.*, September 15, 1908.

plantation after plantation on the delta over the next few years, the Santee Club faced the prospect of having to manage waterfowl habitat themselves.

The Santee Club's initial identifiable step toward planting its own rice was the hiring of Ludwig A. Beckman on April 15, 1905. Beckman, the club's first full-time manager, took the job after selling his plantation in the delta, Blackwood, to club member Eben D. Jordan Jr. of Boston, who intended to use the tract as his own personal shooting grounds during visits to the club.¹² Although it cannot be corroborated, Beckman may have overseen the planting of the club's first rice crop within a couple of months of being hired. The earliest record associated with growing rice at the Santee Club, which strongly suggests that the club planted a crop in 1906, can be found in a small collection of Beckman's personal and business papers at the Village Museum in McClellanville. This record, an expense sheet from June of that year, shows that the club purchased twenty-five bushels of seed rice from Edward Porter Alexander, the former Confederate general and railroad executive from Georgia who had taken up rice planting at Ford's Point Plantation on South Island in retirement.¹³ Twenty-five bushels would have been enough seed to plant about ten acres of rice.¹⁴ Beckman also

¹² Ludwig A. Beckman Journals, 1919–1924 vol., pp. 120–122, private collection (hereafter cited as LABJ); SCBR, vol. 1, p. 158; Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 19.

¹³ "Pay Roll for Farm Work Done at the Santee Gun Club," June 16, 1906, 1905–1929 folder, Santee Club Records, 1899–1933, Village Museum, McClellanville, S.C. It is possible that the Santee Club planted rice earlier than this since Beckman's predecessor as superintendent was another rice planter, John Y. DuPre of Palmetto Plantation. However, evidence of the club producing rice crops under DuPre is lacking. DuPre was superintendent from circa 1900 to 1905.

¹⁴ Although it varied from plantation to plantation over time depending on soil conditions and a host of other factors, two and a half bushels of seed rice to the acre was a fairly standard application. See, for instance, A Constant Reader [pseud.], "Summary of the Various Plans of Planting Rice, as Furnished in the Answers to Mr. Washington's Queries," *Southern Agriculturalist*, May 1829, 193–197; [Solon Robinson], "Mr. Robinson's Tour—No. 18," *American*

left behind a number of journals that are held in a private collection, but the oldest surviving volume goes back no further than 1919. Apart from these sources, the only detailed evidence of rice cultivation at the club comes from contemporaneous newspapers.

In a letter to the editor of the *News and Courier* published in January 1908, Beckman stated that the club's "old rice lands are being reclaimed and planted" by "hundreds of day laborers."¹⁵ A *Charleston Evening Post* article from March 1911 indicated that the club's early reclamation and planting efforts had met with success and were ongoing: "During the summer months, thousands of dollars are spent on improving their property for the next shooting season. The club will plant a large area in rice this year in order to attract the ducks next winter."¹⁶ As nearly as can be determined from a June 1916 article in the *Evening Post*, only one hundred acres of rice were planted on the South Santee in 1916, and the club was responsible for seventy-five of them.¹⁷ An article in the *News and Courier* the following year told that "the club plants seventy acres of rice,

Agriculturalist, June 1850, 187; Robert F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops; Read before the Agricultural Association of the Planting States, on Occasion of the Annual Meeting, Held at Columbia, the Capital of South-Carolina, December 3d, 1853* (Charleston, S.C.: A. E. Miller, 1854), 32; "Modes of Growing Rice in South Carolina," *Pacific Rural Press* (San Francisco), July 29 and August 5, 1871.

¹⁵ L. A. Beckman, letter to editor, *News and Courier*, January 31, 1908.

¹⁶ "The Santee Gun Club," *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), March 27, 1911.

¹⁷ "McClellanville News," *ibid.*, June 21, 1916. W. Hampton Graham of Woodville Plantation and David Doar of Harrietta Plantation jointly planted the other twenty-five acres.



Figure 7.2. Ludwig A. Beckman (1869–1947). Beckman was a second-generation South Carolinian and first-generation rice planter. His father emigrated from Germany to Charleston in 1858, fought for the Confederacy, and opened a store in McClellanville following the war. After attending the Southern Normal School and Business College (later Western Kentucky University) and clerking for several years in Charleston, Beckman and a partner bought a 250-acre rice plantation in the Santee delta called Blackwood in 1892. Beckman planted rice at Blackwood until 1905, when he sold the plantation and went to work as superintendent of the Santee Club. Beckman retired from that position in 1945. *Source*: private collection.

solely for duck feed.”¹⁸ The club increased its acreage in rice to one hundred in 1918, and after the 1919 growing season, during which a large part of the crop was lost to a mid-summer freshet, it invited proposals from contractors for a major expansion of its planting operations: “The Santee Club is planning to reclaim 500 acres of old rice fields on the Santee River to be planted in rice and would like to get bids from dredging concerns on opening up canals, building dykes, etc.” Judging from Beckman’s journals, the club did not follow through on this plan and probably never planted much more than one hundred acres of rice in a season.¹⁹

As member B. Brannan Reath II of Easton, Maryland, put it, the Santee Club grew rice “in the old-fashioned way” throughout the 1920s and 1930s.²⁰ Until 1939, when a tractor was first used instead of oxen to harrow one of the fields, all of the work was accomplished by hand, with most of the laborers coming from the nearby African American community of Collins Creek.²¹ There were two windows for planting rice in South Carolina. The first was in April, and the second, in June. Beckman’s journals reveal that the Santee Club invariably planted during late May or June. This was because the club’s top field hands also

¹⁸ “Splendid Hunting along the Santee,” *News and Courier*, October 12, 1917. This article also tells that “they [the Santee Club] use over five hundred bushels of corn of their own raising for duck bait, besides buying on the outside. They will bait more heavily than ever before this coming season.”

¹⁹ “Many Deer Are Being Flushed,” *Charleston Evening Post*, August 2, 1918; LABJ, 1919–1924 vol., pp. 17–20; “Proposals Invited,” *Charleston Evening Post*, December 5–6 and 8–10, 1919 (quotation).

²⁰ B. Brannan Reath II, *Santee Club—A Legend* (Philadelphia: Printed by the Winchell Company, 1971), 61.

²¹ LABJ, 1939 vol., June 12.

worked as guides and watchmen during the winter, so they got a later start with preparing the rice fields for the growing season. Cleaning the ditches was mostly done in March and April, followed by plowing in May and disking in early June. Women joined the club's summer work force. They "clayed" the seeds with marsh mud to prevent them from floating when the fields were flooded and then assisted with the planting, especially in low places that stayed too soggy for sowing with a seed drill pulled by an ox or a mule. Women carried out much of the hoeing in July and August while men were busy building and burying new trunks in addition to repairing and strengthening the banks of fields left fallow for maintenance. Upkeep of the banks and trunks was a year-round chore, except during the ducking season. In late summer, Beckman deployed men and boys as "bird minders" to protect the ripening grain from depredation by bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) and red-winged black birds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). All hands, men and women, were in the fields during October or early November cutting, stacking, and tying the rice. Women threshed and winnowed it overwinter in the club's "rice yard." Beckman often did not supervise the plantation work directly but instead utilized the traditional low-country "task system," whereby hands received specified assignments for the day, which they could perform at their own pace, and earned a day's pay upon completion of the "task." For example, cleaning a one-acre length of "big ditches" represented one task in April 1924, as did cleaning a two-acre length of "small ditches." Each of these tasks



Figure 7.3. Workers repairing a broken rice bank on the Santee Club's Washo Plantation after a hurricane, July 1916. Flood waters had washed much of the bank into the adjacent canal leading from the Santee River, which is in the background of the picture, out of sight. *Source:* private collection.

paid one dollar (13.80 in 2014 dollars).²² Beckman usually handled the delicate business of irrigation and drainage himself, “flowing” and “running off” the fields at the appropriate intervals during the cultivation cycle.

Along with paying weekly wages, the Santee Club offered field hands a share of the rice crop. From planting to hoeing to cutting to winnowing, the “club

²² *Ibid.*, 1924 vol., April 24. On the task system, see Philip D. Morgan, “Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700 to 1880,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39 (October 1982): 563–599; John Scott Strickland, “Traditional Culture and Moral Economy: Social and Economic Change in the South Carolina Low Country, 1865–1910,” in *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, ed. Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 141–178; Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Peter A. Coclanis, “How the Low Country Was Taken to Task: Slave-Labor Organization in Coastal South Carolina and Georgia,” in *Slavery, Secession, and Southern History*, ed. Robert Louis Paquette and Louis A. Ferleger (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 59–78.

rice” always received the first consideration. Once it had been tended, workers turned their attention to the “share rice.” Beckman wrote in 1919 that this arrangement was “enabling people to produce rice for food who otherwise could not without the club’s assistance.”²³ Everyone connected with the Santee Club ate rice from its fields. The hundreds of African Americans employed by the club subsisted on their share of the harvest, while the kitchen staff at the clubhouse daily served rice from the club’s share to the parties of hunters who visited during the ducking season. The rest of the club’s portion went for next year’s seed and baiting the marsh ponds to attract ducks.

For recreational hunters and professional hunters alike, shooting ducks over bait was a tried-and-true method for success. “The principal involved in baiting is relatively simple,” writes modern-day Maryland waterfowler Harry M. Walsh. As described by Walsh, “Bait is placed in a convenient spot until it has been discovered by the waterfowl. Their numbers then become a simple ratio to the amount of bait. Once the flight and feeding pattern has been established, good hunting is assured. The ducks can then be conditioned to feed when and where hunters desire.”²⁴ Ducks responded to a variety of cereal grains, so hunters enticed them into gun range using whatever kind they could obtain most economically. For the vast majority of hunters, this grain was corn.

Heavily hunted Chesapeake Bay was the birthplace of duck baiting. Some of the oldest documentation of baiting on the Chesapeake dates to 1892, though

²³ L. A. Beckman, letter to editor, *News and Courier*, February 17, 1919.

²⁴ Harry M. Walsh, *The Outlaw Gunner* (Cambridge, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1971), 30.

it doubtless started earlier. In March of that year, twelve months from being inaugurated as president of the United States for the second time, Grover Cleveland shot ducks as a guest of the Spesutia Island Rod and Gun Club, located on the headwaters of the bay in Harford County, Maryland, near Havre de Grace. The ex-president was an avid outdoorsman, and his “luck” on fishing and hunting trips was often the subject of national news. A correspondent of *Forest and Stream*, the country’s foremost sporting magazine, disclosed that Cleveland’s luck at Spesutia Island had a lot to do with baiting. “It is the club’s practice to bait their blinds, putting out twenty bushels of corn at a time,” explained the *Forest and Stream* article, which the *New York Times* reprinted two days later.²⁵ A Baltimore *Sun* article on the Spesutia Island Rod and Gun Club from December 1894 stated that “every season the club puts out hundreds of bushels of corn at different places about their points and marshes.”²⁶

Before the decade was out, bait was being used extensively on Chesapeake Bay. “Much competition occurs among the proprietors of the shooting shores,” the *Sun* declared. “During recent years baiting has become necessary to hold the stock of ducks at the ponds,” noted the newspaper, “and many hundred bushels of corn will have been consumed before the shooting begins.” This led the *Sun* to conclude that “the baiting system” was “the most expensive factor of modern ducking on these marshes.”²⁷

²⁵ Blackhead [pseud.], “Mr. Cleveland at Spesutia,” *Game Bag and Gun, Forest and Stream*, March 17, 1892, 248; “Mr. Cleveland at Spesutia,” *New York Times*, March 19, 1892. See also “Grover Cleveland,” *Baltimore Sun*, March 11, 1892.

²⁶ “Disheartened Duckers,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 21, 1894.

²⁷ “Great Flocks of Ducks,” *ibid.*, October 25, 1899.

Another example of baiting in the 1890s comes from South Carolina and also involves Grover Cleveland. Porter Alexander was baiting ponds on South Island with rice from his plantation as early as January 1893.²⁸ As related in chapter 5, Cleveland was a frequent guest of Alexander's at South Island between 1894 and 1907. Journalist James Henry Rice Jr., who also shot ducks at South Island as Alexander's guest, claimed that "the General has two ponds which he keeps for the exclusive use of his friend, Mr. Cleveland, and which ponds are baited daily for months, or as often as it is necessary."²⁹ If this was true, then Alexander never admitted it, not even in his own journal.

Chapter 5 likewise spoke about Cleveland shooting at the Santee Club on a number of occasions while staying with Alexander—enough to be named an honorary member of the club in 1900—but he did so just once, in March 1907, after the club hired Beckman.³⁰ The club's acreage in rice was small then, and that late in the season, all of the bait grown in 1906 may have been gone. Whatever the reason, there is no record of a pond ever having been baited for Cleveland at Santee.

In later years, each guide at the Santee Club took a bushel of rice in his boat to the blind in the morning. When the club member or guest finished

²⁸ "South Island Log," 1890–1910, microfilm copy in Edward Porter Alexander Papers, 1852–1910, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as SIL), 26.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 133–134; James Henry Rice Jr., "Sport of the Rich Is Shooting Ducks," *News and Courier*, December 18, 1904 (quotation). See also Rice, "Hunts That Were Hunts," *ibid.*, December 28, 1910.

³⁰ On Cleveland's final excursion to the Santee Club, see note 13 of chapter 1.



Figure 7.4. Pine Ridge Pond, South Island, March 1907. During numerous visits to Edward Porter Alexander's preserve, Grover Cleveland did most of his duck shooting at Pine Ridge Pond. This photograph of the pond was taken on March 17, one day after Cleveland last hunted there. In honor of Cleveland, Alexander gave the name "President's Stand" to the best blind at Pine Ridge. There is evidence of Alexander baiting the pond with rice prior to Cleveland's arrival in 1896, though this is the only documented case and the extent of the baiting was far less than James Henry Rice Jr. described. Nearby Pine Ridge Pond was the site of "Camp Cleveland," where Alexander erected tents to accommodate the ex-president's hunting party until building a lodge for them in late 1900. *Source:* Cleveland, "Shooting in Season," p. 1314.

shooting, the guide scattered the rice on the surface of the water near the blind before leaving the pond. In the afternoon, a special crew made the rounds to the blinds that had not been occupied that day and baited them. "This sometimes meant that bait would be put out in forty areas," Reath observed.³¹ Beckman

³¹ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 61.

might put out even more while making inspections of the property, such as on January 20, 1928, when he baited the old fields at his former plantation, Blackwood, which the Santee Club had bought from the Jordan estate three years earlier, with club rice grown in fields across the river.³² Considering that a bushel of rough rice weighed forty pounds or more and allowing for “rest days,” when no shooting took place on the preserve, the club put out as much as fifty tons of rice over the course of a November-to-March season.³³ This was in line with the larger Chesapeake Bay clubs, which went through between forty and one hundred tons of corn every year.³⁴ In addition to baiting with rice versus corn, another major distinction between the Santee Club and most of the ones on the Chesapeake was that the latter bought grain, while the former grew it.

By heavily baiting its ponds with rice, the Santee Club gradually altered the flight and feeding patterns of the ducks on the Santee delta. Over time, many started spending day and night in the Santee Club marshes. “Ducks still feed up river but to a less extent,” Carter remarked.³⁵ As a result of operating its own rice plantation and baiting aggressively, the club actually bagged record numbers of ducks in the 1920s, well after the demise of commercial rice planting on the Santee River. In 1904–1905, the last season before bringing in Beckman as

³² LABJ, 1928 vol., January 20; Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 19.

³³ The weight of a bushel of rough rice is taken from William M. Lawton, *An Essay on Rice and Its Culture, Read before the Agricultural Congress, Convened at Selma, Alabama, December 5, 1871* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, Printers, 1871), 7.

³⁴ Walsh, *Outlaw Gunner*, 29.

³⁵ Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club*, 15.

manager, the club's total take was 3,613 ducks.³⁶ Despite the fact that fewer ducks returned to the South Carolina low country with every passing season due to loss of breeding habitat and overhunting along the length of the migration corridors, the club's total for 1922–1923 was 6,388.³⁷ The 77 percent increase in the number of ducks killed at the Santee Club over this period is all the more impressive because it occurred after Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918, which empowered the federal government to regulate waterfowl shooting for the first time by shortening the open season and reducing the daily bag limit.

By 1931–1932, with the open season on ducks cut to thirty days and the daily bag limit lowered to fifteen, the Santee Club was doing much more feeding than baiting. What once had been a means of ensuring the biggest bags possible was now primarily seen as a management and conservation tool. Beckman started scattering rice for the ducks as soon as they arrived in the fall and persisted, to a greater or lesser degree, until they left in the spring. In late February 1932, more than two months after the season closed—a season in which club members altogether killed 1,831 ducks—a team consisting of staff from the Charleston Museum and Cape Romain Migratory Bird Refuge conducted a duck census at the club.³⁸ “To this small group,” wrote museum ornithologist Alexander Sprunt Jr., “the day was a revelation!” After Sprunt and

³⁶ SCBR, vol. 1, p. 157.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 1914–1923, January 31, 1923.

³⁸ “Season on Ducks Opens Tomorrow,” *News and Courier*, November 15, 1931; SCBR, vol. 5, 1930–1941, December 15, 1931.

his colleagues surveyed roughly one-third of the wetlands on the property, “the result was that, at the most conservative estimate, it was decided that sixty-nine thousand ducks had been observed!” A fraction of the club’s marshes and rice fields holding this many ducks “seems rather remarkable in this day and time when the numbers at large seem to have decreased so much,” Sprunt confessed, adding that “the Santee Gun club [*sic*] is run along lines approaching perfection.”³⁹

In 1935 new federal regulations enacted under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act outlawed the practice of shooting over bait.⁴⁰ The new rule proved so consequential for the Santee Club that Beckman actually reached out to Jay N. “Ding” Darling, chief of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, a few weeks before the opening of the 1935–1936 season seeking clarification of the law. “I have been studying the situation,” Beckman wrote, “and I am afraid that I could not feed the ducks on the Club property during the shooting season, and not have some of the ducks moving over some of our ponds where there is shooting, while they are going to and from their feed.” He asked if it would be within the law for the club to stop feeding the ducks one day prior to the opening of the season on November 20, or even four days prior on the 16th, then resume

³⁹ A. S. Jr. [Alexander Sprunt Jr.], “Ducks and Ducks,” *Woods and Waters, News and Courier*, February 22, 1932. Twelve months later, members of the same group returned to the Santee Club to conduct another survey of the wintering duck population. See “Survey at Gun Club Reveals Many Ducks,” *ibid.*, February 17, 1933; A. S. Jr. [Sprunt], “A 1933 Duck Census,” *Woods and Waters, ibid.*, February 23, 1933.

⁴⁰ “Baiting, Now Banned, Led to Killing of More than 660,000 Ducks in ‘34,” August 9, 1935, available online in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Historic News Releases database, <http://www.fws.gov/news/History/NewsReleases/1935/19350809.pdf> (accessed November 22, 2014).

the day after the season ended on December 19. Beckman closed, “I understand some are doing this, but I will not, until I am sure it is permissible.”⁴¹ The bureau’s response, which came from Stanley P. Young, chief of the Division of Game Management, put an end to the baiting era at the Santee Club: “The regulation, as you doubtless realize, forbids the shooting of migratory waterfowl attracted to the hunter with or by aid of feed. Now, at what time the feed is put out is immaterial if there is a direct connection between the feed and the ducks that are shot.”⁴²

Beckman’s letter alludes to others on the Santee River feeding ducks. The Santee Club left behind the most thorough documentation of its activities related to plantation-based waterfowl management, but it did not act alone in this regard. The Kinloch Gun Club presents another compelling example. Although the seasonal rhythms of rice cultivation were the same and the labor structures looked alike, with African American men and women toiling in the fields under the oversight of retired white rice planters, circumstances at Kinloch differed in a few important respects from Santee.

Kinloch was committed to growing its own bait from the first, which set it apart from Santee, and short-term potential for rice production factored into the club’s decision to establish its preserve on a series of depreciated plantations along the North Santee River. The Santee Club originated in the era of

⁴¹ L. A. Beckman to J. N. Darling, October 24, 1935, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, General Correspondence, 1890–1956, Reservations, National Archives II.

⁴² Stanley P. Young to L. A. Beckman, October 29, 1935, *ibid.*

abundance for both rice and ducks in the Georgetown region, when hunters simply took advantage the optimal wintering habitat available on the working plantations near their shooting grounds. By the time Kinloch came into being in 1912, however, baiting was standard practice among Georgetown's northern sportsmen. Indeed, the Hagley Gun Club, forerunner of the Kinloch Gun Club, had baited their leased preserve on the Waccamaw River with rice bought from local planters.⁴³ The rice fields on the Santee Club preserve had laid fallow for a number of years before Beckman began putting them back in order around 1905. The reclamation work proceeded gradually, one field at a time, until Santee had one hundred acres in cultivation in 1918. On the other hand, Kinloch's first crop, which it planted in the spring of 1913, covered 125.5 acres. This was one year removed from the club's incorporation and a mere ten months since it obtained the title to the land.⁴⁴

Kinloch was able instantly to surpass Santee's rice acreage because its new preserve contained an operational plantation, Richfield. Richfield's previous owner, S. M. Ward & Company, had sent a sizeable crop to market one year prior to selling the plantation to the sportsmen, and the apparatus was in place for Kinloch to continue planting on the same scale. Kinloch retained Ward &

⁴³ Alexis I. du Pont, John Satterthwait, Eugene du Pont, Josiah Marvel, Eugene E. du Pont, Ramsay, J. Danforth Bush, and J. G. Ewing, "General Description of the Richfield Property, South Carolina," March 21, 1912, p. 2, box 17, "KGC—Annual Reports of President and Treasurer, 1912–21" folder, Papers of Eugene du Pont (1873–1954), 1835–1956, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del. (hereafter cited as PEDP); F. W. Ford to J. Stuart Groves, January 9, 1912, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1912" folder, Kinloch Gun Club Papers, 1906–1935, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library (hereafter cited as KGCP).

⁴⁴ William G. Ramsay, Eugene du Pont, and J. Danforth Bush, Report of House Committee, March 31, 1914, p. 2, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (April to June)" folder, KGCP.

Company's superintendent, Stephen F. Coachman, and most of the sharecroppers, who lived in sixty-four tenant houses on the club property. Kinloch offered basically the same terms as Ward & Company: the club charged four bushels of rice per acre as rent, and it collected two additional bushels from the crop for each bushel of seed that it supplied.⁴⁵ Under this arrangement, the Kinloch Gun Club planted at least one hundred acres of rice each year through 1917. That year's harvest was the biggest yet, with the club's share coming to two thousand bushels. After setting aside what it needed for bait and seed, Kinloch shipped the remainder of the grain to Charleston for milling and sale on the open market in 1913, 1914, 1915, and 1917, making it one of the last commercial growers on the delta. Proceeds from the 1917 crop amounted to \$1,596.84 (29,500 in 2014 dollars).⁴⁶

The Kinloch Gun Club's good results with rice also put it in position to sell seed. During the 1910s, some of the last crops raised by Georgetown's native planters came from Kinloch seed. The club bought the first lot of seed that it

⁴⁵ P. R. Lachicotte to William G. Ramsay, April 22, 1912, box 16, H–N folder, PEDP; William G. Ramsay, Eugene du Pont, Alexis I. du Pont, Josiah Marvel, J. J. Satterthwait, J. G. Ewing, and Eugene E. du Pont, Supplement to "General Description of the Richfield Property, South Carolina," March 21, 1913, p. 1, box 17, "KGC—Annual Reports of President and Treasurer, 1912–21" folder, *ibid.*; Ramsay, Eugene du Pont, Alexis du Pont, Marvel, Satterthwait, Ewing, and Eugene E. du Pont, "Description of Kinloch Gun Club Property, Georgetown County, South Carolina," April 1, 1913, p. 5, box 17, "Kinloch-Special Mtg of Stockholders to Consider Increasing Dues, 19 Sep 1916" folder, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Kinloch Gun Club Account Book, 1913–1917, pp. 94–97, 102–105, 110–115, box 25/148, folder 1, Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914–1922, South Carolina Historical Society (hereafter cited as KGCR); Eugene du Pont and Eugene E. du Pont, Report of the House Committee, Kinloch Gun Club, March 31, 1918, p. 2, box 2, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1918 (January to March)" folder, KGCP; R. M. Doar to Eugene du Pont, June 30, 1917, box 21, 1917 folder, PEDP; Doar to Eugene du Pont, July 12, 1918, box 15, "EEdP Kinloch Club, Assessment, 1918" folder, *ibid.* The KGCR, the KGCP, and the PEDP contain documents related to Kinloch Gun Club accounts with the West Point Mill Company of Charleston.



Figure 7.5. Field of rice at Kinloch Gun Club, circa 1920.
Source: Kinloch Gun Club Collection, Georgetown County
Library, Georgetown, S.C.

sowed in the spring of 1913 from one of its western neighbors, Frederick W. Ford of Rice Hope Plantation. The following spring, Ford requested one hundred bushels of seed rice from Kinloch, as did Susan Pringle Alston, owner of Fairfield Plantation on the Waccamaw River. Kinloch even attracted attention from as

faraway as Colleton County, south of Charleston. Duncan Clinch Heyward, the former governor and one of the state's last major planters, inquired about seed for his Combahee River plantations in the fall of 1913.⁴⁷

Kinloch's lone setback in its first five years of planting came in 1916, when a July hurricane destroyed the crop. The Santee Club lost its crop too. On the 8th, Russell M. Doar, who was superintendent at Kinloch from 1914 to 1922, had passed along word to club president William G. Ramsay that "the hands are howing [*sic*] out the rent rice and it looks very well."⁴⁸ One week later, Doar sent word of "a severe hurricane here and much damage to crops and buildings," adding "I will write more fully in a few days and let you know how things are."⁴⁹ On the 22nd, he reported that the rice had survived the storm, but he was fearful of the freshet coming down the river. He followed up on August 1: "The freshet reached us on July 24th and on the 27th it reached a hight [*sic*] of 6 ' ' more than the disastrous one of 1908. . . . All of the rice is about 8 to 9 feet under water and probably will be for another week or ten days, which will destroy it."⁵⁰ Ramsay

⁴⁷ [J. Stuart Groves] to William G. Ramsay, January 31, 1913, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)" folder, KGCP; Ramsay to Groves, February 3, 1913, *ibid.*; [Groves] to F. W. Ford, February 8, 1913, *ibid.*; [Groves] to Ramsay, February 20, 1914, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (January to March)" folder, KGCP; [Groves] to Ramsay, April 21, 1914, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1914 (April to June)" folder, *ibid.*; Ramsay to Groves, October 4, 1913, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (August to December)" folder, *ibid.*; [Ramsay] to D. C. Heyward, November 19, 1913, box 19, 1913 folder, PEDP; Heyward to Ramsay, November 22, 1913, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ R. M. Doar to William G. Ramsay, July 8, 1916, box 23, "Correspondence with Russell Doar (Superintendent), 1916" folder, PEDP.

⁴⁹ R. M. Doar to William G. Ramsay, July 15, 1916, *ibid.* On the hurricane, see "Storm Strikes Georgetown and Vicinity in All of Its Fury," *Georgetown Times* (Georgetown, S.C.), July 19, 1916.

⁵⁰ R. M. Doar to William G. Ramsay, July 22, 1916, box 23, "Correspondence with Russell Doar (Superintendent), 1916" folder, PEDP; Doar to Ramsay, August 1, 1916, *ibid.* (quotation).

responded on September 5, saying that he hated to hear the crop was a total loss since it meant the club would be without any rice for duck baiting. Ramsay felt especially bad for the tenants, “as it represents their all,” and he asked Doar to find work for them around the plantation.⁵¹ In the fall, both Kinloch and Santee purchased damaged rice from West Point Mill Company of Charleston. After Ramsay passed away in October, Doar advised the club’s new president, Eugene du Pont Jr., on November 2 that Santee had bought nine hundred bushels of West Point’s damaged rice, and he recommended that they get five hundred bushels. This was the first time that the Kinloch Gun Club bought rice for baiting, but it would not be the last.⁵²

As early as January 1916, Ramsay had noted that “the negroes [*sic*] do not appear to be altogether satisfied with the present basis.”⁵³ In 1918, with jobs plentiful and wages on the rise amid the wartime economy, particularly in Georgetown’s lumber and shipping industries, Kinloch’s sharecropping system broke down. According to du Pont, “Where the rice was planted on shares it was found that it did not work out satisfactorily because the negroes could not be induced to realize the importance of doing the necessary preliminary work on time.”⁵⁴ On May 14, 1919, Doar complained to du Pont, “We have not been able

⁵¹ [William G. Ramsay] to Russell M. Doar, September 5, 1916, box 23, “Correspondence with Russell Doar (Superintendent), 1916” folder, PEDP.

⁵² See R. M. Doar to Eugene du Pont, November 2, 1916, *ibid*.

⁵³ [William G. Ramsay], “Report of President on Visit to the Club,” January 17, 1916, p. 7, box 22, “Kinloch Gun Club—General Correspondence, 1916” folder, PEDP.

⁵⁴ [Eugene du Pont], President’s Annual Report, Kinloch Gun Club, April 15, 1919, box 17, “Kinloch Gun Club—Annual Mtg of Stockholders, 1919-20” folder, *ibid*. See also R. M. Doar to du

to get any of the darkies to work on the rice planting so far.”⁵⁵ His frustration was evident on June 21, when he wrote again to say that “some of the darkies planted some and altho a little late I hope it will come all right.”⁵⁶ In du Pont’s annual report for 1919, he observed that “a number of our men left us,” but “most of them returned for guide work during the shooting season.”⁵⁷ Thereafter, the club grew rice strictly on its “own account” for bait and seed, paying the guides and outside seasonal laborers by the task.⁵⁸ At this point, the club’s rice acreage shrank drastically. By 1921 the membership had fallen to fourteen. This was barely one-third of the members of the Santee Club, so clearly, the Kinloch Gun Club required much less bait. Kinloch never again planted more than three or four fields, which totaled less than thirty acres. Some years the club ran low on bait and had to buy more. In the late 1920s, this bought rice came from Louisiana.⁵⁹

Pont, June 19, 1918, box 15, “EEdP Kinloch Club, Assessment, 1918” folder, *ibid.*; Doar to du Pont, July 12, 1918, *ibid.*; Doar to du Pont, August 30, 1918, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ R. M. Doar to Eugene du Pont, May 14, 1919, box 22, “Kinloch Gun Club—General Correspondence, 1919” folder, PEDP.

⁵⁶ R. M. Doar to Eugene du Pont, June 21, 1919, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Eugene du Pont, President’s Report, Kinloch Gun Club, March 30, 1920, box 16, B folder, *ibid.*

⁵⁸ [Ramsay], “Report of President on Visit to the Club,” summary.

⁵⁹ R. R. M. Carpenter, Eugene du Pont, and Eugene E. du Pont to the Board of Directors of the Kinloch Gun Club, April 11, 1921, box 17, “Kinloch Gun Club—Annual Mtg of Stockholders, 1921-22” folder, PEDP; Carpenter to the Directors of the Kinloch Gun Club, December 16, 1921, box 24, “Kinloch Club—R. R. M. Carpenter Correspondence, 1921–32” folder, *ibid.*; T. C. Lucas to Carpenter, April 6, 1925, box 23, “T. C. Lucas, 1925–26” folder, *ibid.* On the club purchasing Louisiana rice, see Lucas to Eugene du Pont, July 17, 1929, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—T. C. Lucas, Supt., 1929” folder, PEDP; F. J. Jumonville to Kinloch Gun Club, September 20, 1929, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—Eugene du Pont, 1922–34” folder, *ibid.*; Lucas to Eugene du Pont, September 25, 1929, *ibid.*

Another contrast between Kinloch and Santee was their conflicting baiting strategies, which stemmed from their principal shooting grounds being located at opposite ends of the ducks' diurnal flight path across the delta. Since the Santee Club did most of its shooting at ponds in the island marshes, the objective of its baiting program was to concentrate ducks on the coast. Kinloch attempted to achieve the opposite effect with its baiting. The eastern extent of the Kinloch preserve was three miles upriver from the mouth of the North Santee, and its shooting took place exclusively in old rice fields. Initially, Richfield was the only plantation on the preserve with functioning impoundments. The rest of the plantations at Kinloch were essentially abandoned. The rising and falling tides coursed through the broken banks and damaged trunks of these fields, flushing them twice daily. Over time, this scouring action had created ponds within the fields that held water even during low tide. Getting the ducks to remain in the rice fields on calm days and not, in the words of manager T. Cordes Lucas, "leave for the sea" was a perennial challenge for Kinloch, but by baiting these ponds, the club kept its share of ducks coming back to feed at night like they did in years past when all of the plantations were active.⁶⁰ Often, Kinloch shooters enjoyed the best sport in the late afternoon and evening during the ducks' return flight.

Scattered references in the Santee Club and the Kinloch Gun Club sources give a sense of the scope of the rice planting and baiting carried out by other clubs and individual preserve owners between the World Wars. Both Santee and Kinloch sold seed rice to neighboring sportsmen. Examples include

⁶⁰ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, September 25, 1929, box 24, "RRMC Correspondence—Eugene du Pont, 1922–34" folder, PEDP.

Idaho rancher and mining engineer Wayne Darlington, who produced rice crops at Annandale Plantation in 1918 and 1919 with Kinloch seed; New Yorker E. Gerry Chadwick, a real-estate executive and member of the Santee Club, who used fifty bushels of Santee seed rice to plant the Wedge, his private plantation, in 1933; and former cement-company president William N. Beach of New York, who likewise obtained fifty bushels of seed rice from Santee in 1938 and again in 1939 for his plantation, Rice Hope.⁶¹ Of course, more bait on the neighboring preserves meant greater competition for the ducks wintering on the delta. In an October 1925 letter to plantation manager Cordes Lucas, Kinloch president Eugene du Pont stated, "Since everybody in that section seems to intend to bait hard this Fall, we will have to look after our own ducks and do likewise."⁶²

Charleston *News and Courier* reporter Chalmers S. Murray wrote articles about the Kinloch Gun Club as well as Annandale, the Wedge, Rice Hope, and several other Santee River plantations in 1931.⁶³ Reflecting eighteen years later

⁶¹ Wayne Darlington to Russel [sic] M. Doar, March 27, 1919, box 25/147, folder 12, KGCR; Darlington to Doar, April 28, 1919, box 25/147, folder 10, *ibid.*; Darlington to Doar, October 13, 1919, box 25/147, folder 11, *ibid.*; LABJ, 1933 vol., May 20; *ibid.*, 1938 vol., April 12; *ibid.*, 1939 vol., May 22 and 24. An in-law introduced Darlington to Annandale. Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Darlington married a South Carolina woman from Edgefield whose brother-in-law Frank E. Johnstone owned nearby Estherville Plantation. On Darlington, see "Raising of Hogs Is Profitable," *Idaho Statesman* (Boise), September 10, 1910; "Mackay Enjoys Big Mine Boom," *ibid.*, May 11, 1926; "Mackay Bourbon Raps Macbeth's Political Belief," *ibid.*, October 24, 1926; "Two Mines in Challis Region Form Corporation," *ibid.*, November 28, 1927; "Wayne Darlington, 80, Dies in Florida," *News and Courier*, October 19, 1942. On Chadwick, see "E. G. Chadwick, 63, Realty Ex-Leader," *New York Times*, March 24, 1945. On Beach, see C. S. Murray, "Many Northern Sportsmen Arrive at Georgetown Hunting Grounds," *News and Courier*, January 6, 1929; Murray, "Northern Hunters Control Rice Hope," *ibid.*, June 14, 1931; "W. N. Beach, Hunted Big Game in Alaska," *New York Times*, May 6, 1955.

⁶² Eugene du Pont to T. C. Lucas, October 6, 1925, box 23, "T. C. Lucas, 1925–26 folder," PEDP.

⁶³ See C. S. Murray, "Annandale, Secluded in Georgetown," *News and Courier*, May 31, 1931; Murray, "The Wedge on the South Santee," *ibid.*, September 20, 1931; Murray, "Northern Hunters Control Rice Hope"; Murray, "Kinloch, Exclusive Santee Gun Club," *ibid.*, July 12, 1931.

on the people and places he had covered in the stories, Murray asserted that “almost all of the millionaire sportsmen followed the same pattern”: in addition to turning upland fields into hunting grounds and restoring the old mansions, they “grew rice for ducks.”⁶⁴ Waldo L. McAtee, acting chief of the Biological Survey, confirmed the extent of rice growing and its importance to waterfowl shooting and management on the Santee delta in 1931, four years before the advent of the federal baiting ban. “I have been all over the property of the Santee Club and we have available reports of a special investigator who covered most of the club properties in the region,” wrote McAtee, a specialist on the feeding habits of migratory waterfowl. His conclusion was that “essentially the ducking properties of the lower Santee region are kept going by baiting.”⁶⁵

As the Rice Hope Plantation example illustrates, rice culture continued at the Santee Club and other places even after the baiting ban took effect. The Kinloch Gun Club may have dissolved in 1931, but items in the *News and Courier* reveal that former members Eugene du Pont and Eugene E. du Pont grew about thirty acres of rice in the same fields to at least 1938. That year Chadwick planted rice on twenty acres at the Wedge. These situations seem typical of the late 1930s. Reporting on the sunset of the Santee River rice fields in 1939, journalist John M. Lofton Jr. observed, “Each of the plantations, held by

⁶⁴ Chalmers S. Murray, *This Our Land: The Story of the Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: Carolina Art Association, 1949), 201.

⁶⁵ W. L. McAtee to Seth Gordon, April 24, 1931, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, General Correspondence, 1890–1956, Reservations, National Archives II.

Northern owners, plants a little rice (twenty or thirty acres) for non-commercial use.”⁶⁶

The most detailed timeline of the closing days of rice planting on a Santee River ducking preserve comes from the Santee Club, where it endured until the early 1940s, nearly a decade and a half after the last commercial rice grower in South Carolina, Theodore Ravenel of Laurel Spring Plantation, gathered his final crop on the Combahee River.⁶⁷ Historian James H. Tuten contends that against all odds, Ravenel and others of his generation persevered in the moribund industry because planting rice was an important part of their cultural self-identity.⁶⁸ Having grown rice for thirty years, the Santee Club may have persisted after the prohibition on baiting partly out of a similar sense of self-identity. Some rice was put out for the ducks after the shooting seasons closed, but most of the grain grown at the Santee Club in the late 1930s was either eaten by members and employees or saved for seed. Because of outmigration and better job opportunities elsewhere, field hands were becoming scarcer by this time. Increasing labor costs caused the club to scale back its planting activities. The

⁶⁶ “Where Rice Has Been Grown for More Than Century [sic],” *News and Courier*, July 12, 1936; J. M. L. Jr. [John M. Lofton Jr.], “Do You Know Your Charleston? Kinloch Plantation,” *ibid.*, October 3, 1938; “Testimony Continues in Plantation Suit,” *News and Courier*, October 28, 1953; J. M. L. Jr. [Lofton], “Do You Know Your Lowcountry? The Wedge,” *ibid.*, July 4, 1938; J. M. L. Jr. [Lofton], “Do You Know Your Lowcountry? Santee Rice Fields,” *ibid.*, March 20, 1939.

⁶⁷ Doar, *Rice and Rice Planting*, 5; Workers of the Writers’ Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of South Carolina, comp., *South Carolina: The WPA Guide to the Palmetto State* (1941; repr., Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 289.

⁶⁸ Tuten, *Lowcountry Time and Tide*, 32.

club raised about sixty-five acres of rice in 1937 and fifty acres the following year. It harvested its last crop in a single, thirty-acre field in 1941.⁶⁹

Two years earlier, about eighty miles upriver from the Santee Club, the South Carolina Public Service Authority had started construction of a dam across the Santee River at Wilson's Landing, part of the New Deal-funded Santee-Cooper Project.⁷⁰ Designed to develop inland navigation, produce hydroelectric power, and promote industrialization, the project would divert 90 percent of the Santee's stream, the fourth largest average flow by volume of any river on the Atlantic coast of the United States and the life's blood of rice planting in the delta, into Charleston Harbor via two large reservoirs, two canals, and the much smaller Cooper River.⁷¹ The Santee River's average discharge was 18,900 cubic feet per second, swelling to as much as 360,000 during freshets. The Cooper River, on the other hand, was little more than a tidal estuary, with a flow of just seventy-two cubic feet per second.⁷² After completion of the Santee-Cooper Project, neither river would ever be the same.

⁶⁹ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 32–33; J. M. L. Jr. [John M. Lofton Jr.], "Do You Know Your Lowcountry? Santee Gun Club," *News and Courier*, November 15, 1937; Jack Leland, "5,000 Acres to Be Planted in Rice," *ibid.*, January 14, 1952; LABJ, 1938–1945 vol., p. 70.

⁷⁰ On the Santee-Cooper Project, see Marvin Leigh Cann, "Burnet Rhett Maybank and the New Deal in South Carolina, 1931–1941" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1967), esp. 137–185; Jack Irby Hayes Jr., *South Carolina and the New Deal* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), esp. 78–84; T. Robert Hart Jr., "The Santee-Cooper Landscape: Culture and Environment in the South Carolina Lowcountry" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alabama, 2004), 39–140. See also Walter B. Edgar, *History of Santee Cooper, 1934–1984* (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Company, 1984); Douglas W. Bostick, *Sunken Plantations: The Santee Cooper Project* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2008); Hart, "The Lowcountry Landscape: Politics, Preservation, and the Santee-Cooper Project," *Environmental History* 18 (January 2013): 127–156.

⁷¹ Miles O. Hayes and Jacqueline Michel, *A Coast for All Seasons: A Naturalist's Guide to the Coast of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: Pandion Books, 2008), 164.

⁷² Erle Kauffman, "Conservation over the Dam," *American Forests*, November 1939, 550; Fred Rigsbee, "Engineers Dig in to Complete Rediversion Project," *Charleston Evening Post*, July 3,

The Santee Club and the owners of other ducking properties on the Lower Santee joined with a broad spectrum of interest groups in opposing the Public Service Authority's controversial plans. Those who owned property in the proposed reservoir basins opposed the Santee-Cooper Project because it meant condemnation of their homes and lands, some of which had been in the same families for generations. Charleston's emerging preservation community did not want to see the sites of historical battlefields, plantations, cemeteries, and churches in old Saint John's Berkeley Parish lost under the lakes. Private power companies operating in South Carolina objected to the project because they did not want competition from a public utility. The U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey and major environmental organizations like the National Association of Audubon Societies, the American Game Protective Association, and the Isaak Walton League of America, even the National Council of State Garden Clubs, disapproved of the project on the grounds that it would be an ecological disaster: above the dam, the Santee Swamp, one of the last virgin bottomland forests in the South and habitat to several rare and endangered species of wildlife such as the ivory-billed woodpecker, would be completely destroyed; below the dam, hydrological changes would damage the delicate ecology of the Santee delta, a continentally significant wintering area for migratory waterfowl. The Santee-Cooper Project was the subject of numerous hearings, lawsuits, and editorials during the 1930s, but in the end, the Public Service Authority's powerful political

1981; Rigsbee, "Cooper River Rediversion Project Correcting 40-Year-Old Mistake," *News and Courier*, March 19, 1989.

backers carried the day.⁷³ The authority closed the Wilson's Landing Dam in April 1942. With its primary source of vital freshwater all but eliminated, Beckman jotted in his journal that the Santee Club "cannot plant rice anymore."⁷⁴

In his writings, Archibald Rutledge often depicted the Santee delta during his lifetime as a "wilderness." In *Home by the River* from 1941, he described "the lonely delta of the Santee, formerly one of the greatest rice-growing areas of North America, but now returned to a green wilderness as primeval as it must have been in the days of the Indians."⁷⁵ Rutledge evoked the image of a reedy wasteland—vast, unbroken, and "primeval"—to lend his stories and poems an element of romance and mystery, but he took a measure of creative license in

⁷³ On the specific opposition groups mentioned here, see K. F. M., "Santee Canal Hearing Opens; Expanded License Proposed," *News and Courier*, September 29, 1932; "Dynamos Threat to Hunting U.S. Hearing Shows," *American Game*, September–October 1932, 82; S. B. Locke (conservation director of the Isaak Walton League of America) to Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harold L. Ickes, telegram, April 22, 1935, box 135, "Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938" folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, General Correspondence, 1890–1956, Reservations, National Archives II; National Association of Audubon Societies to Harold L. Ickes, telegram, July 20, 1935, *ibid.*; "Power Interests Open Three-Point Fight on Santee," *News and Courier*, October 11, 1935; "Names of Santee Objectors Given," *ibid.*, November 1, 1935; R. P. A. [Robert P. Allen], "Audubon Association Opposes Cooper-Santee Power Project," *Bird-Lore*, November–December 1935, 443; "State Garden Club Board Met Yesterday at Hotel Columbia," *State* (Columbia, S.C.), December 19, 1935; Hilding Siverson, "The Santee Project," *Washington Post*, December 21, 1935; "Full Text of Judge Glenn's Decision Upholding Santee-Cooper Validity," *State*, September 3, 1937; Henry R. Dwight, "Sees Only Grief for Berkeley in Santee-Cooper Development," letter to editor of *Berkeley Democrat* (Moncks Corner, S.C.) reprinted in *State*, April 21, 1939; John O'Reilly, "Lordly Carolina Plantations to Vanish beneath Reservoir," *New York Herald Tribune* article reprinted in *News and Courier*, September 1, 1939; O'Reilly, "Santee-Cooper Is Opposed as Blow to Wild-Life Region," *News and Courier*, September 2, 1939; Harry Ashmore, "Property Owners Persisting in Their Opposition to Santee," *Greenville News* article reprinted in *News and Courier*, October 1, 1939; "Movement Sponsored to Save Plantations," *Charleston Evening Post*, August 16, 1940. For an example of an editorial directed at the national sport-hunting community, see "Santee-Cooper Fiasco," Conservation Developments, *Field and Stream*, October 1935, 9. For historians' overviews of the opposition to the Santee-Cooper Project, see Cann, "Burnet Rhett Maybank," 145–146, 152–154, 159–172; David L. Lendt, *Ding: The Life of Jay Norwood Darling* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979), 83–84; Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*, 80–83; Hart, "Santee-Cooper Landscape," 49–54, 56–68, 70–72, 77–81.

⁷⁴ LABJ, 1938–1945 vol., p. 70.

⁷⁵ Archibald Rutledge, *Home by the River* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1941), 16–17.



Figure 7.5. Isaac German and Dicks Simmons cutting and shocking rice in “Big Washo” field at the Santee Club, circa 1920. *Source:* private collection.

the picture that he painted with these words. Indeed, thousands of acres of delta rice fields had been abandoned, and countless miles of banks had degraded since the Civil War. But even as Rutledge penned *Home by the River*, rice was growing here and there along the North and South Santees in well-ordered impoundments that had been maintained over the course of many years, including more than a few at Blake’s Plantation on the Santee Club grounds—fields that his father had once planted.⁷⁶ “I have, as a cherished recollection [from childhood], the vision of a glorious field of a thousand acres of rice, level and golden, stretching between the two broad rivers toward the sea,” Rutledge

⁷⁶ Archibald Rutledge, *Santee Paradise* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1956), 16, 122. See also see “Archie” [Archibald Rutledge] to Herbert [R. Sass], July 19, [1947?], box 24/101, folder 27, Herbert Ravenel Sass Papers, South Carolina Historical Society.

wrote.⁷⁷ Several hundred acres of rice dotting the delta wetlandscape in the 1930s paled in comparison to what Rutledge had witnessed as a boy, but it is significant nonetheless considering the late date and who was doing the planting.

Northern duck hunters extended the life of working rice plantations on the Santee River by some two to three decades, repurposing age-old wetland-use customs and investing large sums of capital to prop up a dying culture for a little longer so that they might enjoy their favorite sport to the fullest. Accounts in contemporary newspapers along with the records of the Santee Club, the Kinloch Gun Club, and the Biological Survey provide clues that sportsmen on other low-country rivers did the same. In 1906 Santee Club member Isaac Emerson began acquiring a string of plantations on the Waccamaw River for himself that eventually encompassed almost ten thousand acres.⁷⁸ When he arrived from Baltimore for his first hunt of the 1909–1910 season, a *News and Courier* article announced that “Mr. Emerson has had his extensive rice lands flooded for the duck shooting and baited it with uncut rice. . . . It is said that even the blinds are formed of sheaves of rice.”⁷⁹ Elizabeth Allston Pringle took note after World War I that Emerson continued to have “some fields planted in rice every year, simply for the ducks.”⁸⁰ Emerson’s neighbor on the Waccamaw was New York financier

⁷⁷ Rutledge, *Home by the River*, 17.

⁷⁸ Alberta Morel Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, rev. ed. (1961; repr., Columbia, S.C.: State Printing Company, 1967), 21–22.

⁷⁹ “Rich Hunters in Georgetown,” *News and Courier*, November 25, 1909.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle, *Chronicles of Chicora Wood* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 17.

Bernard M. Baruch. Baruch, who had purchased nine contiguous plantations between 1905 and 1907 totaling nearly twelve thousand acres, bought 115 bushels of seed rice from the Kinloch Gun Club in 1919. When Baruch acquired the first six of these plantations from the Donaldson family in 1905, they contained 225 acres of rice fields in a “high state of cultivation.”⁸¹ Fourteen years later, it seems that Baruch had plans to plant no less than fifty acres or so. A tantalizing clue as to the extent of rice planting across the low-country region well into the 1930s comes from Neal Hotchkiss, a federal wildlife biologist who surveyed waterfowl conditions in South Carolina in December 1934, in the final year before baiting became illegal. Hotchkiss found that “the amount of baiting appeared to be as great as a year ago” not only on the Santee River but also on the Cooper and the Combahee, and “it may have been heavier in proportion to the numbers of ducks present.”⁸² Three years after Hotchkiss made his report, the owner of Mansfield Plantation on the Black River, a Philadelphia stockbroker, ordered forty-four bushels of seed rice from the Santee Club.⁸³ “Col. Robert L. Montgomery feeds his wild ducks instead of shooting them,” remarked Archibald

⁸¹ Suzanne Cameron Linder and Marta Leslie Thacker, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of Georgetown County and the Santee River* (Columbia: Published by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for the Historic Ricefields Association, Inc., [2001?]), 53; M. A. Boyle to Kinloch Gun Club, May 9, 1919, box 25/147, folder 12, KGCR; James Henry Rice Jr., “Great Waccamaw Marsh Tract Changes Hands at Georgetown,” *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), May 20, 1905 (quotation). On Baruch, see Bernard M. Baruch, *Baruch: My Own Story* (New York: Henry Holt, 1957); Baruch, *The Public Years* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960); Jordan A. Schwartz, *The Speculator: Bernard M. Baruch in Washington, 1917–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); James Grant, *Bernard M. Baruch: The Adventures of a Wall Street Legend* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

⁸² Special Report Number 5, “Waterfowl Conditions in the Coastal Area from Virginia to Georgia,” box 2, “N. Hotchkiss December, 1934” folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Records of the Branch of Wildlife Research, Research Reports, 1912–1951, National Archives II.

⁸³ LABJ, 1937 vol., December 15. On Montgomery, see obituary, *New York Times*, January 24, 1949.

Rutledge. Montgomery grew rice at Mansfield until 1943, when the war caused a local labor shortage.⁸⁴

These are clear indications that as a form of waterfowl management, rice planting long outlived its commercial viability in South Carolina. The career of Ludwig Beckman is a powerful case in point. Beckman sold his plantation to a member of the Santee Club in 1905, yet as an employee of the club, he continued to make a living planting rice for the next thirty-six years. Rice planting initially appealed to northern duck hunters because baiting was considered a legitimate mode of taking waterfowl and the plantations possessed large, experienced work forces that could produce bait relatively economically. Rice cultivation continued on the northern-owned plantations as long as wages remained low and baiting, legal. Even if baiting had not been outlawed in 1935, growing rice “simply for the ducks” probably would not have survived much beyond World War II. Rising labor costs would have made the practice prohibitively expensive. Of course, the Santee-Cooper Project killed traditional rice culture on both the Santee and the Cooper, where the discharge from the former river drowned all of the fields, but elsewhere, it passed peacefully as the sportsmen who had resuscitated and sustained it during the baiting era gradually decided to end life support in favor of modern waterfowl-management techniques.

⁸⁴ Archibald Rutledge, “The Old Plantations Live Again,” *Saturday Evening Post*, January 15, 1944, 44 (quotation); Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, 84.

CHAPTER 8

MOVING TOWARD HABITAT-BASED WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American sportsmen who wanted to attract ducks to their private hunting preserves created a market for the birds' favorite wild food plants. First mail-order seed companies and then nurseries that express shipped fresh rootstocks responded to the demand. The seeds or rootstocks typically arrived with detailed planting instructions describing suitable soil and water conditions, but it was up to the hunters to start the plants in wetland habitats that would promote their growth and reproduction. A series of booklets from the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey provided sportsmen with additional guidance relative to identifying and transplanting duck food plants. Finally, nurseries began to offer on-site consulting services, in which plant experts visited the preserves, studied their environments, and made specialized recommendations regarding which foods would invite the most ducks as well as where, when, and how to propagate them. For an extra fee, the nursery agents would even handle the job of sowing or transplanting. By introducing so-called "natural duck foods," which might be either native or non-native species, gentleman waterfowlers everywhere subtly altered the ecology of their marshes and took the initial step toward modern, habitat-based waterfowl management.

There is little doubt about who originally experimented with planting northern wild rice (*Zizania palustris*), the first widely marketed natural duck food, in the Santee River marshes. Edward Porter Alexander, owner of South Island, was a progressive sportsman. The railroad executive who had become a rice planter after retirement was connected with the northern duck-hunting crowd and informed by the latest national sporting magazines. During the 1890s and early 1900s, Alexander developed South Island into an early prototype of the modern ducking preserve. In addition to baiting the shooting grounds with “tame rice” from his plantations, he tried growing perennial marsh plants as duck food in the ponds, creeks, canals, and ditches that crisscrossed his preserve. Alexander recorded his initial trial with northern wild rice in his logbook. On March 27, 1893, he “scattered about a quart of ‘wild rice’ from Chicago in Canvass Back, Lagoon & Black Duck ponds.”¹ Later, from 1904 to 1906, Alexander ordered several lots of “Canadian Wild Rice” and “Minnesota Wild Rice,” which he along with his plantation manager, George W. Hazzard, and some of the African American hands sowed throughout the property. Alexander even devoted a block of fields on one of his productive plantations, White Marsh, to growing wild rice. On November 4, 1904, he took two bags of the mail-order seed to White Marsh for William Kinlaw, a hand who was “planting say 6 or 8 seed in hoe chops 30 inches apart in rows 10 feet apart across the beds & covering with his feet.” Hazzard

¹ “South Island Log,” 1890–1910, microfilm copy in Edward Porter Alexander Papers, 1852–1910, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as SIL), 253 (first quotation), 30 (second quotation).

and the hands put three hundred pounds of seed in the ground at White Marsh in November 1905.²

Alexander did not confine his experiments to northern wild rice. Southern wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*), known in South Carolina as “duck oats,” occurred naturally in the freshwater habitats of the Santee delta. Although lacking the wide reputation of the northern subspecies as a prized duck food, its ripened grain was a staple of practically every species of waterfowl that wintered on the Carolina coast. Alexander transplanted ducks oats, which could be found in clusters scattered around the South Island marsh, to certain ponds in order to concentrate the ducks for shooting. On April 10, 1903, a hand named Phineas set out thirty-nine bunches of duck oats in Pine Ridge Pond, the site of President Cleveland’s favorite blind. By May 7, Phineas had transplanted an additional 179 bunches of duck oats to Pine Ridge Pond.³

Alexander also transplanted two less common native duck food plants, widgeon grass (*Ruppia maritima*) and wild celery (*Vallisneria americana*). Widgeon grass was a hardy submergent that could tolerate both weak and strong brackish water. Dabbling ducks like mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) consumed all vegetative parts of widgeon grass as well as the seeds. Another submergent, wild celery required freshwater with a slow current. As Alexander noted, wild celery was the “famous food of Canvass Back on Chesapeake [Bay].” Canvasbacks (*Aythya valisineria*) and other diving ducks would eat any part of

² Ibid., 249 (first quotation), 251–255 (third quotation on p. 251), 258–259, 262, 264–265, 267–269 (second quotation on p. 269), 273, 280–282, 287.

³ Ibid., 222, 224–225.

the plant, though they preferred the buds and roots. Alexander took widgeon grass and wild celery from isolated spots in the preserve backwaters and put them in frequently hunted ponds and creeks. In November 1905, for instance, he sent the same hand who had set out so many bunches of duck oats, Phineas, “to plant *Valisneria* [*sic*] in Black Duck pond.” The following day, “Phineas went to Pine Ridge . . . to plant *Valisneria*—he planted it around the blind we usually shoot from nearest Mr. Cleveland’s first blind.”⁴

Alexander’s work with duck food plants ended when his health failed in January 1909, and he put South Island and North Island up for sale. On February 22, 1909, the islands passed to lumberman Joseph L. Wheeler of Marion. At the time, South Island contained the most thoroughly improved ducking grounds of any preserve in the state. Wheeler, a native Pennsylvanian, shared Alexander’s commitment to progressive habitat management. He reputedly enjoyed not only hunting the islands but also “bringing them into a high state of development as sporting properties.”⁵ Thomas A. Yawkey of New York City—sole heir to his uncle’s mining and lumbering fortune, whose greatest fame came from owning a professional baseball team, the Boston Red Sox—bought South Island from Wheeler in 1924. Seven years later, he obtained North Island from Wheeler as

⁴ SIL, 29–30 (first quotation on p. 29), 53, 137, 267–268, 273–274 (second and third quotations on p. 274), 284.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 308, 310; conveyance of real estate, South Island Company, a Corporation under the Laws of the State of Georgia, to Joseph L. Wheeler, recorded February 22, 1909, Deed Book M, pp. 377–381, Registrar of Deeds, Georgetown County Courthouse, Georgetown, S.C.; “J. L. Wheeler, 64, Dies at Florence,” *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), July 30, 1932 (quotation).

well. Yawkey would carry on the legacy of waterfowl management at South Island for the next four decades.⁶

The earliest evidence of an outside authority advising Santee sportsmen on duck foods comes from the Kinloch Gun Club and concerns Jasper B. White of Waterlily, North Carolina. White was the proprietor of White's Game Preserve, a commercial hunting lodge located on Church's Island in Currituck Sound. He advertised the lodge in all of the leading outdoor magazines of the day, promising the "best duck and goose shooting in America" during November, December, and January and offering the "best of references from all parts of North America and England."⁷ White's Game Preserve also operated a specialty nursery business: "If the reader of this advertisement is interested in growing wild duck foods for wild ducks and geese in any part of the U.S., Canada, the Canal Zone, Hawaiian Islands, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Africa, Japan or China, our experts will visit them and advise about planting. We are the pioneers in the business and consider this one of the most important matters to all lovers of waterfowl shooting."⁸

⁶ Title to real estate, South Island Club to Thomas A. Yawkey, recorded August 4, 1925, Deed Book Z-1, pp. 615-618, Georgetown County Registrar of Deeds; "Yawkey Acquires North Island Too," *News and Courier*, May 1, 1932; [Julie Lumpkin], *Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center* (1979; repr., Columbia: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 2004), 5-7, 15-17.

⁷ Archie Johnson and Bud Coppedge, *Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound* (Virginia Beach, Va.: CurBac Press, 1991), 134-135, 142. For examples of White's Game Preserve advertisements, see *Forest and Stream*, December 1916, 1218; *Game Breeder*, November 1919, 272; *Outing*, March 1920, 380; *Hunter-Trader-Trapper*, July 1921, 113; *Field and Stream*, November 1921, 747; *Forest and Stream*, January 1922, 40 (second quotation); *ibid.*, April 1923, 210; *ibid.*, October 1923, 590 (first quotation); *ibid.*, November 1928, 667.

⁸ Advertisement for White's Game Preserve, *Outers' Recreation*, February 1922, 158.

Kinloch's House Committee—Eugene du Pont Jr., Eugene E. du Pont, and J. Danforth Bush—was in charge of improvements to the club's shooting grounds, and they were curious about the benefits of planting duck foods. They had learned a good deal on the subject through bulletins issued by the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey. The first, W. L. McAtee's *Three Important Wild Duck Foods*, came out in 1911. McAtee had studied the contents of hundreds of duck stomachs. Although the birds consumed "a large variety of plants," his analysis showed that wild rice (both northern and southern), wild celery, and sago pondweed (*Stuckenia pectinata*) were "of especial importance," constituting "one-fourth of the total subsistence of the 16 most important game ducks in the United States."⁹ McAtee concluded, "By transplanting and sowing the seeds of these and other plants used by ducks for food many depleted ducking grounds can be restored and new grounds can be created. This means much in the effort to preserve our valuable wild ducks."¹⁰ His pamphlet discussed the value of each plant as duck food, described it physically through text and illustrations, mapped its range, and gave instructions for its propagation. McAtee continued his research and expanded his findings in subsequent bulletins. The Biological Survey released *Five Important Wild-Duck Foods* in 1914 and *Eleven Important Wild-Duck Foods* in 1915. Bush and the du Ponts ordered copies of all of these for themselves and the club's superintendent, Russell M. Doar, owner of

⁹ W. L. McAtee, *Three Important Wild Duck Foods*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Biological Survey, Circular No. 81 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911], 1 (first and second quotations), 18 (third quotation).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

neighboring Woodside Plantation. On February 23, 1917, the survey published *Propagation of Wild-Duck Foods*, which combined and revised McAtee's first two bulletins. Exactly one month later, Bush wrote to Doar: "We inclose [sic] herewith the latest circular of the department about Ducks' Food which is practically the same as the ones sent you before except that it contains more information about planting in the first two or three pages, also some new Duck Foods which were not mentioned before. We will probably buy some Wild Celery and Sago Pond Weed for shipment sometime in May for you, so please be prepared to plant it in the best places."¹¹

On May 7, Bush notified Doar that the House Committee planned to order "some two or three bushels" of widgeon grass, sago pondweed, and wild celery from Jasper White "at an early date."¹² The rest of Bush's letter to Doar relays a mixture of information derived from the McAtee circulars and communications with White. Bush first addressed shipping, handling, and storage. "The principal requisite in propagating celery, and in fact, all these plants is that the buds, plants, or seeds must not be allowed to dry, or ferment, between the time of gathering and planting."¹³ White told customers that he packed freshly sprouted stock in bushel baskets with damp cloth and "the virgin soil on the roots, so they

¹¹ J. D. Bush to R. M. Doar, March 23, 1917, box 2, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1917 (January to August)" folder, Kinloch Gun Club Papers, 1906–1935, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del. (hereafter cited as KGCP). See also Bush to Doar, March 5, 1917, *ibid.*; J. Stuart Groves to "Editor and Chief of the Div. of Publications, United States Department of Agriculture," January 21, 1913, box 1, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1913 (January to July)" folder, KGCP.

¹² J. D. Bush to Russell M. Doar, May 7, 1917, box 2, "Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1917 (January to August)" folder, KGCP.

¹³ *Ibid.*

will reach you almost as green as when they were dug up.”¹⁴ While packing in moss was more common, White felt that “our way of shipping the plants are the best, and besides, *plant for plant* they cost only about one-quarter as much as other dealers charge.”¹⁵ Bush stressed that upon receipt, Doar should “keep them moist and cool, till wanted for planting, and if they must be kept for some time, and which we cannot see will be necessary in your case, put them in open vessels full of water in cold storage.”¹⁶

Bush’s letter to Doar continued with directions for planting:

Mr. White advises planting the Sago Pond Weed and Widgeon Grass and Wild Celery in May or June. He says in May is the best time, and he says it should be distributed in as many different parts of the place as it soon scatters all over by floating seeds and root stock that will be dug up by the ducks, and it will go on growing a few days after planting. He says where the water is shallow enough the roots can be pressed in the bottom with the hand about two or four inches, and where the water is deep plant the roots in a mud ball and drop where wanted to grow. They will all grow in any depth of water from two inches to ten feet, but the depth of one to [two] feet, he says is the best for all of it.¹⁷

After conferring with White, Bush stated, “I believe it would be the best plan to plant the Sago Pond Weed and the Widgeon Grass in the Rice Fields and with a little Wild Celery in each one also.” Should Doar have any questions later, Bush referred him to the McAtee studies. “It may be that you have those circulars

¹⁴ Jasper B. White to T. Lucas, March 5, 1925, box 23, “T. C. Lucas—Correspondence, 1924–25” folder, Papers of Eugene du Pont (1873–1954), 1835–1956, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library (hereafter cited as PEDP).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (emphasis in original).

¹⁶ J. D. Bush to Russell M. Doar, May 7, 1917, box 2, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1917 (January to August)” folder, KGCP.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

about duck food,” he reminded the superintendent, “in which case, you can get all the dope in them.”¹⁸

White shipped three bushels of sago pondweed and three bushels of widgeon grass to Kinloch on May 11. “I wrote them how to plant,” White confirmed to Bush.¹⁹ Doar reported to Bush on May 18: “Have been buisey [*sic*] getting out the ‘Sago Pond Weed’ & ‘Widgeon Grass’ which arrived in good shape. I have planted them on ‘Crow Island,’ ‘Wicklow,’ ‘Pine Grove,’ ‘Doar’s Point,’ ‘Richfield Island,’ ‘Camp Main,’ and Newland and hope they will make a start in some of these places.”²⁰ In other words, Doar had done as directed, distributing the rootstocks upriver and downriver, from one corner of the preserve to the other. Three bushels of wild celery followed from White in early June. Doar updated Bush on June 23, stating that “the duck foods are thriving.”²¹ One week after that, in a letter to the president of the club, Eugene du Pont, Doar related, “The three kinds of duck food seem to be doing nicely especially the Widgeon grass and the Sago Pond Weed.”²² The final word in the Kinloch Gun Club collections on this round of plantings comes from the House Committee’s report for the year ending March 31, 1918: “Certain duck foods which we planted on the

¹⁸ Ibid. In a discussion of the history of waterfowl management, Eric G. Bolen writes that “it is unclear” whether McAtee’s investigations of waterfowl food plants “actually attracted much response.” See Bolen, “Waterfowl Management: Yesterday and Tomorrow,” *Journal of Wildlife Management* 64 (April 2000): 325. Here is proof of one group of hunters who made use of them.

¹⁹ Jasper B. White to J. D. Bush, May 11, 1917, box 21, 1917 folder, PEDP.

²⁰ R. M. Doar to J. D. Bush, May 18, 1917, *ibid.*

²¹ J. D. Bush to R. M. Doar, June 8, 1917, box 2, “Kinloch Gun Club—Correspondence, 1917 (January to August)” folder, KGCP; Bush to Doar, July 2, 1917, *ibid.* (quotation).

²² R. M. Doar to Eugene Du Pont, June 30, 1917, box 21, 1917 folder, PEDP.

spent two days at Santee, the 26th and the 27th, inspecting the marshlands in the company of Ludwig A. Beckman, the club's superintendent, and Alec Gaillard, its first African American head guide, who had succeeded Charles H. Mills in that position in 1908. Beckman wrote that on the first day, he "went with Mr. Jasper B. White . . . over Cedar Island & Black Point [on Murphy's Island]." They discovered widgeon grass growing naturally on Cedar Island in Jordan Marsh, Graveyard Pond, and Peter Pond as well as on Murphy's Island "in the canal leading to Black Point and in the small ponds around Black Point, but none in the main pond." On the second day, Beckman and White covered Little Murphy's Island plus the remainder of Murphy's Island. Gaillard paddled them through the web of narrow waterways from Coy Pond to Rushes Pond, Palmetto Pond, Hoyt Stand Ponds, and Ocean Pond. Beckman wrote that "we found widgeon grass in Coy Pond Canal & in Rushes growing nicely but not very thick."²⁵

It looks from Beckman's journal like White recommended propagating widgeon grass extensively in the ponds along with introducing two additional salt-tolerant submergents, sago pondweed and muskgrass (*Chara spp.*). White supplied the rootstocks from his nursery within two weeks of his visit. On June 10, two days after finishing sowing the last of the club's rice fields, Beckman recorded that he "planted Widgeon Grass, Sago Pond Weed & Chara at Ocean Pond, Black Point & Hoyt Stand." On the same day, his middle son, William, who was home from college, and Gaillard "planted the same duck foods in Palmetto

²⁵ Ibid. (first and second quotations on p. 89, third on p. 90); B. Brannan Reath II, *Santee Club—A Legend* (Philadelphia: Printed by the Winchell Company, 1971), 23.

[Pond], Boggy [Pond], & Rushes [Pond].” Meanwhile, Beckman’s youngest son, seventeen-year-old Eugene, accompanied by assistant head guide L. Eli Mills, the son of Charles Mills, and John “Buddie” Howard, who eventually succeeded Gaillard as the club’s second African American head guide, “planted the same duck foods in Jordan Marsh, Graveyard [Pond], Ford Creek [Pond] #2 & Pig Root [Pond].” White also sent some wapato bulbs specifically for Peabody Pond on Cedar Island, which Beckman and a four-man crew set out before the end of the day. Mallards ate the stems, tubers, and seeds of wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), an emergent that grew in mainly freshwater.²⁶

The Santee Club kept in contact with White for the next few years. Beckman and six of the hands planted a quantity of sago pondweed in Old Graveyard Pond on May 22, 1922, that likely came from White’s Game Preserve.²⁷ The final reference to White in the Beckman journals is on February 21, 1924. That day, Beckman drove to Charleston in the club’s Ford Model T for a meeting with White, who was doubtless in town to consult with one or more other clients. Beckman remarked that he “had a long talk with him [White] about duck foods and our ponds in general.”²⁸ Under White’s tutelage, Beckman had become adept at identifying and transplanting a handful of natural duck foods.

²⁶ LABJ, 1919–1924 vol., pp. 95–96 (first quotation on p. 95, second on pp. 95–96, third on p. 96); Henry H. Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club* ([Boston?]: privately printed, [1934?]), 11; Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 23.

²⁷ LABJ, 1919–1924 vol., p. 140.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1924 vol., February 21.



Figure 8.2. Widgeon grass. The Santee Club's efforts at transplanting widgeon grass from White's Game Preserve to several ponds on Murphy's and Cedar Islands in 1921 met with success. Source: Martin and Uhler, *Food of Game Ducks in the United States and Canada* (1939), plate 28.

Widgeon grass, in particular, seemed to thrive in the ponds and drew hungry ducks almost as well as rice bait. On May 13, 1924, after going to Cedar Island by himself to check three of the ponds—Pig Root, Fanny Meade, and Rosetta—

Beckman noted with satisfaction in his journal that he “saw lots of widgeon grass in them.”²⁹

White touted the “splendid success” of his plantings at the Santee Club in a March 5, 1925, letter to the owner of Hopsewee Plantation on the North Santee River, T. Cordes Lucas, who had taken over as manager of the Kinloch Gun Club from Russell Doar three years earlier. “When I first begun to ship [to] the Santee Club a few years ago, they had practically no food at all,” White asserted, “while now, their ponds are filled with food.” He further attested, “Mr. Beckman told me in Charleston last spring the shooting was better than it had been for many years.”³⁰

In February 1930, almost nine years after first bringing in White as a consultant, the Santee Club engaged one of his chief competitors, Terrell’s Aquatic Farms of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to conduct its own study of duck foods on the preserve and make planting recommendations.³¹ In fact, advertisements for White’s and Terrell’s often appeared side by side in the sporting periodicals during the late 1910s and 1920s.³² The owner of Terrell’s Aquatic Farms, Clyde B. Terrell, was more than thirty years White’s junior. In the 1890s, Terrell’s father, a Wisconsin farmer and an ardent waterfowler, had successfully grown

²⁹ Ibid., May 13.

³⁰ Jasper B. White to T. Lucas, March 5, 1925, box 23, “T. C. Lucas—Correspondence, 1924–25” folder, PEDP.

³¹ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 36–37.

³² See, for example, *Game Breeder*, October and December 1917, 31, 95; *ibid.*, February and March 1918, 159, 191; *Outers’ Recreation*, February and April 1922, 158, 351; *Field and Stream*, May and August 1922, 133, 521; *Forest and Stream*, May, June, and November 1923, 285, 349, 664.

Chesapeake Bay wild celery from imported seed on his two-hundred-acre ducking grounds in the marshes of Big Lake Butte des Morts in Winnebago County. “My dad was a practical outdoorsman,” Terrell told the *Milwaukee Journal* in 1950, “and after that wild celery of his took hold in Butte des Morts, he found he had enough to spread it around and began selling it. That was the beginning of the business.”³³ Terrell took over the business while in his teens and within a few years had turned his father’s sideline into the national leader in the field.³⁴ One of Terrell’s advertisements informed readers that “ducks fly hundreds of miles to get their favorite natural foods. Plant my genuine Wisconsin wild rice, wild celery, duck potato, water cress, chufas, water lily or blue duck millet and you can attract them to ponds, lakes, rivers, or overflowed lowlands by the hundreds.”³⁵ Another ad contained the assurance that “Terrell’s wild duck foods and seeds are recommended by Commissioners, Sportsmen, and Preserve Owners the country over.”³⁶

White, born in 1861, and Terrell, born in 1894, were from different generations. They had different backgrounds too. White, like Terrell’s father, was a “practical outdoorsman.” Most of what he knew about duck foods came from a lifetime of observing the habits of the wild birds that he hunted. Terrell, on the

³³ “Terrell Farms the Waters for Weeds That Pay Profits,” *Milwaukee Journal*, January 8, 1950.

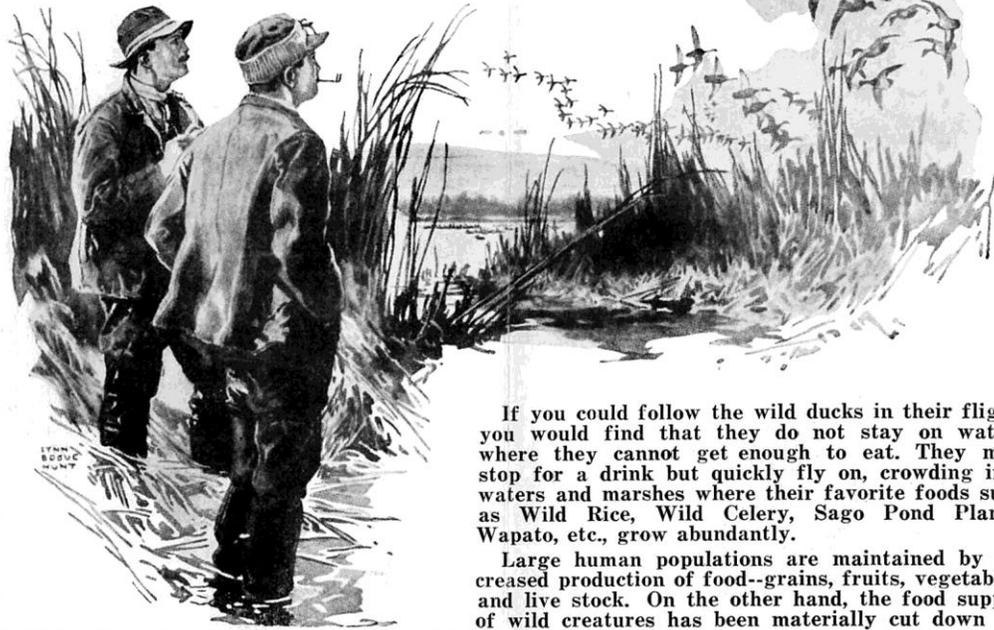
³⁴ On Terrell, see “Money from the Marshes,” *Interesting Boys*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 25, 1915; “Feeding Wild Ducks Makes Man Famous,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 17, 1916; Frank G. Moorhead, “A Life Income from Wild Water Fowl,” *Illustrated World*, August 1917, 956; “Terrell Farms the Waters”; Mel Ellis, “Feeding the Ducks,” *The Outdoorsman*, *Milwaukee Journal*, July 31, 1955. See also A. S. Pearse and Clyde B. Terrell, “Aquatic Preserves,” *Natural History*, January–February 1920, 103–106.

³⁵ Advertisement for Clyde B. Terrell, *Forest and Stream*, August 1915, 451.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, October 1915, 638.

FOOD IS THE SECRET!

"Food maintains all life"



If you could follow the wild ducks in their flight, you would find that they do not stay on waters where they cannot get enough to eat. They may stop for a drink but quickly fly on, crowding into waters and marshes where their favorite foods such as Wild Rice, Wild Celery, Sago Pond Plants, Wapato, etc., grow abundantly.

Large human populations are maintained by increased production of food—grains, fruits, vegetables and live stock. On the other hand, the food supply of wild creatures has been materially cut down by

draining of marshes, pollution, clearing of land, pasturing, and destruction of berry-bearing shrubs and vines along highways and fences. To maintain and increase your wild life population, it is necessary to plant plenty of food for them in most places.

For information on important food and cover plants for wild ducks, upland game birds, song birds, muskrats and fish—ornamental water plants, trees, shrubs and vines that can be planted now, turn to the next page—

Terrell's Aquatic Farms and Nurseries

Specialists in Natural Food Plants for Wild Life

Oshkosh, Wisconsin, U. S. A.

Figure 8.3. Extract from a Terrell's Aquatic Farms & Nurseries brochure, circa 1929. Clyde B. Terrell (1894–1959) operated the world's largest aquatic nursery specializing in duck food plants, with a catalog that eventually included approximately fifty varieties of seeds. By the mid-1950s, after nearly five decades in the business, he and his network of regional suppliers had sent seeds to almost every state in the Union and twelve foreign countries. *Source:* box 25, "Kinloch Gun Club—C. Underwood, 1930" folder, Papers of Eugene du Pont (1873–1954), 1835–1956, Manuscripts and Archives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del.

other hand, was college educated and considered himself to be a “naturalist.” White and Terrell’s consultations at the Santee Club reflected their differing approaches to their work: the former looked over the preserve and offered empirical advice on which duck foods to plant where, while the latter collected data, analyzed it, and used the results to draw scientific conclusions about the duck foods best suited for the water conditions in specific ponds.

Beckman’s journal from 1930 is missing, but Santee Club member B. Brannan Reath II recollected that “Terrell made a survey which lasted through all of February.”³⁷ Terrell’s standard services included an inspection of the property; “chemical tests of the waters . . . made by the colorimetric process”; instructions for adjusting the pH value of the water as needed; a comprehensive report containing blueprint plans of the ducking grounds and a planting program; planting stock shipped from Terrell’s nursery; and upon request, personal planting assistance. The person who actually conducted the survey at the Santee Club was Terrell’s associate, Henry J. Hubert, the “superintendent of plantings.”³⁸ Once Hubert completed the month-long investigation, according to Reath, “Terrell then furnished some twenty-two different aquatic duck foods which the Club planted on an experimental basis.” Reath wrote that only “two of the twenty-

³⁷ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 36–37.

³⁸ The Terrell report on the Santee Club preserve is apparently lost. The description of Terrell’s services here is based on Henry J. Hubert, “Making Estherville and Daisyville Plantations Ideal Game Preserves: (Georgetown County, South Carolina), Report 1,” 1926, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston (first quotation); Clyde B. Terrell to R. R. M. Carpenter, December 20, 1926, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—Eugene du Pont, 1922–34” folder, PEDP (second quotation); Terrell to Carpenter, February 6, 1930, box 25, “Kinloch Gun Club—C. Underwood, 1930” folder, *ibid.* See also Clyde B. Terrell to Lawrence M. Pinckney, January 2, 1926, box 2, “Coming Tee Corporation, 1924–1926” folder, Joseph S. Frelinghuysen Papers, 1733–1948, Archibald S. Alexander Library, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Special thanks to Daniel J. Vivian for bringing the Terrell-Pinckney letter to my attention.

two proved worthwhile.” One was widgeon grass, which White had prescribed, and the other was a plant that Reath called “nut grass.”³⁹

From the perspective of a modern researcher, identifying this second plant was problematic. Initially, the author assumed Reath was referring to *Cyperus esculentus*, or chufa. Among national authorities on duck foods in the early twentieth century like McAtee and Terrell, nut grass was synonymous with chufa, an emergent sedge that produced a profusion of tubers, which ducks billed up from the mud. The sedge’s natural range covered the entire continental United States except for the Rocky Mountains and the Great Basin. It grew best in freshwater ponds that went dry during the summer and was particularly prevalent in the bottomlands of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. McAtee profiled chufa, “known also . . . as nut grass,” in his circular from 1914 entitled *Five Important Wild-Duck Foods*, and Terrell’s price lists from the late 1920s and early 1930s likewise denoted chufa as nut grass.⁴⁰ However, evidence that the Santee Club’s so-called nut grass was not chufa came from McAtee himself.

Early in his career with the Biological Survey, McAtee developed an interest in the common names of plants and began collecting each new one he encountered. As he observed while doing field work from coast to coast for his waterfowl food-habit studies, “It is patent that single vernacular names sometimes are applied to more than one botanical species,” and these “may

³⁹ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 37.

⁴⁰ W. L. McAtee, *Five Important Wild-Duck Foods*, Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, no. 58 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914], 10 (quotation); price list for Terrell’s Aquatic Farms & Nurseries, effective May 20, 1929, box 25, “Kinloch Gun Club—C. Underwood, 1930” folder, PEDP; price list for Terrell’s Aquatic Farms & Nurseries, effective February 20, 1931, box 25, “Kinloch Gun Club—C. Underwood, 1931” folder, *ibid*.

have widely different meanings in different localities.”⁴¹ Nut grass was one example. Between 1913 and 1946, McAtee published nine lists cataloging local names for hundreds of North American plant species in the hope that one day they would form the basis for “some very favorably circumstanced individual or institution” to compile a comprehensive glossary.⁴² Unfortunately, McAtee’s plant compilations attracted little attention during his lifetime and have been rarely cited in scholarship since his death in 1962. The majority of names in the first two lists, published in 1913 and 1916, respectively, came from sportsmen—including a number from the Santee Club—and concerned aquatic or marsh plants, which “in general are known among hunters and others as grass, moss or weeds,” with “various adjectival terms . . . used to specify the different kinds.”⁴³ McAtee documented that at the Santee Club, nut grass was the name used for salt-marsh bulrush (*Scirpus robustus* Pursh).⁴⁴

A sedge that produced nut-like seeds eaten by ducks, salt-marsh bulrush was native to the brackish marshes of the Santee River estuary, and at the Santee Club, it was a dominant species in ditches and along ponds borders inundated only during the higher stages of the tide. By the 1929–1930 ducking season, most of White’s plantings had died off due to a drought, which will be

⁴¹ W. L. McAtee, “Some Local Names of Plants—2,” *Torreyia* 16 (November 1916): 235 (first quotation); McAtee, “Some Local Names of Plants,” *Torreyia* 13 (October 1913): 225 (second quotation). Discontinued in 1945, *Torreyia* was a journal of botanical notes and news published by the Torrey Botanical Society, the oldest botanical society in the United States.

⁴² W. L. McAtee, “Some Local Names of Plants—IV,” *Torreyia* 26 (January–February 1926): 3. For a complete listing of McAtee’s “Some Local Names of Plants” series, see the bibliography.

⁴³ McAtee, “Some Local Names of Plants,” 225.

⁴⁴ McAtee, “Some Local Names of Plants—2,” 237.

discussed in the next chapter, and a series of freshets. Ludwig Beckman told his counterpart at the Kinloch Gun Club, Cordes Lucas, in June 1930 that “the nut grass was all they had to depend on at Santee Club last year.”⁴⁵ Four major freshets had occurred between August 1928 and October 1929. Severe erosion from the exhausted cotton fields in the South Carolina piedmont filled the Santee drainage with sediment, which contributed to the frequency and ferocity of freshets in the delta in the 1920s. After the flood of August 1928, Beckman recorded, “Everything killed in path of freshet.”⁴⁶ This doubtless included much of the aquatic duck foods from White’s Game Preserve still growing in the marsh ponds such as widgeon grass and sago pondweed, which were either washed away or buried in silt. Only tall marsh plants rooted on slightly higher ground like nut grass managed to survive. Poor shooting followed the freshets, prompting the Santee Club to seek Terrell’s help with replenishing its supply of natural duck foods in early 1930.

Although the club had called it nut grass for years, the plant that emerged from Terrell’s experiments as a success alongside widgeon grass apparently was not salt-marsh bulrush. Instead, it was a different species from the same genus—in other words, another “nut grass.” A letter from Reath to Clarence Cottam of the

⁴⁵ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, June 8, 1930, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—Eugene du Pont, 1922–34” folder, PEDP.

⁴⁶ LABJ, 1928 vol., September 6. On the freshets, see also *ibid.*, August 24–25, 27, 30–31, September 1, 7, 14, 17, 18; T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, September 2, 1928, box 23, “Kinloch Gun Club—T. C. Lucas, Correspondence, 1926–28” folder, PEDP; Lucas to Robert R. M. Carpenter, September 11, 1928, *ibid.*; Lucas to Carpenter, September 17, 1928, *ibid.*; Lucas to du Pont, September 24, 1928, *ibid.*; Lucas to Carpenter, March 12, 1929, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—T. C. Lucas, Supt., 1929” folder, PEDP; Lucas to Clarence Underwood, September 13, 1929, *ibid.*; Lucas to du Pont, October 14, 1929, *ibid.*; “Flooded Santee Plays Havoc in Swampy Lands,” *Georgetown Times* (Georgetown, S.C.) October 18, 1929.

Biological Survey dated March 21, 1940, allows for a reasonably certain identification. Reath stated, “I understand that what we call nut grass is the 3-square bulrush.”⁴⁷ Like salt-marsh bulrush, three-square bulrush (*Scirpus pungens* Vahl) was a native of the Santee estuary. While its more salt-resistant relative was at home in soggy soils periodically flowed by the tide, three-square bulrush favored ponds and canals in the intermediate zone between brackish and freshwater marshes that held several inches of water irrespective of the tide cycle. Reath said that in their experience, “the Nut grass . . . would only grow in areas where the water was substantially fresh.”⁴⁸

Once established, Terrell’s three-square bulrush spread, forming large, conspicuous stands and dropping ample crops of seeds. On August 11, 1931, Beckman entered in his journal that he “went over Murphy Island” and “saw lots of nut grass along the new ditch and around new & old Hoyt Stands.”⁴⁹ By April 1933, nut grass was flourishing throughout the Murphy’s Island Marsh. “Went on Murphy Island. . . . Saw lots of nut grass,” Beckman stated on the 6th.⁵⁰ A *News and Courier* article about the Santee Club from 1937 noted that “nut grass now thrives on hundreds of acres and provides excellent feed for a host of ducks.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ B. B. Reath II to Clarence Cottam, March 21, 1940, box 136, “Santee Cooper, 1939–1944” folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, General Correspondence, 1890–1956, Reservations, National Archives II, College Park, Md.

⁴⁸ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 37.

⁴⁹ Entry for August 11, 1931, photocopy in “Journal Excerpts, 1926–1932” folder, L. A. Beckman Historical Records, 1925–1932, Village Museum, McClellanville, S.C.

⁵⁰ LABJ, 1933 vol., April 6.

⁵¹ J. M. L. Jr. [John M. Lofton Jr.], “Do You Know Your Lowcountry? Santee Gun Club,” *News and Courier*, November 15, 1937. This article claimed that “sixteen years ago nut grass was

The Santee Club was not the first assignment for Terrell's superintendent of plantings, Henry Hubert, at a northern ducking preserve on the Santee delta. Previously, he had examined and developed planting programs for three North Santee River properties bordering the Kinloch Gun Club—Annandale Plantation, Daisyville Plantation, and the Rice Hope Gun Club. Hubert spent time at Annandale, owned by New York textile executive Richard E. Reeves, in 1925. The next year, he visited Daisyville as well as Estherville Plantation, located not far away on Winyah Bay, both of which belonged to John A. Miller, president of the New York-based Pennsylvania-Dixie Cement Corporation. Hubert's report to Miller seems to be the only one either he or Terrell made in South Carolina that is extant. Hubert was impressed that Miller's plantation manager, Frederick W. Ford, still cultivated "several hundred acres" of "tame rice" at Estherville on "a paying basis." For ponds in the fallow rice fields at Daisyville, Hubert suggested wild celery in addition to a variety of freshwater marsh plants—including a strain of *Zizania aquatica* from Minnesota known in the nursery business as "giant wild rice," wapato, bur reed (*Sparganium spp.*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), and wampee (*Peltandra virginica*). In early 1928 Hubert went back to Georgetown County at the request of New Yorker William N. Beach, president of the Rice Hope Gun Club, for a consultation at Rice Hope Plantation.⁵² One of the

introduced at a cost of \$12 per bushel for seed." If this is accurate, then Jasper White may have advised the club to plant small quantities of nut grass at a few choice sites offering favorable habitat. The surviving volumes of Beckman's journal that cover the years when White was a consultant for the club do not mention nut grass.

⁵² See Hubert, "Making Estherville and Daisyville Plantations Ideal Game Preserves" (first, second, and third quotations on p. 1, fourth quotation on p. [11A]); T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, March 22, 1928, box 23, "Kinloch Gun Club—T. C. Lucas, Correspondence, 1926–28" folder, PEDP. See also Clyde B. Terrell, "Duck Foods for Old Carolina Rice Fields," Open Forum,

duck foods started at Rice Hope under Hubert's advisement, Cordes Lucas noted, was "rice cousin," the Kinloch manager's vernacular name for *Echinochloa crus-galli*.⁵³ This was an introduced species from southern Asian that Terrell's Aquatic Farms referred to in its price lists as "wild duck millet" or "goose grass."⁵⁴ However, after the freshets in August and September, Lucas wrote to Eugene du Pont: "I fear all the duck food Mr. Beach had planted is gone."⁵⁵

There is no proof that anyone from Terrell's Aquatic Farms ever came to the Kinloch Gun Club. However, Kinloch did purchase plants from the Wisconsin nursery. Following the 1928 freshets, Kinloch experienced its worst shooting in years. In April 1929, while waiting for yet another freshet to subside, the club placed an order for northern wild rice. "I wrote Terrell to forward the wild rice seed," Lucas notified du Pont on the 7th, "as by the time it gets here the water should be low enough to plant same." He added, "P.S. If things are not right to put out seed when it comes will follow directions of how to care for same until

Game Breeder, February 1932, 49. On Reeves, see "R. E. Reeves Dies in New York," *Greensboro Record* (Greensboro, N.C.), February 28, 1926. On Miller, see John W. Jordan, *Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography*, vol. 3 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1914), 984–985; Winfield Scott Downs, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Biography*, n.s., vol. 11 (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1940), 414–415; "John A. Miller, 88, Cement Official," *New York Times*, April 13, 1961. On Beach, an executive in the cement industry, see note 61 of chapter 7.

⁵³ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, September 2, 1928, box 23, "Kinloch Gun Club—T. C. Lucas, Correspondence, 1926–28" folder, PEDP; McAtee, "Some Local Names of Plants—2," 236.

⁵⁴ Price list for Terrell's Aquatic Farms & Nurseries, effective May 20, 1929, box 25, "Kinloch Gun Club—C. Underwood, 1930" folder, PEDP; price list for Terrell's Aquatic Farms & Nurseries, effective February 20, 1931, box 25, "Kinloch Gun Club—C. Underwood, 1931" folder, *ibid*.

⁵⁵ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, September 2, 1928, box 23, "Kinloch Gun Club—T. C. Lucas, Correspondence, 1926–28" folder, PEDP.

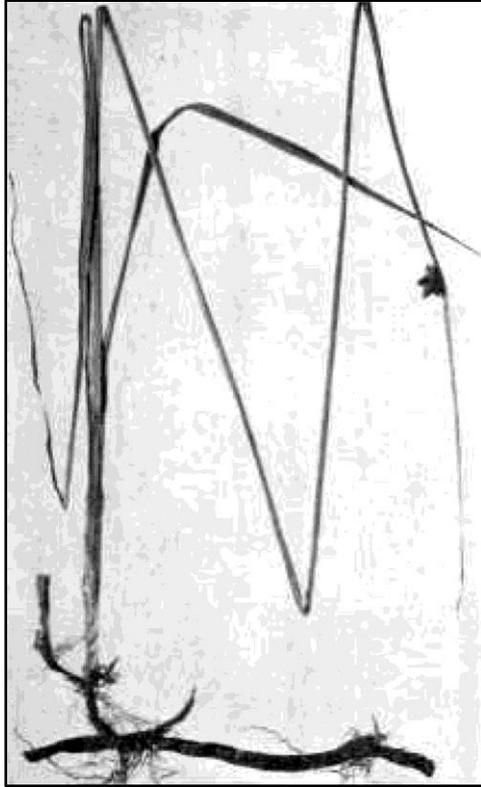


Figure 8.4. Called “nut grass” locally, three-square bulrush transplanted from Terrell’s Aquatic Farms & Nurseries in Wisconsin became a mainstay of the Santee Club’s natural duck foods in the 1930s. *Source: Martin and Uhler, Food of Game Ducks in the United States and Canada* (1939), plate 76.

ready to plant.”⁵⁶ On the 25th, Lucas followed up with du Pont about the order: “The wild rice seed came in good condition and I put it right out in nice bottoms where it would be sure to grow. There is a lot of the native [southern wild rice] springing up so of course had to use judgement [*sic*] how thick to sow the bought

⁵⁶ T. C. Lucas to Robert R. M. Carpenter, November 30, 1928, *ibid.*; Lucas to Eugene du Pont, April 7, 1929, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—T. C. Lucas, Supt., 1929” folder, PEDP (quotations).

seed and accordingly covered a much greater area than at first thought.”⁵⁷

Terrell’s seed did not disappoint. “The wild rice is over most of the property [in] places we planted & places we did not plant,” Lucas observed in mid-September.⁵⁸ “Judging from [the] look of things,” he remarked to du Pont, “Kinloch will be the duck camping grounds [this winter].”⁵⁹ Even an October freshet did little to injure the crop. Although “the freshet came down like a tidal wave 2 ” higher than last August,” Lucas informed du Pont, “most of the wild rice . . . was ripe & falling & a lot of it too well grown to be covered.”⁶⁰

In June 1930, after Lucas talked to Beckman about Terrell’s recent recommendations for the Santee Club, the Kinloch Gun Club decided to try similar plants on its preserve. “We have planted out lots of widgeon & nut grass over Crow Island, Pine Grove & Wicklow,” Lucas stated. Whether Lucas was alluding to salt-marsh bulrush or three-square bulrush cannot be ascertained. In April 1931, he mentioned nut grass growing “in quiet water 6 ” to 8 ” deep” on Crow Island that may have been slightly brackish—conditions better suited to three-square bulrush. These plantings are not referenced again in the sources, so their outcome is unknown.⁶¹

⁵⁷ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, April 25, 1929, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—T. C. Lucas, Supt., 1929” folder, PEDP.

⁵⁸ T. C. Lucas to Clarence Underwood, September 13, 1929, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, September 10, 1929, *ibid.*

⁶⁰ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, October 14, 1929, *ibid.*

⁶¹ T. C. Lucas to Eugene du Pont, June 8, 1930, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—Eugene du Pont, 1922–34” folder, PEDP; Lucas to Robert R. M. Carpenter, April 27, 1931, box 24, “RRMC Correspondence—R. R. M. Carpenter, 1925–1935” folder, *ibid.* (quotation).

Starting with Porter Alexander in the 1890s, Santee sportsmen made repeated attempts to raise natural food for ducks on their preserves. Often, they purchased commercially available seeds or rootstocks and relied on professional nurserymen for advice. Scientific information disseminated by the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey was useful as well. Some experiments were more successful than others. Knowing the proper timing and techniques of sowing and transplanting was important, but the key was determining the appropriate vegetation for the existing environments in the marsh. The Santee Club and the Kinloch Gun Club at first viewed natural duck foods as a supplement to rice baiting. In the event that the rice crop failed, they would have a secondary food source to attract ducks without resorting to buying large quantities of bait. But as the cost of rice planting gradually rose after World War I, the hunters came to see habitat management as a substitute for agriculture. Once committed to managing the marshes long term, their next step was erecting impoundments, where they could control water flow and develop the habitat of the food plants.

The Kinloch Gun Club dissolved at the end of 1931, and its stream of primary-source material dried up shortly thereafter except for rare references to “Kinloch Plantation” in the Charleston newspapers. In the next two chapters, our focus narrows onto the Santee Club, which led the way in the 1920s and 1930s not only in impounding tidal marsh as a means of improving waterfowl habitat but also in the fight against the destructive Santee-Cooper hydroelectric project. In the process of diking its ducking grounds, instructing other sportsmen on how to do the same, and organizing opposition to the dam, the Santee Club ushered in

the modern era of waterfowl management and wetlands conservation in the low country.

CHAPTER 9

MANAGING IMPOUNDMENTS

Liberal baiting allowed the Santee Club to record the biggest seasonal bags in its history in the 1920s. Club members were cognizant, though, that planting rice for bait would only become more expensive over time. Early in the decade, on the heels of considering a significant investment in reclaiming hundreds of additional acres of old rice fields for growing bait, the club brought in the first of several outside consultants to instruct plantation manager Ludwig A. Beckman in the identification and propagation of native perennial marsh plants that could be transplanted easily and provide a permanent source of duck food in the ponds on Cedar Island, Murphy's Island, and Little Murphy's Island at much less expense than baiting with rice. Later in the decade, the club began impounding large areas of tidal marsh in order to protect the ponds and improve habitat for duck food plants. They also created new habitat for these plants in reclaimed rice fields on Murphy's Island and at Blake's Plantation. By the time the baiting ban was instituted in 1935, the club's program in propagating native duck foods behind embankments was well established, and its distinctive, monocultural style of managing its preserve for waterfowl, a product of the agriculturally depressed low country in the early twentieth century, was falling into step with the national mainstream. As the club shifted its emphasis from

planting rice to developing waterfowl impoundments in the years leading up to the ban on baiting, the ecology of its wetlands grew increasingly similar to the modern prototype. In the 1930s, the Santee Club also contributed to the spread of the modern preserve model throughout the low country by sharing its accumulated expertise on converting old rice fields to managed duck marshes with fellow sportsmen.

During its carefree golden age and for most of the rice-baiting era, the Santee Club made minimal improvements in the marsh. Aside from building blinds, the club mostly concerned itself with increasing access to the shooting grounds. In 1900 member Thomas E. Richardson told a prospective member that since the founding of the club two years earlier, “blinds have been built on ponds which were not then accessible.”¹ Richardson went on to say that “we have many ponds over which we have never fired a gun, and we do not even yet know the possibilities of our preserves.”² In order to realize the potential of the ducking preserve, the club directed its guides to dig a series of canals radiating through the marsh, which branched into ditches barely wide enough for a small rowboat. These waterways eventually connected the river, the creeks, and the network of existing rice canals and ditches with practically every pond on the property. Subject to silting and overgrowth that made them impassible, the club’s internal system of canals and ditches would always require regular upkeep. However, the nature of marsh improvements at the club changed fundamentally in the years

¹ Thomas E. Richardson to A. H. Hayden, September 25, 1900, box 2, folder 177, Santee Club Papers, 1897–1902, Thomas Eveleigh Richardson Collection, ca. 1683–1933, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

² Ibid.

after it first hired nurseryman Jasper B. White of North Carolina as a consultant. Good results from growing his widgeon grass in the open marsh in the early 1920s motivated the club to manage the shooting grounds more intensively later in the decade in an effort to protect their crops of duck foods, diversify the plants, and attract more birds. Of course, the building block of intensive management was impoundment.

The Santee Club's successful propagation of nut grass in the 1930s indicated the amount of progress it had made on impounding the marsh since White's time there in 1921. Not nearly as adaptive as widgeon grass, nut grass required several inches of standing water that was, in club member B. Brannan Reath II's words, "substantially fresh." Raising large stands of nut grass in the Santee marshes would not have been possible without a means to exclude the tides and regulate the water levels in the ponds. To this end, the club applied the traditional technology of rice culture to waterfowl management in a new way.

In the years leading up to Wisconsin nurseryman Clyde B. Terrell's consultation in 1930, the Santee Club erected several miles of what Reath called "protective banks" in the Murphy's Island Marsh.³ With Beckman supervising, the guides did all of the work by hand in between attending to club members during the ducking season and sharecropping rice. Many of the sportsmen's banks augmented old rice banks. However, they built some new banks in virgin marsh as well. On the order of two to three feet tall, three to four feet wide on top, and eight to ten feet wide at the base, the new marsh banks were smaller versions of

³ B. Brannan Reath II, *Santee Club—A Legend* (Philadelphia: Printed by the Winchell Company, 1971), 30.

rice banks. Where the marsh banks crossed sloughs, the workers built dams and installed trunks. The marsh trunks were identical in form and function to rice trunks. With the banks, dams, and ditches in place, manipulation of the trunks permitted flooding of the salt marshes with freshwater from the river. In this way, the strongly brackish ponds became less so, and the ponds with low salinity became practically fresh.

The first catalyst for reclaiming the Murphy's Island Marsh was the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's s construction of the Casino Creek-Alligator Creek connection of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. As part of ongoing efforts to deepen, widen, and straighten the waterway for accommodating larger craft, the army engineers cut a channel through the marsh between Casino Creek and Alligator Creek near the Santee Club's southwestern boundary line in 1924. The engineers also made arrangements with the club to deposit spoil dredged from Alligator Creek in a five-hundred-foot-wide strip along the creek's eastern shore. Subsequent dredgings built up a roughly four-mile-long embankment that stretched from the cut to the South Santee River.⁴ This government dike served

⁴ *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1924: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1924, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1924), pt. 1, pp. 588–590; *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1925: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1925, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1925), pt. 1, pp. 568–570; photocopy of part of a letter from an unknown individual at the U.S. Engineer Office, Charleston, S.C., to L. A. Beckman and an attached map of the “Inland Waterway between Charleston and Winyah Bay S.C., Alligator-Casino Creek Connection,” March 1, 1924, Miscellaneous Beckman Material folder, Santee Club Records, 1899–1933, Village Museum, McClellanville, S.C.; photocopy of a “Sketch Showing Method of Depositing Spoil, Dredged from Alligator Creek on Property of Santee Gun Club,” November 27, 1928, *ibid.*; *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1928: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1928, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1928), pt. 1, pp. 630–631; *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1929: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1929, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1929), pt. 1, p. 627. For a brief overview of the

as the starting point for the club to bring much of the Murphy's Island Marsh "under bank," as Reath referred to the process. Reath's use of the old rice-planting terminology was appropriate since the Murphy's Island Marsh encompassed abandoned rice fields that once belonged to the Lucas family.⁵

The second catalyst for reclaiming the Murphy's Island Marsh was a severe drought in the mid-1920s that negated a lot of the Santee Club's previous work with Jasper White to propagate duck foods on the preserve. The average flow of the Santee River for the period from 1908 to 1936 was 18,900 cubic feet per second, but during an exceptionally dry spell in 1925, it dropped to twenty-five hundred cubic feet. With the volume of freshwater coming down the Santee reduced drastically, the brackish marshes near the river's mouth became more exposed to the tides. "The tidal flow brought the ocean water up the river in such concentrations," federal waterfowl biologist Clarence Cottam later explained, "that much of the best [duck] foods were killed out." The Santee River averaged below ten thousand cubic feet per second through 1927, and even after the normal flow resumed, it took a few years for the marshes to recover fully from the salt kill.⁶ The drought and the resultant loss of food crops for the ducks persuaded the members of the Santee Club that reclamation was a prerequisite to safeguarding their future investment in waterfowl management.

historical development of the Intracoastal Waterway in South Carolina between Charleston and Little River (at the North Carolina line), see Ronald E. Bridwell, *Gem of the Atlantic Seaboard: Part 2 of "That We Should Have a Port": A History of the Port of Georgetown, South Carolina* (Georgetown, S.C.: Georgetown Times, 1991), 49.

⁵ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 30.

⁶ Erle Kauffman, "Conservation over the Dam," *American Forests*, November 1939, 550.

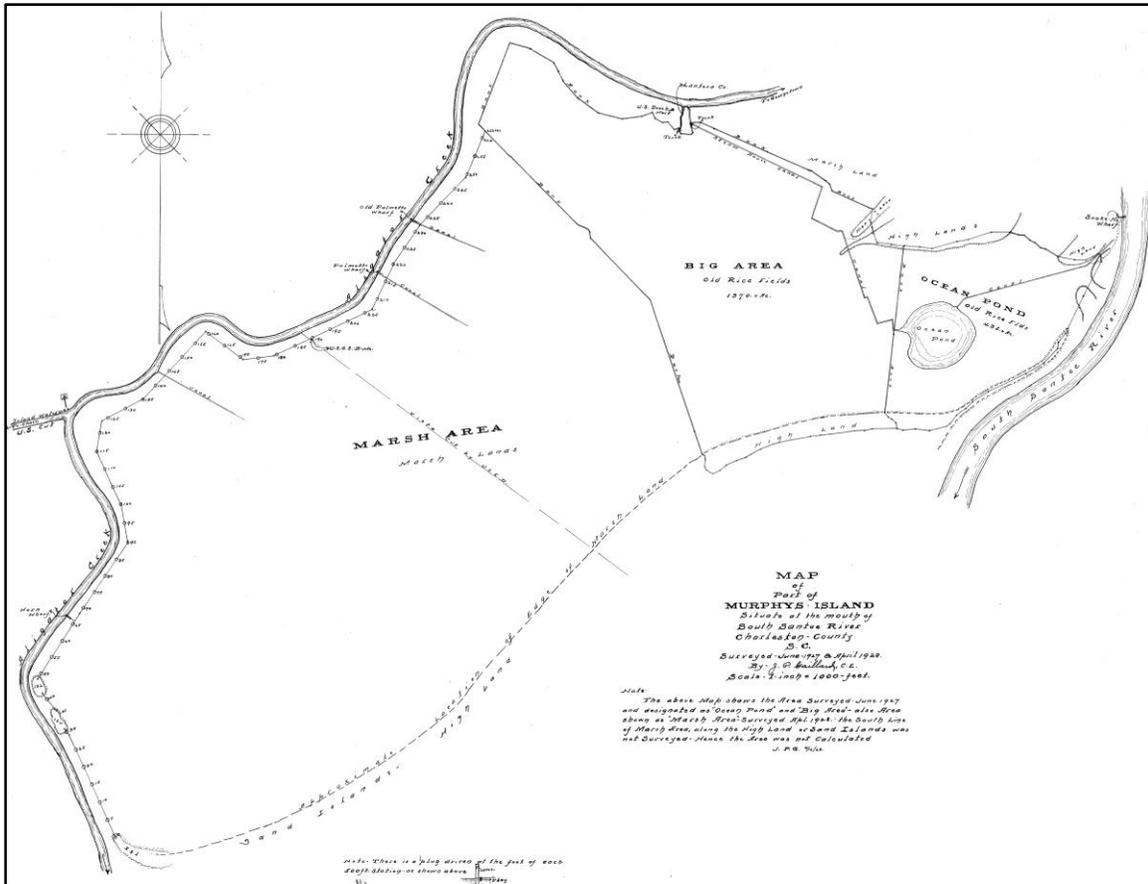


Figure 9.1. “Map of Part of Murphy’s Island,” surveyed by J. P. Gaillard, 1927–1928. The Santee Club finished building its first dedicated waterfowl impoundments, which comprised the northern one-third of Murphy’s Island, in 1928. *Source:* drawer 5, Gaillard Plat Collection, 1835–1989, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

A surveyor’s map shows that by June 1927, the club had made significant progress toward reclaiming two sections of old rice fields in the Murphy’s Island Marsh totaling 1,805 acres, and Beckman’s journal from the following year records his crew busily engaged in the final stages of impoundment construction. In February, for instance, L. Eli Mills and a group of guides were working on a two-mile stretch of bank through the marsh that would connect the spoil bank at Alligator Creek with the high ground at Tina Ridge on Murphy’s Island. Part of

this bank, perhaps most of it, was built atop one of the derelict Lucas rice banks. On February 22, Beckman entered in his journal that he “went to Murphy’s Island & looked over the work being done there. The men are ditching the bank and are almost to Mills Creek from Alligator Creek.” On the 28th, he put down that the “men started to dam Mills Creek where bank crosses it.” Two days later, Beckman was able to walk atop the new bank from Alligator Creek, across Mills Creek, and “on to Hoyt Stand ditch where Eli Mills met us with a small boat.” When Beckman went to Murphy’s Island on April 4, he noted that the “men have reached the woods with the ditching of [the] bank.” Work on other dams and banks continued throughout April and May. On June 8, after finishing a dam in an old rice canal near the South Santee, Beckman wrote that “this completes dams & banks around big area on Murphy Island. Only thing left to be done,” he added, “is to put in a trunk at Ocean Pond ditch and a trunk at new ditch at Lantern Creek.”⁷

A reporter who looked over the Santee Club preserve in 1932 remarked on the impressive marsh infrastructure of Murphy’s Island: “These old rice fields have been reclaimed, new dykes built, new trunks and gates put in, and the ditches and canals opened up.”⁸ Just like the banks and trunks in the rice fields, though, those in the Murphy’s Island Marsh called for routine maintenance. For example, the Lantern Creek trunk needed attention in 1933. On July 19,

⁷ Ludwig A. Beckman Journals, 1928 vol., February 18, 22 (first quotation), and 27–28 (second quotation on the 28th), March 1 (third quotation) and 12, April 4 (fourth quotation) and 24, June 8 (fifth quotation), private collection (hereafter cited as LABJ).

⁸ John Vavasour Noel, “Santee Gun Club Conserves Game,” *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), February 28, 1932.

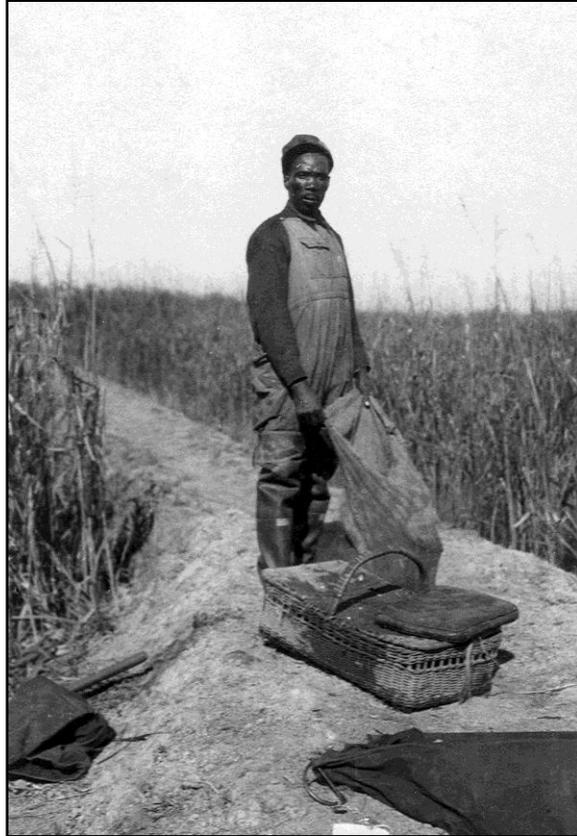


Figure 9.2. Santee Club guide John “Buddie” Howard (d. 1960) at work on a new bank in the Little Murphy’s Island Marsh, December 1928. The Santee Club undertook three major marsh-banking projects in 1928. After finishing the job on Murphy’s Island in June, the crew moved to Embargo Plantation in the delta and then to Little Murphy’s Island. *Source*: private collection.

Beckman wrote, “Sent my wheelbarrow to the club . . . to repair leak in Lantern Creek trunk.”⁹ Beckman logged on May 27, 1936, that the “men started to repair banks on Murphy Island,” a job that took months to complete.¹⁰ Three years later,

⁹ LABJ, 1933 vol., July 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1936 vol., May 27.

they undertook another major maintenance project. "Men repairing cross banks on Murphy Island," Beckman jotted on April 24, 1939.¹¹

In contrast to the rice fields and the threshing yard, women did not work in the duck marsh at the Santee Club. One reason doubtless was the demanding physical nature of the labor. Beckman did not see heaving logs into place for a dam or hauling heavy bags of sand through the mud to extend a bank as jobs suitable for women. Plus, the rice fields and the threshing yard, located in the vicinity of the clubhouse, were convenient to Collins Creek, the African American community where most of the club's employees lived. Murphy's Island, on the other hand, was remote. A day in the Murphy's Island Marsh started with a boat ride of four or five miles, depending on where the work was being done, and often involved an additional mile or two of paddling or walking through the marsh to the job site. This usually meant leaving the clubhouse wharf early in the morning and getting back late in the evening, which would have interfered with women's domestic duties and family responsibilities.

At some point after 1930, probably in late 1932 or early 1933, the Santee Club impounded the section of the Cedar Island Marsh surrounding Cotton Ridge Pond with the aim of developing new freshwater habitat for nut grass. Although the name suggests that at one time, planters experimented with raising Sea Island cotton on Cotton Ridge, rice had never been grown on Cedar Island east of Fanny Meade Plantation. Therefore, unlike on Murphy's Island, where the club incorporated parts of remnant rice banks in the marsh impoundment

¹¹ Ibid., 1939 vol., April 24.

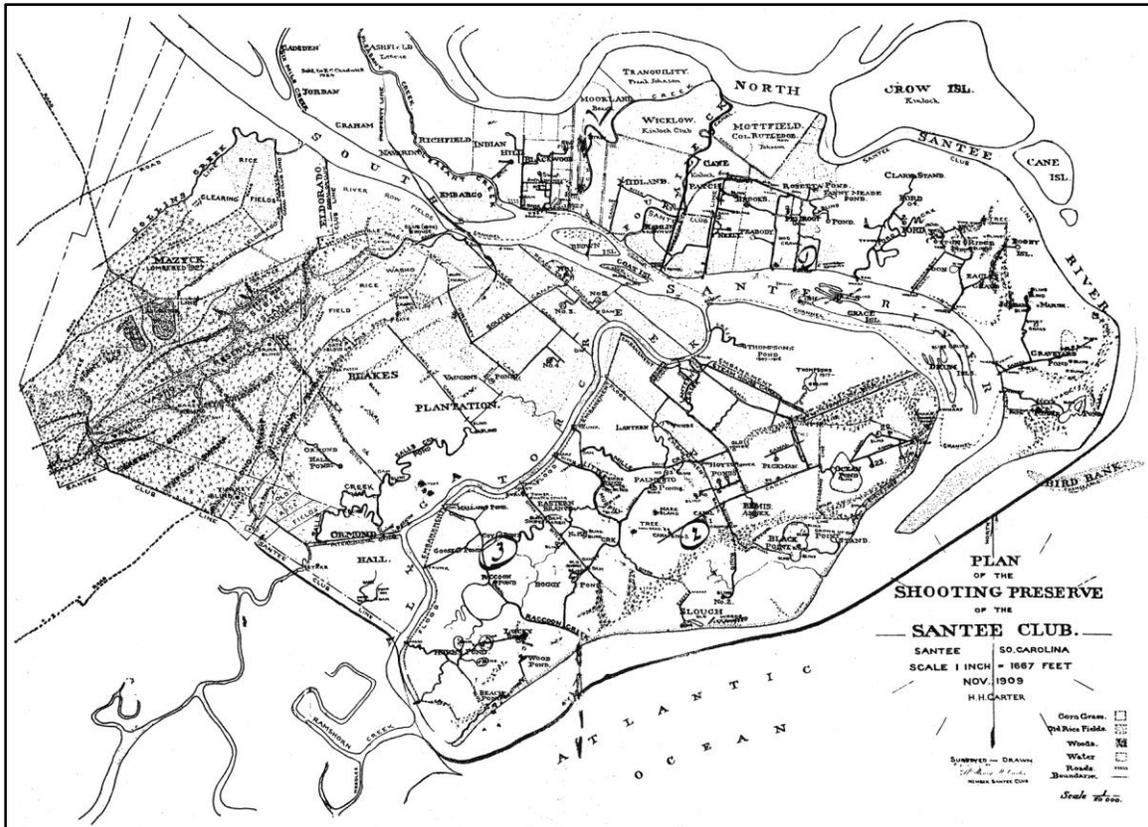


Figure 9.3. “Plan of the Shooting Preserve of the Santee Club,” 1909, with later additions. Several of the embankments constructed during the late 1920s and early 1930s are designated on this map. *Source:* Henry H. Carter, *Early History of the Santee Club* (1934?).

infrastructure, it constructed entirely new banks in the Cotton Ridge Marsh. Cotton Ridge and Little Murphy’s Island were the only two marshes impounded by the Santee Club that had not previously been put under bank, either in whole or in part, by rice planters.

After the work of banking Cotton Ridge Marsh was done, Beckman evidently sowed a few test plots in the pond with nut grass. During a check of Cedar Island on April 27, 1933, he “saw where rushes & wire grass is dieing

[sic] in Cotton Ridge Marsh. Nut grass beginning to appear.”¹² Within four days of finding the sprouts, Beckman had three of the guides “planting nut grass in Cotton Ridge Marsh, will plant all week.”¹³ Propagating nut grass in managed ponds that were not naturally suited to its growth was a proud achievement for the club. Years later Reath recalled that “it [nut grass] did well in such areas as the marshes behind the Cotton Ridge on Cedar Island, and the middle section of Murphy, which included marshes around Eastern Brach, Hoyts, and Palmetto Stands.”¹⁴

Between 1934 and 1940, the Corps of Engineers further widened and deepened the Intracoastal Waterway through the Santee Club preserve using funds allotted by the Public Works Administration. This resulted in the creation of an embankment on the western shore of Alligator Creek and precipitated the club’s reclamation of the Blake’s Plantation marshes at the Cape and Ormond Hall. Beckman’s 1936 journal, for example, contains several references to the reciprocal process of enlarging the waterway and impounding the marsh. “The U.S Engineers Dept. starting to dam 2 canals in Blake’s Marsh,” Beckman observed on March 3.¹⁵ He put his “men [to] building banks on Alligator Creek” in

¹² LABJ, 1936 vol., April 27.

¹³ Ibid., May 1.

¹⁴ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 37.

¹⁵ *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1934: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1934, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1934), pt. 1, pp. 410–412; *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1935: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1935, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1935), pt. 1, pp. 495–497; *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1936: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1936, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1936), pt. 1, pp. 479–481; *Annual Reports, War*

July, and the government dredge *Colonel G. P. Howell* returned to complete the job of revetting the rice canals in September and October.¹⁶ Reath commented that the spoil bank at Blake's grew with each dredging of the waterway until "it was over three miles long and much higher than our normal marsh protective banks."¹⁷ Meanwhile, Beckman's crew built dams, opened ditches, and installed trunks behind the embankment. The work proceeded at intervals on two fronts until "these marshes were brought under control for the first time in the Club's history," stated Reath. During the improvements to Blake's Marsh, the club's annual operating expenditure was around \$30,000 (495,000 in 2014 dollars).¹⁸

By 1940 the transformation of wetland use at the Santee Club was nearly complete. Three years earlier, a journalist writing about the club for the *Charleston News and Courier* had taken notice of how "the old rice fields are now to a large extent being planted with duck food plants."¹⁹ At the same time, northern sportsmen were adapting old rice fields to modern marsh management throughout coastal South Carolina. The Santee Club had a leading hand in these changes as both a technical advisor and a source of planting stock. Members of

Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1941: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1941, in Two Parts (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1941), pt. 1, vol.1, pp. 598–599; LABJ, 1936 vol., March 3 (quotation).

¹⁶ *Annual Reports, War Department, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1937: Report of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1937, in Two Parts* (Washington, [D.C.]: Government Printing Office, 1937), pt. 1, pp. 521–523; LABJ, 1936 vol., July 13 (quotation), September 29, October 3, October 5.

¹⁷ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 30–32 (quotation on p. 32).

¹⁸ LABJ, 1936 vol., September 29, October 3; *ibid.*, 1937 vol., May 6–7, August 11–13, August 16 and 23, September 15 and 17, October 4 and 26; *ibid.*, 1939 vol., August 1; J. M. L. Jr. [John M. Lofton Jr.], "Do You Know Your Lowcountry? Santee Gun Club," *News and Courier*, November 15, 1937.

¹⁹ J. M. L. Jr. [Lofton], "Do You Know Your Lowcountry? Santee Gun Club."

the club also spread the managed marsh ecosystem by acquiring their own private holdings and improving them along the same lines as Santee. The club's significant influence on the ecology of the region prior to World War II is well documented in the journals of its long-time superintendent, Ludwig Beckman.

One way that the Santee Club contributed to the proliferation of duck-marsh ecosystems in the low country was Beckman's personal instruction. As the Santee Club's reputation for progressive waterfowl management grew in the 1930s, Beckman received numerous requests for assistance in developing duck marshes from either his peers at other hunting preserves or the sportsmen who employed them. Beckman's guidance came in two forms: (1) he invited interested individuals to the Santee Club for guided tours of the marshes, and (2) he conducted on-site consultations at plantations in Georgetown, Charleston, Berkeley, Colleton, and Beaufort Counties.

Some preserve owners like Z. Marshall Crane of Hope Plantation on the Edisto River in Colleton County and Radcliffe Cheston Jr. of Friendfield Plantation on the Sampit River in Georgetown County felt it was important for their employees to see the Santee Club marshes firsthand.²⁰ Crane's manager, Marion W. Sams, and Cheston's manager, Patrick C. McClary Jr., actually traveled to Santee to meet with Beckman on the same day, March 10, 1933. Both men were around thirty years of age and just starting their careers as plantation managers. It appears from his journal that Beckman set aside the entire day for their instruction. He took them "to Blackwood, Jordan Marsh & the

²⁰ On Crane, see "Z. M. Crane Dead, Paper Firm Head," *Daily Boston Globe*, April 30, 1936. On Cheston, see "Radcliffe Cheston, A Zoo President, 79," *New York Times*, March 23, 1968.

Reserve to show them the blinds & widgeon grass & nut grass [*Ruppia maritima* and *Scirpus pungens* Vahl, respectively].”²¹ Santee members who bought plantations for their personal use such as Percy K. Hudson and E. Gerry Chadwick sent their superintendents to the club to learn from Beckman too.²²

More commonly, though, Beckman did the traveling. In 1933 alone, he visited nine plantations, making multiple trips to several of them. This included two separate consultations at Franklyn L. Hutton’s Prospect Hill Plantation on the Edisto River in Charleston County, four at Paul D. Mills’s Windsor Plantation on the Black River in Georgetown County, four at Cheston’s Friendfield Plantation, and seven at Hudson’s private holdings, Nieuport and Clay Hall Plantations on the Combahee River in Beaufort County.²³

Beckman’s consultations at Friendfield and Windsor in 1933 were typical. On March 28, he drove to Windsor for an appointment with Mill’s manager, Whitfield W. Hane. Beckman wrote that he “went in a boat with him and Mr. Paul Mills to look over their rice fields.”²⁴ The Santee Club superintendent apparently pointed out several spots in the fields with development potential because he returned on April 29 “to see a duck pond . . . Mr. Hane is ditching out.” Beckman

²¹ LABJ, 1933 vol., March 10. On Sams, see obituary, *Post and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), November 24, 1993. On McClary, see “P. C. McClary Jr., Was One of the Last S.C. Rice Planters,” *State* (Columbia, S.C.), January 26, 1990.

²² LABJ, 1933 vol., February 23; *ibid.*, 1939 vol., January 11; Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 10–11. On Hudson, see “Percy K. Hudson, Ex-Stockbroker,” *New York Times*, March 15, 1962. On Chadwick, see note 61 of chapter 7.

²³ LABJ, 1933 vol., February 2 and 20, March 8, 14, and 28, April 4, 11, 22, 25, and 29, May 10, 15, 16, 17, and 30, June 2, 17, and 26, July 11, 20, and 25. On Hutton, see “Franklyn Hutton, Retired Broker, 63,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1940. On Mills, see “Paul Denckla Mills, a Retired Broker, 77,” *ibid.*, July 12, 1954.

²⁴ LABJ, 1933 vol., March 28. On Hane, see obituary, *State*, December 1, 1987.

checked Hane's progress again on May 15. Two days later, he "carried 30 Bu[shels of] Widgeon Grass" to Mills's plantation and "showed Mr. W. W. Hane his supt. how to plant it in a new pond he ditched out." Hane ordered an additional eighty bushels of widgeon grass from the Santee Club on Monday, June 5, which the field hands gathered from the marsh and delivered by truck in two shipments, filling the order by Thursday, the 8th.²⁵

Looking next at Friendfield, Beckman drove to the plantation on April 22 in order "to show Pat McClary about duck marsh."²⁶ Beckman went back to Friendfield on May 10 with sixty bushels of Santee Club nut grass and "showed [the] men how to plant it." On the 15th, he shipped another truck load of nut grass as well as fifty bushels of widgeon grass from the Santee marshes to Friendfield. The next day, the club trucked fifty more bushels of widgeon grass to the Cheston plantation. Beckman followed in his car and "showed Pat McClary & men how to plant widgeon grass." Beckman called again at Friendfield to inspect the growth of the duck foods on July 20. He "started to paddle through the fields" and had "found a little Widgeon Grass in one field" when "a Heavy Rain came up & we had to leave." He jotted, "Found no Nut Grass growing. Got wet from rain."²⁷

It stands to reason that the Santee Club received compensation for Beckman's time. Still, the extant volumes of his journal contain only one

²⁵ LABJ, 1933 vol., April 29 (first quotation), May 15 and 17 (second and third quotations on the 17th), June 5, 7, and 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, April 22.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, May 10 (first quotation), 15–16 (second quotation on the 16th), July 20 (third, fourth, fifth, and sixth quotations).

reference to a payment for consulting services. On June 12, 1933, Beckman noted, "Received check from Radcliffe Cheston Jr. for \$30.00 for instructing Mr. Patrick C. McClary Jr. as to planting and growing duck food, building blinds ect [sic]."²⁸ The few financial records of the club that remain, including the treasurer's report for the 1932–1933 fiscal year, do not reflect income from Beckman's consultations either.²⁹

For those who belonged to the Santee Club, Beckman's help at their plantations undoubtedly was a complimentary benefit of membership. An example of Beckman consulting at the private estate of a club member involves Gerry Chadwick's plantation, the Wedge, located on the South Santee River in Georgetown and Charleston Counties, not far from the Santee Club. Beckman joined Chadwick's manager, William F. H. Glover, on February 20, 1933, and "went with him in his rice fields he expects to plant & also on the Island to look over his duck marsh. Saw lots of ducks and lots of duck food, especially Wampee & Smartweed [*Peltandra virginica* and *Polygonum hydropiperoides*, respectively]."³⁰

Exposure to new environments at other plantations challenged Beckman to become a better marsh manager. For instance, before heavy rain forced him out of the rice fields that day at Friendfield in July 1933, he encountered two

²⁸ LABJ, 1933 vol., June 12.

²⁹ The treasurer's report is in Miscellaneous Beckman Material folder, Santee Club Records, 1899–1933, Village Museum, McClellanville, S.C.

³⁰ LABJ, 1933 vol., February 20. On Glover, see "W. F. H. Glover, 87, Dies in Orangeburg," *News and Courier*, February 15, 1965.



Figure 9.4. Rice-field pond at Nieuport Plantation, 1935. Santee Club members like New York stockbroker Percy K. Hudson contributed to the expanding footprint of managed duck marshes on the South Carolina coast when they acquired individual landholdings. In the early 1930s, Hudson, a member of the Santee Club since 1908, bought two plantations of his own on the Combahee River, Nieuport and Clay Hall. Straightaway, he enlisted the help of Santee Club superintendent Ludwig A. Beckman in transforming Nieuport's rice fields into duck marshes. First, Hudson arranged for his white superintendent and top African American hand to tour the Santee marshes with Beckman. Second, he brought in truck loads of nut grass from the Santee Club for transplanting at Nieuport. Finally, he asked Beckman to make regular visits to Beaufort County and oversee the Nieuport marsh work. On July 25, 1933, Beckman wrote that he "went to Mr. Hudson's Place," he "went over the marsh," and "everything looks good." *Source:* Photograph Collection, Charleston Museum, Charleston, S.C.

plants he could not identify. Whenever this happened, he collected samples and sent them off to Waldo L. McAtee of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, the country's foremost authority on duck foods. In his journal, Beckman described the first sample from Friendfield as looking "like Spike Rush" (*Eleocharis spp.*), and the second was "similar to Widgeon Grass."³¹ Earlier that same year, Beckman had checked with McAtee following his consultation at Hope Plantation. On March 8, in the company of manager Marion Sams, Beckman "saw Ty Ty [*sic*] lands where Red Root Grass #1 grows, and old Rice Fields where grass like Widgeon Grass grows." For positive identifications, he "sent samples to Mr. W. L. McAtee."³² The only correspondence between Beckman and McAtee still in existence is a letter dated July 26, 1935. In it, Beckman acknowledged receiving "the information" from McAtee and offered his "sincere thanks for all of your favors."³³ As Beckman became more informed about diverse food plants and their habitat requirements, he could make better management recommendations.

Beckman's delivery of hundreds of bushels of planting stock to Windsor and Friendfield Plantations in 1933 brings up the second way that the Santee Club played a part in the spread of managed duck marshes. The club's propagation of widgeon grass and nut grass was so successful in the 1930s that it actually began operating a commercial aquatic nursery. By the end of the

³¹ LABJ, 1933 vol., July 20.

³² *Ibid.*, March 8.

³³ L. A. Beckman to W. L. McAtee, July 26, 1935, box 135, "Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930-1938" folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, General Correspondence, 1890-1956, Reservations, National Archives II, College Park, Md. Beckman relied on McAtee for help in identifying unknown plants from the Santee Club marshes as well. See, for example, LABJ, 1936 vol., October 5.

decade, duck foods raised in the Santee marshes had been transplanted to numerous hunting preserves up and down the length of the old rice coast.

Turning once more to Beckman's journal from 1933, the Santee Club filled over two dozen orders for widgeon grass and nut grass in May and June, the best months for transplanting. The hands collected the vegetation from ditches, creeks, and ponds in the marsh, packed it in baskets, and transported it to various plantations. The club sold and gave away literally tons of plants that year. On top of the shipments to Windsor and Friendfield already referenced, two truckloads of nut grass and 150 bushels of widgeon grass went to William R. Coe's Cherokee Plantation on the Combahee River in Colleton County. Among the other big orders were one hundred bushels of nut grass and ten bushels of widgeon grass to Prospect Hill, two truckloads of nut grass to Nieuport, and a boatload of widgeon grass to the Wedge.³⁴ The shipments to Nieuport and the Wedge were probably complimentary since those plantations belonged to Santee Club members. The same situation would have applied to the widgeon grass that head guide Alec Gaillard and his crew spent the better part of three days gathering for club member Horatio S. Shonnard, who owned Harrietta Plantation, located adjacent to the Wedge, a short distance upriver from the club.³⁵ In spite of the quantities used by its members at their individual plantations, the Santee Club's sales figures for duck foods were strong. Those from 1933 seem to be no

³⁴ LABJ, 1933 vol., May 4, 18, 29, and 30, June 8, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 23, and 27. On Coe, see "William R. Coe, 85, Sportsman, Dead," *New York Times*, March 16, 1955.

³⁵ LABJ, 1933 vol., May 8–9, June 26. On Shonnard, see "Horatio S. Shonnard, Once a Stockbroker," *New York Times*, October 12, 1946.

longer available, but in 1932, the receipts just for widgeon grass totaled \$765 (13,300 in 2014 dollars).³⁶ Thus, within a few years of Clyde B. Terrell's consultation at Santee, the club's sales had cut into the Wisconsin nurseryman's South Carolina business.

Following the lead of the Santee Club, northern sportsmen changed the ecological character of the coastal landscape in the 1920s and 1930s. At plantation after plantation, rice fields gave way to managed duck marshes. In many cases, the Santee Club supplied the expert guidance and planting stock that went into creating the new marshes. On one hand, the future of waterfowl habitat in the low country seemed assured, but on the other, a planned hydroelectric project involving the Santee and Cooper Rivers posed serious concerns. If the project went through, then some of the most productive wintering habitat on the East Coast, much of it newly developed, would be lost. Headed up by the Santee Club, northern duck hunters girded themselves for a political fight. In doing so, they assumed a new role in South Carolina—wetland conservationists.

³⁶ Treasurer's Report, Santee Club, March 31, 1933, Miscellaneous Beckman Material folder, Santee Club Records, Village Museum.

CHAPTER 10

CONSERVING HABITAT

Santee Club members like B. Brannan Reath II were sensitive to the fact that many South Carolinians still thought of them as “Damn Yankees.”¹ Consequently, ever since Hugh R. Garden died in 1910 and northerners assumed leadership of the club, they had tried to keep a low profile in the state and stay out of the news whenever possible. When local matters arose such as prosecuting a poacher or appealing a tax assessment, they let the club’s superintendent, Ludwig A. Beckman, handle them. In the 1930s, though, the Santee Club took a controversial public stance against the mammoth Santee-Cooper hydroelectricity and navigation project, which endangered both the managed and the natural habitat of the Santee River delta, one of North America’s vitally important wintering areas for migrating waterfowl. The club put together a coalition of like-minded sportsmen-conservationists and lodged protests at the state and federal levels. Ultimately, their energetic efforts on behalf of the wetlands were to no avail. Construction of the diversion dam complicated waterfowl management at the club, limiting options and adding significantly to the expense. Following completion of the Santee-Cooper Project,

¹ B. Brannan Reath II to Thomas P. Stoney, June 15, 1953, box 18, folder 100.01 (C) 02 (S) 01, Thomas P. Stoney Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston (hereafter cited as TPSP).

managed duck marshes were the only factor mitigating the destructive effect of the dam on the delta's wintering habitat. The Santee Club demonstrated its commitment to waterfowl conservation by redoubling its management efforts.

At the Santee Club, the specter of the Santee-Cooper Project gave a sense of urgency to impoundment of the marshes west of the Intracoastal Waterway in the mid-1930s. Schemes for damming the Santee River and redirecting part of its stream into the Cooper River had been a source of concern for the Santee Club since the late 1920s. In 1926 the Columbia Railway and Navigation Company obtained a license from the Federal Power Commission to undertake such a project in the interest of generating hydroelectric power and facilitating river commerce between Columbia and Charleston. Two years later, Columbia Railway and Navigation became a subsidiary of the International Paper Company. Private funding for the project was not forthcoming, however, especially after the Wall Street crash of 1929, forcing the company to ask the Power Commission for multiple extensions of the deadline to begin construction.² At this point, with the Great Depression intensifying, the project may have seemed like a pipedream to many in South Carolina, but for members of the Santee Club, the threat was real.

On March 25, 1930, the club's president, Philadelphia banker Clarence M. Clark, wrote a letter to Paul G. Redington, chief of the U.S. Bureau of Biological

² Marvin Leigh Cann, "Burnet Rhett Maybank and the New Deal in South Carolina, 1931–1941" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1967), 141–145; "New Plans for Santee Canal Power Plant of Impressive Magnitude," *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), December 22, 1928.

Survey, addressing the Santee-Cooper Project. “As a member of the Santee Club, on the lower waters of the Santee River in South Carolina, I appreciate the efforts which are being made by the Biological Survey for the preservation of wild fowl throughout the United States,” Clark started. Next, he acquainted Redington with the Columbia Railway and Navigation Company’s diversion plans. While company officials had stated in 1928 that “perhaps around 5,000 cubic feet per second” would pass over the dam, the federal license required them to maintain a flow of just five hundred cubic feet in the Lower Santee.³ This was two thousand cubic feet less than the lowest stage during the drought of 1925 and scarcely 2.5 percent of the Santee’s average flow. “You are undoubtedly familiar with the extensive marshes along the South Carolina coast which are feeding grounds for wild ducks,” Clark told Redington. He explained: “These marshes many years ago were rice fields, and are largely fresh, the heavy discharge of fresh water down the two Santee Rivers [its northern and southern branches], keeping the salt water back. If there is practically no discharge of the Santee River the tides, of course, will come many miles farther up these rivers, thereby making the marshes salt.” Clark informed Redington that “there are many sporting club preserves, and private residences and preserves along the lower Santee and the Cooper River, all of which will be seriously injured by this diversion of water from the Santee into the Cooper” for no other reason “except

³ Clarence M. Clark to Paul G. Redington, March 25, 1930, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, Record Group 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, General Correspondence, 1890–1956, Reservations, National Archives II (first quotation), College Park, Md. (hereafter cited as USFWS-R); “New Plans for Santee Canal Power Plant” (second quotation).

the selfish interests of the promoters.” He closed by asking for a reply “setting forth the views of the Survey.”⁴

Redington answered Clark eight days later, but his succinct response offered little encouragement to the Santee Club: “A license for the construction of the diversion dam was issued by the Federal Power Commission on April 2, 1926, and I do not see how the Biological Survey can now enter into the situation, it being largely a matter of concern to those, such as yourself, who have opposed this diversion of water.”⁵ Redington responded in a similar fashion to inquiries from the Kinloch Gun Club and the Rice Hope Gun Club, both of which owned large tracts in the Santee delta.⁶

Clark wrote to Redington for a second time on April 4, 1930. At the outset of the letter, he reinforced his earlier point about the ecological crisis facing the Santee delta by relating it to “what has happened to the duck feeding grounds of Currituck Sound on account of the invasion of salt water.”⁷ This was a reference to the Army Corps of Engineers’ enlargement of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal in the 1910s and removal of a lock from the waterway in 1922, which exposed the formerly sheltered, largely freshwater sound in North Carolina to tidal currents from Chesapeake Bay. Attracting upwards of one hundred

⁴ Clarence M. Clark to Paul G. Redington, March 25, 1930, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R.

⁵ Paul G. Redington to Clarence M. Clark, April 2, 1930, *ibid.*

⁶ See Paul G. Redington to Eugene du Pont, April 1, 1930, *ibid.*; Redington to G. C. Meyer, April 10, 1930, *ibid.*

⁷ Clarence M. Clark to Paul G. Redington, April 4, 1930, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R.

thousand birds annually, Currituck Sound had long been one of the most productive wintering habitats for migratory waterfowl on the southern Atlantic coast, but within a few years of the introduction of saltwater from the canal, its native duck foods were nearly gone.⁸ If the Santee-Cooper Project is built according to plan, then “it seems inevitable that exactly the same thing will happen along the entire extensive area on the coast of South Carolina, which is now maintained as fresh water marshes by the flow of the North and South Santee Rivers,” Clark observed. Afterward, he made a plea for Redington to reconsider his previously stated position. “I appreciate, of course, that it is not within the power of the Biological Survey to prevent this result. This project, however, has so little to justify it,” insisted Clark, “that it is possible that a proper presentation of the facts to the Federal Power Commission, and to the Army engineers may prevent the promoters from securing what they require in the way of permits and authorization.” He concluded, “When the time comes perhaps the Biological Survey can help in that direction.”⁹

Clark then enlisted the help of well-known outdoors writer Nash Buckingham of Memphis in contacting a number of other prominent groups

⁸ On the canal’s role in the decline of the natural food supply for wintering waterfowl at Currituck Sound and adjacent Back Bay, Virginia, in the 1920s, see “Wild Fowl Waters Destroyed by Government Orders,” *Forest and Stream*, February 1928, 98; “Ruin of Currituck Sound,” *American Game*, December 1929–January 1930, 6; Warren S. Bourn, “The Destruction of Aquatic Duck Food Plants in Back Bay and Currituck Sound,” in *Transactions of the Sixteenth American Game Conference, Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, December 2 and 3, 1929* ([Washington, D.C]: American Game Association, [1930?]), 46–54; “The Polluted Waters of Currituck and Back Bay,” *New York Herald Tribune* article reprinted in *Outdoor Life*, April 1930, 37; “Restored Canal Lock Called a Monument to Conservation,” July 13, 1932, available online in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Historic News Releases database, <http://www.fws.gov/news/Historic/NewsReleases/1932/19320713.pdf> (accessed November 24, 2014).

⁹ Clarence M. Clark to Paul G. Redington, April 4, 1930, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R.

concerned with waterfowl conservation such as the American Wild Fowlers, the More Game Birds in America Foundation, the American Game Protective Association, the National Association of Audubon Societies, the National Committee on Wild Life Legislation, and the U.S. Senate's Special Committee on Conservation of Wild-Life Resources, asking for their cooperation to avert a repeat of "Currituck's catastrophe" in South Carolina.¹⁰ "The more this project is investigated," Clark said in a March 25, 1931, missive to Buckingham, "the greater will be the appreciation of the complete disaster which it will cause to the duck feeding grounds on the lower reaches of the Santee and Cooper Rivers."¹¹

In a third letter to the Biological Survey, dated April 1, 1931, Clark once again invited Redington's help. He reminded him that "all of us who are interested in preserving feeding ground for wild fowl are much exercised over this proposed diversion of practically the entire flow of the Santee River into the Cooper River." Clark said that they awaited an opportunity for taking "our side of the case" to the Federal Power Commission. He ended, "At that time we shall need all the assistance we can get, . . . and we are hoping the Biological Survey will add its influence in our favor."¹²

¹⁰ C. M. Clark to Nash Buckingham, March 25, 1931, box 135, "Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930-1938" folder, USFWS-R; Buckingham to Clark, n.d. [1931?], *ibid.*; [Buckingham] to T. Gilbert Pearson, March 29, 1931, *ibid.* (quotation); [Buckingham] to F. C. Walcott, March 29, 1931, *ibid.*; Clark to Paul G. Redington, April 1, 1931, *ibid.* On Buckingham, see note 43 of chapter 1.

¹¹ C. M. Clark to Nash Buckingham, March 25, 1931, box 135, "Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930-1938" folder, USFWS-R.

¹² Clarence M. Clark to Paul G. Redington, April 1, 1931, *ibid.*

From the Santee Club's perspective, the situation became more serious in 1932. With another construction deadline looming and still no progress to report, the Columbia Railway and Navigation Company was in jeopardy of having its license revoked, so the company took two bold steps to move ahead with the Santee-Cooper Project: first, it applied for a loan of \$34 million (589 million in 2014 dollars) from the newly created Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a federal recovery agency that lent money to banks and other private businesses; and second, it requested an amended license from the Federal Power Commission. The proposal for the amended license substantially expanded the scope of the project, not only increasing the estimated expenditure and raising the total power-production capacity but also enlarging the storage reservoirs and diverting ten thousand more cubic feet per second of water from the Santee to the Cooper.¹³ When Columbia Railway and Navigation's license came up for review at a September hearing before the Power Commission in Washington, D.C., Clark would finally have his say.

Despite the time and energy invested, Clark's letter-writing campaign leading up to the hearing proved ineffectual. Redington did not waver in his refusal to take a stand. Others in the budding waterfowl-conservation community were supportive, but eventually, they learned that a ruling by the U.S. attorney general prohibited the Federal Power Commission from weighing wildlife protection or any other environmental issue not directly related to power development in their licensing process. Seth Gordon, the president of the

¹³ Cann, "Burnet Rhett Maybank," 145; K. F. M., "Santee Canal Hearing Opens; Expanded License Proposed," *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), September 29, 1932.

Washington-based American Game Protective Association, attended the hearing, and as a courtesy, the Power Commission allowed him to testify concerning “wild life values, both from a national and local standpoint.” Gordon’s testimony so impressed the commission that they ordered it entered into the trial record, but his remarks did not factor into their ruling.¹⁴ If Clark and his fellow sportsmen wanted to block Columbia Railway and Navigation’s bid for an amended license, then they would have to sway the Power Commission with their own arguments.

The Charleston *News and Courier* reported that “representatives of the property-holding interests, chiefly hunting clubs and game preserves in the area which would be submerged by the proposed waterpower development, appeared in force” at the hearing on September 28 “to protest the granting of the amended license.” Among those who spoke against the application were former U.S. senator Joseph S. Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, an avid duck hunter who owned Rice Hope Plantation on the Cooper River, and T. Cordes Lucas, manager of Kinloch Plantation on the North Santee. But the “star witness for the opposition” was Santee Club president Clarence Clark, “who attacked the project bitterly and said it would not create one-tenth of the productice [*sic*] activity that it would destroy.” As stated in the newspaper account, “Clarke [*sic*] showed considerable familiarity with power matters and insisted that the proposed development would be superfluous.”¹⁵

¹⁴ “Dynamos Threat to Hunting U.S. Hearing Shows,” *American Game*, September–October 1932, 82.

¹⁵ K. F. M., “Santee Canal Hearing Opens.”

An article about the hearing that appeared in *American Game*, the bulletin of the American Game Protective Association, brings Clark's testimony into sharper focus. He pointed out that private power companies already supply the viable markets in the Carolinas and Georgia with electricity "at cheap prices," and they have "a large surplus of power available." While Columbia Railway and Navigation claimed their project would attract new industrial customers, Clark contended that the cost of production, including land acquisition, construction materials, labor, and transmission, would make the price of hydroelectricity generated at the Santee-Cooper plant "so high that it could not be sold." He also touted steam power, which could be produced from coal, oil, or natural gas "at almost any point in this country," as the wave of the future and presented evidence that even now, it was far more economical than water power. Clark said that fifty years hence, when regional demand for electricity finally exceeded the present production capacity, then large steam plants located in proximity to the markets would be the way to go.¹⁶ "He stuck to his guns under cross-examination from the power company's attorney, and even when some of his views were questioned by Chairman [George O.] Smith, of the federal power commission," remarked the *News and Courier*.¹⁷

Frelinghuysen took a different tack in his testimony before the commission. While on the stand, he emphasized the personal losses that Cooper

¹⁶ "Dynamos Threat to Hunting U.S. Hearing Shows," 82. Clark reiterated some of the points he made at the Federal Power Commission hearing in "Santee-Cooper River Diversion Hydro-Electric Project, South Carolina—Statement," February 1, 1934, box 135, "Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938" folder, USFWS-R (quotations).

¹⁷ K. F. M., "Santee Canal Hearing Opens."

River plantation owners like himself, “who had developed hunting lodges at great expense,” stood to sustain from the hydroelectric project, both in terms of property damage and diminished opportunities for duck shooting. He stated that in the last decade, he had bought more than forty-five hundred acres adjacent to the Cooper and spent over \$300,000 on improvements (5.2 million in 2014 dollars), neither of which he would have done “had it not been for the duck shooting.” He feared that during the construction phase, “salt water would be admitted into that section . . . and that this would kill the food upon which ducks live.” Even worse, he doubted that once the diversion dam on the Santee was finished, “the proposed flow of water could be kept within the banks of the Cooper River,” thereby swamping all of the rice fields and managed duck marshes.¹⁸

The hearing also revealed that the Santee-Cooper Project had recently picked up some important political allies. None was more enthusiastic than the young, ambitious mayor of Charleston, Burnet R. Maybank. Within a few months of assuming office in December 1931, Maybank had taken a keen interest in Columbia Railway and Navigation’s plans. “Realization of this project would revolutionize lower South Carolina economically,” he predicted.¹⁹ As he envisioned it, “Unlimited cheap power would be available for industries, farms, and domestic purposes. Many acres of swamp land would be converted into fertile soil, and water navigation between Columbia and Charleston and points in

¹⁸ “Objection to Cooper Power Project Made,” *Charleston Evening Post*, September 29, 1932.

¹⁹ “Santee-Cooper Project Up To Federal Government,” *ibid.*, April 21, 1933.

between would be possible.”²⁰ Maybank and another champion of the project, South Carolina state senator Richard M. Jefferies of Colleton County, began discussing its transformative potential as well as the possibility of federal funding with a host of state and national leaders in the spring and summer of 1932. Maybank and Jefferies even obtained an audience with presidential nominee Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in June. Although Roosevelt avoided an endorsement of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation loan, as an advocate of stabilizing the economy through federal spending on infrastructure, he was receptive to their proposal. He found the prospect of putting thousands of unemployed South Carolinians to work on the project especially appealing.²¹ Roosevelt’s election would bode well for the Santee-Cooper Project. In the meantime, though, all of Maybank’s hopes for an industrial revolution in the low country hinged on approval of Columbia Railway and Navigation’s amended license at the Power Commission hearing.

Maybank followed news of the hearing closely from Charleston. On September 29, both of the city’s daily newspapers, the *News and Courier* and the *Charleston Evening Post*, carried front-page stories about the proceedings in Washington.²² Somewhat inexplicably, Maybank let Clark’s pointed criticism of the project, which was summarized briefly that morning in the *News and Courier*,

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Cann, “Burnet Rhett Maybank,” 147; Walter B. Edgar, *History of Santee Cooper, 1934–1984* (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Company, 1984), 5; “Santee-Cooper Project Up To Federal Government”; “Water Power Development in S.C. Urged,” *Charleston Evening Post*, April 18, 1933.

²² See K. F. M., “Santee Canal Hearing Opens”; “Objection to Cooper Power Project Made.”

pass without answer, while zeroing in on Frelinghuysen's objections, which were described in greater detail in the *Charleston Evening Post*. Perhaps Frelinghuysen made a more inviting target because of his higher public profile, or perhaps his protests seemed more self-serving and thus easier to dismantle. Whatever the case, Maybank telegraphed a stinging rebuttal of Frelinghuysen's testimony to Power Commission chairman George Smith. His telegram was published in the next edition of the *Evening Post*:

As mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, representing sixty-two thousand citizens and expressing the sentiment of many additional thousands of South Carolinians . . . who see in the Santee-Cooper power project the industrial salvation of this section through assurance of cheap power, I emphatically protest the action of former Senator Frelinghuysen in attempting to block the request of the Columbia Railway and Navigation company [*sic*] to amend its license, on the grounds that [the] extension asked would injure wild duck preserves of northern plantation owners near Charleston. With due respect to northern investors in plantations, thirty-four million dollars spent in bringing cheap abundant power to South Carolina means more to us than many times that amount spent in private duck preserves and the people of this section . . . will not submit to any reactionary move of this kind jeopardizing our interests for the convenience of a few.²³

Maybank called Frelinghuysen's stance "unreasonable" and even threatened to show up at the hearing with a delegation of South Carolinians "to defend our claims before your body."²⁴

Maybank elaborated on his telegram to the Power Commission in comments to the *Evening Post*. "It is absurd on the face of the argument," he said, "to assume that an intelligent federal commission would, for an instant,

²³ "Terms Stand Unreasonable," *Charleston Evening Post*, September 30, 1932.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

consider so ridiculous a claim for wild duck protection as paramount to the industrial development of a state of 1,367,635 inhabitants.” Further singling out Frelinghuysen for reprobation, he alleged that “apparently the former solon would have the state of South Carolina revert to a feudal overlord system, where game, and not the inhabitants, is the factor to be considered.” Maybank’s inflammatory tone, democratic rhetoric, and charges of elitism were clearly meant to discredit sportsmen’s concerns about conserving waterfowl habitat in the court of public opinion. “South Carolina, with its wealth of natural resources, stands on the threshold of a new and prosperous era once we can obtain abundant cheap power,” he proclaimed, “and the effort of Senator Frelinghuysen to hold up the development program of an entire state to assure good hunting for his friends and associates is so reactionary in principle, and so utterly opposed to the interests of this state that widespread and immediate protest should be forthcoming.”²⁵

The Charleston mayor generally viewed northern ownership of southern hunting plantations in a positive light. For example, he went out of his way a few months later to correct an erroneous report that had painted an unflattering picture of New York stockbroker Edward F. Hutton, who owned a ducking preserve on the Combahee River.²⁶ In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, Maybank wrote, “Mr. Hutton and many others among the plantation

²⁵ Ibid. The *News and Courier* published a sarcastic editorial at Frelinghuysen’s expense on October 2, 1932.

²⁶ See “Criticize E. F. Hutton,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1932; Burnet R. Maybank, letter to editor, *ibid.*, February 2, 1933.

owners between Georgetown and Beaufort have made an excellent contribution to the cause of wild-fowl conservation in South Carolina.” Without their “patient and costly baiting,” he noted, “the presence of wild fowl along these shores would have been a phase of the past.”²⁷ Moreover, he made plain that

the South Carolina coastal country centring about Charleston welcomes these public-spirited men such as have invested heavily in our plantations and game preserves, not only because they have spent tremendous sums in restoring to us a natural resource which otherwise would have been lost, but because of their kindly interest in the state of their adoption they have proved to be valued citizens and have rendered an invaluable service in bringing to the attention of their friends the exceptional facilities of Charleston and vicinity as a sporting country.²⁸

On the Santee-Cooper issue, though, Maybank was uncompromising. In his view, sportsmen who owned ducking grounds on the Lower Santee and the Cooper were obligated to sacrifice their investment in waterfowl management for the greater good.

Over the objections of Clark, Frelinghuysen, and others expressed at the hearing, the Federal Power Commission granted the Columbia Railway and Navigation Company’s request for an expanded license in April 1933. Maybank’s communication to Smith doubtless carried much less weight in the decision than the company’s pending application for a loan from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. However, the Emergency Relief Act of July 1932 had extended the scope of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to include state and local public works, and there was a sense among the Santee-Cooper Project’s political base

²⁷ Maybank, letter to editor, February 2, 1933.

²⁸ Ibid.

that loans for public enterprises would receive more favorable consideration under the new Roosevelt administration. This led Senator Jefferies to introduce a bill on April 19, 1933, for establishing the South Carolina Public Service Authority, a semi-independent state agency with the power to acquire the development rights and property of the Columbia Railway and Navigation Company and pursue federal financing for its massive hydroelectric and navigation plans. After the senate approved the bill, the Santee Club sent Ludwig Beckman to speak in opposition to it at a House Judiciary Committee hearing on May 3. The committee passed the bill, but it was soundly defeated by the full House of Representatives, which remained unsold on the sudden idea of a state-owned utility.²⁹

Two significant events took place in the interim between the end of the first regular session of the Eightieth General Assembly, which adjourned in May 1933, and January 1934, when the second regular session opened. First, the National Industrial Recovery Act set up the Public Works Administration in June, and second, Columbia Railway and Navigation applied for an appropriation of \$34 million from the Public Works Administration in mid-November, with \$10 million designated as a grant for improving navigation and the rest in the form of a low-interest loan. Two and a half months later, the General Assembly sent a sixty-five member delegation appointed by Governor Ibra C. Blackwood to Washington to lobby for the money. Public Works Administration officials informed the South Carolinians that there was little chance of a loan for a private

²⁹ Cann, "Burnet Rhett Maybank," 146–148; Ludwig A. Beckman Journals, 1933 vol., May 3, private collection.

corporation and urged them to resubmit the Santee-Cooper application as a state project. Back in Columbia, Santee-Cooper adherents in the legislature redoubled their efforts to build bicameral support for the South Carolina Public Service Authority. In a show of statewide solidarity, Jefferies and James S. Glymph of Oconee, South Carolina's westernmost county, filed bills in the upper and lower houses, respectively, that were similar to the one rejected during the previous session. Beckman's 1934 journal is lost, but he probably went to Columbia again to lodge a protest on the behalf of the Santee Club against this latest legislation. The opponents of the Public Service Authority could not muster the necessary votes this time, and on April 7, Blackwood signed the enabling act. On May 19, Blackwood appointed Maybank as the first chairman of the authority's board of directors.³⁰

As political forces rallied around the Santee-Cooper Project, the Santee Club was running out of alternatives, but the South Carolina Public Service Authority's application for Public Works Administration funding still needed final approval. In 1932, when Columba Railway and Navigation made its first bid for a federal loan, the Santee Club had joined with other concerned property owners such as Thomas A. Yawkey of South Island in forming a subscription association to oppose the Santee-Cooper Project. Clark served as treasurer and secretary of the association's executive committee. On February 1 and April 13, 1934, he sent form letters to the subscribers apprising them of the latest developments. "It has seemed to the Committee," he wrote, "that steps should be taken to present

³⁰ Cann, "Burnet Rhett Maybank," 148–156; Edgar, *History of Santee Cooper*, 5.

the adverse facts in regard to this project to the Public Works Administration in Washington, and to oppose its favorable consideration.” Therefore, “it is important that every property owner and taxpayer in the affected region whose property will be destroyed or damaged, should file a protest against this project.”³¹ The Santee Club’s protest, which Clark almost certainly authored, questioned the statements and figures of the engineers who drew up the plans for Columbia Railway and Navigation, disputed the demand for a navigable waterway between Columbia and Charleston as well as the need for flood control, cast doubt on the claims that the project would bring about rapid industrialization, pointed out the consequences of diversion on the ecology of the Santee delta, called attention to sportsmen’s sizeable investment in managing waterfowl habitat along the Santee and the Cooper, and anticipated a major silting problem in Charleston Harbor. It also restated Clark’s contentions from the 1932 Federal Power Commission hearing regarding the financial unsoundness of the project and its inefficiency as a regional producer of electricity.³² “There are many reasons,” he asserted in correspondence to the subscribers, “why the Federal Government should not advance this money, and why this project should not be constructed. It is not possible to present all of them adequately in these

³¹ Clarence M. Clark to “Subscribers in 1932 and 1933 toward Expense of Opposing the Construction of Santee-Cooper River Hydro Project” (Paul G. Redington), February 1, 1934, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R (quotations); Clark to “Subscribers in 1932 and 1933 toward Expense of Opposing the Construction of Santee-Cooper River Hydro Project” (Redington), April 13, 1934, *ibid.* See also Clark to Redington, June 23, 1934, *ibid.*

³² “Santee-Cooper River Diversion Hydro-Electric Project, South Carolina—Statement,” February 1, 1934, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R.

individual protests.” Consequently, Clark encouraged all of the parties who filed protests with the Public Works Administration to request a public hearing.³³

While waiting impatiently for a hearing, Clark reached out yet again to the Biological Survey. Paul Redington’s successor as chief, Jay N. “Ding” Darling, who took over in March 1934, was an outspoken critic of the Santee-Cooper Project. In an April 26 letter to the Public Works Administration, Darling put the Biological Survey on record as opposed to the project: “This Bureau is interested in the welfare of wild life in general and has a direct responsibility for maintenance of migratory species, including the important group of wild fowl which will be principally affected by this development. We fear that conditions for these birds will be made worse by the action that is proposed in connection with the project ” In Darling’s opinion, “it would seem better to allow conditions to remain as they are.”³⁴ In December, with the Public Works Administration review dragging on and project backers becoming frustrated, the junior U.S. senator from South Carolina, James F. Byrnes, got word of Darling’s oppositional stand. Byrnes, a close friend of both Burnet Maybank and President Roosevelt, had taken on the role of point man for the project in Washington. He accused Darling of being the puppet of “a few wealthy sportsmen, who . . . fear that as a result of this great development there will be fewer ducks for them to kill.”³⁵ Unfazed,

³³ Clarence M. Clark to “Subscribers in 1932 and 1933 toward Expense of Opposing the Construction of Santee-Cooper River Hydro Project” (Paul G. Redington), February 1, 1934, *ibid.*

³⁴ J. N. Darling to Public Works Administration, April 26, 1934, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R. See also David L. Lendt, *Ding: The Life of Jay Norwood Darling* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979), 83–84.

³⁵ James F. Byrnes to Harold L. Ickes, December 14, 1934, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R.

Darling wrote to Roosevelt in April 1935, advising him that “from a migratory waterfowl point of view this is about as bad as any project could be.”³⁶ This was not Darling’s only overture to the president. “I have protested time and again to the President and to Secretary [of the Interior Harold L.] Ickes but little result is apparent,” he said in a letter to Thomas Yawkey, acknowledging that “public sentiment down there [in South Carolina] is strong for the project and the Senators, Congressmen and the Governor are using all possible pressure to put it across.”³⁷

The political pressure paid off in July 1935, when Roosevelt sent Byrnes a letter informing him that the Public Works Administration allocation had been approved. The only condition was the South Carolina Supreme Court had to uphold the constitutionality of the enabling legislation that created the Public Service Authority, which it did in September.³⁸ Within days of the president’s communication to Byrnes becoming public, Seth Gordon of the American Game Protective Association contacted Clark and asked how he could help carry on the fight against the Santee-Cooper Project. Clark conceded that their options were almost exhausted. He believed that personal appeals to Roosevelt were pointless, as were additional requests to the Public Works Administration for a

³⁶ J. N. Darling to the President of the United States, April 20, 1935, *ibid.*

³⁷ J. N. Darling to Thomas A. Yawkey, September 17, 1935, *ibid.* Darling continued to speak out against the Santee-Cooper Project after resigning as chief of the Biological Survey in November 1935. See J. N. Darling, “Shadows along the Santee,” *Field and Stream*, May 1939, 25. Ickes also held the title of federal emergency administrator of public works and, in that capacity, headed the Public Works Administration.

³⁸ Cann, “Burnet Rhett Maybank,” 159–160.

public hearing on the project.³⁹ Yawkey was of the same mind. “I have done everything that I can do—have even communicated with the President on two different occasions—and am one of the group of property owners along the lower reaches of the Santee who have definitely opposed the project from its inception,” he stated in a mid-September missive to Darling.⁴⁰ “We are inclined to think that nothing but court action will stop it,” Clark told Gordon. “I represent a considerable number of property owners and game preserves on the Santee and Cooper Rivers,” wrote Clark, “and I have retained local counsel in Charleston to protect our interests in this litigation.”⁴¹ In October, when engineers studying the feasibility of the project for the Public Works Administration held a hearing in Columbia, Charleston attorney Arthur R. Young, son of one of the charter members of the Santee Club, Henry E. Young, spoke for the sportsmen’s interests.⁴²

Court action would tie up the Santee-Cooper Project for the next two and a half years, but it was not initiated by the property owners. In December 1935, three private utilities—Carolina Power and Light Company, South Carolina Power Company, and Broad River Power Company—challenged the validity of the South Carolina Public Service Authority in federal district court on the grounds that this publicly financed venture would represent unfair competition to the

³⁹ Clarence M. Clark to Seth Gordon, July 31, 1935, box 135, “Santee-Cooper, Gp-Z, S.C., 1930–1938” folder, USFWS-R.

⁴⁰ Thomas A. Yawkey to J. N. Darling, September 16, 1935, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Clarence M. Clark to Seth Gordon, July 31, 1935, *ibid.*

⁴² “Engineers Visit Santee-Cooper for Inspection,” *State* (Columbia, S.C.), October 11, 1935; “Power Interests Open Three-Point Fight on Santee,” *News and Courier*, October 11, 1935.

existing power companies. The initial judgment, handed down in September 1937, favored the Public Service Authority, but the power companies appealed the case all the way the U.S. Supreme Court. The justices refused to hear their argument in May 1938. Two months later, the Public Service Authority contracted for a Chicago engineering firm to oversee construction of the Santee-Cooper Project, and in October, the authority hired its first general manager, former Lee County state senator Robert M. Cooper. The authority signed the agreements for federal aid in January 1939, and in April, it reached a settlement with the Columbia Railway and Navigation Company. Five days after the settlement was finalized, land clearing got underway at the dam and powerhouse sites.⁴³

The Public Service Authority closed the dam at Wilson's Landing for the first time in late 1941 and started releasing the minimum flow allowed under its federal power license, five hundred cubic feet per second, into the Lower Santee River the next year. As expected, with the river decreased to a relative trickle, saltwater flooded the Santee delta for several miles inland. In correspondence with Ira N. Gabrielson, who succeeded Jay Darling as chief of the Biological Survey, Santee Club secretary-treasurer Brannan Reath stated on February 18, 1942, that "our supply of fresh water for the growing of duckfoods [*sic*] . . . has been so reduced as to be negligible," and the club's managed marshes "will be damaged unless some way can be found to replace the supply of fresh water."⁴⁴ Reath was not overly pessimistic, however. He mentioned to Gabrielson that

⁴³ Cann, "Burnet Rhett Maybank," 163–171; Edgar, *History of Santee Cooper*, 7.

⁴⁴ B. Brannan Reath II to Ira N. Gabrielson, February 18, 1942, box 136, "Santee Cooper, 1939–1944" folder, USFWS-R.

“there is a possible solution if [the] South Carolina Public Service Authority can work out some periodic opening of the gates in the diversion dam thus permitting the flow of fresh water down the Santee.”⁴⁵

The Santee Club had put its plan to enter suit against the Public Service Authority on hold when Cooper became general manager. Cooper was a personal friend of some of the members and actually had shot at the club as a guest, so he was sympathetic to their plight. “We of Santee knew that it was possible to grow duck foods in our marshes if we were sure of getting two good floodings of substantially fresh water during the growing season,” Reath later remarked.⁴⁶ As the club’s local representative, Ludwig Beckman approached Cooper with the suggestion for periodically opening the dam gates, and Cooper took it to the authority’s board of directors. The board rejected the proposal, and for a short while, Reath said, “it looked as though we were licked and would have only rain to help us.” But Cooper demonstrated his friendship to the sportsmen by creatively working around the board, as related by Reath with tongue in cheek:

Cooper, as general manager, was charged with controlling mosquitoes. The best way to reduce the mosquito hatch was to dry the shallow edges of Lakes Marion and Moultrie [the names given to the two reservoirs created by the Santee-Cooper Project]. Superintendent Beckman could tell him when fresh water would be of the most advantage to the Club. That Cooper should happen to want to drop the water level in the lakes at that time, of course to control mosquitoes, was a mere coincidence, but a fortunate one for the Club.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ B. Brannan Reath II, *Santee Club—A Legend* (Philadelphia: Printed by the Winchell Company, 1971), 65.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

This “friendly” arrangement lasted until Cooper retired in December 1943. Reath lamented that his replacement, general counsel for the Public Service Authority and early Santee-Cooper proponent Richard Jefferies, was “*no shooterman*.”⁴⁸

With Jefferies unwilling to accommodate them, the Santee Club felt the full effect of the diversion in the mid-1940s. Most of the club’s marsh banks were too small and leaky to keep back the tides completely. This had not been an issue when the full flow of the river filled the delta with freshwater, but since completion of the Santee-Cooper Project, saltwater had been seeping into the impounded marshes with every successive high tide. One unforeseen ecological problem associated with diversion was that the higher salt content in the water attracted a variety of previously uncommon marine animals to the mouth of the river, including large numbers of fiddler crabs. The crabs burrowed into the marsh banks, weakening and perforating them. It did not take long for the damage to begin mounting. Still, the club was hesitant to sue the South Carolina Public Service Authority for compensation. “Because so many of the Santee Club members have been individuals of more or less prominence in their northern affiliations, otherwise designated by South Carolinians as ‘Damn Yankees,’ ” Reath disclosed to attorney Thomas P. Stoney of Charleston, “our management . . . [did not want] to appear as active participants in the Courts of South Carolina until all other avenues of relief were exhausted.”⁴⁹ For that reason, the club

⁴⁸ Ibid. (emphasis in original).

⁴⁹ B. Brannan Reath II to Thomas P. Stoney, June 15, 1953, box 18, folder 100.01 (C) 02 (S) 01, TPSP.

approached the Public Service Authority about negotiating a settlement, which turned out to be a protracted, frustrating ordeal.

In a meeting with Jefferies, the Santee Club's president, Boston financier Carl P. Dennett, fixed the settlement figure at \$35,000 (460,000 in 2014 dollars). Reath thought this amount was much too low, but it was "induced by the desire of our president to, as he said, 'get rid of the damned thing.'"⁵⁰ While Jefferies and his board accepted the settlement offer, the Federal Works Agency, which had assumed the South Carolina Public Service Authority's debt after Congress passed the Reorganization Act of 1939, refused approval. As a result, Reath observed, "we did not get our money."⁵¹

In order to protect its managed duck marshes, the Santee Club embarked on a comprehensive program of bank building in the 1940s, footing the bill for the improvements itself. "Since the damming of the river," reported the *News and Courier* in 1946, "the only two owners to maintain their dikes and thereby insure [sic] fresh water in their ponds have been the Santee Gun club [sic], one of the largest clubs on the river, and Tom Yawkey, who owns North and South islands [sic] at the mouth of the delta. These two places have ducks this year, while the other preserves, which have become brackish, are practically devoid of the fowls."⁵² Reath stated that "work on the marsh protective banks has been pushed

⁵⁰ Ibid. On Dennett, see "Carl P. Dennett, 81, Boston Financier, Civic Figure, Dies," *Daily Boston Globe*, November 18, 1955.

⁵¹ B. Brannan Reath II to Thomas P. Stoney, June 15, 1953, box 18, folder 100.01 (C) 02 (S) 01, TPSP.

⁵² "Survey Indicates 25,000 Ducks in Area, Salting of Santee Delta Keeps Many Out," *News and Courier*, December 15, 1946.

just as fast as money was available.” When Beckman retired as superintendent in 1945, he was succeeded by his assistant, Richard O. Mercer. During Mercer’s tenure, Reath recounted, the club made “the essential change-over from hand labor to machinery, and that was a very fortunate thing as hand labor was steadily harder to find.” One of the members donated a dragline crane to the club, which Mercer put to use enlarging and extending the banks. “This dragline and its successors and the extra draglines which we’ve been flush enough to hire from time to time have enabled the club to maintain its marshes and to grow food therein to attract ducks,” noted Reath. In 1953 Reath estimated that a settlement of approximately \$65,000 (575,000 in 2014 dollars) would be necessary to compensate the club for its damage and the expense of bolstering old banks and building new ones. Around 1960, the club received a settlement of \$35,000 from the Public Service Authority (280,000 in 2014 dollars), the sum it had originally requested.⁵³

Although the Santee Club had taken on planting and embanking projects for waterfowl far ahead of the Biological Survey, one area where the sportsmen lagged behind the refuge managers was applying technology to marsh management. Given the monumental undertaking the club faced in upgrading its entire impoundment infrastructure, mechanization was a necessity. The banks constructed after World War II dwarfed those of the pre-diversion era. They often

⁵³ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 24–26 (second quotation), 30 (first and third quotations), 66–67; B. Brannan Reath II to Thomas P. Stoney, June 15, 1953, box 18, folder 100.01 (C) 02 (S) 01, TPSP.

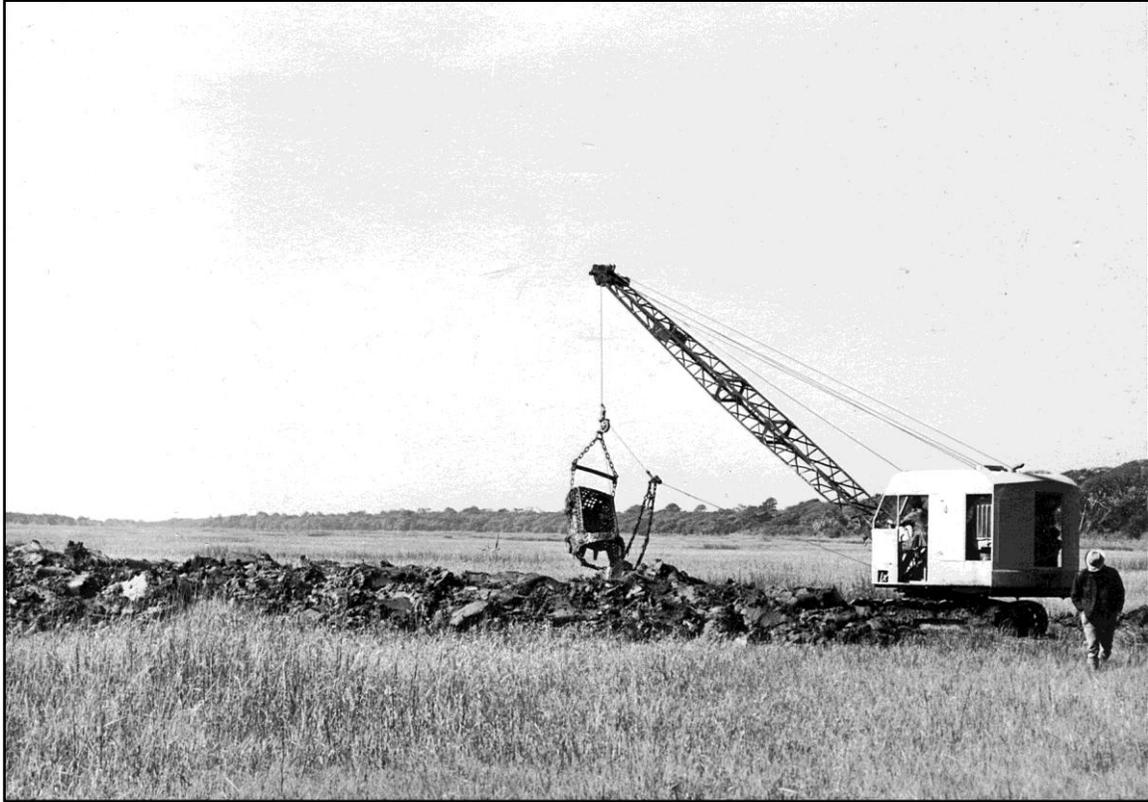


Figure 10.1. Hired dragline from McClellanville building a new bank in the marsh on Murphy's Island north of Black Point, Santee Club, February 1950. *Source:* private collection.

were seven feet tall, twelve feet wide at the top, and twenty-five to thirty feet wide across the base. The network of banks crisscrossing the Santee marshes continued to expand until it measured more than one hundred miles in length by the early 1970s. Approximately fifty miles of banks were in place on Yawkey's South Island preserve.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ R. Kenneth Williams, "Construction, Maintenance and Water Control Structures of Tidal Impoundments in South Carolina," in *Proceedings of a Symposium on Waterfowl and Wetlands Management in the Coastal Zone of the Atlantic Flyway: Wilmington, Delaware, September 16–19, 1986*, ed. William R. Whitman and William H. Meredith (Dover: Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Delaware Coastal Management Program, 1987), 143, 145; John V. Dennis, "Past and Present at Santee Coastal Reserve," *Nature Conservancy News*, Fall 1974, 14; [Julie Lumpkin], *Tom Yawkey*

Of course, while the bigger, stronger banks protected the duck marshes from the tides, the problem of high salt concentrations near the river's mouth persisted. Rainfall and local run-off were the only sources of freshwater available for the food crops. The widgeon grass transplanted from Terrell's Aquatic Farm to the Santee Club in 1930 did well in the new environment. In fact, the club had such an abundance growing on the shooting grounds in 1944 and 1945 that it offered "a limited amount for sale" in the Charleston papers.⁵⁵ The strain of widgeon grass that Clyde Terrell sent to the club could tolerate 15 percent of the salinity level of normal seawater. Over the years, it adapted to the higher saline content of the post-diversion Santee delta, and by the 1960s, it could thrive in brackish marshes with as much as 55 percent of seawater salinity. The storm surge of a hurricane that topped the banks in October 1944 severely stunted Terrell's nut grass, which was far less salt tolerant. "The Nut Grass was practically wiped out," Reath regretted, "and its recovery has been very, very slow."⁵⁶

As the sportsmen feared, the Santee-Cooper Project led to a repeat of the Currituck Sound catastrophe in South Carolina. The dramatic loss of freshwater habitat in the Santee delta following diversion caused the number of wintering waterfowl to plummet. In 1932 conservative estimates had put the winter

Wildlife Center (1979; repr., Columbia: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 2004), 27.

⁵⁵ The advertisements for Santee Club widgeon grass ran in the *News and Courier* during the first half of June 1944 and the *News and Courier* as well as the *Charleston Evening Post* during the second half of May 1945. The quotation comes from the 1945 ads.

⁵⁶ Reath, *Santee Club—A Legend*, 37.

population of ducks on the Santee Club preserve alone at approximately one hundred thousand. Fourteen years later, in the wake of the Santee-Cooper Project, a survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service counted only twenty-five thousand ducks on the entire Santee delta and the Cape Romain Migratory Bird Refuge combined.⁵⁷ For these ducks, natural food sources in the degraded delta environment were sparse. Thus, managed marshes like those at the Santee Club and South Island became critical.

Going forward, building bank by bank with heavy machinery and then growing widgeon grass inside of the brackish impoundments, the Santee Club and Thomas Yawkey provided the blueprint for restoring productive waterfowl habitat to the delta in the 1950s and 1960s. At its peak, the Santee Club was managing approximately 11,500 acres of impoundments, and Yawkey had over two thousand acres of impoundments on South Island.⁵⁸ Sportsmen had set out in the 1930s to protect the delta with political action. When that approach failed, they conserved habitat through management. As a result of their actions, waterfowl numbers on the preserves rebounded during the 1960s and early 1970s to their pre-diversion levels, with South Island recording a high mark in excess of one hundred thousand ducks and Santee reaching nearly 175,000.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ E. Milby Burton, "Burton Favors Longer Season," *News and Courier*, May 15, 1932; "Survey Indicates 25,000 Ducks in Area."

⁵⁸ Jack Truluck, "Costly Strings Tie Down 'Valuable Gift' to S.C.," *State* (Columbia, S.C.), March 6, 1975; [Lumpkin], *Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center*, 27.

⁵⁹ [Lumpkin], *Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center*, 27; John Davis, "A Special Place," *South Carolina Wildlife*, September–October 1974, 54.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

The late 1920s through the late 1940s represent the apex of amateur waterfowlers' engagement with wetland environments nationally. In the matter of a few decades, they had gone from scattering handfuls of seeds in the hope of drawing more ducks to their favorite shooting grounds in the late nineteenth century to conceiving elaborate impoundment projects and utilizing heavy machinery to dike and ditch large areas of marsh that rivaled contemporary developments on the national wildlife refuges. Along the way, they originated the managed duck marsh, an artificial ecosystem that maximized migratory habitat and became a mainstay of modern waterfowl conservation. Duck marshes were a distinct part of the American wetlandscape by the mid-twentieth century, when thousands of hunting clubs scattered from coast to coast were responsible for several million acres of managed habitat. Also in the middle decades of the century, technology began to affect the traditional culture of sport hunting. As Thomas H. Altherr writes, the availability of mass-produced modern conveniences such as all-terrain vehicles, lightweight nylon clothing, portable heating devices, and pre-packaged trail foods deprived sportsmen of "the original sense of ordeal connected with the hunt since primitive times" and insulated

them from “the vagaries of nature.”¹ This growing detachment from the environment caused the hunter-naturalist ideal to lose some of its appeal, opening the door for sportsmen to embrace ecology-based game management. In the 1950s and 1960s, gentleman waterfowlers handed over much of their work in the marshes to trained wildlife professionals, and in general, their direct influence on wetland ecology would diminish during the second half of the twentieth century. The same trend played out in South Carolina with the Santee Club.

The peak of sportsmen’s environmental influence coincided with the rise of scientific game management. Two lifelong sportsmen from the Midwest, Aldo Leopold and Jay N. “Ding” Darling, figured prominently in the rapid development of the field in the 1930s. Leopold was the father of game management as an applied science. His academic background was in forestry. In 1909 he received a Master’s degree from the Yale Forest School, the first graduate program of its kind in the United States, where he learned the European method of sustainable timber harvesting. Leopold spent the next nineteen years working for the U.S. Forest Service in Arizona, New Mexico, and Wisconsin and, “as a personal hobby,” thinking about how principles of forestry, biology, and ecology might be married in “making land produce sustained annual crops of wild game for recreational use.”² After three years of honing his theories and conducting

¹ Thomas L. Altherr, “The American Hunter-Naturalist and the Development of the Code of Sportsmanship,” *Journal of Sport History* 5 (Spring 1978): 18–19 (quotations on p. 18).

² Curt Meine, *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 51, 75–256; Aldo Leopold, *Game Management* (1933; repr., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), xxxii–xxxiv, 3 (first quotation on p. xxxiii, second on p. 3).

focused field research sponsored by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, he published his groundbreaking text, *Game Management*, in 1933. Later that year, the University of Wisconsin appointed him as the country's first professor of game management.³

Meanwhile, in Leopold's native Iowa, Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist "Ding" Darling had successfully lobbied the legislature to establish a nonpolitical state fish and game commission in 1931. As one of the original five members, Darling was concerned about the lack of qualified biologists in the Hawkeye State who could carry out the commission's conservation work. After consulting with Leopold, he pitched an idea to the president of Iowa State College (later Iowa State University) for a cooperative graduate program in game management. Darling proposed a three-year agreement whereby he would personally share the cost of operating what came to be called the Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit with the college and the commission. On July 1, 1932, Paul L. Errington, a protégé of Leopold's and recent Ph.D. graduate of the University of Wisconsin, joined the Iowa State staff as leader of the research unit.⁴

Less than two years later, in March 1934, President Roosevelt named Darling as the new chief of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey. In Washington, Darling encountered a familiar problem—there was a shortage of scientific

³ Meine, *Aldo Leopold*, 256–307.

⁴ David L. Lendt, *Ding: The Life of Jay Norwood Darling* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979), 49, 58–60; James B. Trefethen, *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (New York: Winchester Press and Boone and Crockett Club, 1975), 224–225.

professionals to handle wildlife research, management, and administration at the federal level as well. The Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit was flourishing under Errington, so Darling's solution for the lack of professionalism in the Biological Survey was to expand his Iowa State model nationwide. This time he secured the cooperation of eight additional land-grant colleges (in Maine, Connecticut, Ohio, Virginia, Alabama, Texas, Utah, and Oregon) together with their respective state wildlife departments and the sporting arms and ammunition companies for three years. Each research unit would be supervised by a biologist from the Biological Survey. A number of new states eventually established units, and the program prospered.⁵ Reflecting on its impact, Arnold O. Haugen, leader of the Iowa unit from 1957 to 1973, remarked in 1966 that Darling's cooperative research concept "has produced an amazing volume of original information on wildlife problems and has developed scores of new techniques in wildlife management while training literally thousands of young men for professional careers in wildlife work."⁶

Ohio's Winous Point Shooting Club, where member David W. Cross had experimented with propagating wild celery (*Vallisneria americana*) in the 1880s, may have been the first private ducking preserve to hire a full-time wildlife biologist. John M. Anderson, a product of the Biological Survey's Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at Ohio State University, joined the Winous Point staff in

⁵ Lendt, *Ding*, 79–80; Trefethen, *American Crusade for Wildlife*, 225–226.

⁶ Haugen quoted in Lendt, *Ding*, 80. On Haugen, see obituary, *Chronicle* (Pella, Iowa), July 18, 2002.

1946 as a temporary wildlife technician, and three years later, he took over as manager of the club, a position he held until 1965.⁷

This was an era of increasing specialization across all facets of society, and waterfowl management was no exception. It no longer made sense, Anderson related in the early 1960s, for “people who entrust the health and education of their families to specialists in medicine and education and employ lawyers, accountants, and engineers in their business, for guidance on the management of wildlife, [to] turn to guides who have never been out of their county of residence or to . . . amateurs of wide hunting experience but no knowledge of the food habits, breeding requirements, disease, and other factors by which duck live and die.”⁸ Moreover, Anderson pointed to clubs’ substantial financial investments in their marshes and their large budgets for annual maintenance. “An enterprise of that magnitude certainly warrants professional consultation and management,” he noted. As wildlife biologists established a record of restoring game populations on public lands in the late 1940s and 1950s, sportsmen came around to Anderson’s way of thinking. He remarked, “It is gratifying that in recent years biologists have become established as private consultants specializing in waterfowl management.”⁹

⁷ Tod Sedgwick and Roy Kroll, *Winous Point: 150 Years of Waterfowling and Conservation* (Lanham, N.Y.: Derrydale Press, 2010), 141–142, 145–148, 322.

⁸ John M. Anderson and Frank M. Kozlik, “Private Duck Clubs,” in *Waterfowl Tomorrow*, ed. Joseph P. Linduska (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1964), 525.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Another product of the Biological Survey's Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit Program, William P. Baldwin Jr., became the preeminent consulting wildlife biologist of the early post-World War II period in the South Carolina low country. A native of Wilmington, Delaware, Baldwin received an A.B. in biology from the University of Delaware in 1936 and an M.S. in wildlife management from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1938. The Biological Survey hired Baldwin as junior manager of the Cape Romain Migratory Bird Refuge immediately after he completed his studies at Virginia Tech, and he remained an employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in South Carolina for sixteen years subsequently, becoming manager of not only the Cape Romain refuge but also the Santee National Wildlife Refuge on Lake Marion and the Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge.¹⁰

In 1950 Baldwin presented a landmark paper entitled "Recent Advances in Managing Coastal Impoundments for Waterfowl" at the fourth annual conference of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners in Richmond, Virginia, that was based on experiments he had conducted "during the past five years on Southeastern Wildlife Refuges" as well as his observations while visiting private ducking preserves.¹¹ Addressing an audience of fellow "technicians," Baldwin emphasized the need for identifying native duck foods accurately and

¹⁰ On Baldwin, see "Resumes Former Duties," *News and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), February 10, 1945; "Biologist Talks to Members of St. Andrew's Club," *ibid.*, January 20, 1953; William P. Baldwin, "Food Supply Key to Attracting Ducks," *South Carolina Wildlife*, Winter 1956, 5; "Wildlife Enthusiast William Baldwin Dies," *Post and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), November 16, 1992.

¹¹ William P. Baldwin, "Recent Advances in Managing Coastal Impoundments for Waterfowl," paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, Richmond, Va., October 18, 1950, copy in possession of the author (quotation on p. 4). Special thanks to Michael B. Prevost for providing the author with a copy of this paper.

understanding how soil and water qualities affected their distribution and abundance as fundamental to scientific management. “On the South Carolina-Georgia coast,” he remarked, “at least five submerged aquatics are known to plantation managers as ‘widgeon-grass.’ Many persist in planting these to sites unsuitable, and particularly moving widgeon-grass (*Ruppia maritima*) from brackish sites into waters exhibiting low m.o. alkalinity (15–30 p.p.m.) and no salinity, . . . where the introductions cannot persist.”¹² Next, Baldwin reviewed management problems associated with various wetland types, which “could be summarized by stating that many of the better duck food plants cannot persist too long after the initial impoundment because of changes in soil and water quality, accretion of plant debris or the encroachment of undesired plants.” Finally, he described some proven techniques for correcting these problems and boosting the productivity of waterfowl impoundments such as establishment of new plants, especially more tolerant emergents; summer drawdowns; deep flooding; winter burns; tractor discing; herbicides; “salting,” or reintroducing saltwater; and livestock grazing. Despite the common misconception about wetland management, he closed, “it is not a simple matter of diking and flooding land.”¹³

Naturally, some duck hunters’ attempts at managing plantation marshes were more sophisticated than others. As Baldwin noted in his presentation, “Local managers not versed in plant identification usually are amazed to learn

¹² Ibid., 1–2 (first quotation on p. 2, second on p. 1).

¹³ Ibid., 4–10 (first quotation on p. 4, second on p. 10)

that the natural stands of bushy pondweed (*Najas*) are not the widgeon-grass (*Ruppia*) transplanted earlier in the season.”¹⁴ However, Ludwig A. Beckman of the Santee Club had been careful to identify plants correctly and start them only in the appropriate environments. Furthermore, the Santee Club had been trying to combat ecological succession on its ducking grounds for decades by clearing ponds and ditches manually, “cutting rushes” in fallow rice fields, and burning off sections of the marshes. Beckman passed along many of these lessons to sportsmen and managers at other plantations.¹⁵

In spite of the Santee Club’s relatively advanced approach to marsh management, Baldwin’s research on impoundments at the refuges was pathbreaking. His training as a biologist in ecological theory, command of the scientific literature, methods for precise data collection, and experience with laboratory analysis were beyond the capacities of amateur waterfowlers. In 1954 he left the Fish and Wildlife Service and entered private business as a wildlife-management consultant. His reputation as an expert in the field preceded him, and he quickly built up a large clientele among plantation-owning sportsmen.¹⁶

A stark example of the changing situation and sportsmen’s desire for scientific management in the 1950s comes from Medway Plantation in Berkeley County. In 1930 Sidney and Gertude S. Legendre, newlyweds from New York who shared an interest in world travel and big-game hunting, purchased Medway

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

¹⁵ For examples of these management techniques, see Ludwig A. Beckman Journals, 1933 vol. (February 23) and 1936 vol. (May 18 and September 17), private collection (hereafter cited as LABJ).

¹⁶ Baldwin, “Food Supply Key to Attracting Ducks,” 5.

and set about developing the house and grounds. This included reclaiming some of the rice fields along the Back River and planting small quantities of rice in an effort to improve duck shooting on the property.¹⁷ For further assistance, they turned to the man recognized as the local authority on managed duck marshes, Ludwig Beckman. On April 7, 1938, Beckman wrote that he “went to Medway Plantation to look over the rice fields with Mr. Sidney Legendre & his manager Waring Bunch.” Beckman instructed Bunch on “how to . . . dig out duck ponds & plant widgeon grass in them.”¹⁸ In June, when the time came for transplanting, Beckman delivered thirty-five bushels of widgeon grass from the Santee Club to Medway for the new rice-field ponds.¹⁹ Sidney Legendre died in 1948. Several years later when Gertude Legendre wanted management advice, she did not call the superintendent of the Santee Club. Instead, she employed William Baldwin, who acted as a consultant at Medway until 1978.²⁰

An even stronger example of sportsmen’s demand for trained managers in the 1950s comes from the Santee Club itself. Around the same time that Baldwin began working at Medway, the Santee Club hired him as a management consultant. The club’s present superintendent, Richard O. Mercer, had taken over when Beckman retired from the position in 1945. Mercer was a competent replacement with relevant experience, having previously managed Joseph S.

¹⁷ Daniel J. Vivian, “The Leisure Plantations of the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1900–1940” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 280–286, 309–318.

¹⁸ LABJ, 1938 vol., April 7.

¹⁹ Ibid., June 23.

²⁰ Virginia Christian Beach, *Medway: A Plantation and Its People* (Charleston, S.C.: Wyrick and Co., 1999), 104–106.

Frelinghuysen's Rice Hope Plantation on the Cooper River in Berkeley County. He also had spent several years apprenticing at the Santee Club as assistant superintendent and was well acquainted with Beckman's vernacular management style. Still, Mercer was a layperson, and the members now sought the benefit of professional expertise. Baldwin continued as a regular consultant for the remaining two decades in the life of the club. After the club donated its land to the Nature Conservancy and the conservancy transferred ownership to the state through the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department in 1974, the Santee duck marshes came under full-time management by a wildlife biologist. Thomas A. Yawkey had brought in a full-time wildlife biologist to manage South Island in 1966, and the owners of Kinloch Plantation, the children of Eugene E. du Pont, did likewise in 1969.²¹

As outlined in the preceding chapters, sportsmen—and waterfowl hunters, in particular—were conscious agents of environmental change. While the siren song of artificial restocking initially tempted upland hunters, waterfowlers focused their energies on acquiring and improving wetland habitat. In the age before wildlife management became a professional pursuit, they took information gained

²¹ William Baldwin, *Inland Passages: Making a Lowcountry Life* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2004), 105–106; “Gun Club to Retain Hunting Rights,” *Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.), September 26, 1974; “Santee Coastal Reserve Transferred to State,” *State* (Columbia, S.C.), September 29, 1974; [Julie Lumpkin], *Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center* (1979; repr., Columbia: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 2004), 17, 25, 27; Phil Wilkinson, interview by Robert Raynor, January 25, 2016, Voices of the Santee Delta Oral History Project, <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:93897> (accessed March 21, 2017); Kenneth Williams, interview by Raynor, March 16, 2016, *ibid.*, <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:93898> (accessed March 22, 2017); Jo Ann Mitchell Brasington, “Recognizing 50 Years in Wildlife Biology: S.C. Wildlife Society Presents Williams with Lifetime Achievement Award,” *Wofford Today*, Fall 2016, 47.



Figure 11.1. John T. Dorrance Jr. (1919–1989) on the Jordan Marsh wharf at the Santee Club, December 1948. Dorrance was educated at Princeton University, lived in Philadelphia, and served as chairman of the board of directors of his father’s company, Campbell Soup, from 1962 to 1984. He became a member of the Santee Club in 1944. Exactly three decades later, he was president of the club when it made one of the largest private gifts to the cause of conservation in American history, donating its entire twenty-five-thousand-acre property to the Nature Conservancy, which in turn deeded the land to the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department. Dorrance also made a strong statement regarding his personal commitment to conservation. He donated his private plantation, Eldorado, located adjacent to the club, to the Nature Conservancy at the same time as the Santee gift. *Source:* private collection.

from various sources—including field study, the sporting press, technical reports, aquatic nurserymen, local customs, and communication with each other—and applied it to manipulating their shooting grounds for the purpose of obtaining better sport. Recognizing the importance of plentiful water, food, and cover to wildlife, they modified marsh ecosystems in order to attract large numbers of

migratory game birds to private preserves. They later used the same management techniques to further waterfowl conservation. Nowhere were their efforts to manage waterfowl more robust than on the South Carolina coast, where northern duck hunters affected the environmental history of the rice plantations between the 1890s and the 1940s in several significant respects.

Initially, sportsmen preserved much of the ecological integrity of the rice plantations. When the first wave of northerners staked their claim to the old rice coast of South Carolina, most native plantation owners shunned recreational waterfowling because of a lingering racial stigma leftover from before the Civil War. Northerners introduced local whites to duck shooting over decoys, and through their influence, the sport gained a genteel reputation in the last part of the United States where its popularity lagged. The last years of the nineteenth century were the golden era of duck shooting in South Carolina, especially around Georgetown. Georgetown's proud rice-growing industry was flagging, and one by one, the struggling plantations slowly started passing into the hands of sportsmen from the North. Scattered among thousands of acres of working rice fields that drew wintering waterfowl to Georgetown County and the Santee River delta by the hundreds of thousands, these earliest duck-shooting preserves were perfectly positioned to take advantage of an unprecedented convergence of exceptional local habitat conditions and hunting opportunities. Adjusting to new circumstances after both rice planting and duck migrations began to decline following the turn of the century, waterfowlers repurposed the plantations. In their desire to raise bait for ducks, they prolonged rice culture far beyond the point at

which it ceased to be an economically viable activity. The sportsmen hired former planters and field hands to keep up the plantation banks, trunks, and ditches, and the many of the rice impoundments stayed functional into the 1930s and 1940s. Under the management of duck hunters, numerous plantations produced rice for decades after the last crop went to market.

While still growing rice, sportsmen began transitioning the ecology of the plantations. Baiting with rice was on the verge of becoming prohibitively expensive when the federal government outlawed the practice generally in the mid-1930s. However, following the national trend among sportsmen, northern duck hunters in South Carolina had been gradually moving toward habitat-based waterfowl management since before World War I. Like their counterparts in other states, they experimented with planting naturally growing duck foods, which they often obtained from specialty nurseries and mail-order seed companies, in the tidal marshes. Although the experiments frequently yielded good results in the beginning, the negative effects of unpredictable environmental events like droughts and floods on their marsh plantings opened hunters' eyes to the benefits that could come from greater control over water level and salinity. Starting in the 1920s, they diked open marshland and adapted the old rice fields to waterfowl impoundments. With the help of outside consultants, they propagated a variety of natural duck foods in the new freshwater or brackish habitats created in the impoundments. Through this work, sportsmen introduced a new man-made ecosystem, the managed duck marsh, to the coastal plantations, which they perpetuated to such an extent that it became a dominant

ecological feature of the low country in the twentieth century. Evidence from the Santee Club, the Kinloch Gun Club, and other northern-owned preserves indicates that when large numbers of them acted together, hunters could alter the ecology of an entire region.

The other side of maintaining an artificial ecosystem was halting ecological succession. If sportsmen had not reclaimed the rice fields in the early twentieth century or if they had abandoned the impoundments after duck baiting became illegal, then before long the inexorable tides would have breached the banks and broken the trunks. The fields near the coast soon would have reverted to open salt marsh, dominated by one plant, smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*). In swampy areas upriver, where the water was fresh, bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and tupelo (*Nyssa aquatica*), the climax species in the immense tidal forests that slaves had cleared from the land centuries ago, would have begun to recolonize the old fields. In either scenario, the quantity and quality of waterfowl habitat on the South Carolina coast would have declined. Instead, management kept ecological succession in check.

After threats to the managed marshes emerged in the 1930s and 1940s, the duck hunters committed to conserving habitat. Although they passed on the responsibility of managing impoundments to wildlife biologists after World War II, their wetlands conservation ethic forged in the fight against the Santee-Cooper Project would endure, ensuring that managed duck marshes would continue to constitute a sizeable share of South Carolina's tidal wetlands. In the 1980s, approximately 75,000 acres—one-half of the state's peak nineteenth-century rice

acreage—was still impounded and being managed as waterfowl habitat.²² This wetlandscape of managed marshes is an ecological monument to the environmental engagement of sport hunters.

²² M. Richard DeVoe and Douglas S. Baughman, *South Carolina Coastal Wetland Impoundments: Ecological Characterization, Management, Status, and Use* (Charleston: South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, 1987), 1: v, 9–11.

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