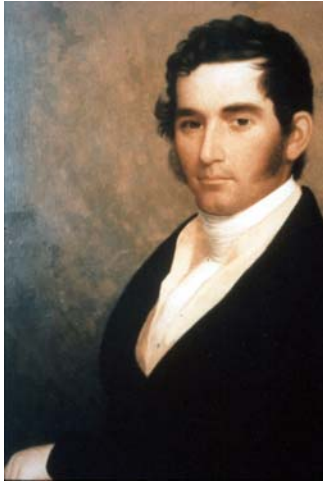


~ Historical Chronology of Dataw Island ~

According to history, Dataw Island's name was derived from the legendary giant King Datha, whom the Spanish learned of from Francisco Chicora, an Indian captured in 1521. Legend tells us that he grew so big because of the magical herbs he ate. The meaning of the name Datha was thought to be "Greenwood."

Over the years there have been eleven different spellings of Dataw, based on historic documents. A 1698 Proprietary Grant used "Datha," the earliest spelling in the English record. In 1701 it appeared as "Data" in a King's Grant. The now official designation is "Dataw Island."

The island's recorded history began with the establishment of a trading post by Caleb Westbrook, a Scottish trader, in 1682. The land was then sold to Charles Odingsell in 1698. In a later sale in 1755, the land was listed as 1170 acres. It changed hands several times and, among other things, was used as a plantation for growing indigo, rice and cotton. Col. Thomas Wigg, his widow Ann Reeve Wigg, and her son Lewis Reeve, were also owners of Dataw Island in the Colonial era.



Berners Barnwell Sams
1787 - 1855

This land known as Dataw Island was purchased by William Sams - - the first of many in his family to own it - - in the 1780s. William was the grandson of Colonel John "Tuscarora Jack" Barnwell, the famous Indian fighter who is buried in the St. Helena Church graveyard in Beaufort. William's introduction to cotton growing, particularly the choice Sea Island Cotton, guaranteed the family wealth. The original plantation house was built in 1786. The chapel was constructed in the late 1700s. After William's death, his two sons, Berners Barnwell Sams and Lewis Reeve Sams divided the island, with Berners owning the south parcel and Lewis the north. Berners occupied the "old house" and added to it over the years; Lewis built his house on Dataw's north shore along the Morgan River.

The Sams brothers died within a year of each other in the mid 1850s and their families continued to inhabit the island until 1861, when they fled the invading Federal troops. Beaufort was the first South Carolina city to fall to the Union Army in 1861. On the plantations, owners were forced to escape with whatever they could take with them. They left their homes and plantations ... and few ever returned.

The island was Federally occupied in 1863 and eventually confiscated for nonpayment of taxes. It was sold in several small parcels by Federal authorities.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the island was held by a series of owners. Several black "Freedmen" occupied various portions of the land for some period. Hunting and agricultural activities were also prevalent. Kate Gleason purchased the land in 1928, planned to develop it and built some sea walls. After Kate's death, the island was inherited by Elizabeth Sanders (Rowland). In 1983 the Rowland family sold it to Alcoa.