

Left: A modern take on the typical coastal cottage style found up and down the Carolina coast—complete with dock for fishing and a wide porch for catching the breeze.



Fort

BY BARBARA MILLEN

Lamar

A Sense of Place

My cares fell away from me as soon as I neared Fort Lamar in the part of James Island once known as Secessionville. The rain had been overtaken by the afternoon sun, and I knew I was in for a lovely drive, but I did not expect the sense of serenity that settled on me. I was, after all, just a few minutes from downtown Charleston.

Street names like Old Military lured me down oak-lined roads and told me I was headed in the right direction. How fortunate to live out here, I thought, in this peaceful spot imbedded with local history.

Shareen Miles and her family are among the lucky few. They wanted to experience the true Lowcountry lifestyle of creek-side living, of catching tonight's dinner from the dock and of oyster roasts on the porch.

"We moved here when my boys were in high school, just young enough to really enjoy life on the creek," Shareen says.

She shows me a photo of her oldest with a shark caught just off their dock, and we agree there is nothing better than seafood that has just come out of the creek. Shareen tells me tales of tubing on the creek and how it always seems to be cooler there, even on the sultriest South Carolina day.

But just as wonderful is living in an area where history was made.

"We ride down to the fort where the earthworks are," she says. "They're grown over with oaks now but you can still see them."

And, indeed, you can. In the summer of 1862, the Confederate forces knew a strike by the Union was imminent. The plan to attack the city of Charleston from James Island was nothing new, but the defenses on James Island were; some had yet to be finished. On

June 16, 1862, they were put to the test, when the first shot of the Battle of Secessionville was fired. Within three hours, the 1,400 Confederate soldiers of Fort Lamar repelled 3,500 federal troops. Troops from the 3rd New Hampshire attempted a flanking maneuver but were forced back by the impassable pluff mud.

Shareen and I take a deep whiff of the pluff mud and agree that the smell means you're home in the Lowcountry. 🌿



Right: Confederate soldiers routed the Union troops in a pre-dawn attack on June 16, 1862 in the Battle of Secessionville. The earthworks are still visible at Fort Lamar.

Below: A country road leads to historic Fort Lamar and nearby homes nestled along the creek on James Island.

