

18th-century SC plantation home, used to educate Freedmen, on the market for \$3.5M



Tombee Plantation on St. Helena Island in Beaufort County dates back to around 1795. The property survived the Civil War and became an agricultural school for Freedman. The historic property is now on the market for \$3.5 million. Brown Land + Plantation Advisors/Provided

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18th-century SC plantation home, used to educate Freedmen, for sale

An 18th-century South Carolina Lowcountry plantation that remained in the

hands of descendants of former enslaved people for more than a century is on the market for \$3.5 million.

Believed to have been built after 1795, the two-story Tombee Plantation home near Beaufort is one of the few surviving [plantation](#) houses constructed before the Civil War on St. Helena Island.

The site's name comes from the cotton planter who had it built, Thomas Benjamin Chaplin or "Tom B," though other accounts say it could have been named for his grandson of the same name. The 24-acre property up for sale includes the main house, guest house and dock.

The original 376-acre plantation served as a hub for shipping sea island cotton to [Charleston](#).

When Union troops seized the sea island in 1861, the owners of Tombee fled as did many other plantation owners.



Tombee Plantation on St. Helena Island in Beaufort County served as a sea island cotton shipping site. When Union

troops arrived in 1861, the property was seized and later divided among Freedman as part of the "Port Royal Experiment." The main house survived and became an agricultural school for former enslaved laborers. Brown Land + Plantation Advisors/Provided

As part of what was called the "Port Royal Experiment" from 1862-1865, abandoned plantation acreage was divided among former enslaved people, who could buy land for \$1.25 an acre, according to [BlackPast.org](https://blackpast.org).

The Tombee home was kept by the government and used as an agricultural school to educate Freedmen, according to a history of the property by Brown Land + Plantation Advisors and Wise Batten Inc., which is handling the listing.

In 1971, James Williams bought the former [plantation](#) property and restored it. The site is currently owned by a Nashville, Tenn.-based firm called Tombee LLC, which bought it in September 2020 for \$1.3 million, according to Beaufort County land records. The property listing says the current owners have been restoring the house.

Raised on a tabby foundation, the T-shaped dwelling includes three windows in each of six major rooms, a characteristic of construction in the area by the 1790s, according to South Carolina Encyclopedia. The house faces Station Creek with a wide, two-tiered veranda.

It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

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