



Historic St. Isabel Plantation

During Florida's 20-year British period from 1763 to 1783, St. Isabel was originally part of a 10,000 acre plantation granted in 1766 to the Earl of Bessborough, and later purchased in 1769 by London merchant Samuel Potts. After Florida was ceded back to Spain in 1783 at the end of the Revolutionary War, the land was abandoned by its British owner.

By 1840 the land was owned by Oran Baxter, a white man arriving from New York sometime before 1830, and his mixed-race wife, Martha Kingsley. Martha was the daughter of wealthy white plantation owner Zephaniah Kingsley and his African wife Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley. Oran died in 1847 leaving Martha in debt, but by 1854 she had paid off her husband's debts and increased her number of slaves from 36 to 48. Taking after her father in business skills, she became one of the ten wealthiest persons in Duval County.

In 1860 Martha's home at St. Isabel was shared with two of her daughters, Isabella Baxter and Anna B. Carroll, and Anna's husband Charles B. Carroll, a white man from New York. Martha's daughter Emma Baxter Mocs and her husband Joseph Mocs, a music teacher from Hungary, lived in a nearby separate dwelling. Martha's mother Anna Kingsley and Anna's grandchild Isabella Kingsley, the daughter of her son John Maxwell, a resident of Haiti, also lived in their own house on the property. All were part of a free black community located along the St. Johns River in what is now known as Old Arlington.


Loyal Union supporters, Martha and her family most likely fled from their homes during the Civil War years. On December 14, 1864, all the dwellings and outbuildings at St. Isabel Plantation were destroyed by fire, possibly the work of Confederate guerrilla torches. After the war, Martha rebuilt her home. She died at St. Isabel on February 14, 1870. She was buried in an unmarked grave in the family cemetery at Clifton.

Source: *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, by Dr. Daniel L. Schafer

1918 Arlington Map



For more historic marker locations, visit www.OldArlington.org

This marker erected in 2009 with a grant from  Comcast through Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.