

2. From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast

This section focuses on how the physical environment of the Lowcountry in combination with the unique skills brought to the area by enslaved Africans led to the development of the “rice culture.” It highlights connections between the West African Rice Coast and the Rice Coast that emerged along the Ashley River Corridor in Charleston.

These questions and activities incorporate text and images from the Rice Coasts to Rice Coast section as well as selected resources from Section 4, Maps and Documents.

Consider using one or more appropriate reading strategies to help students master the extended captions, which may be challenging for younger children.

- Practice paraphrasing
- Reading in small groups
- Reading aloud
- Identifying specific words for vocabulary practice
- Using SQ3R method (survey, question, read, recite, review)
- Finding main idea in a paragraph

Opening

Bring samples of uncooked rice grains to show students. Discuss questions such as:

- What grain is this?
- Who likes to eat rice?
- How does rice grow? (i.e., underground, on trees or bushes, on plant stalks, etc.)
- Where is rice grown? (To this question, students are likely to mention China or Japan since they probably associate rice with Oriental cuisine.)
- Is rice grown in the United States today? To answer that question review this [map](http://www.usda.gov/nass/graphics/county04/images/AR-YI04-RGBChor_gif.gif) (http://www.usda.gov/nass/graphics/county04/images/AR-YI04-RGBChor_gif.gif) of the 2004 U.S. rice harvest. Identify states where rice is cultivated. Notice that South Carolina is not reflected on this map.

Segue from this to noting that in the 18th and 19th centuries, the South Carolina Lowcountry was the center of rice cultivation in this country. Show this [map](http://www.freedomcenter.org/freedomquests/traditions/rice/map.pdf) (<http://www.freedomcenter.org/freedomquests/traditions/rice/map.pdf>) of the Rice Kingdom in 1860, pointing out Charleston and the Ashley River and other parts of the Lowcountry.

Show this online image of [Carolina Gold rice](#) ([From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: "Carolina Gold Rice"](#), Sec. 2) the species that spawned the Rice Culture, growing in the field.

Development

Have students examine the images and review the extended captions to get an overall sense of the content in this section. Print them from the site or display in class from the computer using an LCD system. Consider assigning each image or set of images to a pair of students, who would be responsible for reviewing them and sharing their observations with the class.

Reviewing the resources in the order listed here provides a cohesive “storyline.” In some instances, two or more images are reviewed together in order to more fully make a point. Discuss the implications of each image and how each helps to show the importance of the rice culture and the roles of enslaved Africans and wealthy planters.

The first several images show steps in the rice cycle and equipment used to process the rice.

- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Preparing Rice Field](#) (Sec.2)
 - How was the geography of the Lowcountry suited to growing rice?
 - Why were Africans from the Rice Coast highly valued?
 - What skills and knowledge did they bring?
 - Imagine what it was like to work in a field such as this.
- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Sprout Flow](#) (Sec. 2)
 - Describe the physical systems that needed to be built to grow rice.
 - What was the role of work songs?
 - Listen to the work song and write the lyrics down.
- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: "Carolina Gold Rice"](#) (Sec. 2)
 - Describe plant features, including the gold color of the rice husks.
 - What stage of cultivation in the rice cycle is this?
- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Winnowing Rice](#) (Sec.2)
 - What were these baskets used for?
 - What are they made of?
 - Who made the baskets?
 - Find Senegal on a map of Africa.
 - What is the history and significance of the baskets?
- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Processing Rice](#) (Sec. 2)
 - Describe the mortar and pestle (size, shape, material made of).
 - Who typically used these tools and for what purpose?
 - Listen to the work song that accompanied the milling. Clap or move your body in rhythm to the song.

The next series of images show where rice was grown and provide information about the conditions under which the enslaved worked.

- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Drayton Hall](#) (page 2) + [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Drayton Hall \[2005\]](#) (Sec. 2) and [Maps and Documents: Lower Ashley River](#) (Sec. 4) and [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Craftsmanship at Drayton Hall and Charleston](#) (Sec. 2)
 - What was Drayton Hall and where was it located? Who built it?
 - List tasks the enslaved workforce performed on rice plantations.
 - Consider the architectural features of Drayton Hall. Point out examples of ironwork, blacksmithing, carpentry, and masonry made by the enslaved artisans.
 - How does the work of the enslaved live on today in the Lowcountry?
 - Why were so many rice plantations located along the Ashley River?
 - Discuss how the lives of those who lived in Drayton Hall differed from those who worked in it.
 - Should plantation homes like Drayton be preserved?
- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Archaeological Footprint of Drayton Hall kitchen](#) (Sec. 2)
 - Compare the jobs that enslaved men and women performed.
 - Why do you think the kitchen was separate from the main house?
 - What example of cultural transmission is described?
- [Maps and Documents: Plantation Task System](#) (Sec. 4)
 - What was a task?
 - Who do you think developed the task system rules?
 - Which job do you think was the hardest? Why?
 - How did the status of Charles Drayton differ from that of Carolina and Joe?
 - What is the meaning of Drayton's entry for September 10, 1797?
- [Maps and Documents: Plantation Rules c. 1844](#) + [Maps and Documents: Slave Badges](#) (Sec. 4)
 - Who wrote the rules and to whom do they apply?
 - What is your reaction to the rules? Were they necessary? Fair? Harsh?
 - What does this document reveal about plantation life?
- [Maps and Documents: Drawing of Slave Gardens](#) (Sec. 4)
 - Whose gardens are these?
 - What was adjacent to the gardens?
 - What is the implication of the gardens?
- [Maps and Documents: Ashley River Sloop](#) (Sec. 4)

- Look up the definition of sloop and schooner.
- Where and how do you think this vessel was used? What happened to it?
- How does its excavation help our understanding of the rice culture?
- [Maps and Documents: Thomas Drayton Inventory of 1724 \[1-3\]](#) (Sec. 4)
 - What is an inventory? Whose inventory was this?
 - What year was this document made?
 - Why are the monetary values expressed in pounds?
 - Who are the people listed in the inventory? What categories are they placed in?
 - Compare the values assigned to men and women by age and responsibility. Why were some worth more than others?
 - Name several of the animal and household items listed.
- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: The Gardens at Middleton Place](#) (Sec. 2) and [Maps and Documents: Map of Middleton Place](#) (Sec. 4) + [Maps and Documents: Upper Ashley River](#) (Sec. 4)
 - How and why were the gardens created?
 - Who got to enjoy them?
 - What is the significance of the gardens?
 - Find Middleton Place on the map.
 - How many other plantations were there? How far apart were they?
 - Imagine wandering the grounds of Middleton Place. Describe what you see.
- [From Rice Coasts to Rice Coast: Charleston Street \[2005\]](#) (Sec. 2)
 - What skills did it take to build these buildings?
 - How does the labor of the enslaved live on today?

Extending Learning

Use some of these additional activities to deepen the learning.

Anchoring in Place (Geography)

Sites of memory are anchored in place. These additional resources and map activities will enable students to learn more about places associated with the South Carolina Rice Culture.

- Examine historic maps of Charleston and South Carolina [here](http://www.sciway.net/hist/maps/mapscharleston.html) (<http://www.sciway.net/hist/maps/mapscharleston.html>).
- Review this [map](http://www2.gwu.edu/~folklife/bighouse/images/iii3.jpg) (<http://www2.gwu.edu/~folklife/bighouse/images/iii3.jpg>) showing slave populations in 1860 as a percent of total population. What is the percentage for South Carolina and the Lowcountry counties?

- Take a Virtual Tour of Drayton Hall [here](http://www.draytonhall.org/online_exhibits/virtual_tour/index.html) (http://www.draytonhall.org/online_exhibits/virtual_tour/index.html).
- Print and make copies of the [map](http://www.freedomcenter.org/freedomquests/traditions/rice/map.pdf), (<http://www.freedomcenter.org/freedomquests/traditions/rice/map.pdf>), The Rice Kingdom 1860. Have students shade in the Lowcountry areas where rice was cultivated.
- The Ashley River is only 36 miles long. Use the maps of the Ashley River and other images provided on this website to make an illustrated map of the river on oversized paper. Find images of its natural features and the plantations along its banks to put on the map [here](http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/water/envaff/river/ashley_scenic.htm) (http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/water/envaff/river/ashley_scenic.htm).

Anchoring in Time (History)

Sites of memory are anchored in time. Instead of years and decades, time in this section focuses on the stages of the rice cycle throughout the year.

Use information gleaned from the extended captions to trace the steps of rice cultivation during the year. Have students design a collage or flow chart of rice cultivation, illustrating it with images from *African Passages*. [Here](http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/SlaveTrade/collection/large/NW0077.jpg) (<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/SlaveTrade/collection/large/NW0077.jpg>) is a period illustration showing the stages of the rice cycle:

January	Rice cycle begins with clearing of fields
February	“ “ “
March	Preparation of ground for planting
April	Sowing seed
May	“ “
June	Draining and flooding fields; hoeing to clear weeds
July	“ “ “
August	“ “ “
September	Harvesting, drying, and threshing rice
October	Fanning and winnowing rice
November	Milling rice
December	

Add this date to the timeline created for Section 1 activities.

- 1730s—rice cultivation begins in South Carolina along the Ashley River

Anchoring in Memory (History)

Sites of memory are anchored in the memories of people who experienced them.

- Enslaved women made sweetgrass baskets. What is sweetgrass? Find images and descriptions at these [sites](#).
(<http://www.chisholm.k12.mn.us/~zsceglar/harvest.html>)
(http://www.cofc.edu/sustainability/nativespecies_sweetgrass.htm)
- Carolina Gold rice is again being grown in South Carolina. You can read about and order it [here](#).
(<http://www.carolinagoldrice.com>)
- Enlarge the image of the [slave badges](#)
(http://deepsouth.tulane.edu/sites_of_memory/page4.htm?id=slavebadges)
and try to read the words and numbers imprinted on them. Learn more about these curious artifacts at [these](#) websites.
(<http://www.slavebadges.com>)
(<http://www.wakeforestcoins.com/slave%20badges/slave%20badges.htm>)
- You can find lyrics to the work song *Go Down Ol' Hannah* [here](#)
(<http://www.alex-blue-pages.com/godown.htm>). How closely do they match what you hear at *African Passages*? It is not unusual for songs to develop multiple versions of lyrics over time.
- You'll find many illustrations of rice cultivation in the historic book *A Woman Rice Planter* reproduced online [here](#)
(<http://docsouth.unc.edu/pringle/illustr.html>).
- This Teaching with Historic Places website [lesson](#)
(<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/www/tps/lessons/3rice/3rice.htm>) is entitled "When Rice Was King." Use it to learn more about the rice culture.
- These sources provide extensive background information about the connection via rice between West Africa and the Lowcountry.
[Joseph Opala article](#)
(http://www.africanaheritage.com/Gullah_and_Sierra_Leone.asp)
[Rice and Slavery](#) (http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_es_rice.htm)
[Priscilla's Homecoming](#) (<http://www.yale.edu/glc/priscilla/index.htm>)

Conclusion

Divide the class in half. Have each half work on one of the following topics by responding in writing based on what has been learned. Students should be prepared to share their responses to the class.

- Summarize the geographic conditions of South Carolina that supported the rice culture. Explain the legacy of the rice culture.

- Summarize the knowledge and skills carried by Africans to the Lowcountry that allowed the rice culture to flourish.