



Magnolia grandiflora
The Laurel Tree of Carolina
Catesby's *Natural History*, 1743

Magnolia

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In Search of the Colonial Landscape “A Revolutionary Idea”

SGHS 42nd Annual Meeting in Williamsburg

There could be no more appropriate time for the Southern Garden History Society to visit Williamsburg, Virginia than the year of the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The summer of 1775 found prominent men from across Virginia, in Williamsburg attending the House of Burgesses to address the unrest in the American colonies. Virginians John Randolph, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and many more of note, became the Patriot leaders, making their way through the process to advocate for self-governance and promote principles of freedom. And, as they say, the rest is history.

We invite you to come to Williamsburg on April 10–12, 2026 to see, feel, and understand the momentous times endured by these colonists. We shall explore the Historic Area (already one-hundred-fifty years old by the late 1700s) through the gardens, homes, and public buildings to rediscover our history. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF) has been preparing for this semiquincentennial observation for several years. They are ready for us!

The Williamsburg Lodge, in the middle of the Historic District, will be our meeting headquarters. The Lodge evokes the colonial past in its architecture and furnishings. The business meeting will begin at 12 noon in the ballroom on Friday. During the morning you may



Compton Oak.

Photo Credit: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

wish to plan an “on-your-own” lunch and visits to places within walking distance of the hotel such as the new Colin G. and N. Campbell Archaeology Museum or the DeWitt

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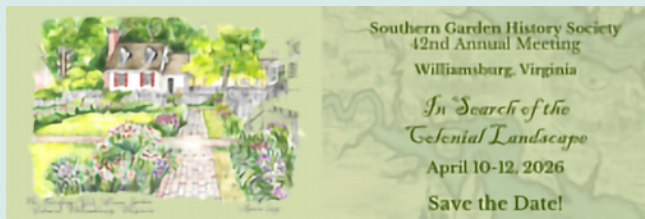
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CALENDAR

April 10-12, 2026. “In Search of the Colonial Landscape, ‘A Revolutionary Idea’,” 42nd annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, held in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. To celebrate the nation’s 250th anniversary, this meeting will explore Williamsburg’s restored gardens and the nearby campus of William & Mary. Two optional Sunday bus tours will feature visits to the James River Plantations in Surry County and Charles City County. See detailed review of the meeting in this issue. Visit southerngardenhistory.org/events/annual-meeting/



April 16-18, 2026. Colonial Williamsburg’s 79th annual garden symposium, celebrating American gardens. Registration information will be available in fall 2025. Visit: colonialwilliamsburg.org/garden-symposium

April 18-25, 2026. Garden Club of Virginia: Historic Garden Week. This beloved statewide event will include unique tours organized and hosted by forty-eight member clubs located from the foothills of the Shenandoah Valley all the way to the beaches of Tidewater. For information, visit: gcvirginia.org/historic-garden-week/



Photo Credit: Garden Club of Virginia.

Restored gardens of Gari Melchers Home and Studio in Falmouth, Virginia.

Randy Harelson Scholarship Fund--Phase II

In the Fall 2024 issue of *Magnolia*, we were pleased to announce success in reaching the initial goal set for the Randy Harelson Scholarship Fund established earlier that year. That goal was \$60,000 which invested at 5% interest would yield \$3,000, the amount currently required to fund the three annual stipends presented to recipients of the Undergraduate Scholarship, Graduate Fellowship, and Young Professional Grant. We have since, however, been unsuccessful in finding a risk-free investment for these funds that yields 5%. Given the fact that a larger corpus is thus needed, and the amount of the stipends will eventually need to be

adjusted for inflation, the Board of Directors approved a new goal of \$100,000 at its spring 2025 meeting in Mobile. Until the new goal is achieved, the Society will continue to underwrite the stipends from the general fund as it has done in the past, thus protecting the Scholarship Fund corpus until it becomes self-sustaining. The Board wishes to thank members and nonmembers who have contributed to the fund and encourage additional contributions. Contributions to the Randy Harelson Scholarship Fund are tax deductible. When you support the scholarship fund, you invest in the future of the Society.

*We wish to thank our
annual meeting sponsors:*



Nelson Byrd Woltz
Landscape Architects

Walace Decorative Arts Museum. Other locations of great interest that require driving would be Historic Jamestowne National Park, the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown, plus the Yorktown Battlefields where Cornwallis surrendered and the adjacent Visitor Center.

The Friday general session meeting begins with a welcome address from Cliff Fleet, President & CEO of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Speakers during this session include Mark J. Wenger, AIA, relaying the very beginnings of the Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area restoration; Will Rieley, PLA, on the rediscovery

and restoration of the Custis Square Garden; and Nick Lucchetti, archaeologist, discussing what research has revealed in historic gardens across Virginia. On the afternoon walking tour, we will visit the Custis Square site and take the CWF horticulture and arboriculture tours. Later, we will walk to dinner at nearby tavern for an authentic colonial repast.

Saturday brings us back to the ballroom to hear Tony Orband, associate director of grounds and gardens for the College of William & Mary, speak about the very first

(continued on page 4)



Governor's Palace Ballroom Garden.



Prentiss House Garden.

Photo Credit: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Photo Credit: Colonial Williamsburg.



Photo Credit: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Taliaferro-Cole House Garden.

Williamsburg garden created on the campus in 1693. Peggy Singlemann, director emeritus of horticulture at Maymont in Richmond, will talk to us about discovering our own historic gardens and how to proceed with design and maintenance of these treasured spaces. Jack Gary, executive director of archaeology at CWF, will discuss the new landscape master plan for the enhancement of the Historic Area. Our last speaker, Lynn Crump, ASLA, fellow and viewshed program manager for Scenic Virginia, will tell us about preserving historic viewsheds to extend the broad historic beauty of our cities and countrysides.

Saturday afternoon tours of the College of William & Mary Campus will show us the Wren Building ca.1695, the oldest college building in the US; the revered Sunken Garden that reflects Thomas Jefferson's vision, "the College shall forever look upon the country;" the recently installed Reveley Garden, recreated from the original Charles F. Gillette landscape design; and the Anderson-Kale Daffodil Tribute Garden of 30,000 early, mid-season, and late varieties of daffodils. We will then return to the Historic Area to visit engaging colonial gardens at homes and taverns. Always a "must-see" is the Governor's Palace with its manicured Palace Green designed by Governor Francis Nickolson in 1699. Formal parterre and terraced gardens are found behind the Palace.¹

There are two optional Sunday tours of James River Plantations. Tour #1: The south side of the James takes us across the river by ferry to visit Smith's Fort, site of Captain John Smith's proposed "new Fort" where a ca.

1765 manor house remains on the parcel of land given to Pocahontas from Smith as a wedding gift. Our next stop is Bacon's Castle, built in 1665, a rare example of Jacobean architecture with a reconstructed seventeenth-century garden.² We then visit Chippokes State Park, the oldest continuously working farm in America and which contains three historic homes on the site. Tour #2: The north side of the James brings us to three ca. early 1700s historic homes, Sherwood Forest, home of tenth President James Tyler, famous for its variety of trees, one being the oldest ginkgo in the US; Westover, home of the William Byrd family; and Berkeley, home of Benjamin Harrison V., signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Please mark your calendars for this incredibly special SGHS annual meeting. Williamsburg will be in its finest glory.

Judy Perry
Annual Meeting Chair
42nd SGHS Annual Meeting

Endnotes

- 1 Readers are encouraged to visit our website Gardens page June 3, 2025, post for a discussion of the Governor's Palace gardens: <https://southerngardenhistory.org/news/governors-palace-gardens-colonial-williamsburg-williamsburg-virginia/>
- 2 For more on Bacon's Castle, see the Gardens Page post for May 4, 2025: <https://southerngardenhistory.org/news/arthur-allen-house-bacons-castle-surry-county-virginia/>

ROOTED IN HISTORY!

Plans for new Martha Daniell Logan Memorial Garden take shape in Charleston

By Elizabeth Bush, Charleston, SC

She rose at the first hint of dawn, eager to feel the cool dirt in her hands. It was time to plant the turnips, onions, leeks and scallions. The rosemary and thyme needed to be clipped for drying. Mrs. Ravenel had requested some leaves from the turkey balm to calm her queasy stomach. A bouquet of sweet-smelling jasmine would be the perfect addition to the house. The garden was calling and Martha couldn't wait to dig in.

The above text is emblematic of what life may have been like for Martha Daniell Logan, as she tended to her horticultural duties in eighteenth-century Charleston, then known as Charles Towne. Described as a horticultural heroine of her time, Logan would become the first Colonial American to write a gardening column, and her friendship with renowned Philadelphia botanist and explorer John Bartram (1699-1777) would elevate

her standing even more. So much so, that a group on Daniel Island, where she spent many years in her youth, is hoping to create a memorial garden in her honor – the first to pay tribute to Logan and her many successes.

But, to best understand Logan's journey to gardening greatness, we must start at the beginning – when the seeds of her life were first planted. The daughter of Colonial governor Robert Daniell, she was born in 1704. Her birth was recorded in the Annals of St. Thomas-St. Denis¹ on the Cainhoy peninsula, just north of Charleston, but some researchers suggest she was actually born in North Carolina while her father was serving as deputy governor there (1703-1705).² If so, she likely returned to South Carolina and her family's Daniel Island estate around 1709, when her father reportedly left North Carolina, immersing herself in the lush Lowcountry landscape that

would become her botanical playground.

Robert Daniell died in 1718 when Logan was just thirteen. The following year, her mother married Col. George Logan Sr., and young Martha married her new stepbrother, George Logan Jr. The couple would move to Weeahoe, a Logan family plantation along the Wando River in what is known today as the Dunes West community of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. They would raise seven children there.

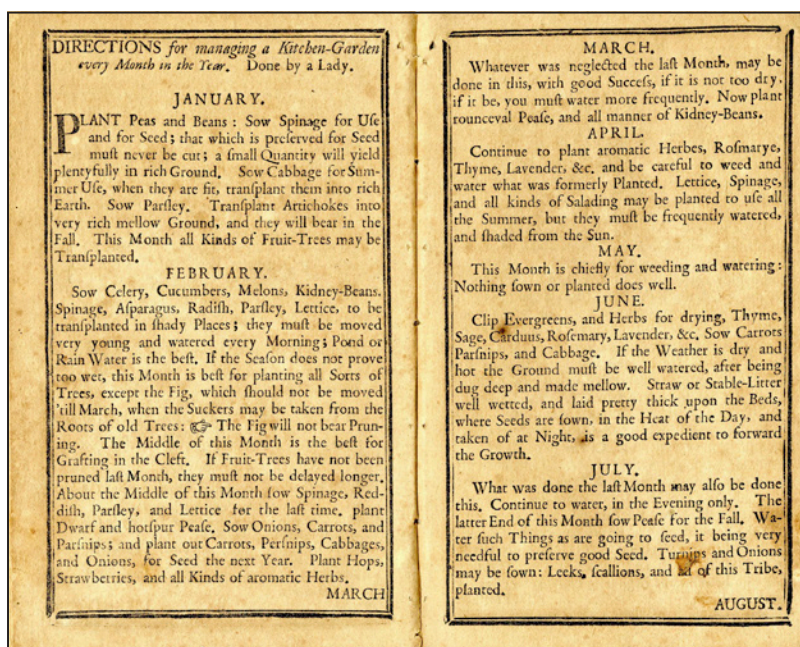
By the time Logan reached her late thirties,

something had shifted. For reasons not completely clear, she decided she needed to earn an income herself. Writers, researchers, and historians have speculated that she was experiencing either financial or family distress. But others feel she simply wanted to pursue her passions.

In the 1730s, the Logans begin listing properties for sale, including Weeahoe Plantation (although it would

be many years before it would change hands). By early 1742, Logan's husband had given her power of attorney to sell and manage the family's South Carolina properties.³ Although George would take up residence in North

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Two-page entry from the "Gardener's Kalendar" in the 1757 South Carolina Almanack, credited to "a lady" but written by Martha Logan.

Credit: Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society.



Advertisement placed in The South-Carolina Gazette and Country Journal by Martha Logan.

Credit: South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal - November 3, 1779.

ROOTED IN HISTORY... *(continued from page 5)*

Carolina, by all accounts they were still married. Logan soon took out newspaper advertisements seeking to board children in her home and provide instruction to them in reading, writing, and embroidery, first at her residence on the Wando River, later at another property in Beaufort, South Carolina, and then in Charleston, where she was living by 1749.

In 1752, she published a “Gardener’s Kalendar” in the *South Carolina Almanack*⁴, offering month by month advice on what to plant in gardens, when to plant it, and how to care for it. Due to restrictions on women of the day, the piece could not be directly attributed to Logan. The author was listed simply as “a Lady” (it would not bear her name until nearly twenty years after her death). According to Logan descendant Barbara Smith, horticulture senior associate - agent, HGIC, Clemson University: “Not only was this the first gardening calendar published by a Colonial American, but it also was written by a woman!”⁵

During this time, Logan also launched a nursery business from her gardens in downtown Charleston, offering seeds and flower roots.⁶ According to author and

historian Suzannah Smith Miles, however, pinpointing the exact locations of the gardens is somewhat difficult.⁷

“The first (garden) may have been alongside the Logan house at the corner of Church and Broad,” wrote Miles, in a research report on the Daniell and Logan families commissioned by the Daniel Island Historical Society in 2024. “I do not know if their house fell victim to the Great Fire of 1740 which took so much of the lower city...Nor do I know specifically where her gardens on ‘Trott’s Point’ were located. This was just above today’s Market Street -- which during Martha’s life was still a creek -- and may explain why various advertisements she places after receiving a shipment of seeds cited different locations that were perhaps easier for people to reach.”

Stefan White in his book *Heroines of Horticulture* noted: “In the 1750s, gardening had become a favored pastime among wealthy Charlestonians, and they especially sought landscaping with rare plants. Martha saw an opportunity when she realized that professional gardeners and written advice were scarcely available to amateur gardeners, so she started to supplement her



Credit: Museum of Fine Art, Boston via Wikimedia Commons.

“Portrait of a Woman Standing in a Garden” by Arthur Devis (1712-1787) reminds us of those who might have been Martha Logan’s customers.



Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

Martha Logan and her customers would have enjoyed radishes such as those painted by Bavarian artist Barbara Regina Dietsch (1706-1783).

nursery business income with horticultural writing.”⁸ Logan’s sage tips in her “Gardener’s Kalendar” were straightforward and practical. For example, in February she instructs her readers to sow celery, cucumbers, and melons, among other things. And she notes “If Fruit Trees have not been pruned last Month, they must not be delayed any longer.” In April, Logan encourages the planting of “aromatic Herbes, Rosmarye, Thyme, Lavender (SIC), &c. and be careful to weed and water what was Planted.”⁹

White’s book includes Logan in his list of one hundred “key, trailblazing women who established themselves as real contributors to America’s horticultural heritage, as founders of the evolution of gardening in North America, and to the very development of the U.S.A. and Canada.”

Logan would go on to edit and enlarge her calendar many times over the following two decades. Perhaps it was this foray into writing about gardening that caught the attention of John Bartram, Royal Botanist to King George III. Bartram spent his time traversing up and down the coast of colonial America to visit gardens from his station in Philadelphia. In 1760, while on a trip to Charleston, he paid a visit to Logan. That encounter would spark a friendship and years of correspondence between the two. They would not only share letters, but also tubs of plant cuttings, bulbs, and roots.¹⁰ Bartram would later tell his friend and fellow botanist Peter Collinson, who was based in London, that Logan’s “garden is her delight – and she hath a fine one.”¹¹

Logan would live to the age of seventy-five, leaving behind an extraordinary botanical legacy that would not be realized until well after her passing. Stefan White goes on to say in his book that Logan is among those who “changed the face of American history and its landscape, using their broad range of skills...Many simply ignored difficulties placed in their way, and plowed their own path.”

Today, the Daniell Island Historical Society is working to illuminate Logan’s contributions by creating the “Martha Daniell Logan Memorial Garden: Serenity Path



Detail of Revolutionary War map of Charleston drawn one year after Martha Logan’s death.

+ Labyrinth” in her honor. The group is currently seeking an ideal site for the garden and hopes to begin fundraising soon after. Logan’s own words, written in her gardening calendar more than 270 years ago, offer poignant inspiration for the project.

“A small quantity will yield plentifully in rich ground,” penned Logan.

The Daniel Island Historical Society and all involved in the garden project are confident the seeds they plant to honor Logan and her legacy will reap a bountiful harvest indeed.

Elizabeth Bush is president of the Daniel Island Historical Society, located in Charleston, South Carolina, and chair of the Martha Daniell Logan Memorial Garden Committee. For more information on the project, email [dihistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:dihistoricalsociety@gmail.com).

Endnotes

- 1 The Annals and Parish Register of St. Thomas and St. Dennis, South Carolina. <https://www.loc.gov/item/06039284/>
- 2 Researcher Ken Daniell, a descendant of Robert Daniell, has done extensive research on the family’s history and believes Martha Daniell Logan was likely born in North Carolina (shared through personal conversation with the author of this article). Author/Historian Suzannah Smith Miles concurs, as noted on page 7 in her report entitled *The Daniell and Logan Families*, commissioned by the Daniel Island Historical Society, October 2024.
- 3 22 January 1742: Power-of-Attorney George Logan of New Hanover Co., NC appoints Martha Logan of Charleston, his attorney, with authority to sell or mortgage his lands & slaves in SC (Langley: II:283).
- 4 Martha Logan, et al. *A Gardener’s Kalendar*, edited by Alice Logan White. (National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of South Carolina, 1976).
- 5 Barbara Smith, “Martha Daniell Logan’s 1752 Gardening Calendar,” <https://hgic.clemson.edu/martha-daniell-logans-1752-gardening-calendar/>
- 6 *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, 4 February 1766.
- 7 Suzannah Smith Miles, *The Daniell and Logan Families*, research report commissioned by the Daniel Island Historical Society, October 2024, 34.
- 8 Stefan White, *Heroines of Horticulture: A Celebration of Women Who Shaped North America’s Gardening Heritage*. (Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, 2023) 29-32.
- 9 Barbara Smith, “Martha Daniell Logan’s 1752 Gardening Calendar,” <https://hgic.clemson.edu/martha-daniell-logans-1752-gardening-calendar/>
- 10 Martha Logan and Mary Barbot Prior, “Letters of Martha Logan to John Bartram, 1760-1763.” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, vol. 59, no. 1, 1958, 38–46. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27566148>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2025.
- 11 “Martha Daniell Logan” in *History of Early American Landscape Design*, 21 Sep 2021, 14:25 UTC. 10 Aug 2025, 16:55 <https://heald.nga.gov/mediawiki/index.php?title=Martha_Daniell_Logan&oldid=41949>.

Credit: Sir Henry Clinton, Historical Maps of Alabama collection via Wikimedia Commons.

Crowfield Plantation Garden Site*

Goose Creek, South Carolina

By Ken McFarland, Bradon, VT

This article expands on a SGHS website Gardens post of June 17, 2025, on Crowfield, a William Middleton ruins site north of Charleston visited during the 1992 SGHS annual meeting.¹ Dating to the 1730s and originally encompassing approximately twenty acres, these gardens at Crowfield on Goose Creek once ranked among the finest in colonial South Carolina.

Aided by period documents, twentieth-and twenty-first-century studies, and archaeological evidence, what remains at the site can still tell the story of a landscape that inspired the awe of eighteenth-century guests and can have the same effect today... if a dose of imagination is applied.* Society members were able to challenge their own fantasy skills when we visited Crowfield. Our organizers were landscape architects Hugh and Mary Palmer Dargan, and we were thus fortunate to get detailed accounts of efforts to protect and shield the Crowfield garden ruins from residential and golf course development.²

A 1727 gift to William Middleton (1710-1775) from his father, Arthur (1681-1737), Crowfield chiefly produced rice, though cattle grazing enhanced profits along with indigo cultivation in later years.³ Like many other Lowcountry planters, William's grandfather Edward

Middleton (1641-1685) came not directly from England, but instead he first emigrated to Barbados in 1635. When he did arrive in South Carolina in 1678 he was therefore fully schooled in the application of enslaved African labor to the production of a staple crop, though he had to shift from sugar to rice. Once settled in North America, Arthur and son William would fall into group mainly with Barbadian roots known as the Goose Creek men. Among them South Carolina political power would settle in the early eighteenth century, and, not surprisingly, their estates would reflect great wealth and social status.

In her Spring 2000 *Magnolia* article, Elise Pinckney (descendant of Eliza Lucas Pinckney discussed below), recalls that during William Middleton's 1720s studies and explorations in England the impressionable young man visited several fashionable gardens.⁴ These included those at Mortlake near Kew and the Middleton family's Suffolk home, Crowfield Hall. It seems likely that he also would have known Alexander Pope's famed Thames-front villa at Twickenham. In England he thus saw mounts, canals, and fishponds along with other features that would reappear at his soon-to-be Lowcountry home place. While lacking a riverfront site such as Pope's villa or younger brother, Henry Middleton's 1740s Middleton Place, built on the Ashley River, William Middleton would have surely learned the importance of vistas and water to any proper garden.⁵ Mounts and aquatic elements therefore would be key to the Crowfield gardens.

No direct evidence found to date links Crowfield's design to a professional garden designer, but the final results suggest such a possibility. Nor should we rule out the early influence of William Middleton's wife, Mary Izard (ca. 1714-1735), the couple having married in 1730.⁶ As well, William Middleton, who is known to have possessed a large library, may have found inspiration in Dezallier d'Argenville's *The Theory and Practice of Gardening*, as did brother Henry later at Middleton Place.⁷ A 1994 *New York Times* article reminds us that Lowcountry residents also had available such publications



Photo Credit: Crowfield HOA.

Crowfield's surviving reflecting pond or "spacious basin" as termed by Eliza Lucas.



Photo Credit: Crowfield HOA.

Crowfield ruins today.

as Stephen Switzer's *Ichnographia Rustica*.⁸

Whatever the various influences, the final design for the Crowfield landscape *pro forma* took the brick mansion and its flankers as its focal point. In turn, the principal north-south axis ran through the center of the main dwelling starting from a public roadway on the south. We are fortunate that Eliza Lucas (she married Charles Pinckney 1744) left a 1743 description of the gardens as part of a series of plantation visits across the area:⁹

“The house stands a mile from, but in sight of the road, and makes for a very handsome appearance; as you draw near it new beauties discover themselves; first the fruitful vine mantling the wall, loaded with delicious clusters. Next a spacious Basin in the midst of a large Green presents itself as you enter the gate that leads to the House wch is neatly finishd, the rooms well contrived and elegantly furnished. “From the back door is a spacious walk a thousand feet long; each side of wch nearest the house is a grass plat ornamented in a Serpentine manner with Flowers; next to that on the right hand is what immediately struck my rural taste, a thicket of young, tall live-oaks where a variety of airey Chorristers pour forth their melody, and my darling the mocking bird joyn’d in the artless Concert, enchanted me with his harmony. Opposite on the left hand is a large square boling green, sunk a little below the level of the rest of the garden, with a walk quite round composed of a fine large flowering Laurel (*Magnolia grandiflora*) and Catalpas wch aford both shade and beauty. “My letter will be of unreasonable length if I don’t pass over the Mounts, wilderness, etc. and come to the bottom of this charming spot where is a large fish pond with a mount rising out of the middle the top of wch is level with the dwelling House, and upon it is a roman temple, on each side of this are other large fish ponds properly disposed which form a fine Prospect of water from the house. Beyond this are the smiling fields dressed in vivid green; here Ceres and Pomona joyn hand in hand to crown the hospitable board. . .” (Briggs, Charleston Gardens)

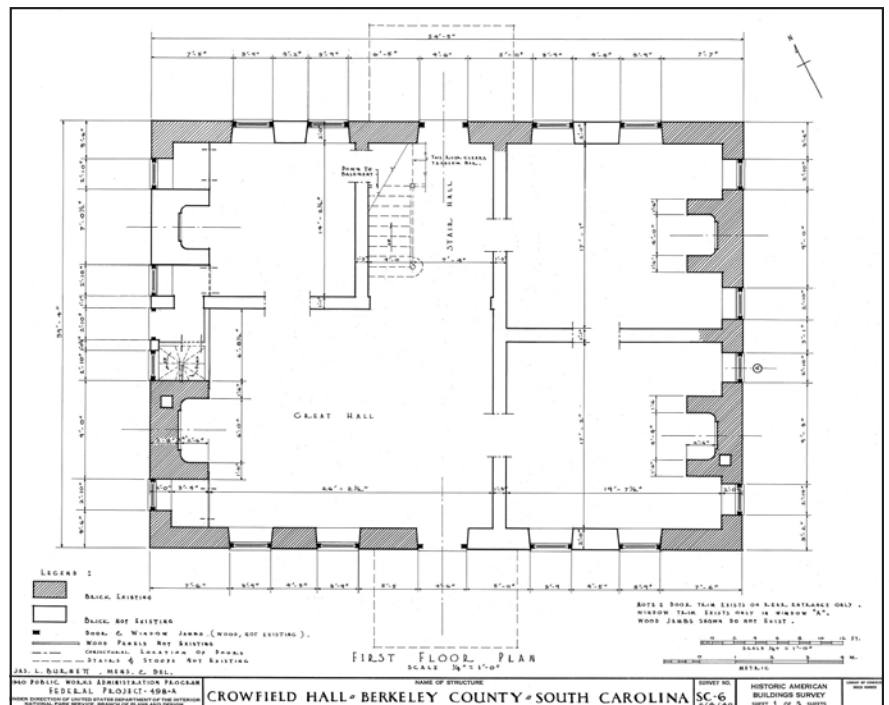
Lucas thus described a landscape that married long-established symmetrical garden designs with newer landscape features à la mode in early-eighteenth-century England. We learn of William Middleton’s “seat” which was first viewed distantly from the main road and then visited via a long carriage way. Interestingly, Middleton opted for straight-line access instead of a serpentine drive of a type growing

increasingly fashionable as the century progressed. Such drives were configured to allow periodic glimpses of the main dwelling complex prior to arrival, and Society members who attend the 2005 annual meeting perhaps will recall such a curving entry at Mount Airy in Virginia’s Northern Neck.

While Lucas does not mention trees bordering the drive, surviving old specimens and other sources indicate that it was shaded by live oaks. A 1936 account of the site also noted that the “driveway of the avenue is about sixty feet wide, and the distance between the trees, measured across it, about seventy feet.”¹⁰ One of Lucas’ first observations relates to a “vine mantling the wall,” this being “laden with delicious clusters.” Several interpretations have been suggested for this wall, conjecturing that it may have been a plantation “fence line” or protective barrier for a kitchen garden. Next mentioned is entering a gate after which visitors passed a still-surviving pond set within a “spacious green.” A 1938 Crowfield site plan by Augustine T. S. Stoney (fig. 1), which accompanies this article, indicates the drive then split into a semicircle fanning east and west around the pond prior to forming an elliptical forecourt for the house curtilage.¹¹ Recalling the phenomenon of free-range livestock grazing, we might also wonder if Middleton’s incorporated ha-ha ditches near the house, a feature referenced in d’Argenville and found at such contemporaneous estates as Stratford Hall in Virginia.

Readers will note that in the Stoney drawing the main house and flankers are separated by open spaces. Archaeological evidence, however, indicates that screening walls joined these buildings thus giving Middleton’s home more of a formal five-part Palladian configuration while

(continued on page 10)



Crowfield main house floor plan.

Crowfield Plantation... (continued from page 9)

offering a clearer dividing line between the southern and northern components of the overall designed landscape.

Walking north from the house, Eliza Lucas followed a wide path “a thousand feet” long, discovering first a “grass plat ornamented in a Serpentine manner with flowers.”¹² Though this lacks other details, one might imagine here some of d’Argenville’s French Rococo parterre designs. Results from 1992 Chicora Foundation archeological testing do provide helpful detail about the composition and appearance of this core segment of the Crowfield gardens along with insight on what might have been grown there.¹³ (See fig. 2, Stoney drawing detail) Thus, we learn that earth had been moved in to elevate the middle “about a foot” from the bordering terrain, the soil coming from pond and canal excavation on the garden’s northern end. The spot was further defined by berms on three sides, while the house and screening walls provided the southern boundary. In addition, while most of the space was top dressed just enough for grass, the area bordering the berms “was a linear planting bed several feet deep.”¹⁴ Here, perhaps, might have been found the flowers Lucas referenced, or shrubs then popular, such as...

To the east of the grass plat Lucas enjoyed a “thicket” of young live oaks filled with songbirds. Pleasing to her “rural taste,” the “thicket” seems a clear nod to a current English fashion for bosquets, a feature that was also popular in France. (See fig.2, Stoney drawing detail.) We might wonder again if William Middleton had been reading d’Argenville, especially Chapter VI, “Of Woods and Groves in general.” Here the author begins by saying “This Chapter contains all that is most noble and agreeable in a Garden, namely Woods and Groves, for no garden without these can be accounted handsome, since they make the greatest Ornament thereof.”¹⁵

The garden’s west side at this point featured a *sunken* bowling green bordered by a “double row” of southern magnolias and catalpas planted on or by the western grass plat berm. An excellent place for social gatherings, such open lawns were de rigueur in important designed

landscapes, such as the Williamsburg Governor’s Palace gardens discussed in the Gardens page post of June 3, 2025. Again, readers who visited Mount Airy in 2005 may recall a similar sunken bowling green on the garden side of the house.

On walking north from the grass plat, Lucas would have passed through an opening in the northern berm and by small brick buildings to her left and right, both seen on the Stoney drawing, fig. 2. The remains of the eastern structure, are reported to be “about 10 feet square” and “originally plastered and finished with a blue pigment.”¹⁶ It might be conjectured that indigo grown at Crowfield was used as the pigment noted here, though the purpose served by these buildings remains subject to interpretation.

Sadly, Lucas passed quickly over the Crowfield garden’s central area, referring only to “mounts, wilderness, etc.” Fortunately, however, a mount survives northwest of the house, sited immediately north of the one-time bowling green. (See fig. 3, Stoney drawing detail.) We can assume this feature has eroded since the eighteenth century, though it is still pronouncedly higher than the surrounding ground. From here, visitors would have had striking views of the main house, central garden features, the ponds to the north, and the surrounding rice and indigo fields. Note, too, that Lucas refers to “mounts” in the plural, seeming to indicate a feature other than the fish pond mount mentioned later in her sentence and discussed below. Site evidence, however, finds no support for this additional mount, and readers will note that within the elaborate central garden parterres depicted in the Stoney drawing only the surviving mount is included.

Crowfield’s gardens terminated with a still extant water feature visible from the main house and described as “a large fish pond.” This, in turn, centered “other large fish ponds,” which may have included the canal shown on the Stoney drawing at the northern edge of the garden. Attracting Lucas’ special attention was the mount “rising” from the lake, this being the setting for a “roman temple.” (Fig. 3) Though the lake mount is lost,

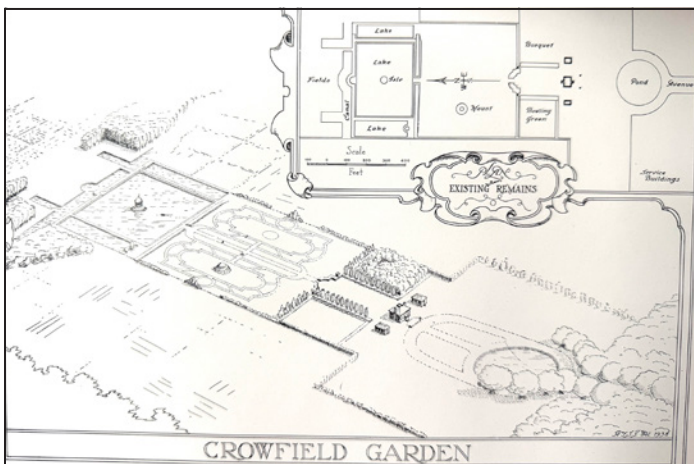


Fig. 1, Crowfield site plan, Augustine T. S. Stoney, 1938.

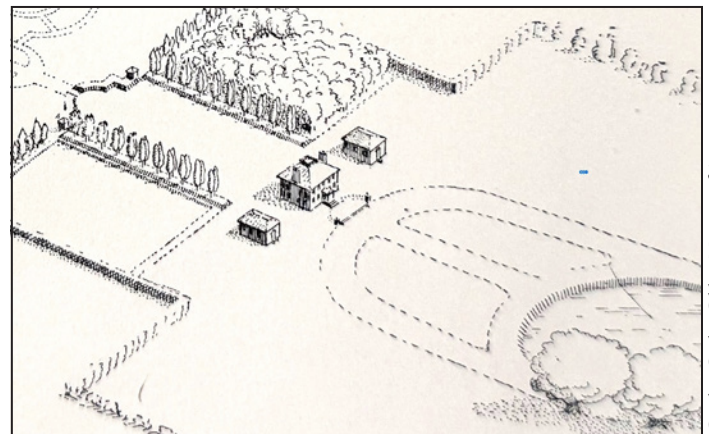


Fig. 2, Stoney drawing detail. Note grass plat to rear of house flanked by bowling green and bosquet.

the imagination cited in paragraph two above helps us envision not only the classical folly standing there, but we can also see William Middleton seated there and perhaps reading the works of Cicero or essays by Charles Pinckney penned under the name “Agricola.” This, after all, was the Augustine Era in England, and as Clemson Professor Andrea Feeser notes in her 2013 study of indigo in South Carolina, planters like Middleton were not averse to embracing the “image of civic-minded Romans bent on improving the circumstances of their community.”¹⁷

Crowfield’s lake mount did not build itself, and to no one’s astonishment, archaeologists have found extensive evidence of large-scale soil relocation in William Middleton’s gardens. (Of course, rice cultivation itself demanded extensive earth-moving operations, and such skills were already well established.) As discussed in the Chicora Foundation report cited several times, this was clearly an undertaking involving tons of earth being transported in baskets, dumped, and carefully packed down, with all due credit going to the many enslaved workers charged with such heavy manual labor.¹⁸

A conversation about the wider Crowfield cultural landscape would require a separate essay, but it should be noted here that quarters for those enslaved men, women, and children were located near the area marked “service buildings” in the lower right corner of the Stoney drawing inset map (fig 1). (Tax records show that in 1745 William Middleton then claimed ownership of one-hundred enslaved persons, but since he possessed 2,433 acres some of them may have dwelled at sites other than Crowfield.)¹⁹ Included there were not only dwellings but also a privy and barns, all being covered in depth in the Chicora archeology report. Surely one or more kitchen gardens were also in place, while beyond the plantation core lay the rice fields and their related water management features (perhaps involving the Crowfield garden ponds), plus indigo fields and an indigo processing area, and most likely some cereal grains growing for domestic consumption.

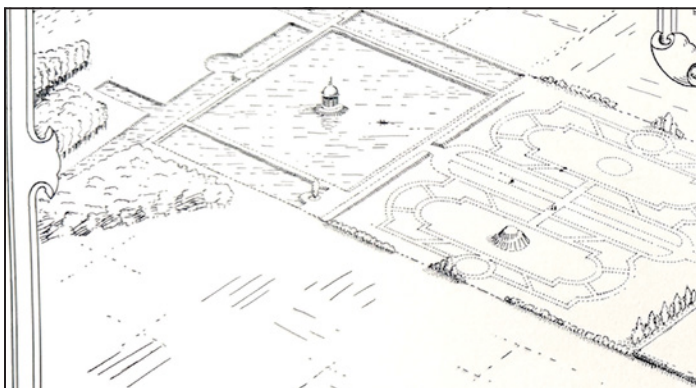
William Middleton enjoyed these remarkable gardens for only a few decades, selling his property and relocating to his recently inherited property, Crowfield Hall, in

England in 1754. Passing out of and then back into Middleton hands, Crowfield’s story is one of slow decline, the final blow given to the house by the earthquake of 1886.

*Today this publicly accessible gardens site is maintained by the Crowfield home owners’ association, under the leadership of Community Manager April Lipps. The author would like to thank her for sharing images of site features, along with providing information about ongoing site upkeep endeavors.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://southerngardenhistory.org/news/crowfield-plantation-gardens-site-goose-creek-south-carolina/>
- 2 <https://southerngardenhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/1991-Fall-Vol.-VIII-no.-2.pdf#page=1>
- 3 Arthur Middleton had acquired the 1440-acre core tract in 1722. For a Crowfield chronology, see: <https://south-carolina-plantations.com/berkeley/crowfield.html>
- 4 https://southerngardenhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Magnolia_Spring_2000-1.pdf#page=1
- 5 For our Middleton Place Gardens page post, see: <https://southerngardenhistory.org/news/middleton-place-charleston-south-carolina/>
- 6 William Middleton married Sarah Wilkinson (1726-1785) in 1747, just seven years prior to his 1754 sale of Crowfield and subsequent move to England.
- 7 For d’Argenville in English translation, see: <https://archive.org/details/theorypracticeg00DeYz/page/30/mode/2up>, hereinafter cited as “d’Argenville” with respective page number(s). Library source, 14. (200-300 books, archaeology, 14.) (20 acres, arch. 15)
- 8 Quoted in: <https://danelliott.wordpress.com/category/crowfield-plantation/>
- 9 <https://southerngardenhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/1991-Fall-Vol.-VIII-no.-2.pdf#page=1>. The Lucas recollection was also quoted verbatim by Mary Palmer Dargan in the Fall 1991 issue of *Magnolia*. Eliza Lucas (married Charles Pinckney in 1744) is particularly well known for her important role in introducing indigo as cash crop in colonial South Carolina. See also: <https://www.chicora.org/pdfs/rs57-Crowfield%20Slave%20Settlement.pdf>, hereinafter cited as “Chicora archaeology, 2003.”
- 10 Chicora archaeology, 2003, 20
- 11 This drawing can also be seen in S.G Stoney, et al, *Plantations of the Carolina Low Country*. Along with a brief description, the drawing is also included in <https://inlandrice.charlestoncounty.org/studying-c.html>.
- 12 Using modern maps of the site that a walk of 1,000 feet takes one to the northern side of the fish pond.
- 13 <https://chicora.org/pdfs/RC102%20-%20Crowfield%20Landscape.pdf>, 5, hereinafter cited as “Chicora archaeology, 1993.”
- 14 Chicora archaeology, 2003, 32
- 15 d’Argenville, 48
- 16 Chicora archaeology, 2003, 32
- 17 Andrea Feeser, *Red, White & Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina Life*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013, 55.
- 18 For further detail, see: Chicora archaeology, 1993.
- 19 Chicora archaeology, 2003, 14



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Fig. 3, Stoney drawing. Note mount at center right and Roman temple on fish pond mount.



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