

Horticultural Connections  
at Snee Farm

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A choked voice on the phone cried, “They’re cutting down the shrubs! We have to *do* something!” That phone call came from Snee Farm. The weeping park ranger continued, “I’ve gotten them to stop for the moment, but I had to beg in the name of our common humanity.” The park employees wielding the chain saws were just following orders. What was the problem here? Could plants be that important? How does one explain the ranger’s strong emotional reaction to the destruction of some old bushes? Was she nuts? What cherished values were threatened? Surely her visceral response illustrated the deep associative and evocative powers of landscape. Maybe botanists are not the only ones who connect to plants.

This paper grew out of that park ranger’s passionate concern for the plant material at Snee Farm, the Charles Pinckney National Historic Site in Mt. Pleasant, SC. Her phone call brought uncomfortable talks with park management about the destruction of two fragrant tea olives, a fifteen foot American holly and a large moss-draped cherry laurel. The 1998 Cultural Landscape Report for the site recommended the removal of 20th-century foundation plantings surrounding the 19th-century dwelling in order to effect visual compatibility with the historic period. So the park brought out the chain saw instead of a shovel. A shovel for transplanting would require compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Because these particular specimens were not of the period of significance (1754-1817), it was simpler to cut them down.<sup>1</sup>

The park’s small action cut to the heart of many conservation and preservation issues where there are potential conflicts between natural and cultural resource protection when we attempt interpretation at historic sites. It also illustrated the urgent need for further research on the role of horticulture and ornamental plants during the Pinckney period. In order for the existing ornamentals, both native and exotic, to be valued, there

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<sup>1</sup>Susan Hart Vincent, *Charles Pinckney National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*. (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 1998), 49.



must be a strong association with the colonial or federal periods of South Carolina's history. This paper is but a beginning effort to elaborate on the international horticultural world as it relates to the Lowcountry and to the Pinckney family. Its intent is to build upon the foundation of existing research and to explore the possibilities for interpretation of Snee Farm's ornamental garden. The Cultural Landscape Report pointed out the need for archeological research to determine the dimensions of the Pinckney gardens. It also called for management to periodically review proposed treatments and to make adjustments when more archeological or documentary evidence becomes available. This paper will examine the theoretical concepts of cultural landscapes, and will include a brief historical overview of Snee Farm and the role of horticulture during the Pinckney period.<sup>2</sup>

### **Cultural Landscapes**

Today Snee Farm is but a 28 -acre remnant of what was once a 700 to 800 acre holding in Christ Church Parish. Ninety percent of the original property has been lost to suburban residential development. However, within the remaining acreage are core areas that contain significant archeological material from the Pinckney era, including the 18th-century house site, domestic dwellings and outbuildings, a levee and a slave village. Two hundred years of use as an agricultural property is hinted at by the remaining circa 1828 lowcountry cottage, postbellum corn crib and early 20th century barn, and by the remaining road traces, fields, marshes and woodlands. The changing cultural landscape of Christ Church Parish - from the arrival of Europeans to modern day - reflects broad patterns of settlement and land use. Pinckney's Snee Farm also speaks to the economic, political and social relations of a slave society.

The American Society of Landscape Architects' committee on historic preservation classifies landscapes in three broad categories. The first are *designed*

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 53,47.



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*landscapes*, those “altered under a plan by a professional or avid amateur with verifiable results.” *Cultural landscapes* are “those that are altered through human interaction on the vernacular level, often related to a desired function and with a discernable pattern.”

*Natural landscapes* are “those that are relatively unchanged by human intervention.” As a vernacular cultural landscape, the grounds at Snee Farm reflect over two centuries of human intervention and offer rich and complex symbols for interpreting patterns of living. Unfortunately, aside from core areas, the cultural landscape at Snee Farm lacks the material integrity necessary for National Register eligibility.<sup>3</sup>

For purposes of historic preservation, the National Park Service defines a cultural landscape as

a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

There are four overall types of cultural landscapes: historic sites, designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes. These types are not mutually exclusive. Most historic properties have a cultural landscape component that is integral to the significance of the resource. Snee Farm is an historic site that incorporates a remnant of an historic vernacular landscape.<sup>4</sup>

The Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines for the treatment of cultural landscapes recommends research, documentation, analysis and comprehensive management planning. The goal of documentation is to provide a record of the landscape as it exists at the present time, thus providing a baseline from which to operate. All components that contribute to the landscape’s historic character should be recorded. While not always possible, the guidelines suggest that “to ensure full representation of existing herbaceous plants, care should be taken to document the landscape in different seasons.” In addition,

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<sup>3</sup>William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, (New York: Sterling, 1988), 125. Vincent, CLR, 2.

<sup>4</sup>Charles A. Birnbaum, “Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes,” in *Preservation Brief 36*, National Park Service, 1998, 1.





“assessing a landscape as a continuum through history is critical in assessing cultural and historic value.” The Standards are intended to promote responsible preservation practices and “consistent and holistic” approaches. As recommended by the guidelines, the Cultural Landscape Report uses “location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association” in evaluating historic integrity.<sup>5</sup>

The lack of material integrity reported in the Cultural Landscape Report does not mean that the present resources cannot be read as contributing to the site’s historical significance. In 1931 noted geographer Carl Sauer defined cultural geography as “concerned with those works of man that are inscribed into the earth’s surface and give to it characteristic expression.” More recently, scholars have criticized traditional historical perspectives of landscape as limited and static. “Their concerns were dominantly rural and antiquarian, narrowly focused on *physical artifacts*.” The “new” cultural geographer saw the landscape in a broader context and called attention to its symbolic dimensions. “The landscape was not merely a collection of material artifacts, each with a particular history; it actually comprised a set of symbols that reinforced the political, economic, and social structure within the society.”<sup>6</sup>

Geographer David Lowenthal added an important concept to the study of landscape when he argued that “every image and idea about the world is compounded, then, of personal experience, learning, imagination, and memory....The surface of the earth is shaped for each person by refraction through cultural and personal lenses of custom and fancy.” No longer was the landscape merely a collection of material objects, but perception and reaction (behavior) entered the equation. Carl Sauer had introduced this concept in 1941 when he wrote that a geographer “needs the ability to see the land with the eyes of its former occupants, from the standpoint of their needs and capacities.”

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<sup>5</sup>“Guidelines for Treatment of Historic Landscape Initiative,” National Park Service, 1998, 3,4.

<sup>6</sup>Carl Sauer quoted in John Winberry, “The Geographic Concept of Landscape: The History of a Paradigm,” in *Carolina’s Historical Landscapes: Archeological Perspectives*, ed. Linda F. Stine, Martha Zierden, Lesley M. Drucker, and Christopher Judge (Knoxville: UT Press, 1997), 5. Denis Jackson & Peter Jackson quoted in *Ibid.*, 8. Winberry, *Ibid.*



Not only were perceptions relative, but also different types of information can be conveyed by a landscape. Human landscapes have been described as autobiographies, reflecting tastes in visible form. “The landscape, therefore, was not just the complex of material traits that gave character to an area but a collection of objects rich in meaning and ready for interpretation by the careful reader/observer.”<sup>7</sup>

Even relict features from past landscapes cannot be understood at only one level. Lowenthal wrote that “Every trace of the past is a testament not only to its initiators but to its inheritors, not only to the spirit of the past, but to the perspectives of the present.” The features that we choose to preserve reflect the changing values of the present. In fact, “the landscape may tell us more about the past [that] people wanted to preserve than about the past as it was experienced.”<sup>8</sup>

Linda F. and Roy S. Stine have written extensively on cultural resource management issues in the Charleston area and throughout the Southeast, including archeological investigations at Snee Farm. The Stines emphasize that a landscape perspective leads to a “holistic investigation.” They assume that landscape is “comprehensive and cultural” as well as historic, and that an over-arching approach would be “holistic, interdisciplinary, multiscalar, and dynamic.” The Stines write that “landscape theory seeks to make connections between material remains, social institutions, natural resources, and human perceptions.”<sup>9</sup>

In a 1997 article, the Stines point to joint projects, such as Snee Farm, to illustrate the power of a landscape perspective. When the property was first acquired by preservationists the site interpretation focused on the house, identified as Charles Pinckney’s circa 1754 home. Further studies of the structure revealed that the house was probably not built until the 1820’s following the Pinckney period of ownership.

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<sup>7</sup>David Lowenthal, Carl Sauer, Peirce Lewis quoted in Ibid., 10. Winberry, Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>David Lowenthal quoted in Ibid., R.J. Johnston quoted in Ibid., 12.

<sup>9</sup>Linda F. Stine & Roy S. Stine, “South Carolina’s Landscapes: Innovative Research and Cultural Resource Management Perspectives,” in *Carolina’s Historical Landscapes*, 190. D.W. Meinig quoted in Ibid. Stine & Stine, Ibid.



Archeological studies, however, revealed significant evidence of the Pinckney period as well as an associated slave village. As the National Register nomination “stressed the qualities of the existing house and its association with Pinckney, the revised dating of the structure has called the qualifications evaluation into question.” But in terms of historical archeology, the site has proven a rich source of information. The Stines wrote that the National Park Service had refocused its efforts at Snee Farm in order to “interpret a succession of past landscapes to the public.” In addition, “Snee Farm data also illustrate examples of broad, important social and economic changes that have occurred throughout the lowcountry’s history.”<sup>10</sup>

### Site History

Christ Church Parish was created by the Church Act of 1706 which established the Church of England as the official church of the colony. Most of the early parishioners were poor farmers and mechanics. They raised free-ranging cattle and hunted abundant wild game. Some were involved in the Native American trade, selling hides and deer skins in Charles Town. Numerous Native American shell mounds provided a source of lime for mortar, whitewash, crude bricks and tabby. Clay deposits were a source for brick-making. Forest products such as turpentine, rosin, pitch, tar and lumber were also marketed.<sup>11</sup>

In 1708 the boundaries of the parish were the Wando River, Awendaw Creek and the Atlantic Ocean. The only artificial boundary was a line drawn from the cowpen of Captain Robert Daniel on the swamp at the head of the Wando to the cowpen of Joseph Wigfall at the head of Awendaw Creek. Like many other early colonists, Daniel had come to Carolina from Barbados. He served as governor of the province in 1716-7 and his plantation, Daniel Island, still bears his name. His daughter, Martha, was born in

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 194, 195.

<sup>11</sup> Anne King Gregorie, *Christ Church, 1706-1959: A Plantation Parish of the South Carolina Establishment* (Charleston: The Dalcho Historical Society, 1961), 7, 20.





1702, married George Logan and became well known in 18th-century horticultural circles. There are two George Logans in Christ Church Parish records, one of whom was Martha's husband. Colonel George Logan was one of the original Church Commissioners of 1706 and owned a plantation on the Wando River. George Logan, Jr. was elected vestryman in 1744.<sup>12</sup>

By 1721 there were 107 families living in the parish - 400 whites and 637 enslaved Africans. Among the parishioners listed in parish records is found Benjamin Law - elected a church warden in 1727. Joseph Law and James Allen are listed as parishioners in 1732. William Pinckney, Charles Pinckney's grandfather, is listed as a new member in 1740. These three family names are associated with ownership of the Snee Farm site.<sup>13</sup>

Original ownership of what is now Snee Farm can be traced to a 1696 grant of five hundred acres to Richard Butler, although an earlier 1685 map shows a Butler in the vicinity of the site. The property is bounded on the north by Long Point Road, a landmark feature remaining from early settlement times. Referenced as early as 1707 as the "Seawee Broad Path," the road connected Governor Nathaniel Johnson's lands on Sewee Bay with Bermuda Town. Historian Anne King Gregorie cites a 1707 Assembly act which ordered the widening of the path to sixteen feet. The road extended from Belvue-Bermuda Plantation to the west of Boone Hall to Christ Church at present day Highway 17. The 1719 establishment of Long Point Plantation apparently led to the renaming of the road. Highway 17 was formerly known as the Church Road to Hibbens Ferry, the Public Road, Old Georgetown Road and the King's Highway.<sup>14</sup>

Several subsequent owners enlarged the property before it was purchased in 1754

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 12,13, 7, 18, 40.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 25,28,32,37,38 Thomas Boone and Jacob I'On were elected vestrymen and Robert Brewton a new member in 1740. The Brewton and Pinckney families had multiple ties of kinship by marriage. A significant amount of Boone's landholding in Christ Church is maintained as an historic site while the remains of I'On's property is being developed as a suburban 'neotraditional' neighborhood.

<sup>14</sup> *Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, Historical Overview (June 1994)*, Atlanta: National Park Service, 22.



by Colonel Charles Pinckney, father of Governor Charles Pinckney. Col. Pinckney was a wealthy Charleston attorney, public servant and planter. He acquired Snee Farm shortly after his marriage to his cousin, Frances Brewton, sister of Miles Brewton. A working plantation of 715 acres, it was one of several owned by Pinckney. It is not known how the word “Snee” came to be associated with the property, but the term first appears in documents relating to the Pinckney purchase. “Snee” is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “bountiful, plenteous.” The plantation appears to have been at its most productive during the years 1754 to 1790, under the ownership of Col. Pinckney and his son, Governor Pinckney.<sup>15</sup>

After the fall of Charleston in 1780, Col. Pinckney took protection in order to avoid the loss of his property. The act of swearing allegiance to Britain is thought to have alienated him from his prominent Pinckney cousins. Yet historian George Rogers points out that when Pinckney died in 1782, his cousin Charles Cotesworth Pinckney wrote in praise of his character. During the British occupation of Charleston, Snee Farm served as parole quarters for William Moultrie and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. In his *Memoirs*, Moultrie noted:

When we got to Haddrell’s Point, it was very difficult to get quarters in barracks for the number of officers sent over; they went into neighboring houses within the limits of their paroles; and many built huts about the woods....Col Pinckney [Charles Cotesworth] and myself were in excellent quarters at Mr. Pinckney’s place called Snee Farm.

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney wrote over twenty letters from Snee Farm during 1780; but while they deal with family matters, they contain no descriptive material about his surroundings. In 1783, following the war, a widowed Mrs. Charles Pinckney wrote her son William: “I shall spend much more time at Snee farm....” In his 1991 report prepared for the Friends of Snee Farm, historian Walter Edgar further detailed the earliest family references to Snee Farm found in the journal of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the letters of

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<sup>15</sup> Vincent, *Cultural Landscape Report*, 7,8.



Thomas Pinckney. The references deal with visiting or dining with relatives at the farm and do not describe the physical landscape.<sup>16</sup>

When Colonel Pinckney died in 1782 he left Snee Farm to his son Charles. The probate inventory of Col. Pinckney's estate in 1787 lists forty enslaved people at Snee Farm, including a driver, sawyer, wheelwright, an oarsman, three carpenters, five field hands, a cooper and *a gardener*. Historian Edgar argues that even a family as wealthy as the Pinckneys would not have had a slave gardener "just for show." The presence of a gardener and his family is evidence that there were formal gardens to be tended.<sup>17</sup>

Young Charles Pinckney would be best known for his contributions to the development of the U.S. Constitution. As a member of the planter elite, he devoted forty years of his life to public service, including four terms as Governor of South Carolina, several terms in the state and U.S. legislature, as well as serving as Thomas Jefferson's Minister to Spain. Pinckney's outspoken defense of the institution of slavery at the Constitutional Convention as well as in the U.S. Congress pointed the way to the doctrine of nullification and John C. Calhoun. Following in his father's footsteps, Charles' son, Henry Laurens Pinckney, in the 1830's urged Congress to adopt a gag rule which would prevent discussion on the subject of slavery.<sup>18</sup>

Typical of the elite absentee planters of 18th-century South Carolina, Pinckney owned several other plantations and an elegant home in town. His other properties included Frankville and Hopton, two plantations on either side of the Congaree River, five miles below Columbia; a Georgetown plantation of 560 acres of tidal swamp and 600 acres of high land; 1200 acres at Lynches Creek; Fee Farm on the Ashepoo; a

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<sup>16</sup>George C. Rogers, Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1969; reprint, Columbia: USC Press, 1980), 127. William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution So Far As It Is Related to the States of North and South Carolina, and Georgia*, (2 vols. New York, 1802), 2:116. Mrs. Charles Pinckney II to Major William Pinckney, 30 March 1783, quoted in Walter B. Edgar, "Historic Snee Farm: A Documentary Record" (Prepared for the Board of Directors of the Friends of Historic Snee Farm, 1991), 6,7.

<sup>17</sup>Julia A. King, "Archaeological Investigations at Charles Pinckney Snee Farm, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina" (Prepared for Friends of Historic Snee Farm, 1992), 21. Edgar, "Historic Snee Farm," 5.

<sup>18</sup>Vincent, 9., Rogers, 130,163.





Haddrell's Point house called Shell Hall, a plantation on the Carolina side of the Savannah River called Wright's Savannah; a tract of land on the Santee above the canal, including a ferry called Mount Tacitus; and a house and garden lot at 16 Meeting Street in Charleston. He inherited Shell Hall from his mother, Frances Brewton. The Santee tract and ferry he acquired through his wife, Eleanor Laurens, whom he married in 1788. Eleanor was the daughter of powerful merchant, slave trader, statesman and planter, Henry Laurens.<sup>19</sup>

Although Snee Farm was his established country estate and a short distance from Charleston, it is not known exactly how much time Pinckney spent on the property. His activities in government would have kept him away from the Lowcountry for long periods of time. As Governor he established a residence in Columbia. During his second term as Governor, Pinckney invited George Washington to Snee Farm as a stop on his 1791 tour to Charleston. In a letter delivered to Washington at William Alston's plantation on the Waccamaw, Pinckney invited Washington:

to make a stage at a little farm of mine in Christ Church a few miles distant from hence. I must apologize for asking you to call at a place so indifferently furnished and where your fare will be entirely that of a farm. It is a place I seldom go to, or things perhaps would be in better order.

The above invitation should be read in the context of the times as a polite understatement. Would the Governor have invited the President to dine *alfresco* at a plantation, or farm, of which he was ashamed? The fact that "your fare will be entirely that of a farm," suggests that the farm produced table crops for consumption. After his May visit, Washington wrote in his journal: "Breakfasted at the Country seat of Governor Pinckney about 18 miles from our lodging place and then came to the ferry at Haddrell's Point..." The term "country seat" is the same affectionate term that Washington used for his own Mount Vernon.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Vincent, 9.

<sup>20</sup>As quoted in Edgar, "Historic Snee Farm," 7,8.



Between 1797 and 1807 Pinckney was annually elected to the vestry of Christ Church; however because of residency requirements, he only served during 1807. During these years he earned the reputation as “Blackguard Charley” because of his political tactics. He aligned himself with Jefferson’s Democratic Republicans, abandoning his earlier stance as a Federalist. He successfully campaigned for Jefferson in South Carolina against the Federalist candidate, his own second cousin, General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. The rift in the family would deepen. Federalist Alexander Hamilton wrote to console Charles Cotesworth Pinckney after the continued Republican victories: a “garden...is a very useful refuge of a disappointed politician.” General Pinckney did, in fact, retreat to the isolation of Pinckney Island near Port Royal harbor where he spent his time in agricultural pursuits.<sup>21</sup>

Governor Pinckney was beset with legal and financial problems for over twenty years. In 1816 he conveyed Snee Farm and other properties in trust to be sold to pay his debts. An advertisement in the *Charleston City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 21 February 1817, describes Snee Farm as “containing about eight hundred acres with the necessary buildings well suited for supplying the Charleston markets. Also, about 60 head of cattle which may be seen on the farm.” This description of the farm as “well suited for supplying the Charleston markets” suggests the production of cash food crops. Other County records describe the Pinckney property as “wholly unproductive” and one of several “in perishing condition the houses going to ruin and daily diminishing in value.” In 1817, Snee Farm was sold to Francis G. Deliesseline and passed out of the Pinckney family. Charles Pinckney died in 1824 at his home on Meeting Street and was buried in St. Philips churchyard.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Gregorie, 69. Marvin R. Zahniser, *Charles Cotesworth Pinckney: Founding Father* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1967), 226, 241

<sup>22</sup> Vincent, 11.



## The Pinckney Gardens at Snee Farm

Pinckney's family records were lost when his Meeting Street home was destroyed by fire in 1861. Because no family papers or plantation records of the Pinckney era at Snee Farm are known to survive, descriptions of the farm have been based on survey plats, deeds, wills and other legal documents. A 1783 survey plat shows property boundaries but no landscape details. An 1818 survey plat prepared for new owner Francis G. Deliesseline shows forested acreage, agricultural fields, rice swamp and a rectangular cruciform pattern to the north of the existing house. The cruciform pattern is considered evidence of a formal garden and is also represented on an 1844-5 copy of the 1818 plat (see attachments). The plats also indicates the avenue of oaks and what could be interpreted as ponds.<sup>23</sup>

Other documentary evidence of a garden is found in the records of an 1843-4 boundary dispute between subsequent owner William Mathews and Henry Horlbeck. The attorney for Mathews wrote:

Upon this tract there has been continous possession since the conveyance to Charles Pinckney and perhaps long before, and a handsome garden and adjoining pleasure grounds besides houses and fields have long existed on it and been carefully tended and embellished by Charles Pinckney, Governor Pinckney and the Plaintiff.

The lawyer's statement supports the existence of a *handsome garden and pleasure grounds*.<sup>24</sup>

A third reference to the Pinckney garden appears in an article by William Savage Elliott in the April, 1866 issue of *De Bow's Review*. Despite Elliott's reputation for romantic exaggeration and his use of florid Victorian language, Walter Edgar believes some credence should be given to Elliott's descriptions of the property. Elliott was a Pinckney descendant. He wrote that Charles Pinckney was "fond of rambling over his farm" in Christ Church Parish, the site of a "villa" with fountains, shrubbery, an artificial

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>24</sup> William Mathews v. Henry Horlbeck, et al, 7 April 1844. Charleston Court of Appeals. 1844-1845: 197-200 quoted in *Historical Overview*, 31.





lake and fish ponds. His description of “An avenue a mile long, with a grove of luxuriant oaks, led the way to the rustic residence...” correlates with the entrance avenue found on plat maps.<sup>25</sup>

In his report, *Historic Snee Farm*, Walter Edgar noted that the formal garden illustrated in the 1818 plat is very similar to two late eighteenth century Charleston gardens: Mr. Peronneau’s 1784 garden on Meeting Street and Mr. Mey’s 1787 garden on Pinckney Street. Furthermore, the 1787 inventory of Col. Charles Pinckney’s property listed “Negroes at Mr. Mey’s” in addition to the slave gardener at Snee Farm. The similarity of design indicates a common and popular trend in gardening. That Colonel Pinckney hired out his “Negroes” to work at Mr. Mey’s illustrates a dimension of labor relations in the Lowcountry.<sup>26</sup>

## Charleston Gardens

Wealthy planters with close ties to England were known to establish elaborate gardens as a sign of wealth and status. Henry Middleton, Henry Laurens, Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Charles Drayton, contemporaries of Col. Pinckney, fashioned their gardens from English models of the time. The popular style of *ferme orneé*, or ornamental farm, was characterized by geometric planting beds with straight walkways enclosed by hedgerows or fences. Stephen Switzer was the first to publish the term ‘ornamental farm’ in 1733 and ‘*ferme orneé*’ in 1742: “This Taste...has also for some time been the Practice of the best Genius’s of France, under the Title of la Ferme Ornee. And that Great Britain is now likely to excel in it, let all those who have seen the Farms and Parks of AbbsCourt, Riskins, Dawley-Park, now a doing.” The essence of this style was the ornamentation of

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<sup>25</sup> William Savage Elliott, “Founders of the American Union - Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina,” in *De Bow’s Review*, April 1866, Charleston Library Society archives, quoted in Ibid. 31 and Edgar, “Historic Snee Farm,” 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



hedgerows with a wide range of shrubs and climbers and the addition of herbacious flower-beds or borders. It often combined the planting of vegetables and herbs with ornamentals, mixing the “useful and profitable Parts of Gard’ning with the Pleasurable.” It has also been described as “linear wilderness planting.” The rectangular cruciform pattern found in the 1818 Snee Farm plat conforms to the style of *ferme orneé*.<sup>27</sup>

According to historian Ann Leighton, 18th-century plantings were characterized by combining the profitable with the pleasurable forms of gardening. She referred to John Parkinson’s *Paridusus in Sole, Paradusus Terrestris* of 1629, when she wrote:

...Parkinson’s listing of the Almighty’s reasons for creating gardens for men embraces the two first centuries of gardening in the New World and divides neatly between the two. God, says Parkinson, when He created Adam, inspired him with the knowledge of all natural things: “What Herbes and Fruits were fit, eyther for Meate or Medicine, for Use or for Delight.” The first half of the phrase, “for Meate or Medicine,” describes the gardening world of the seventeenth century in New England. “For Use or for Delight” serves well for the gardens of the struggling settlements farther south as they develop and become colonies and, finally, states.

The style of *ferme orneé* combined the profitable and the pleasurable in its plantings “for use or for delight.” Within the geometric design were fruits, vegetables and herbs, intended for the table or for market. Beyond the ornamental hedgerow or ditch boundaries were lands planted in crops or used for grazing or timbering. Documents and plats of Snee Farm suggest provision crops that served the markets in Charleston as well as providing food for the country gentleman’s table and that of his workforce.<sup>28</sup>

The celebrated contemporaneous gardens at Middleton Place show the influence of French and English gardening traditions on a grand scale. The rice fields beyond the gardens can be glimpsed from the terraced walks, providing a sense of unity between the garden and the working plantation itself. In a study of colonial American gardens, W.H.

<sup>27</sup> “Historical Overview,” 30. Sir Jeffrey Jellicoe & Susan Jellicoe, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 186.

<sup>28</sup> Ann Leighton, *American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century: “For Use or for Delight”* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 3.



Adams describes Henry Middleton's gardens:

The generous use of native magnolias and live oaks enhances the indigenous feeling and character while the *camellia japonica* forming the *allee* to the canal introduce an exotic note and reflect the Middleton family's international connections and travels in the eighteenth century.

Tradition has it that the camellias were introduced by noted French botanist and plant collector Andre Michaux (1746-1802) who visited Middleton Place several times. Adams writes that "Charleston had developed a number of nurseries and private botanical gardens, distinguishing South Carolina for its comparatively advanced interests."<sup>29</sup>

In addition to embellishing their country estates, Lowcountry planters maintained town gardens. Henry Laurens, Governor Pinckney's father-in-law, was known for his brick-walled garden on East Bay. That garden measured 600 by 450 feet and contained plants from around the world. Laurens employed an English gardener, John Watson, to maintain his grounds. Landscape historian W.H. Adams noted that "Thomas Jefferson later at Monticello was one of the few eighteenth-century Americans who could match Laurens' knowledge and interest" in horticulture. Noted physician and intellectual David Ramsay, Lauren's son-in-law, described Lauren's garden as "enriched with everything useful and ornamental that Carolina produced or his extensive mercantile connections enabled him to procure from remote parts of the world" including

Among other productions, olives, capers, limes, ginger, guinea grass, the alpine strawberry bearing nine months in the year, red raspberries, blue grapes...directly from the south of France...and vines which bore abundantly of the choice white eating grape called Chasselates blancs.

Like Ramsay, Governor Pinckney was married to one of Henry Laurens' daughters. The family connection deepened with the marriage of Pinckney's daughter, Mary Eleanor, to Dr. Ramsay's son, David, her first cousin.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> William Howard Adams, *Nature Perfected: Gardens Through History* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 282.

<sup>30</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: USC Press, 1998), 199. Rogers, 84. Adams, 283. The intermarriage between the Pinckney, Brewton, Laurens and Ramsay families is a prime example of the elite's marriage patterns, what one historian termed a "tangled web of cousinry."





Governor Pinckney's stately home at 16 Meeting Street also had a large garden. The garden was decorated as a promenade during George Washington's visit in 1791. Washington attended two dinners and a ball at Pinckney's home and wrote the Governor in November of that year: "I have received and thank your Excellency for, the painting of the aloe or agave which grew in your garden, and which you had the goodness to send me." The aloe was a large century plant which bloomed in Pinckney's garden in 1791. On the same day that he wrote the Governor, Washington wrote to William Moultrie, "However unnecessary it may be I will remind you of the plants and seeds you were to provide for me..." In a letter dated March 17, 1792 Washington thanked Pinckney for sending him a requested box of seeds.<sup>31</sup>

### **Charleston & the horticultural world**

Like Philadelphia, Charleston played an important role in the dissemination of plants across the Atlantic. The Pinckney family was involved in this exchange as early as 1704. Thomas Pinckney, the progenitor of the South Carolina Pinckneys, made his fortune privateering in the Caribbean for William and Mary before arriving in Charles Towne in 1692. In 1704 he forwarded a box of plants to London by way of a ship captain of whom he wrote "yu will hear of him Daly at ye Carolina Cofie House in Birchin Lane Ner ye Royall Exchange and he hath promised me to be very Careful in ye Deleverie of it..."<sup>32</sup>

In 1732, Charles Pinckney (Governor Pinckney's great-uncle) ran an advertisement in the *Gazette* for the sale of seeds from London. Sweet alyssum, cornflower, daisy, foxglove, periwinkle, snapdragon, stock, thrift, and violets arrived in the colony by way of such seed sales. These flowering plants are still the mainstay of

<sup>31</sup>Terry W. Lipscomb, *South Carolina in 1791: George Washington's Southern Tour* (Columbia, SC: SC Dept of Archives & History), 67. Pinckney Papers, copies on file at Charles Pinckney NHS.

<sup>32</sup>quoted in Mary Pinckney Powell, *Over Home: The Heritage of Pinckneys of Pinckney Colony, Bluffton, SC* (Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan Co., 1982), 26.



Southern gardens. From the West Indies came the begonia, four o'clock, lantana, and the *Parkinsonia* (Jerusalem thorn tree). By 1730, Mrs. Lamboll had a "handsome flower and kitchen garden upon the English plan." Mrs. Martha Logan was sending seeds and plants to Peter Collinson in England as well as to John Bartram in Philadelphia. Among the seven nationally important seed houses of the eighteenth century, three were based in Charleston and a fourth had strong Charleston connections. Henry Laurens, John Watson and Robert Squibb had seed houses and nurseries in Charleston. John Bartram's nursery in Philadelphia received plants and seeds from Mrs. Logan, the Lambolls, Alexander Garden and Henry Laurens of Charleston.<sup>33</sup>

The lush vegetation of the lowcountry caused historian George Rogers, in his *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, to exude:

When spring came, the fragrance of the flowers hovered sweetly in the air; indeed, the smell of flowers was scarcely absent the whole year through.

As earlier as 1592 Laudonniere, a French explorer, offered a glimpse of the Carolina coast:

We found the place as pleasant as possible, for it was covered with mighty oaks and infinite stor of cedars and with Lentiskes [myrtle] growing underneath them, smelling so sweetly, that the very fragrant odor made the land seem exceedingly pleasant. On every side were to be seen palm trees and other sorts of trees bearing blossoms of very rare shape and very good smell.

John Lawson's 1709 *A New Voyage to Carolina* is a thorough descriptive account of the natural history of the region. Lawson spent eight years studying the area. He pointed to the scarcity of cultivated flowers in the young settlement, but "as for the wild spontaneous Flowers of this Country, Nature has been so liberal, that I cannot name one tenth part of the valuable ones..." Lawson described plants and trees in terms of curiosity, pleasure, and practical uses. "The yellow Jassamin is wild in our Woods, of a pleasant Smell....the Bay-Berries yield a Wax, which besides its use in Chirurgery, makes Candles that, in burning, give a fragrant Smell...[the wax myrtle] Berry yields wax that makes

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<sup>33</sup> Rogers, 83-4.



Candles, the most lasting, and of the sweetest Smell imaginable...these are fit for a Lady's Chamber." In his list of timbers, Lawson describes four types of pine and their various "Domestic and Plantation Uses," ncluding "Pitch, Tar, Rozin, and Turpentine...Planks...Masts." Lawson's list of trees serves as a basic list of American trees, many which were soon to be demanded for English and French cultivation and for popularization in American gardens.<sup>34</sup>

Mark Catesby, the famed naturalist, was sent to Carolina in 1722 by Sir Hans Sloane, the founder of the British Museum. It was Catesby's work that introduced the British public to the flora and fauna of the colony. Catesby's *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*, two volumes printed in 1731 and 1743, contained over 200 illustrations and first descriptions of many species of American natural life. His *Hortus Europae Americanus* of 1767 suggested transplanting the American umbrella tree, the dogwood, the cassena, the live oak, and the yellow jessamine, which diffused its fragrance "to a great distance." Catesby thought that even the "Palmetto-tree of Carolina" might grow in England since it was the only palm he had discovered growing outside of the tropics. The grandest of exports to England was the *Magnolia grandiflora*, a species of laurel. As early as 1735, Sir John Colleton's estate in Devonshire had specimens of "this magnificent evergreen." whose "ample and fragrant blossoms, the curious structure and beauty of its purple cones and pendent scarlet seeds, successively adorn and perfume the woods from May to October...."<sup>35</sup>

Around the same time, a young Eliza Lucas (later Pinckney) wrote her brother soon after moving to South Carolina from Antigua:

...we have a most charming spring in this country, especially for those who travel through the Country for the scent of the young mirtle and Yellow Jasmin with which the woods abound is delightful.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., James R Cothran, *Gardens of Historic Charleston* (Columbia: USC Press, 1995), 2., Leighton, 59, 63, 65, 69,71.

<sup>35</sup> Rogers, 83, Cothran, 2.





This same Eliza Lucas has traditionally been credited with the introduction of indigo as a cash crop in the colony. While others share the credit for its introduction, Miss Lucas played an important role in successfully cultivating indigo and demonstrating the crop's economic potential. Miss Lucas experimented with cotton, Guiney corn, ginger, and alfalfa and planted oaks for timber, a cedar grove, fig orchard and flower garden. An avid plant collector, she exchanged plants and seeds with her many acquaintances abroad. Miss Lucas married Charles Pinckney, who shared her interest in horticulture. Their sons, Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, were statesmen and leaders in agricultural innovation.<sup>36</sup>

Another contributor to the knowledge of plants was physician, botanist and zoologist, Dr. Alexander Garden, who was a fellow of the Royal Society of London and a leading participant in Charleston's intellectual and cultural life. He was a friend and correspondent with Linneaus, the Swedish botanist who established the modern system of plant classification. Linneaus named the gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*), or cape jasmine, for Dr. Garden. The gardenia originated in China and was introduced into Charleston around 1762. Long a favorite in Southern gardens, it is known for its glossy leaves and large fragrant white flowers.<sup>37</sup>

John Bartram (1699-1777), the Quaker plant hunter and the first American born botanist, made several trips to Charleston and maintained ties with a number of the city's natural history and plant enthusiasts. Bartram was a leader in the exchange of plants with English collectors, among them Peter Collinson. Eventually appointed King's Botanist to George III, Bartram was responsible for the introduction to Europe of numerous different plants from the East coast of America. He corresponded with Linneaus who called him "the greatest natural botanist of his time." Dr. Alexander Garden welcomed Bartram to

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<sup>36</sup> Letter from Eliza Lucas Pinckney's Letterbook, South Carolina Historical Society. Edgar, *South Carolina*, 146., Cothran, 9. Eliza Lucas Pinckney was Governor Charles Pinckney's great-aunt.

<sup>37</sup>Cothran, 3. , Robert Shosteck, *Flowers and Plants: An International Lexicon with Biographical Notes* (New York: Quadrangle/NY Times Book Co., 1974), 114.



Charleston in 1760 and introduced him to friends with gardening interests, among them Thomas Lamboll, another long time correspondent of the British plant collector, Peter Collinson. Thomas Lamboll is credited with introducing the chinaberry or pride of India (*Melia azedarach*) into Charleston. Like Henry Laurens, the Lambolls maintained large gardens for both flowers and vegetables and exchanged letters, advice and plant materials with Bartram.<sup>38</sup>

Bartram visited the garden and nursery of Martha Logan at Trott's Point. He and Mrs. Logan kept up a lively exchange of plants and letters for a number of years. He referred to Mrs. Logan as "my fascinated widow" who would "pass thro fire or water to get any curiosity for mee alltho our personal acquaintance was but A few minits & with much company." Mrs. Logan was well-known in Charleston for her horticultural expertise and her *Garden Kalendar*, printed in the local almanac for the years 1751-60, was the first published in America. Besides her plant nursery she also managed a plantation on the Wando River in Christ Church Parish.<sup>39</sup>

Mrs. Sarah Hopton also sent plants to Bartram. On another trip through Charleston, Bartram stopped at William Hopton's plantation on the Wando where he walked through rice grounds and beside salt marshes. But the botanist was so interested in the varieties of palmettoes that he didn't record any further details of his visit to what Hopton facetiously called "Starvegut Hall." Hopton's plantation was located across the Wando from the village of Cainhoy on Daniel Island (see attachment). This visit to Hopton's put Bartram in the vicinity of Snee Farm in 1765.<sup>40</sup>

Dr. Alexander Garden at times sent letters and plants to Bartram by way of Charleston ladies visiting in Philadelphia, "not doubting but it will give you joy to see a

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<sup>38</sup>Penelope Hobhouse, *Gardening through the Ages: An Illustrated History of Plants and their Influence on Garden Styles - from Ancient Egypt to the Present* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 264,5. Edmund Berkeley & Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *The Life and Travels of John Bartram: From Lake Ontario to the River St. John* (Tallahassee: FSU Press, 1982), 186,187., Cothran, 6.

<sup>39</sup>Berkeley & Berkeley, *Life and Travels*, 187. Edmund Berkeley & Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *The Correspondence of John Bartram (1734-1777)* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 559, 594.

<sup>40</sup>Gregorie, 49. Berkeley & Berkeley, *Life and Travels*, 187.



Lady coming so far to view & Admire your Curiosities.” Writing to the imaginative

Bartram in 1766, Garden expressed his disdain for the intellectual climate in Charleston:

Think that I am here, confined to the sandy streets of Charleston, where the ox, where the ass, and where men as stupid as either, fill up the vacant space, while you range the green fields of Florida, where the bountiful hand of Nature has spread every beautiful and fair plant and flower, that can give food to animals, or pleasure to the spectator.

But for the enthusiastic Bartram, Carolina was a place rich in natural material:

I think there is in Carolina two sorts of sweet bay & three or more sorts of Candle berry mirtle & A wonderfull variety of oaks *Oh Carolina Carolina A ravishing place for a A curious Botanist*<sup>41</sup>

Henry Laurens took an active interest in the work of John Bartram and his son, William. They not only exchanged plants and seeds, but personal advice. Laurens visited “young Billy” at his “hovel” on the St. John’s River where the young man was attempting to establish himself as a planter. After several visits to this “least disagreeable” and “unhealthy” spot, Laurens wrote the elder Bartram about the “forlorn state of poor Billy Bartram” and his “discouraging situation.” The gentle naturalist-artist whom the Creek Indians in Florida called “Puc Puggy,” the “Flower Hunter,” was in a state approaching despondency. Laurens had business interests in Florida and eventually brought young William back to Charleston on board one of his ships.<sup>42</sup>

In examining correspondence between Charleston and Philadelphia dealing with natural history and plant material, the names of noted physician Benjamin Rush and statesman Benjamin Franklin appear. Franklin was a good friend of Bartram’s. In 1999 a commemorative stamp was issued honoring the work and spirit of John Bartram and his son, William. The illustration on the stamp is a detail of a painting done by William of a branch of the *Franklinia alatomaha* tree, the Bartrams’ most famous discovery. John and William discovered this plant along the Altamaha River in Georgia in 1765 and it was

<sup>41</sup> Berkeley & Berkeley, *Correspondence*, 522, 658, 558.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 670-673, Henry Savage, Jr & Elizabeth J. Savage, *Andre & Francois Andre Michaux* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), 226.





later named for Franklin. During a return trip, son William collected seeds but he did not bring them back to their garden in Philadelphia until just before the death of his father in 1777, so John Bartram never saw the *Franklinia* in bloom. It is through William's later writing that we learn "This very curious tree was first taken notice of about ten or twelve years ago, at this place, when I attended my father on a botanical excursion; but, it being then late in the season, we could form no opinion to what class or tribe it belonged." While this tree has disappeared from the wild, it is grown in many American and European gardens.<sup>43</sup>

"This place" below Fort Barrington on the Altamaha was where in 1765 the Bartrams had found another "curious" shrub. Describing it on a later expedition, William wrote that it was "equally distinguished for beauty and singularity." It is today known as the fever tree or Georgia Bark (*Pinckneya pubens* Michx.). In 1791 Royal French Botanist Andre Michaux found Bartram's curiosity on the banks of the St. Mary's. Writing many years later, Michaux's son recalled: "he carried seeds and young plants to Charleston and planted them in a garden he possessed there. Though entrusted to an ungrateful sod, they succeeded so well that in 1807 I found several of them 25 feet high and 7 or 8 inches in diameter." Andre Michaux named the plant for his friend Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, "from whom," wrote his son, "my father and myself, during our residence in Charleston received multiplied proofs of benevolence and esteem."<sup>44</sup>

Botanist Andre Michaux and his fifteen year old son arrived in New York in 1785, by way of commission from Louis XVI, to collect plants in the New World that might have economic potential for France. The following spring they visited William Bartram at John Bartram's botanical garden near Philadelphia and returned there many times. Andre Michaux spent eleven years botanizing throughout the eastern States,

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<sup>43</sup> Lisa Smith, "Happy Birthday Mr. Bartram," *National Historic Landmarks Network*, Vol II, No I, (NPS, Summer 1999), Berkeley & Berkeley, *Life & Travels*, 245,6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Mark Van Doren, ed. *Travels of William Bartram* (Philadelphia: James & Johnson, 1791; reprint, Toronto: Macy-Masius, 1928; New York: Dover, 1955), 41. Savage & Savage, 112.



following much the same route of exploration that John and William Bartram had taken. Besides finding trees that would be suitable for forestry in France, Michaux was responsible for the introduction of numerous plants into the Americas. Michaux and his son moved to Charleston in 1787 and established what would soon be called the French Garden about 10 miles from Charleston in Goose Creek. Michaux's discovery and classification of American plants, as well as his introductions to American gardens, made his contribution to botany a major one.<sup>45</sup>

In 1787 Michaux sent to France seeds or plants from Charleston, including, among others, the palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*); honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*); *Magnolia grandiflora*; two other species of magnolia (*fraseri* and *tripetala*); Hercules'-club or toothache tree (*Zanthoxylum - clava-herculi*); *Sassafras*; loblolly bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*); the persimmon tree (*Diospyros*); beauty berry (*Callicarpa*); witch hazel (*Hamamelis*); the silver bell tree (*Halesia*); and the sweet pepper bush (*Clethra*). The first of many large shipping chests also included the seeds of the climbing yellow jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*), which Michaux called *Bignonia sempervirens*; the dainty partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*); Spanish bayonet (*Yucca gloriosa*); and the passionflower (*Passiflora*), bearing large egg-shaped fruit that pop when pressed - known as maypops to children. Michaux was entranced by the flaming red native azalea. He collected seeds of many species of oak (*Quercus*); of bald cypress [*Cupressus distichia* (*Taxodium distichum*)]; black gum (*Nyssa montana* - probably *N. sylvatica*); and the cassina (*Ilex cassine*). By the end of the year more chests included the seeds of the tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*); the sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*); cypresses and tupelos.<sup>46</sup>

Plants travelled in both directions across the Atlantic. In November 1787 Michaux was in Charleston to receive shipments of plants from France via New York, as part of

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<sup>45</sup> Hobhouse, 266,267., Cothran, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Savage & Savage, 57, 80, 81.



the botanical exchange agreed upon in his royal commission. Planted in the French king's Carolina garden, plants introduced by Michaux include *Camellias*; the fragrant sweet olive or tea olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*); and crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*).

Michaux is also credited with introducing the Chinese tallow or candleberry tree (*Sapium sebiferum*), also known as the popcorn tree; the mimosa or silk tree (*Albizia julibrissim*); and the gingko or maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*). Michaux's Charleston garden was especially important because it was from here that many old-world species were introduced into the young United States. Many of these exotic plants had earlier been introduced into England. The camellia arrived in Britain by 1739 from China; the mimosa from the Levant by 1745, the gardenia from China by 1754, the crape myrtle from the East Indies by 1759, the tea olive from China by 1771, and the hydrangea from China by 1788.<sup>47</sup>

South Carolina planters were eager to adorn their gardens with such imported curiosities. Michaux proved an excellent source. Historian George Rogers wrote that by following Michaux' advice,

the surrounding planters turned their plantations into paradises. Although the gardenia was brought in before him by Dr. Alexander Garden of Otranto and the poinsettia was brought in after him by Poinsett, Michaux deserves first place among importers of new flowers.

According to family tradition, old camellias and an ancient crape myrtle at Middleton Place were presented to the family by Michaux. Drayton Hall was also frequently visited by both Michauxs. While Snee Farm can make no such claims to plants actually touched by Michaux, there are connections by association, as the Michauxs were personal friends of Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Governor Pinckney's second cousins. Andre Michaux named one of the Bartrams' discoveries for Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. The rare *Pinckneya pubens*, or fever tree, was used by early inhabitants for

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 81, Cothran, 7, Rogers, 85.





treating malaria and other fevers.<sup>48</sup>

## Agricultural Innovations

The Pinckney family were agricultural innovators, operating within the framework of a developing slave society. They were active in the the transatlantic movement of plants, people and ideas - a dynamic process of cultural exchange that affected all areas of life in the Lowcountry. Economic historian Joyce E. Chaplin has written an intriguing cultural history of the Lower South that uses changes in agriculture to trace the extent to which white inhabitants redefined themselves as a modern people. Her period of study, the years between 1720 and 1815, is considered the region's golden era - for the white population. It was during this time, "when the sun still shone on plantation agriculture," that the Lower South made its fortune on vegetation imported from far off places. Chaplin points to "David Ramsay who emphasized, in 1809, that all of South Carolina's crops (except maize, sweet potatoes, and Indian peas) were, not natives, but 'exotics' brought from afar." Charleston's commerce was supported by rice, then indigo, and later cotton, all imported cash crops.<sup>49</sup>

The Pinckneys experimented with indigo and silk culture, and were interested in technical improvements in rice cultivation. They researched and collected drawings of Dutch agricultural machinery, including pumps and waterwheels, as well as European threshing and milling machines. Both Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney were founding members and officers of the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, established in 1785. The Society encouraged the spread of innovative cultivation practices, such as the use of experimental plots and more scientific record-keeping. With a membership composed of elite planters, this Society also served social and political functions far

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 86, Savage & Savage, 61, 226, Cothran, 128. Present day horticulture students from a local college claim to have found remnants of Michaux' French Garden plantings at the site of Charleston's airport.

<sup>49</sup> Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation & Modernity in the Lower South, 1730 - 1815*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993), 3,4,142.



beyond its stated purposes of “promoting and improving agriculture.” The organization modeled itself on the Royal Society of Arts by awarding gold medals and premiums, “but it gave itself a new, patriotic and national identity by establishing contacts with learned men throughout the Republic.” Thomas Jefferson was its first honorary member.<sup>50</sup>

Charles Pinckney is noticeably absent from the Society records and from its official history, *This Our Land*, written in 1949. Perhaps this indicates that Pinckney’s interests lay more in political matters at the state and federal level. Or perhaps the schism within the Pinckney family had occurred before “Constitution Charley” broke with his Federalist cousins. However invisible, Governor Pinckney *was* a member of the Society. Evidence of his membership is found in court judgments - in 1798 the Society sued him for four years of outstanding membership dues.<sup>51</sup>

In their pursuit of new commercial crops, Eliza Lucas Pinckney’s three children experimented with sugar cane. Although sugar was not as successful as that grown in the West Indies, the Caribbean proved an important source and testing ground for exotic products such as indigo and citrus. Henry Laurens grew West Indian “guineau” and “Scotch” grasses, ginger from Jamaica, as well as pineapples from South America. Planters acquired cotton from islands that had produced it since the 17th-century and had improved strains derived from the Old and New Worlds.<sup>52</sup>

Chaplin writes that “considering their long-standing association with Africa established by the slave trade, it is surprising that whites in the Lower South did not experiment more with African crops.” This lack of interest paralleled a disregard for South American plants, perhaps because planters considered both places to have extremely torrid climates and “because they were prejudiced against regions that lacked what they would recognize as civilized cultures.” Rather than importing African crops,

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 140, 143., Chalmers S. Murray, *This Our Land: The Story of the Agricultural Society of South Carolina*. (Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan Co., 1949), 32, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Agricultural Society of South Carolina Records, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, SC., Notes of Marty Matthews, PhD Candidate, University of South Carolina, 9-22-99, Sept. 1, 1798 judgment.

<sup>52</sup> Chaplin, 153, 154.



planters most often discovered them in their enslaved workers' gardens. "For these crops, blacks were the true experimenters and relied on a transatlantic network much different from that emanating from the Royal Society. Through the Atlantic slave trade, blacks had gradually transferred African plants (like sesame, guinea corn, okra) and native American crops transplanted in Africa (peanuts and capsicum peppers) to lands where they were enslaved." White planters became interested in slaves' products only when they learned of external markets for them, as in the case of peanuts and sesame (benne).<sup>53</sup>

Chaplin traces the correlation between established commercial agriculture and the urge to reform or diversify it, especially to prevent greater dependence on slavery. But even as planters actively sought to improve their society and economy, they were anxious over the corrupting influence of progress and commerce. The basis for planter accomplishments, as well as the root of their anxieties were the same: race-based chattel slavery. While slavery made it possible to attain the planters' golden age, the institution also limited the Lower South's ability to compete in the contemporary world. Charles Pinckney saw potential conflicts in the regional differences of the young republic. As a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, Pinckney saw southern economic interests as hostile to, not supplemental to, northern interests.<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusions

The landscape at Snee Farm represents over two hundred years of continuous use for profit and pleasure. The rich variety of native flora evoke the adventures of early plant hunters. In their wanderings, Lawson, Bartram and Michaux found magnolia, live oak, cedars, longleaf and loblolly pine, dogwoods, american holly, wax myrtle, sea lavender, marsh grasses, cherry laurel, carolina jessamine, smilax, sassafras, palmettos, spanish moss, resurrection fern, hickory and pecan trees, all of which can be found today at Snee

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 183, 361, Rogers, 129.





Farm. Also present are camellias, azaleas, crape myrtles, chinaberry, tea olives, and flowering bulbs. These exotic ornamentals embellished 18th-century Lowcountry gardens. In fact, many species of trees and shrubs that today grace the modern landscape at Snee Farm were present in the Lowcountry during the Pinckney era.

The important connection of horticulture with the world of planter society in Charleston includes international ties to Europe, the Far East, the Caribbean and Africa. The discovery and cultivation of various plants are a significant part of cultural history, shaping economies and societies. Just as sugar represents the Caribbean and rice the Lowcountry, the large *camellia japonicas* are powerful symbols of South Carolina's eighteenth century ruling class. As an exotic import from the Far East, they speak to the global nature of trade and a lively interest in natural history.

Commercial agriculture based on a slave labor system was also a part of Snee Farm's history. Rice, indigo and cotton, provision crops, timber, maize, peas, and sweet potatoes were at one time grown on the property. The *ferme ornee*, or ornamental farm, where useful crops were grown alongside ornamentals, was tended by enslaved labor. Later tenant farmers and hired help continued the tradition of providing table crops for Charleston markets by way of truck farming. Subsequent owners also continued planting ornamentals for enjoyment. There is no question that plants have played a defining role in the history of Snee Farm, its inhabitants, and that of the young nation.

The loss of rural green space to suburban development only increases the value of what little remains of former productive agricultural land. Snee Farm is but a remnant of its original land grant. The encroaching suburbs, golf course and tennis courts, are 20th-century changes that reflect urban sprawl and changing land use along the southeast coast. Like the archeological materials and standing vernacular structures, the plants that remain at Snee Farm were a part of its continuous use as a country seat and working farm. The fact that the current specimens were not present during Pinckney's lifetime does not diminish their power to evoke a sense of time and place. Evidence shows that



these varieties were present in Charleston during the Pinckney era.

Plants do speak across time. The camellia by its beauty and the tea olive by its fragrant scent connect a person with the past and suggest imaginative possibilities. While Governor Pinckney may have paused to admire a bloom, surely the enslaved Ben knew whose labor and sweat made that fragrant garden possible. Thus the doors are opened to examine the contradictions of the young nation.



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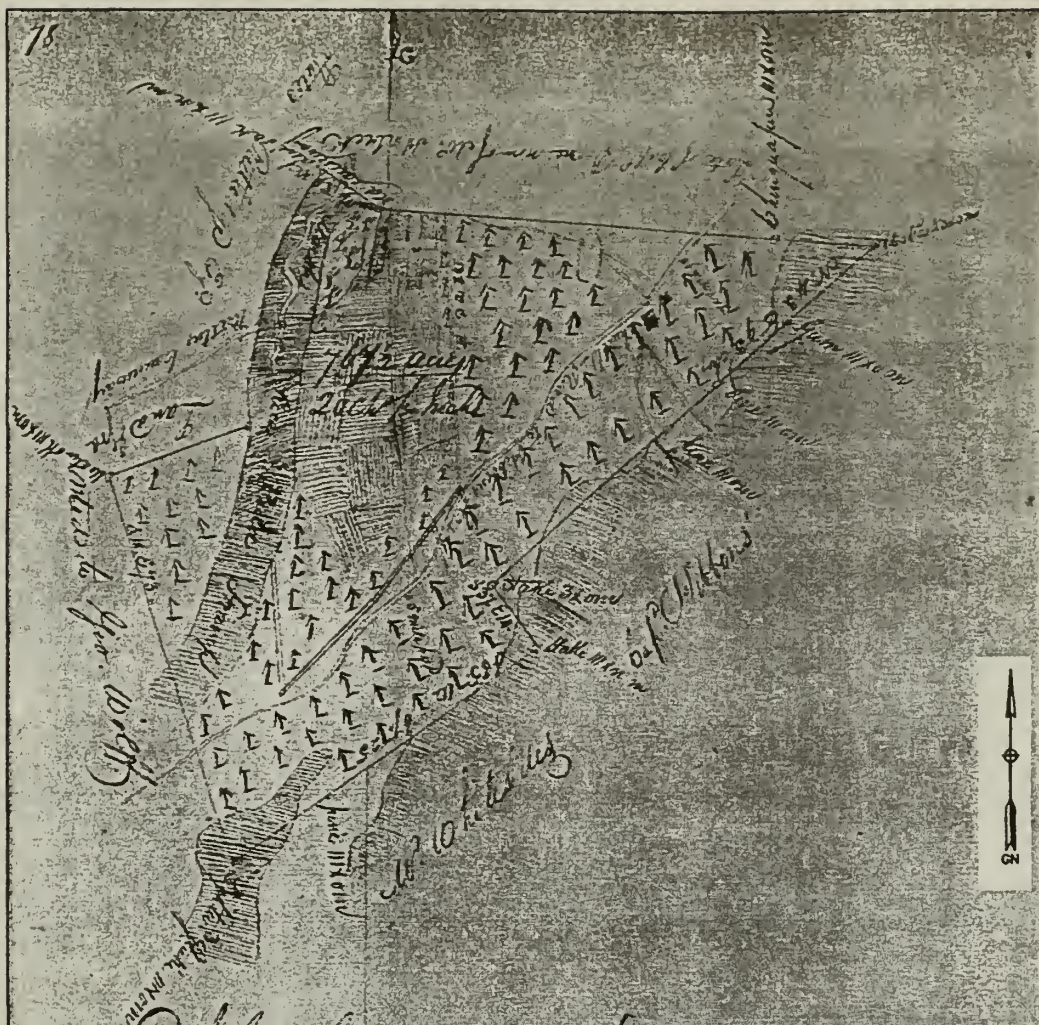


Faden Map of 1780









I do hereby certify for Francis Deliesseline  
a tract of land (containing) four hundred & thirty seven P  
a half acre surveyed for him the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1818. Situate in the  
district of Charleston. Chis P. Church Parish on the waters of  
Wando River & hath such shape from D. Marks as the above  
plat represents.

Given under my hand this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April 1818.

Wm. Bradford  
S<sup>r</sup>.

Joseph Hilgore  
Sur. Genl.

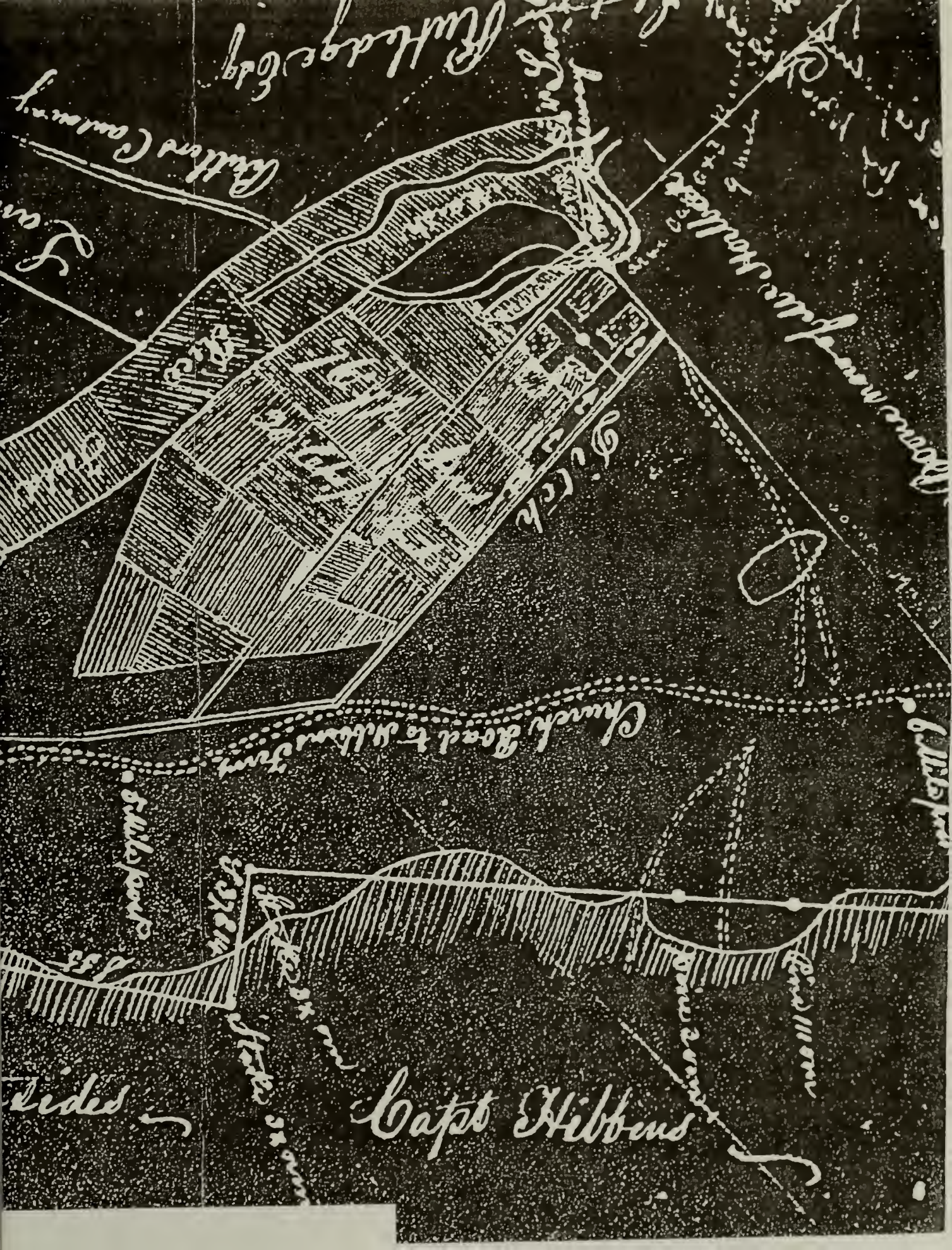












Butter County

Holloway

Setch

Church Road to Albion Town

Sides

Capt Hibbins

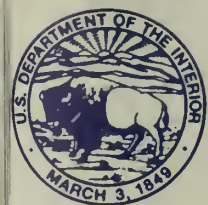
Holloway

Holloway









# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

2275

### Memorandum

To: Cultural Resource Managers

From: Chief Archeologist

Date: January 5, 2012

Subject: Return of park-related archeological files

The WASO Archeology Program is consolidating and archiving files in preparation for reallocation of physical space. We are returning the enclosed materials to you, as they are no longer required by the program. We hope that they will be useful to you and augment your existing files.

