



Rice mill at Wormsloe, 1934.

Photograph by Branan Sanders, FSA/OWI collection, Library of Congress.

Although Wormsloe contained a rice mill and the Joneses grew rice on their Newton plantation along the banks of the nearby Little Ogeechee River, there is no conclusive evidence that the family ever raised the cereal on their Isle of Hope plantation. Instead, Wormsloe's rice mill cleaned grain from neighboring plantations. Instead of being a rice estate, Wormsloe was perfectly suited to raising another Lowcountry staple: Sea Island cotton. This long-fibered cotton produced handsome profits without the elaborate earthworks and water control devices required by rice culture.

Wormsloe's rice mill demonstrates the interconnected nature of the Joneses' Lowcountry plantations. At various sites scattered across the region, the family raised rice, corn, livestock, Sea Island cotton, indigo, and short staple cotton. Each plantation specialized in a particular crop or two best suited to the soil and climate, yet each unit was part of an economic whole.