

SCORES VISIT GHOST ISLAND

Six-Acre Strip Has Attraction for Curious People

FAMILY BURIAL GROUND

Curiosity Seekers Evidently Find Interest in Viewing Graves of Those Who Were Interred Many Decades Ago for Little Island Has Nothing Else to Attract Visitors

Ghost Island, a small island about six acres in dimension, in the Ashley river, a short distance above the Charleston bridge, is now a popular place of visit for the curiosity seekers, and it is estimated that the little island has been visited by many hundred people during the last few weeks.

The interest which attracts is a morbid and gruesome concern, for the island was the place of burial for an old Charleston family, now extinct, and it is to view the old mahogany caskets with their dead in the vault in the center of the island which carries the visitors to the little island.

Ghost Island is at the turn of a creek, nearly opposite Congressman Legare's place. It is a beautiful little spot, the island resembling much an inverted saucer, in its topographical and natural appearance. It is wooded with a number of high pines, a few small oaks and underbrush, with only a well trodden path leading to the vault in the center of the island. From the oaks hang heavy folds of moss, some of it being particularly graceful festoons and drops, making the place a beautiful little spot, which should be permitted to serve its purpose of being a resting place for the dead of an old honored family, now said to be practically extinct.

The island was the burying ground of the Lining family. This fact is established by the marble tablet which stands over the entrance of the vault, bearing the name of Charles Lining and the year 1808. There is no landing place. It looks as if the family purposely designed that the island should be a private ground and the intrusion of those who are not members of the family should be discouraged. The island is only reached in a boat of small draft but the elevation juts up so suddenly and completely that it is possible to step from the launch or row boat on to the land. The present ownership of the island is not known, and there is no one in charge to enforce the privacy which the family desired. The island stands within easy approach and recently the attention of the curious has been directed to the island, and, as stated, there is a large travel to the place.

The vault is of brick, with heavy oak doors, and large brass hinges, securely rivetted. It is about fifteen feet square and about ten feet in height. It contains a number of shelves on which are placed the caskets, containing the dead. In all there are about twenty-five caskets in the vault. The caskets are all made of mahogany of a style of workmanship which has long passed. The caskets are generally without covers, and this fact makes the visit of the curious so gruesome. The small boats come up to the edge of the island and the parties are disembarked to enter the vault and peer into these uncovered caskets. How the covers have happened to be off it is not known. The covers may never have been screwed and perhaps in some instance through idle curiosity one cover was raised and the experiment was followed in the case of the others, until all the caskets had their lids removed.

The vandalism of the visitors to the burial ground is shown in the removal of the silver plates which formerly adorned each casket, giving the name of the deceased within the box. Every one of these plates has been stripped from the caskets and, not content with this plunder, the very person of the dead has been robbed.

In one instance a doll was torn from the arms of a little girl in one of the caskets and buttons have been cut from the clothing of the dead. In one of the caskets are the remains of a member of the family, clothed in a uniform resembling that of a Continental, which attracts special attention from the visitors.

The preservation of the bodies and dress is said to be remarkable. In the case of some of the caskets the limbs are still held together by a tegument which has become petrified in a way, and the clothing is also intact and in instances appear as clean and well arranged as the day that the bodies were dressed for burial. With the remains uncovered and the increased interest in the burial ground, it is not expected that the bodies will longer survive the treatment of the spectators in viewing the remains.

BEFORE THE RECORDER