

# LIVING WITH THE GHOST OF EDWARD WIGG



By Betsy Adams

In 1998 the Indigo Plantation property that was destined to become Oldfield, was placed under contract by Crescent Resources, Duke Energy's development arm.

Tommy Baysden who had helped develop and market Sea Pines and Spring Island was hired by Crescent as consultant and visionary for Oldfield in 1999. By 2000, General Manager Chuck Mitchell and Sales Manager Joe Agee had opened an Oldfield sales office in Barrel Landing (where Enmark is today) with 5 sales people. The sales process was straightforward, to just to call everyone they knew.

The local press wrote that "the lots in Oldfield will range in size from half-acre to an acre, with homes close enough together for neighbors to actually get to know each other. That may sound like an unusual sales tool but for Chuck Mitchell, it's the key to the community's ultimate success."

Mitchell, goes on to explain that "... Oldfield is being designed to give residents plenty of ways to enjoy the exciting landscape and natural resources of the Okatie."

Crescent Resources threw a welcoming party for new property owners the weekend of November 3-6, 2000. One of those original owners was Robin Harris. He recalled that Oldfield, "at that time, had:

- an unsafe River House (hardhats were worn at opening party)
- an overgrown barn/stable (which became the first Outfitters Center)
- an unusable outbuilding on lot 26
- 8 miles of weathered horse fencing
- 2-one lane bridges
- 3 ponds, a mile-long drainage ditch and 2 large puddles
- a dirt trail from 2-lane Highway 170 to the River House
- an overgrown blueberry patch on the island which gave way to the 15<sup>th</sup> hole
- many magnificent live oaks
- and Tommy Beysden's plan"

The party invitation featured this poem and handsome, staged photo of Edward Wigg.

You remember the Wiggs, right? Edward Wigg was the very successful Beaufort merchant and planter who owned a 532-acre plantation on Port Royal Island and a 450-acre plantation on the Okatie River. According to Wigg family tradition, "Edward farmed extensively, and at the time of the outbreak of [the Revolutionary] war was one of the most prosperous and progressive planters in the Low Country."

Edward Wigg married Mary Hazzard in 1738. They had 4 daughters, Sarah, Elizabeth, Mary and Ann and one son, William Hazzard Wigg. The Okatie River plantation which included some of our Oldfield lands, became the Wigg family seat. As was common in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,

**The Ghost of Edward Wigg  
A Toast To The First Families Of Oldfield**

I was standing on the bridge to Wigg's Bluff  
When a spectre rose up from the pond  
I cried out "Who's there?," and was frightened enough,  
When I suddenly heard it respond:

"My name is Edward Wigg", it revealed,  
"And I used to live right here ...  
I loved these marshes and forests and fields,  
In my heart I held them dear.

I watched the river flowing by  
And the ebb and flood of the tides  
I gazed at the moon in the Autumn sky  
And my heart was filled with pride.

I loved the animals, fowl and fish  
Who made this place their home  
Until one day, against my wish  
My soul was set to roam.

But I still come back from time to time  
To check up on my land  
And to satisfy my troubled mind  
That these ancient trees still stand.

Now I hear chat others soon will come  
Within this place to dwell  
And I know not where they're coming from,  
But I hear you chose them well!

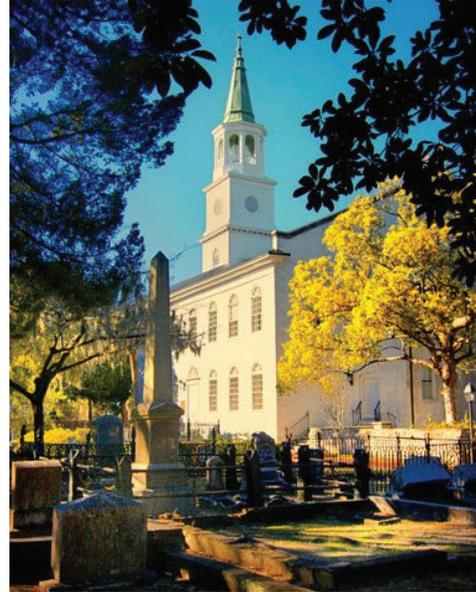
I hear they're wise, and have good taste  
On which I can rely  
And that they love this special place,  
With a passion, as did I.

I hear they're active outdoor types,  
And very social, too  
But they don't like pretense, show or hype.  
They like what's real and true!

I know they'll help protect my trees  
And keep my river pure  
They wouldn't dare pollute the breeze -  
For others to endure!

successful planter families left land managers to run the plantations while they lived in towns like Beaufort.

Edward Wigg died in 1755, at the age of 40. He had traveled to the island of Bermuda but died shortly after his arrival. His death occurred in the town of St. George and his tomb is still to be seen in the St. George churchyard but an impressive engraved marble plaque still hangs in Beaufort's St. Helena's Episcopal Church



*St. Helena's Episcopal Church in Beaufort was built in 1724. It has been expanded and remodeled numerous times but the church and cemetery remain active and open at 501 Church Street. Edward Wigg was a committed member of the congregation as was his family in later years. In 2012, the congregation renamed the church the Parish Church of St. Helena. Worth a visit.*

So I give my blessing here tonight  
To these new pioneers,  
May they forge together a new birthright  
That will live throughout the years.

May they come to celebrate the day  
They made this special deal  
And always say with pride that they  
Are the "First Families" of Oldfield!

**The sitter for the Edward Wigg photo and author of the finely-penned The Ghost of Edward Wigg are unknown to me. Please step forward, sir or madam, to accept our thanks.**

©2019 by Betsy Adams