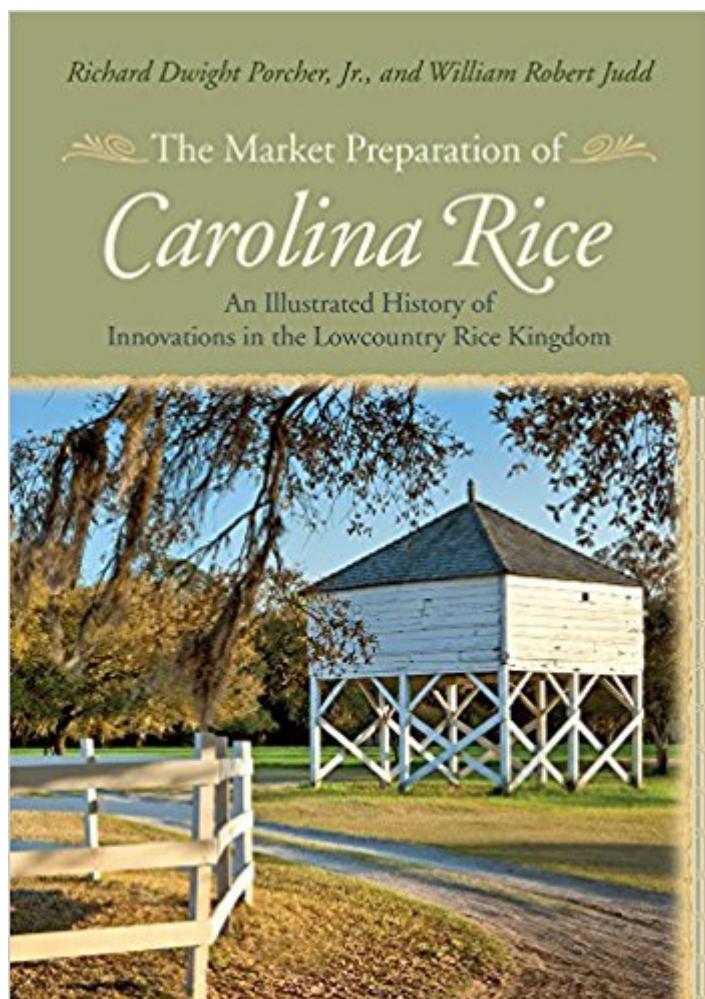


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The Market Preparation Of Carolina Rice: An Illustrated History Of Innovations In The Lowcountry Rice Kingdom



Synopsis

Richard Dwight Porcher, Jr., eminent field biologist and lowcountry South Carolina native, has brought all of his skills as a botanist, historian, photographer, and conservationist to bear in a multidisciplinary study of the rice industry in South Carolina from its beginnings in the 1670s to its demise in the twentieth century. Using the tools of the geographer, civil engineer, draftsman and close readings of many primary and secondary sources on the history of rice culture in the colony and state, Porcher and coauthor William Robert Judd have amassed a great body of previously unknown information on rice history. Detailed illustrations and descriptions of the implements and machines featuring technology used to prepare Carolina rice for overseas markets, *The Market Preparation of Carolina Rice* includes 161 illustrations, most of them meticulously hand-drafted by Judd expressly for this edition. The book begins with the preindustrial implements and techniques used by African and African American slaves and workers in the late 1600s and early 1700s and concludes with the water- and steam-powered machines that drove rice threshing and milling until the end of the industry in 1911. In great detail the authors reveal the immense, continually evolving technological innovations of an agricultural industry that spanned the Industrial Revolution and much of the history of the colony and state. With this rich body of knowledge in hand, Porcher stands at odds with theories held by most historians of rice culture who generally assert that the plantation culture of rice was in unrecoverable decline as the South hastened to civil war. Porcher believes that decline was retarded by continuous technological innovation and increasing investment in land, labor, and mechanization as local planters sought to sustain profits in a globally expanding market. Porcher asserts that the post-“Civil War loss of slave labor and destruction of infrastructure, a series of hurricanes, competition from rice grown in the American Southwest starting in 1880, and financial restraints that led to the cessation of rice culture in lowcountry South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. Impoverished and unable to adapt to new technologies and market demands, rice planters left the commercial rice enterprise to others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have read more than 50 books on South Carolina history, with emphasis on rice and slaves, by authors such as Edgar, Littlefield, Joyner, Dusinberre, Irving and dozens of others. I have pored over papers by Allston and other planters and read the letters from their overseers and factors. Whether you are an academic or just enjoy history, and if you especially want to know how South Carolina rice was cultivated and prepared for market this book is a must-have. Porcher tells the story of rice with a passion befitting a descendant of lowcountry rice planters. But this book is not all science, and is not limited to sterile diagrams of rice fields, tidal banks and trunks, milling machinery and explanations of plantation hydraulics. Porcher's poignant epilogue will take you into the heart of the author, a true conservationist with a burning love for South Carolina, the lowcountry, and his own family heritage.

Very informative as all Dr. Porcher's books are. This is more of a technical manual that was "The History of Sea Island Cotton, but for those interested in American ante bellum southern history, it's a great, great resource.

Almost 40 years ago I looked out over a rice field on one of those historic plantations bordering the Ashley River and just wondered to myself how they got the water into and out of the field, and maintained proper water levels. I was a sophomore cadet at The Citadel majoring in Biology back then, and later Dr. Porcher was one of my favorite professors. So when I saw this book and recognized the author, I had to read it. I am currently about half way through it, and I must say that I feel like I could almost create a rice plantation with this book as a guide. Dr. Porcher goes into explicit detail about how a rice field was created, how water was sourced and managed, and all the assorted tools and equipment for producing rice (often invented by innovative southerners).

An outstanding history and description of southern rice culture.

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