

Pierce Mease Butler



When Rice was King. Beginning about 1750, rice paddies were the dominant crops in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. Most of

these plantations had "absentee owners".

If you are riding along hwy 17 North into Darien, look to your left and you will see the plantation house on the Altamaha River Estuary. Major Pierce Butler inherited these lands from his grandfather (Pierce Butler who married Mary Middleton). His grandmother's family had many slaves, and this assisted Pierce Butler in his start. This curious location is observed by most travelers.

During the 19th century Major Butler was known as one of the richest men in the United States, owning thousands of acres from Savannah to Brunswick. He utilized the marsh land for rice patties and later grew the Sea Island Cotton on his numerous South Carolina plantations as well as the Butler Plantation in Darien, Georgia.

He was wed to Miss Fannie Kemble, an New England actress who hated plantation life. Her tiny, notorious 5x6 " book "Fanny Kemble" is still found on the shelves of Georgia libraries. Fannie voiced her intense dislike of the sea island plantations. The sea islands of South Carolina to Georgia, however, provided quite a wealth for her husband. Seems ironic, since she lived the life of a privileged lady inside the walls of her homes. It was not until the War Between The States the family left the plantation to return to their home in Massachusetts. Pierce Butler and his daughter, Frances, did, however, return in 1866, and Butler died a year later.



Source:

<https://georgiapioneers.com/gahistory/gahistory.html>

Links to 8 Genealogy Websites

<https://georgiapioneers.com/restricted/genealogies/butler3.html>

<https://georgiapioneers.com/restricted/SC/scgenealogies/butler.html>

<https://glc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/South%20Carolina%20Rice%20Plantations.pdf> SC Rice Plantations

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/business-economy/rice/>