



HISTORICAL SUMMARY

In 1697, the Lord Proprietors established a settlement called “Wiltown,” “Will Town”, or what was also referred to as “New London” on what is now Willtown Bluff, Willtown Plantation, and its surroundings. At this time, the region was occupied by Yemassee Indians and some traders. The town was possibly named after William of Orange (William III) who reigned from 1688-1702. Between 1697 and 1717, there more than thirty town lots granted. At one point the town had a church, courthouse, and school. In its most profitable years between 1715-1730, rice was a key export, and the labor force was predominantly enslaved West Africans. Colonists defended the town during the Yemassee War of 1715, as well as during the Stono Rebellion in 1739. Willtown was plundered by British soldiers in 1776, during the Revolutionary War and malaria epidemics caused Willtown’s decline in the mid to late 18th century.

An archaeological study by the Charleston Museum documents remains found on Willtown Plantation. These include ruins from a burned church (image below) and parsonage, and a church cemetery (image below).

Willtown Plantation has been within the same private ownership for 50 years.

Sources:

Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of the ACE River Basin, Published 1995 by Suzanne Cameron Linder
Willtown: An Archaeological and Historical Perspective, Published 1999 by The Charleston Museum & Archaeological Contributions 27



Presbyterian Church Ruins (circa 1750's)

Site of the second Presbyterian church on Willtown Plantation.
It burned in a fire around 1807.



Old Church Cemetery

Quarter-Acre Plot with Numerous Depressions

Headstone: 1770, Wife and 1-Yr Old Daughter of The Rev. John Maltby

Altar Stone: 1806, John Berkeley Esqr. “Berkley was the last male member and Deacon of the Church of Christ in this place”