

Museum Around the Corner
Georgetown County Historical Society and Museum
Greenwich Plantation ©

The residents of the eastern side of St. James Street here in Georgetown may not realize that they are living on a plantation. The eastern edge of the city of Georgetown is where the old Greenwich Plantation stood. It bordered Winyah Bay on the east, St. James Street on the west, the Sampit River on the south and maybe as far north as Black River where it joins Winyah Bay. The earliest known date of existence is around 1752 when Thomas Mitchell obtained the land. It was not sold again for almost 85 years when John Taylor purchased it in 1837. In 1841, Dr. Francis Simons Parker traded his plantation, Wedgefield, with her for ownership of Mansfield and Greenwich. In 1865, the main house was destroyed in a slave riot that had been initiated by Federal troops. The kitchen building remained and has been in use as a residence.

Julian Stevenson Bolick wrote about the Greenwich kitchen in his book of sketches of houses in downtown Georgetown entitled "Georgetown Houselore" in 1944. He wrote this engaging sketchbook for his daughter, Margaret Ann, now Mrs. Glennie Tarbox.

"This is the original kitchen to the old "Greenwich Plantation House." It was built long before the Revolution, before Greenwich had been taken into the city limits. Originally it was the property of the Mitchells and then the Parkers, Tarboxes, Moses, Dills, and Bolicks.

Margaret Ann, when your father finished college your grandmother gave him this plantation. It contained three blocks of negro houses bring a fair rent. However, it was on the edge of town and faced the bay, the most beautiful site for homes around town. We took a chance and the first thing we did was to remove all the cabins. This section was called "Slab Town" because of the slab houses.

One day Mr. Marion Doar, an old citizen of Georgetown, came to your father and asked if he was going to tear down the old kitchen. He explained which building it was and told how his father had been overseer of Greenwich and that they had lived in the big house. Just after the War the plantation house burned and the Doar family moved into the kitchen where they lived a number of years.

A few years later Gen. Wade Hampton made his campaign speech here and a great celebration was hold in his honor under the old Greenwich Oaks where the house stood. For years later this was used as a picnic ground.

Your father went to look at the old house. It was of sturdy construction and he was much amazed when he entered. An old negro woman and her blind son lived in the building. The fireplace was so large that she had a small stove in one side with the pipe extending up the chimney and she sat on the other side smoking her pipe. The opining measured five and a half feet square. In one side was a crane and in the other a rusted stove."

One relic of the past that has remained at Greenwich besides the old kitchen house is the plantation bell. Since 1773, the bell has called workers at days end each evening in plantation days and rang in alarm when events warranted. In 2016, the house was being sold by the Hamlin family. Next door neighbor, David Bertrand, suggested that the bell be removed and donated to the Georgetown County Museum. The Hamlin daughters agreed and the bell was moved to temporary storage while a fixture was constructed to hang the bell in the courtyard of the Museum. Walter Hill, blacksmith and consummate historian, made an iron stand and brace for the bell to be installed at the Museum. The bell can be seen at any time in the front of the Georgetown County Museum.