

Cultural Interpretation Inventory

Cumberland Island National Seashore



September 25, 2008

Provided by
Kaplan & Associates Cultural Resources
researching/developing/presenting culture, nature & the arts

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Contents

I.	Introduction	Page 2-4
II.	Cultural Resources	Page 4-7
III.	Interpretive Programs	Pages 8-11
IV.	Analysis	Page 11-13
V.	Recommendations	Page 13-14
VI.	Conclusion	Page 15

Also see attached sections of this report:

Appendix I	Historical Periods of Cumberland Island Occupation
Appendix II	Selected Bibliography

I. Introduction



Summary

This document provides an inventory and analysis of the cultural and historical interpretation of resources available to be experienced by the public on location at Cumberland Island National Seashore. As requested by the park's staff, this reports documents the existence of cultural resources on Cumberland Island, while focusing specifically on interpretive programs currently available to the public.

The content of this report has been acquired through secondary source research, site visits, park authored publications such as informational brochures, and documents such as the General Management Plan (published in 1984) and a draft of the Longer Range Interpretive Plan (date unspecified; research dated 1999.)

The Cumberland Island National Seashore General Management Plan (pp. 16) states that a goal of the park, under "Management Objectives: Cultural Resources" is... "To identify and evaluate Cumberland Island's cultural resources including historic structures, archeological sites and other remains and to preserve and make available as appropriate those determined to be significant and worth of preservation."

Further in the same document, under "Management Objectives: Interpretation" the Management Plan also relates the park's goal... "To foster appreciation and understanding of the seashore's ecological communities, the geological processes that shape the island system, the historical and cultural resources of the island, and the relationship between man's activities and the island communities and processes."

This report specifically inventories and analyzes the current interpretive programs* available to the public that work towards fulfilling the latter goal of "foster(ing) appreciation and understanding of the... historical and cultural resources of the island, and the relationship between man's activities and the island communities and processes" by asking the following questions:

1. What are cultural resources are available on Cumberland Island for interpretation?
2. What interpretation of these cultural resources is currently available to visitors?
3. What cultural/historical subject matter is currently being interpreted for visitors?

and

4. How does current interpretation "foster(s) appreciation and understanding"?

This report does not attempt to create a complete or exhaustive inventory of Cumberland Island cultural resources. Rather it addresses the major cultural resources of direct interest and experience of visitors, for whom these resources may be interpreted.

Note on Reserved Estates: Though perhaps the majority of important Cultural Resources are currently under the ownership of the National Park Service, many resources of key importance to the interpretation of Cumberland Island are, at the time of this report, still held with reserved estates. According to the Resource Management Plan, published in 1984, (pp. 27) "Most of the reservation will expire during the first few decades of the next century. Decisions on preservation and use of the properties within the reserved estate will be made when control passes to the National Park Service."

Background

Cumberland Island, Georgia is one of the largest barrier islands that extend from North Carolina to Florida. Approximately 17 ½ miles long and 3 miles wide, Cumberland Island rests at the southern border of Georgia where it meets the state of Florida. Cumberland

Island National Seashore, now part of the National Park Service, consists of the majority of Cumberland Island, Georgia. Created by Public Law 97-250 by the United States Congress on September 8, 1982, Cumberland Island National Seashore designates approximately 8,840 acres as wilderness and approximately 11,718 acres as “potential wilderness.” According to the General Management Plan, the enacting legislation named the park’s purpose as “to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of certain significant shoreline lands and waters of the United States, and to preserve related scenic, scientific, and historical values....”

The geographic area now encompassed by the National Seashore has a long and diverse history of occupation by Native Americans, the Spanish, the British, and Americans. The story of people on Cumberland Island is unique in its intimate connection to important global workings, from the settlement of the new world by Native Americans and the Spanish colonial era, the trans-Atlantic trade of enslaved peoples, the American Civil War, and the Gilded Age. Further discussion of these topics will follow in the Analysis and Recommendations sections of this report.

* For the purposes of this report, an interpretive program is defined as any offering to the public, whether exhibit, publication, or in-person program, that provides educational information about the culture or history of Cumberland Island.