



BEACH REPORT

Weekly update on great deals, good times in Myrtle Beach. **Page 2**

Fiji: He's living in paradise. **Page 6**

Travel

**NEXT SUNDAY:
6 EASY PLACES IN
THE N.C. PIEDMONT**

Need to save money, gas and travel time? We'll save your summer vacation



THOMAS NAMEY - MANSFIELD PLANTATION PHOTO

Look down the oak alley as you approach the main house at Mansfield Plantation. It's on the banks of the Black River, near Georgetown, S.C., and dates to 1718.

Relax This grain once made Georgetown County prosperous. Today, the area makes a splendid getaway. in rice country

A short drive south of the high-rise condo towers, theme parks and neon lights of Myrtle Beach, some of South Carolina's richest yet least-known historical areas still thrive.

What is now Murrells Inlet, Litchfield, Pawleys Island and Georgetown were once vast indigo and rice plantations with graceful mansions, long drives lined with live oaks and a large slave population imported from West Africa.

Waterfront land on the Atlantic may be pricey property today, but in the 1700s and 1800s, wealthy planters built their main homes overlooking the area's five rivers - the Wacca-

maw, Pee Dee, Black, Santee and Sampit. Prominent plantation families headed to their oceanfront homes each summer.

At one time, rice plantations ran all along the Waccamaw Neck, from south of Georgetown to the fishing village of Murrells Inlet.

Thanks to the locally grown rice nicknamed Carolina Gold, Georgetown County became one of the wealthiest areas in the nation.

Here's how you can discover its culture. — LEIGH PRESSLEY, SPECIAL TO THE OBSERVER

GET READY FOR FUN What to see, what to do, where to play golf. Plus, a little history. **Pages 4, 5**

Mansfield Plantation: It's on the banks of the Black River, near Georgetown, and dates to 1718 when 500 acres were granted to the Parker family. Construction began on the main house 50 years later, and Mansfield blossomed into one of the largest rice plantations in South Carolina.

Today, it covers 1,000 acres and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. John Rutledge Parker, a descendant of the original Parker family, operates Mansfield Plantation as a bed-and-breakfast with his wife, Sallie Middleton.

Guests bunk in newly renovated rooms and suites in the Old Kitchen House (built around 1800), the School House (circa 1840) or the North Guest House (added around 1930). Breakfast is served in the Main House, which also features a library, gourmet kitchen and conference rooms.

Around the property, you can explore a slave village and chapel, preserved forests, cypress swamps, gardens and oak alleys via walking trails or free bicycles. Charleston magazine named Mansfield Plantation to its Top 10 Romantic Getaway list.

Plantation tours and afternoon teas also are available to groups of 15 or more.

Details: 866-717-1776 or visit www.mansfieldplantation.com.