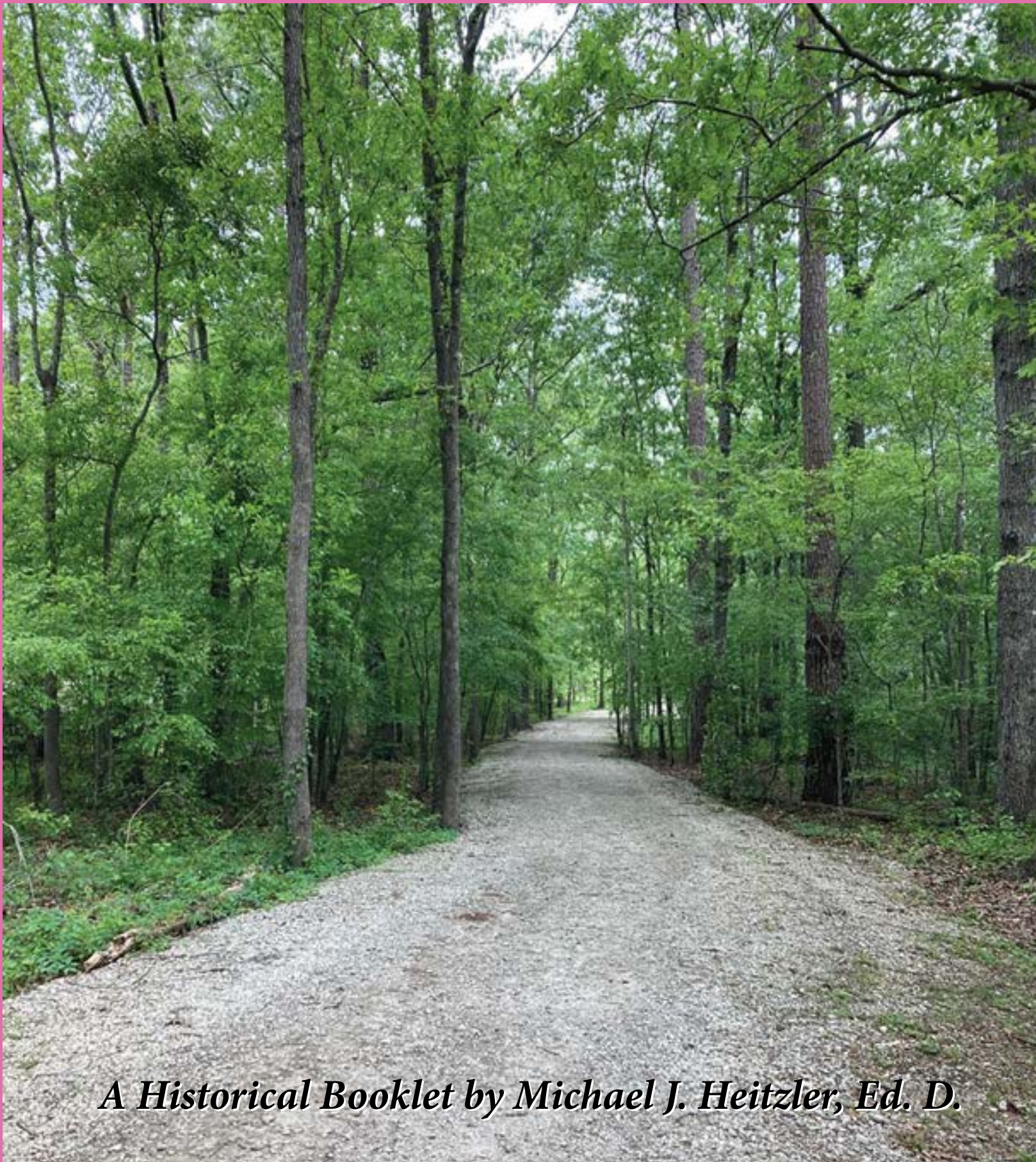


Bloomfield



A Historical Booklet by Michael J. Heitzler, Ed. D.

BLOOMFIELD



8 55
BROOM HALL
PLANTATION
Established 1730, 1731
Broom Hall passed to Thomas
Smith in 1730, member
of the Royal Academy 1730
The Protestant Episcopal
Church in 1731, and the
plantation "The most fertile
any where in North Carolina,"
said by Thomas Smith in 1731.
The house and outbuildings
destroyed by the Cherokee
warfare of 1761. Later
owned by Westview, Broom
Hall was established as
plantation development
in 1930.

A historic marker (Above) visible from Westview Boulevard punctuates the entrance to the fascinating Bloomfield Manor site.

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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover photograph shows one of many walking paths that span from the obsolete Bloomfield, also known as (Broom Hall, Broomville, Broomfield, Bloomville), manor site, where large fallen oaks punctuate the passive park on Westview Boulevard, in the City of Goose Creek, Berkeley County, South Carolina. An early 19th century tourist, Ariel Abbot noted, “The glory of this extensive garden is the walks. They are perfectly embowered with wild oranges & other ornamental trees...” South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine (SCHGM), Volume 68: page: 244.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael James Heitzler earned a Doctor of Education Degree from the University of South Carolina. He is a Fulbright Scholar and a retired school administrator of the Berkeley School District, South Carolina. He served as Mayor of the City of Goose Creek from 1978 to 2018. He is the author of *Historic Goose Creek, South Carolina, 1670-1980*, published in 1983 by Southern Historical Press, Easley, South Carolina, and *Goose Creek, a Definitive History*, volume I published in 2005 and volume II published in 2006, by the History Press, Charleston, South Carolina. *The Goose Creek Bridge* and *The Chicken Trilogy* were published by Author House Press in 2010 and 2015. The City of Goose Creek, Berkeley County and the South Carolina Historical Society published many more of his articles and booklets.



An entrance sign (left) greets residents and visitors to one of a dozen residential neighborhoods in the historic Bloomfield Plantation site.

FORWARD

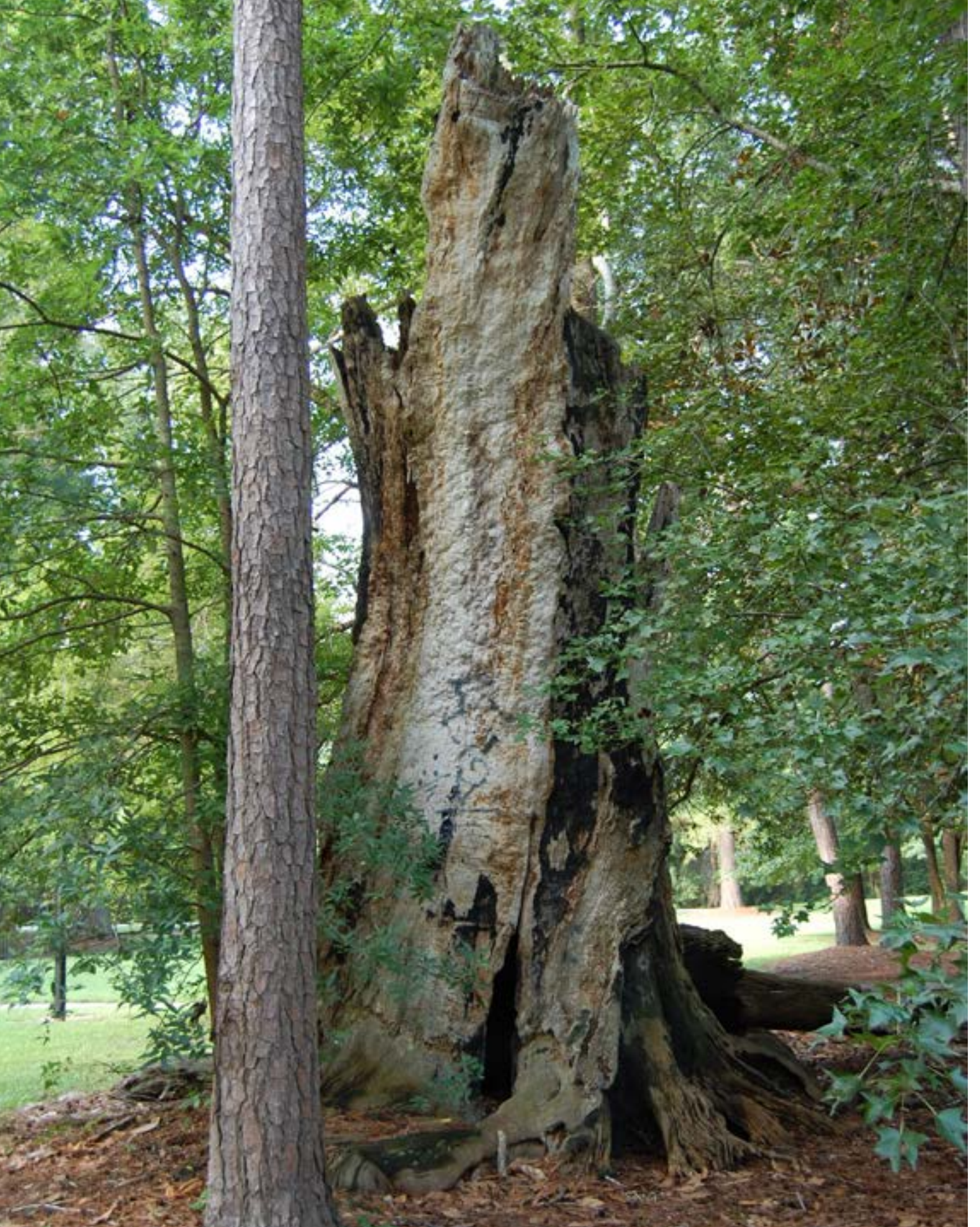
Tourism and marketing studies consistently find that heritage and history attract visitors, home buyers and investors to growing communities. History impacts the self-perceptions of a place and drives the surveys that define historic sites as the first interests of tourists. A thorough study conducted for the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism found that the most important criteria for visitors in South Carolina were interests in architecture and history.¹ Unfortunately, few understand the long-muted story of Goose Creek in Berkeley County, South Carolina.

We miss opportunities to tell our tales to residents and visitors. Thus, we should develop tactics that take advantage of this untapped resource. Strategies could include the establishment of an historic commission composed of interested citizens to continue the research begun by others because so much remains to be discovered, organized, and shared. The commission could oversee the maintenance of an historic web page and other media releases recalling significant Berkeley events and contributions. The commission could design and erect historic markers indicating to all that they are visiting or living in a historically important part of South Carolina and the Nation. Such strategies could result in a cost-effective basis for improved public relations that emphasizes conservation and protection of historic resources. Also, initiatives to share and explain the community's long and rich heritage could be a way of finding a marketable brand such as Berkeley County, Cradle of the Deep South. The municipal and county leaders should develop strategic initiatives for enjoying local history and reaping the many benefits.

Thus, this exploration of Bloomfield Plantation lands and its neighbors is one of many dozens of initiatives needed to help Berkeley County residents and visitors understand, appreciate and benefit from the county's compelling past. I hope this rendering will make our home-place more complete by keeping the residents and visitors better informed and inspiring those who build and protect it today and tomorrow. But mostly this work is a labor of love.

Michael J. Heitzler Ed.D.

¹ Michael Trinkley Ph.D., South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, 1992 p. 55. TMS 2110002008, Berkeley County, South Carolina. Berkeley County Register of Deeds, DB 1197, pg. 29.



BLOOMFIELD PLANTATION

In 1678, the South Carolina Grand Council awarded to Edward Middleton "... his greate Lotte [sic] of Land [on] the upper part of Adthan Creeke..."² in the Carolina Colony. The word "Adthan" used in this journal entry, was the Native American phonetic reproduction of the sound made by the abundant geese on the waterway that was later tagged, "Goose Creek."³ Edward Middleton kept a large contiguous tract of property that he named "The Oaks," but he conveyed the western section along the northern bank of Goose Creek to Robert Mallock, a Charleston merchant and sea captain. Robert Mallock was the first of several industrious immigrants to Carolina to work that expansive tract sprawling along the northern reach of the Goose Creek headwaters.

Subsequent planters transformed the land from wetland forest to prosperous

2 Henry A.M. Smith, "Goose Creek," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine (SCHGM)*, 1928, V.29: p. 273, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

3 The word "Adthan" is a derivation of a Native American word meaning "sound of the goose," thus documenting the origin of the "Goose Creek" moniker for the waterway and community. The English immigrants attempted to capture the Native-American phonemic sound of the goose with the "Adthan" label. Thus "onk-onk" or "honk-honk" was resounded as "Adthan or Adthau" on the earliest land survey records and references to the waterway.

Burnt remains of ancient oaks (left) shade the Bloomfield Manor site on Westview Boulevard. Careless hunters caused a wildfire that destroyed the ring of oaks that once shaded the ancient mansion.

rice fields, and named the place Broomhall, after the family estate in England. A later owner created an enviable country resort with sprawling gardens and welcoming walkways and renamed the retreat, "Bloomfield" to reflect the colorful vistas. At that rural hideaway, colonial era leaders conspired with others to lead the rebellious colony through bloody conflicts with the mother country until it emerged a rising state in the infant republic. The fabled Bloomfield land housed leaders of the new nation until the place that resounded with dreams for many generations, descended to desperation seventy years hence when the Federal Government reordered the intransigent southern state. After the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877), Bloomfield languished for six decades where tenant farmers eked sparse livings into the twentieth century. Then lumber companies harvested the ancient hardwoods, planted thousands of pineland acres, and reaped the rising forests to supply nearby lumber and paper mills. Today, those grand forests shade thousands of residential tracts where families come home to the modern City of Goose Creek, South Carolina. There, they may recall the three-hundred-year saga of a mystical place of rural charm called Bloomfield.⁴

4 Residential subdivisions named Gibb's Forest, Deerfield, Hunters Woods, The Commons, Planters Walk, Pembroke, Cadbury, Bridge Creek, and Stratford Forest, comprise the fabled Bloomfield Plantation lands today.



ON THE CUSP OF THE CAROLINA FRONTIER

Robert Mallock, merchant, and sea captain, arrived in Charleston circa 1682 with his wife, Jane Mitchell and seventy-four “servants.”⁵ The Lord Proprietors of England owned Carolina and granted tracts of land to ambitious families with the hope of making profits from trade and rents. They awarded all the most accessible and valuable properties along navigable reaches of Goose Creek to aspiring planters during the initial decade of British settlement in South Carolina (1670-1680). When civil unrest in England provided an influx of Scots and Irish captives, Lord Proprietors welcomed the workforce in the frontier as potential defenders of their colony against the Spanish and French “interlopers,” and a boundless source of

5 Robert Malloch married Jane Mitchell in Edinburgh. She was widow of David Trench [Trinch] b.1659.

An early owner created an enviable resort with sprawling gardens and welcoming pathways. He renamed the retreat, “Bloomfield” to reflect the colorful vistas beneath the sprawling oaks. Today (left), mounds of broken bricks and chipped roofing slate lay beneath a thick blanket of soil and grass that hides the footprint of the ancient manor house.

wealth, offering abundant land along the shallow headwaters to enterprising frontier families of most faiths.⁶

The headright land distribution system of that day allowed immigrants to receive acreage in accordance with the size of their family, including indentured servants and slaves. Consequently, with his numerous “family,” Mallock qualified for a large three-thousand, seven-hundred-acre tract of land,⁷ and notwithstanding the initial intent of the colonial council, a section of the tract previously granted to Edward Middleton was at his behest, and for consideration, transferred to Robert Mallock.⁸

6 The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was enacted in 1685. Daniel Ravenel, the compiler of *Liste des Francois et Suisses*, arranged a list of French and Swiss Protestants who settled in Charleston, including a Marianne Caroline Fleury and Abraham Fleury. He also records Isaac Fleury, who was a brother to Abraham.

7 “You are forthwith to Cause to bee admeasured & laid out unto Robert Mallock Three Thousand seaven [sic] Hundred Acres of Land being soe much due to him for the Arrivall of seaventy ffower [sic] servants who are entred in the secreteryes office ye Thirteenth of November 1684...”

8 *Warrants for Lands in South Carolina 1672-1711*, edited by A.S. Salley, Jr., Published by University of South Carolina Press, pages 377, 378 & 503.



A detail of the Henry Mouzon Map (above) shows a section of the St. James, Goose Creek Parish in 1775. A red star added to this detail identifies the location of Bloomfield Plantation. The map is among the collections of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

A sea captain by vocation, Robert Mallock transported ship loads of Scots seeking passage to Carolina. Selected passengers were banished from England for civil disorder and required to leave to escape further punishment or worse, but others traveled as indentured servants who labored for their passage to America.⁹

⁹ David Dobson, *Scots in the Carolinas*, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1994, p. 47. Douglas Ferguson, Robert Gordon, John Crichton, are three of thousands of Scots banished to plantations in Carolina. They were three of hundreds transported by Robert Malloch, sea captain and merchant in Edinburgh, August 5, 1684.

Robert Mallock and his entourage disembarked in Charleston a decade after the earliest British immigrants arrived in pursuit of new-world opportunities in the Carolina frontier of the expanding British Empire.

After arriving in Charleston, Robert Mallock applied to Governor Thomas Smith for land,¹⁰ but before the governor issued a warrant, the impatient immigrant, with a small army of family members, explored and soon claimed coveted properties eighteen miles from town, where he slashed a clearing on the highest ground for a settlement.

¹⁰ The Proprietors granted land to anyone transporting a laborer or indentured servant to the colony. These land grants consisted of fifty acres for a person arriving to the area and one hundred acres for people previously living in Carolina.



A detail of a plat by John Herbert, March 20, 1718 shows the locations of early settlements along the Goose Creek waterway. For clarity on this map, "Mullock" is identified in red in the upper right quarter above the two Middleton Plantations on each side of the Goose Creek waterway.

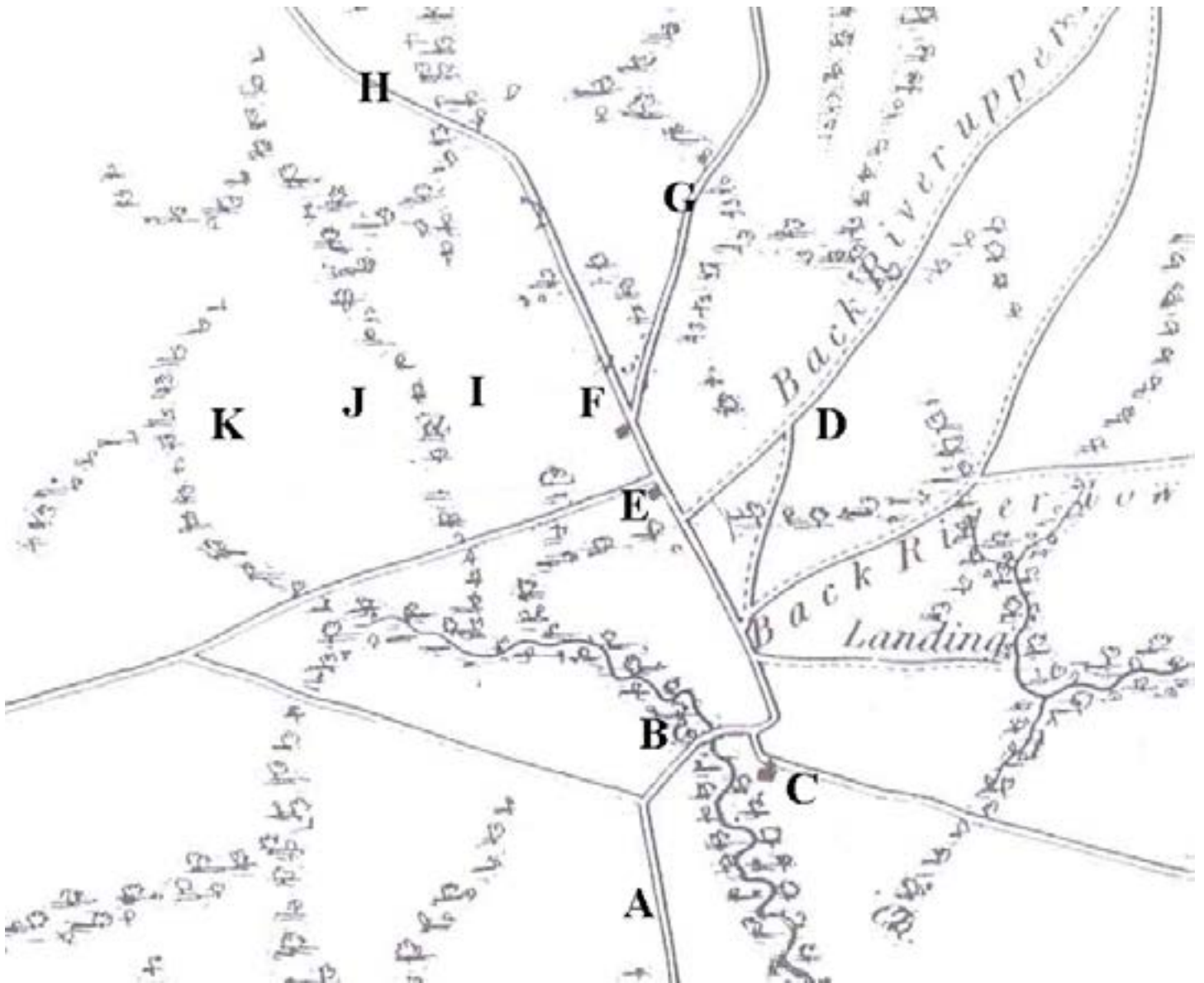
Soon, the impatient sea captain/pioneer led his wife and a gaggle of servants with their families and a train of packhorses laden with supplies, beyond the bounds of Charleston toward the tall forests spanning the northernmost shores of Goose Creek. Charleston was not a popular destination for Native Americans and across untold millennium, the larger and better-organized tribes of the interior relegated the weaker coastal clans to the thin briny soils of the peninsula. The sparsely populated coastal tribes infrequently used the trail that connected the peninsula to the mainland and consequently, they poorly defined it for the first Europeans. However, by the time Robert Mallock and his entourage arrived, the pathway was busy with packhorse trains laden with manufactured goods slouching into the interior and returning with deerskins and peltries. Additionally, men such as Bernard Schenkingh drove herds of cattle from his land near the Goose Creek Bridge to the town butchers and ship captains waiting at the Charles Towne (Charleston) wharfs. The herds trampled the narrow trail making it wider, muddier, and deeply pockmarked by innumerable hooves.

The Robert Mallock family followed the unseemly cow path all morning, sixteen miles inland to the Goose Creek Bridge, erected four years earlier by brothers Arthur and Edward Middleton. The Middleton workers raised the low approaches by laying a corduroy pathway with innumerable logs and bridged the deepest water with sturdy hickory trunks, crossed beams, with split trunks laid flat side up.

Two miles farther north, at the eighteen-mile marker, the troupe found a trace projecting west through the tall grasses and hundred-foot-tall trees. There, they diverged from the trading path to commence the final one-mile leg of their journey along the distinctive track on the headwaters of Goose Creek. That shallow creek rose in the southwest among thousands of puddles, pools, and springs at the foot of a significant rise later named "Windsor Hill." The shallow water flowed imperceptively but steadily north down a one percent grade until it bent east to flow lazily for three more miles before bending south toward the Cooper River. The wide, shallow, and slow-moving waterway provided reliable irrigation, produced abundant graze and mash in a thick forest where regular rainfall and alluvial soils supported large herds of deer and thousands of birds, fowl and furbearing mammals. For millennia, native

hunters sought the game for along those wetlands, their suede footsteps braided the animal traces along the way, exposing hardpan in places and wearing a foot-wide pathway. After the first decade of European settlement pioneers such as the Abraham De La Plaine and John Berringer families, shaped the ancient footpath into a rutted wagon road that led to the Mallock family home that afternoon of a winter Carolina day.

The image (below) shows a section of Mills Atlas, 1825, Robert Mills, cartographer. The map is among the collections of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina. This detail indicates the routes of major roads in Goose Creek during the colonial era. Alpha letters added for this publication indicate principal features: A- The road from Charleston to Goose Creek, B – Goose Creek causeway and bridge, C – St. James, Goose Creek Church, D – Boochawee Manor, E – Eighteen-Mile House Tavern, F – 19-Mile House Tavern, G – Road to Moncks Corner, H – Road to Wassamassaw, I – Broom Hall Manor, J – Crowfield Manor, K – De La Plaine's Plantation.



WETLANDS OF RICE AND RICHES

Robert Mallock cleared the wetland forest where he shaped farmlands and a small settlement for his family, workers, and livestock. His neighbors included two French Huguenot families, Abraham De La Plaine's and Benjamin Marion, grandfather of Francis Marion, the renowned patriot of a latter era, and John Berringer, who cleared the land others tagged Crowfield. The land descended to Robert Mallock's son and through the son's lawyer to Moses Medina in 1708 for £200. Next, Colonel Thomas Broughton acquired the 1,000-acre property to build his residence.

Thomas Broughton amassed a fortune trading deerskin, but he garnered an unscrupulous reputation for plying native slavers with rum and cheap goods to acquire enslaved captives that he sold to ship captains bound for the Caribbean sugar islands. Consequently, he became contemptuous with the Colonial Council, as well as the native clans, until he turned his attention to the Goose Creek headwaters where he intended to plant rice. He purchased land for that purpose but, for some undocumented reason, he abruptly changed his mind and traded all of it to Benjamin Gibbes.



A red lined plat of Bloomfield Plantation (left) overlays a contemporary map of that section of the City of Goose Creek. The plat traces the plantation border lines, the access and egress roads and the rice fields reaching along the western boundary.



This contemporary photograph (above) shows the remnants of a rice field in a southernmost section of Broom Hall (Bloomfield). The author took this photograph May 12, 2022.

BROOM HALL–BLOOM HALL

Benjamin Gibbes' ancestors hailed from Brome or Broom House in the parish of Backham, Kent in England. Undoubtedly, his ancestral home is the origin of the "Broom Hall" name attached to the Goose Creek tract.¹¹ He began building the main house and its settlement in 1710 upon a wide rise above a thickly grown inland swamp that drained into the shallow head waters of Goose Creek. He cleared the thick wetland forest, flushed with water oaks, tupelo, willow, maple, and cypress trees, for planting grounds and he gradually impounded the slowly sheeting water for irrigation. By the turn of the 18th century, rice production promised lucrative returns and Broom Hall was ideally situated with potential water reserves and flat and low planting grounds. Moreover, it was upstream and in view of the immensely productive rice fields of The Oaks and Otranto Plantations, which provided an enviable model for success.

¹¹ SCHGM V.29: p. 273.

Benjamin Gibbes married Jane Elliott of Barbados, and both became ardent supporters of the St. James, Goose Creek Parish, and Church. He made bricks and floated the heavy blocks in shallow bottom bateaus through Middleton's rice fields and unloaded the clay building blocks near the Goose Creek Bridge from where a wagon hauled the bulky load three hundred yards to the rising parish church. The Gibbes were principal benefactors of the brick and masonry house of worship that replaced the earlier wooden structure. Benjamin Gibbes also led as a vestryman, keeping a life-long interest in the Parish. After Jane died in 1717, Benjamin married Amarinthia Smith and fathered one daughter Elizabeth, leaving Bloom Hall to them when he died in 1722.¹² The inheritance included considerable cash, twenty slaves, valuable livestock, furnishings, and farm tools with a total worth of £2,339 (\$300,000 today). This was an impressive fortune at a time when typical devised amounts were £300 or less.

¹² SCHGM, V.29: p. 273-274, and Charleston County Wills 1722-1724: Book 66.



The photographs on this page show the gait entrance to the St. James, Goose Creek Parish Church, the interior furnishings with centered pulpit and the displayed memorial tablet honoring Jane and Benjamin Gibbes. The photographs are in the possession of the author.

CAPTAIN PETER TAYLOR: SUCCESSFUL HUSBAND, PLANTER AND POLITICIAN

Widow Amarinthia Smith, and her daughter, Elizabeth enjoyed privileged lives at the well accommodated estate, and their fortunes swelled when Amarinthia married Captain Peter Taylor, an Irish immigrant.¹³ Captain Taylor received a 500-acre land grant in St. Paul's Parish (War Hall Plantation) but relocated to Broom Hall after his betrothal. He too increased his fortune when he acquired 930 fertile acres and 70 Broom Hall slaves. He ascended as a well-respected member of the Goose Creek planting society where he reigned for forty years.¹⁴ He served as a church vestryman, a militia captain, a commissioner in various capacities, and his neighbors elected him eight times to the Colonial Assembly. But he was not overly ambitious. When invited, he declined the honor of serving on the Governor's Privy Council.¹⁵

13 South Carolina Gazette, October 5, 1765.

14 Walter B. Edgar and N. Louise Bailey, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, 1977:V.2: p. 665-667.

15 Edgar and Baily.

Not only was Peter Taylor a successful husband, planter, and politician, he led as a founding member of the social club called the "Goose Creek Friendly Society," and as a long-standing member of, and contributor to, the prestigious Charleston Library Society. Also, he was charitable, promising £75 to educate the poor of the parish, and giving £100 sterling for the erection of a schoolhouse.¹⁶ Also, near the end of his life, he set aside £500 for a free school to "educate and christen Indian children."¹⁷

16 Joseph Ioor Waring, *St. James Church, Goose Creek, South Carolina: A Sketch of the Parish from 1706-1898* (Charleston, South Carolina, Lucas and Richardson Co. Printers and Engravers, 1897), p. 15. Taylor contributed to the Ludlam educational fund.

17 South Carolina Wills V.10: 533.

SCHOOL SOLICITATION

St. James, Goose Creek Church Minister James Harrison, like his predecessors, wished to build a school and thus tapped into the sensitivities of the young planters, as well as the old parish tradition of supporting poor children with local instruction or tuition assistance. However, the solicitation money for a schoolhouse merely collected interest, until Peter Taylor of Broom Hall bequeathed a handsome amount. Then, the impatient minister pushed the project farther. He encouraged the vestry to incorporate as a lawful business to facilitate the expenditure of the £15,272 school account. When Henry

Middleton generously conveyed twelve acres of land at the intersection of Red Bank and Church Roads (Snake Road today) for a school and consummated the transaction with the consideration of “a twig and a turf,” the heart of the enthusiastic minister soared. Soon, donated stacks of clay blocks from Broom Hall, as well as other plantations near and far allowing masons to erect a little brick schoolhouse beneath five spreading oak trees.¹⁸

¹⁸ Waring, 9.



Remnants of the fallen brick schoolhouse lay scattered beneath five spreading oak trees across Red Bank Road from the contemporary Goose Creek Volunteer Fire Department. Notes on the margin of the original photograph states, “Site of brick schoolhouse (Free School) St. Jas. Goose Cr. Par. S.C.” The image (Left) is among the records of the South Carolina Historical Society.

During the 1730s and 1740s, Peter Taylor developed Broom Hall into one of the best accommodated rice plantations in Carolina. His laborers produced large harvests of rice, indigo and corn that returned a steady income with which he expanded his herds of beef and dairy cattle. He built a handsome two-story mansion with locally baked brick and a slate roof¹⁹ upon the highest ground, at the terminus of two grand oak lined avenues. One avenue reached south from the manor house to intersect the Road to Dorchester (typically called Ladson Road) connecting to his

19 The author observed wide scatters of roof slate at the Broom Hall House site as late as 1982. Also see in the epilogue section of this work, archeological samples the author collected from the site.

neighbors at Crowfield and The Elms. The second proceeded east to intersect the Road to Charleston at the 18-mile stone near Button Hall Plantation and The Oaks. The stately home stood upon high ground with ornamental gardens sweeping around the manor and across a broadening expanse onto the edge of the rice fields.

The photograph (below) shows the intersection of Dorchester Road (Bloomville/Broom Hall Avenue / Westview Boulevard and Old State Road (Highway 176) at the 18-mile marker. The Eighteen-Mile House Tavern stood here. Notations on the original photograph note that arrows identify two geese standing at the 18-mile intersection.



Along the western descent, from the Bloom Hall manor house, nearer the fields, were slave quarters, barns, sheds, coops, kilns, and workhouses, where smiths and coopers made barrels, barrel hoops, horseshoes, hinges, and other necessary implements. A barn with a brick floor provided the best dairy accommodations of that era, but the most notable feature was a long and wide body of water, called “Looking Glass Pond,” gracing the base of the hill. The pond was spring fed, supplying freshwater year around and cool amusement in the summertime. Another pond, lined with a single course of brick, cooled the pleasure garden closer to the principal abode.²⁰

The family lived as comfortably as any in South Carolina. Their spacious home featured Moroccan leather chairs, mahogany tables, imported window curtains, fine china and an extensive library.²¹ When Peter Taylor died in 1765, his estate was valued at £21,000 in South Carolina currency. His fortune included eighty-one cows, and seventeen oxen, but he credited his fortune to his seventy

²⁰ When Joseph Ioor Waring visited the site, he noted that the house rested on a hill overlooking broad terraces, which led down to a large pond. He noted that a small “artificial pond” was situated near the house and that the bottom of the pond was lined with a “course of bricks.”

²¹ Inventories of Estates, Charleston Probate Records, Vol. 10, 1765-1769:191-193.

bound souls. His final testimony stressed his concern for his workers, including several specific bequeaths. His last will also stipulated that £1,000 be used for the instruction of all of his slaves in payment for the “great debt” owed to their labor and to promote the “Eternal Felicity of so useful a Body of reasonable creatures...”²² Neither Amaranthia nor any of his children survived Peter Taylor, prompting him to bequeath Broom Hall Plantation to Thomas Smith, his close friend and business associate.²³

²² Ibid. and see Edgar and Bailey, V.2: p. 66. There is a tablet to the memory of Peter Taylor in St. James, Goose Creek Church and he is buried on the grounds with his wife, Amaranthia, and their son, Joseph.

²³ South Carolina Wills, Vol. 10, 1760-1767, p. 533. The War Hall Plantation was bequeathed to Peter Taylor’s nephew, Thomas Taylor.

EIGHTEEN-MILE HOUSE TAVERN

Most of the Goose Creek Plantations transformed to renowned country seats and by mid-century, the Eighteen-Mile House Tavern, like a noisy foyer, welcomed travelers to some of the grandest places in North America. Broom Hall Plantation loomed on the northern side of the road west of the Eighteen-Mile House Tavern, after which Crowfield and Fleury's Plantations came into view. Travelers easily accessed The Oaks and the Elms Plantations south of that crossing, and the intersection at the eighteen-mile stone conveniently connected Gibbes Path to Back River Upper and Back River Lower Roads, as well as the extraordinarily well-developed Button Hall, Springfield, and Parnassus Estates to the east.

The Goose Creek Bridge provided access to the plantations on the north side of Goose Creek, but private paths and roadways in all neighborhoods tied the land and people together. A well-kept private road called "Gibbes Path" connected the main avenues of Crowfield, Broom Hall, Mt. Holly and Springfield Plantations.

Near mid-century, the Eighteen-Mile-House Tavern at the mouth of Bloom Hall Avenue shone at the epicenter of the most technologically advanced inland rice cultivation zone in South Carolina. Inventors Peter Villeponteaux of Back River Plantation²⁴ and Samuel Knight, who resided in a cottage next to the busy tavern,²⁵ frequented the stop-over to sell their ideas and inventions. They built competing animal powered thrashing machines, consistently improved the efficiency of their inventions, and advertised for sales in the South Carolina Gazette, published in Charleston. Thus, Goose Creek planters, especially at Broom Hall, were well-positioned at their premiere inland rice plantations to take advantage of the newest labor-saving devices such as winnowing barns, trunk gates, and various types of horse-drawn thrashers.

²⁴ Hirsch, 212

²⁵ Charleston County Register Mesne Conveyance (RMC) Book M-5, 330, 331. The Button Hall overseer usually lived in the cottage, but Samuel Knight rented the abode for a time.

“A PLEASANT ONE... IN A GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD”

Thomas Smith, a successful merchant, owned partnerships in five ocean vessels and traded robustly for decades, but when he inherited Broom Hall from his friend Peter Taylor he retired there, where he enthusiastically participated in the community. He served in the St. James, Goose Creek Parish government as a commissioner and churchwarden and was elected three times to the Royal Assembly and to the 1st Provincial Congress in 1775. He remained in Goose Creek most months of the year during the 1760s, 1770s and the early 1780s, but typically returned to his house on Broad Street to escape the summer heat. In a letter to a relative in Boston, he wrote that Peter Taylor left him “A pleasant one [retreat] and in a good neighborhood,”²⁶ but he did not take up the profitable rice and indigo production that made his predecessor rich. Instead, he merely produced food for his family and workforce, explaining that he employed about “30 hands which will afford me some employment and amusement.”²⁷

26 Langdon Cheves, Cheves Papers, 1848-1940, Miscellaneous land papers 34/320 among the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society; Michael Trinkley Ph.D. Debi Hacker, and Natalie Adams, Broom Hall Plantation, “A Pleasant one and in a Good neighborhood,” Chicora Foundation, Columbia, South Carolina, p. 58.

27 Cheves.

Nonetheless, he kept the manor in good repair, prompting a visitor in 1772 to note:

...passing a very long Avenue of wood and a part of it stately live oaks we got to his seat, which has a great outside appearance, but a better inward appearance, being comfortably and neatly furnished wt. [sic] all Conveniences...²⁸

Rich estates, such as Broom Hall were favorite stops of marauding cavalry during the Revolutionary War when the British occupied the low country. Like his immediate neighbors, at Crowfield and The Oaks Plantations, Smith joined the zeal for revolution at first, and his son-in-law, John Mackenzie, of nearby Button Hall Plantation, was an ardent leader of the non-importation party. However, when the crisis deteriorated into open revolt, Smith retreated to Broom Hall to stay above the fray. Josiah Quincy, who dined with Smith during that period, commented that he enjoyed a pleasant evening with “excellent wines and no politics.”²⁹

28 Sally, A.S. Jr., “Diary of William Dillwyn in 1772,” SCHGM 36: 107-110. William Dillwyn, a New Jersey merchant visited Smith’s country seat and wrote a brief description of it.

29 Edgar and Bailey, V.2: p. 643.

John McKenzie at nearby Castle Brawn Plantation (aka Button Hall), married Sarah Smith, the daughter of Thomas Smith and Sarah Moore of adjoining Bloomfield (Broom Hall).³⁰ John McKenzie built an extensive library valued at £2,100, experimented with hay production, represented the Saint James Goose Creek Parish in the Royal Assembly, served as churchwarden, and allied with Christopher Gadsden as an ardent patriot during the turbulent Revolutionary War.³¹ These families unions greatly increased their fortunes, as well as their political and social connections, but in 1771, at the age of thirty-three, John McKenzie died at his father-in-law's home. His body was carried by wagon along the shaded avenue from Bloomfield House to his final resting place at Castle Brawn, less than one mile distant.

Notwithstanding the death of John McKenzie, the Smith family was pulled into the conflict, and like his neighbors, he begrudgingly acquiesced by contributing supplies and other support to the invaders. Still, British marauders swarmed in to pilfer food and drink, greatly alarming the families. Nonetheless, his losses were

30 Barnwell Rhett Heyward, "The Descendants of Col. William Rhett, of South Carolina," SCHGM 4 (July 1903): 41, n. 3.

31 Edgar et al., Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives, 2: 425.

minor compared to burned and pillaged homes of many ardent patriots.³²

After peace returned, Thomas Smith wrote his cousin in Boston in 1783 that he "...was truly in the way of both parties" causing distress and trouble for himself and his family.³³ One patriot reported that Smith provided funds for a loyalist regiment during the British occupation, but Smith's name did not appear on the Jacksonborough Assembly confiscation list of traitors who paid fines. The "Thomas Smith" appearing on the penalty list departed South Carolina with the British evacuation and was not the Broom Hall resident.

Thomas Smith was successful most of his life and with Sarah Moore, fathered 12 children. He kept 50 slaves in Goose Creek, several at his Charleston residence, was elected to the General Assembly four times and reported to the State Convention as a delegate to ratify the Federal Constitution in 1788. But due to his advancing age, divided interests and the weak, post war economy, the land and buildings at Broom Hall deteriorated until he gifted the aging estate to his son, Peter, and retired to his Charleston town house.

32 Michael Trinkley, Ph.D. Debi Hacker, and Natalie Adams, "Broom Hall: a good one and in a pleasant neighborhood," 1995, The Chicora Foundation Inc. Columbia, South Carolina p. 58. Smith may have asked the British for protection. Patriot Ralph Izard, of the neighboring Elms Plantation lost many slaves and suffered malicious property damage. 33 Trinkley, p. 59.

PETER SMITH II RETURNED BLOOMFIELD TO PREWAR SPLENDOR

Despite a weak economy and exhausted soils, Broom Hall was one of the few Goose Creek plantations that returned to pre-war splendor. Peter Smith II improved the fields, barns, and dairy, and increased the acreage to 1,293 by exchanging 131 acres for the 585-acre contiguous Fredericks tract. He married Mary Middleton, of The Oaks, and with her reared six children. He brought good crops to market, reinvested in the land by improving the settlement, and lived well with fine furnishings and a good stock of excellent wines in his cellar,³⁴ but significant debts plagued him for the rest of his life. Consequently, he conveyed Broom Hall to his mother in 1790 to keep from losing it to settle overdue obligations.³⁵ In this transaction the old plantation was referred to as “Bloom Hall,” as it was when his mother transferred it back to him in a trust nine years hence to hold for her grandchildren.³⁶ Peter Smith II eventually regained the title and maintained the estate until he died in 1821, but the final order from Peter Smith was to sell “Bloomville,” and divide the proceeds among his sons and daughters.³⁷

Peter Smith worked to bring the estate back to its previous standard with some success. He changed the name to Bloomville and exchanged 131 acres of the land for the 585-acre Fredericks tract, thus increasing the acreage to 1,293 acres.³⁸ According to the 1800 census, Peter Smith owned 50 slaves on his Goose Creek property and owned property in Charleston as well. He was elected to the General Assembly four times to represent St. James, Goose Creek. As a delegate to the State Convention, he voted to ratify the Federal Constitution.

³⁸ Bailey, 1986, V. 3: p. 1505.

³⁴ Charleston Inventories, Book F, 1819-1824:389.

³⁵ Charleston County RMC, Deed Book I-6: 208 and Edgar and Bailey, Biographical Directory, 1986, V. 3: p. 1505.

³⁶ Charleston County RMC, Deed Book Y-6: 181.

³⁷ Charleston County RMC, Deed Book I-6:208 and Charleston Wills, Vol. 35, 1818-1824:389.

Heads of households residing on the North Side of Goose Creek in 1790.

Plantation Name Location	Name of Head of Household	Number Whites in Family	Number Freemen in Family	Number Slaves	Number of Acres	Parish of Residence
St. James Church	Reverend Ellington	2	3	10	548	St. James
The Oaks	Thomas Middleton	9	0	10	1800	St. Phillips/ St. Michaels
N/A	Rebecca Smith	7	0	42	N/A	St. James
Bowen's (21)	John Bowen	4	0	25	1370	St. James
Mt. Pleasant	John/Rebecca Withers	6	0	26	1880	St. James
White House	William Johnson	0	0	16	800	St. James
Red Bank	Peter Gray	3	0	6	314	St. James
Crowfield	John Middleton	5	0	1	1464	Prince George
Cherry Hill	Thomas Bacot	3	0	8	478	St. James
Bloomfield	Peter Smith	0	0	64	840	St. James
Frederick's (Note 1)	Ralph Izard	1	0	105	584	St. James
Totals/ Mean		40 <hr/> 4	3	313 <hr/> 28	10,078 <hr/> 1,008	

Broom Hall appears to have been one of the few Goose Creek plantations that returned to its pre-Revolutionary War splendor, despite a weak economy and exhausted soils. Ariel Abbot toured Broom Hall in 1818 and described neatly apportioned gardens and impeccable grounds. He wrote, "The glory of this extensive garden are the walks. They are perfectly embowered with wild oranges & other ornamental trees..."³⁹ Peter Smith married Mary Middleton, of The Oaks, and with her had six children. Upon his death in 1821, he directed in his will that his plantation, called Bloomville, be sold and the proceeds divided between his sons and daughters.⁴⁰

39 SCHGM V. 68: p. 244.

40 Edgar 1974, V.3: p. 670.

No justification for the new "Bloomville" name is given in Peter Smith's final papers, nor were the devised instructions literally followed. The property was not sold, but instead, Peter Smith's II son, Henry Middleton Smith kept the land and remained upon it with his wife, Elizabeth Sully. Abiel Abbot returned in 1828, during the tenure of Henry and Elizabeth Smith, and glowingly described the retreat and the "beautiful grounds of infinite variety of trees, & flowering shrubs...the most interesting spot I have seen in Carolina." Henry Middleton Smith died soon after Abbot's second visit, but Bloomville continued to be ably managed by Elizabeth. She was the sister of a noted portrait painter, but also, she was a skilled land manager, who kept the estate and managed it.

ELIZABETH SULLY SMITH

Many plantations in Goose Creek were abandoned during the 1830s, 40s, and 50s due to malaria, soil exhaustion, maintenance costs and negative returns from an increasingly moribund slave-based economy, however Elizabeth Sully Smith kept Broom Hall Plantation until mid-century. Predictably, as she aged, she was increasingly hampered to maintain the buildings and land until she finally left it to decay. A visitor in 1843 commented on the declining status of the Broom Hall and Crowfield houses that stood on opposite banks of the old rice preserve when he, "...passed two abodes of former magnificence ...as appeared from the still

beautiful remains of live oaks." Continuing, "...one plantation [probably Broom Hall], had been profitable, [but] had neither a resident nor foreman and [had] been sold"⁴¹ Elizabeth conveyed the declining land and decaying buildings to four neighbors in exchange for a \$600 lifetime annuity.⁴² When it transferred, the old place was titled "Bloom Hall," and "Fredericks," but when the four neighbors sold their interest to Henry Arthur Middleton it was titled, "Bloomville."⁴³

41 Trinkley, Bloomfield, p. 62.

42 Charleston County RMC, Deed Book Y-12:305.

43 Charleston County RMC, Deed Book P-13:572.

Remnants of the avenue of oaks at Frederick's Plantation on the northern extent of Crowfield (right), stand today in the Persimmon Hill Town House Community.



Interestingly, the neighbors who temporarily owned the estate realized a handsome profit when they sold it to Henry Arthur Middleton for \$5,250.⁴⁴ The Civil War loomed, the sclerotic slave-based economy was threatened on all fronts, and few were buying plantations, but Middleton's familial attachment to the old place rather than a wise investment choice drove the purchase and returned the land to Middleton ownership where it remained for sixty more years.

They made no immediate improvements because the Confederate States soon after convulsed in war and four years hence, the Massachusetts 55th Union forces swept through Goose Creek in February and March of 1864. The young black soldiers under the command of equally youthful white officers disembarked at Otranto Railroad Station and walked undeterred along the State Road, to each front door, liberating the slaves and asserting whatever force was needed to suppress resistance offered by the frightened households.

⁴⁴ Charleston County RMC, Deed Book P-13:572.

Notations along the margin of the above photograph states "...Bloomfield, Goose Creek. Tradition says that on 1 of these trees Sherman's men hung a negress." The photograph is in the William Henry Johnson Scrapbook among the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

The young hungry soldiers foraged in the barns, chicken coops, and potato bins, and addressed the wide-eyed slaves, who stood in awe before their liberators, mere moments from freedom. Not unexpectedly, some encounters were violent and a disturbance at Bloomfield culminated when an African American woman was executed by hanging upon an oak tree as punishment for some unrecorded transgression.⁴⁵ The reasons for the death sentence remains unknown, but great bitterness swirled amidst the unkempt lands during the waning days of conflict.

⁴⁵ William Henry Johnson, 1871-1934, William Henry Johnson Scrapbook, V.1, Visual Materials, VM 34/293/295, among the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina. This undated photograph is among the William Henry Johnson Scrapbook images.



African American soldiers claimed the dry quarter at the Eighteen-Mile House and patrolled from it in search of bound workers. Within days of their departure during the confusion of retreat and occupation, someone thoroughly ransacked the old structure for firewood, doors, window glass and sashes. Moreover, long neglect degraded the intersecting Road to Dorchester, then greatly overgrown and barely discernable. But, the Eighteen-Mile House store, like the ancient tavern, was alive again. Youthful boys in blue cooked, ate, slept, and shouted orders from the meetinghouse to small clusters of obedient, barefoot, and liberated souls mulling about. Long ago, that place resounded with talk of deerskins, furs, horses, rice, thrashing machines and politics and much more recently flew a banner against the “northern fanatics.” No such banners greeted the exhausted souls of all ages, liberated from plantations called Cherry Hill, Crowfield, Bloomfield, Fredericks, Button Hall, and Mount Holly. That cold night, black soldiers slept on the floor before the roaring hearth of the Eighteen-Mile House. All week they witnessed the passing of an era, and all night and until their dying days, some harbored dream images of joyful souls in a rebellious place called “Goose Creek, South Carolina.”

Today, a fallen and fire-scarred oak (right) lay as a mute witness to the error of careless campers.

Though long neglected, the house was still inhabitable after the war, but it was damaged severely by fire when careless deer hunters camped in it for a night. Though burned beyond occupancy, Judge Henry A.M. Smith found the main house standing to its rafters in 1883 and noted “considerable evidence of gardens and ornamental grounds.” He also reported “one of the finest springs for furnishing water.”⁴⁶ Today, a few fallen fire scarred oaks recline sluggishly at the Broom Hall home-site as mute witness to the acts of crude justice, and careless campers who allowed their campfire to spread and damage some surrounding trees.

46 SCHGM V.19: p.8. In 1904, Joseph Ioor Waring found an avenue of “fire scarred oaks a half mile long” leading to the house.





Today, fire-scarred oaks (image left) stand stoically at the Broom Hall home-site as mute witnesses to by-gone days.



The image (left) shows a section of the 2005 Berkeley County tax map. Letter “A” indicates the location of the Broom Hall Main House. Letter “B” indicates the location of Looking Glass Pond. Letter “C” indicates the location of the formal garden. Letter “D” indicates the location of the slave quarters. Letter “E” indicates Westview Boulevard and letter “F” indicates Crowfield Lake [AKA Huck Hole Swamp] and preserve.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Michael Trinkley Ph.D., et. al. Preparation of a Final Report on Archaeological Excavations at Broom Hall Plantation, Berkeley County, South Carolina, Chicora Foundation, Inc. PO Box 8664, 861 Arbutus Drive, Columbia, South Carolina.



The author took the above photograph (left and below) in May 2022. The image shows remnants of overgrown rice land at Bloomfield.



HENRY ARTHUR MIDDLETON RENTED SMALL PLOTS TO FREEDMEN

When Henry Arthur Middleton acquired Bloomville he also purchased Crowfield and other contiguous properties prior to the Civil War and soon after the conflict he rented small plots of farm land to freedmen such as Richard Bryant, Dave and Thomas Burbage, L.D. Connelly, Harlee Gibb, Henry Pinckney, and C. Whaley.⁴⁸ These men and dozens more, paid a dollar or less to use the land for a year and sometimes cleared the forest in lieu of the payments.⁴⁹ Middleton employed John Driggers in 1866 to collect the rents, protect the forests and oversee the little farms, but Driggers was sorely challenged by persistent freedmen who squatted, cut wood, stole brick and salvaged remnants from the old structures.⁵⁰

As freedmen experimented with self-determination, they stole much of the brick to use as foundations and chimneys

48 Cheves - Middleton papers, 1168.02.05 among the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society. List of rents, Goose Creek Middleton Lands, 1887-1898.

49 Cheves.

50 Cheves-Middleton Papers, 1168.02.05, see Driggers to Middleton October 6, 1866 and lease to Jacob Minott, 1874, file 18.

The photograph (right) shows the ruins of a Bloomfield outbuilding [perhaps the barn] near the turn of the twentieth century. The notes in the margins of the photograph state, "Bloomfield, Goose Creek." "Ruins of outbuildings to S. of residence." The photograph is courtesy of the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

for little cabins where the first liberated families were reared. Furthermore, when Middleton signed with a new watchman, Jacob Minott in 1874, he granted permission, to salvage, use or sell any brick except those from the Crowfield or Bloomfield house sites. Consequently, most of the baked remnants of the slave quarters, barns, walks, dairies, spring, and pond were carried away and widely scattered. Finally, the earthquake of 1886 threw down the remaining brick walls, except two stark columns that eerily balanced in the encroaching forest well into the 20th century.⁵¹

51 Cheves-Middleton Papers, 1168.02.05, see Driggers to Middleton October 6, 1866 and lease to Jacob Minott, 1874, file 18.



Langdon Cheves visited the site in 1923 and left a description of the last vestiges of the house. He believed that the house was standing intact after the Civil War including roof, and he recorded that the walls and chimney were standing until the earthquake of 1886, when all but the first and part of the second story were destroyed. Cheves accused brick thieves of removing the last remnants of the once elegant home, including the bricks that lined the freshwater spring.⁵²

⁵² Langdon Cheves papers, 1735-1941 South Carolina Historical society # 1167.00. Creator: Cheves, Langdon, 1848-1939. Description: Ca. 21 linear ft.



The writing on the bottom margin of the original image states, "The brick ruins of residence at Bloomfield. St. James, Goose Creek Parish."⁵³

⁵³ William Henry Johnson Scrapbook, 34-293/295 contains two images of brick ruins and one of a "tiled pond." Also see 30-15-24 at the South Carolina Historical Society.

LANGDON CHEVES, INFLUENTIAL LANDOWNER

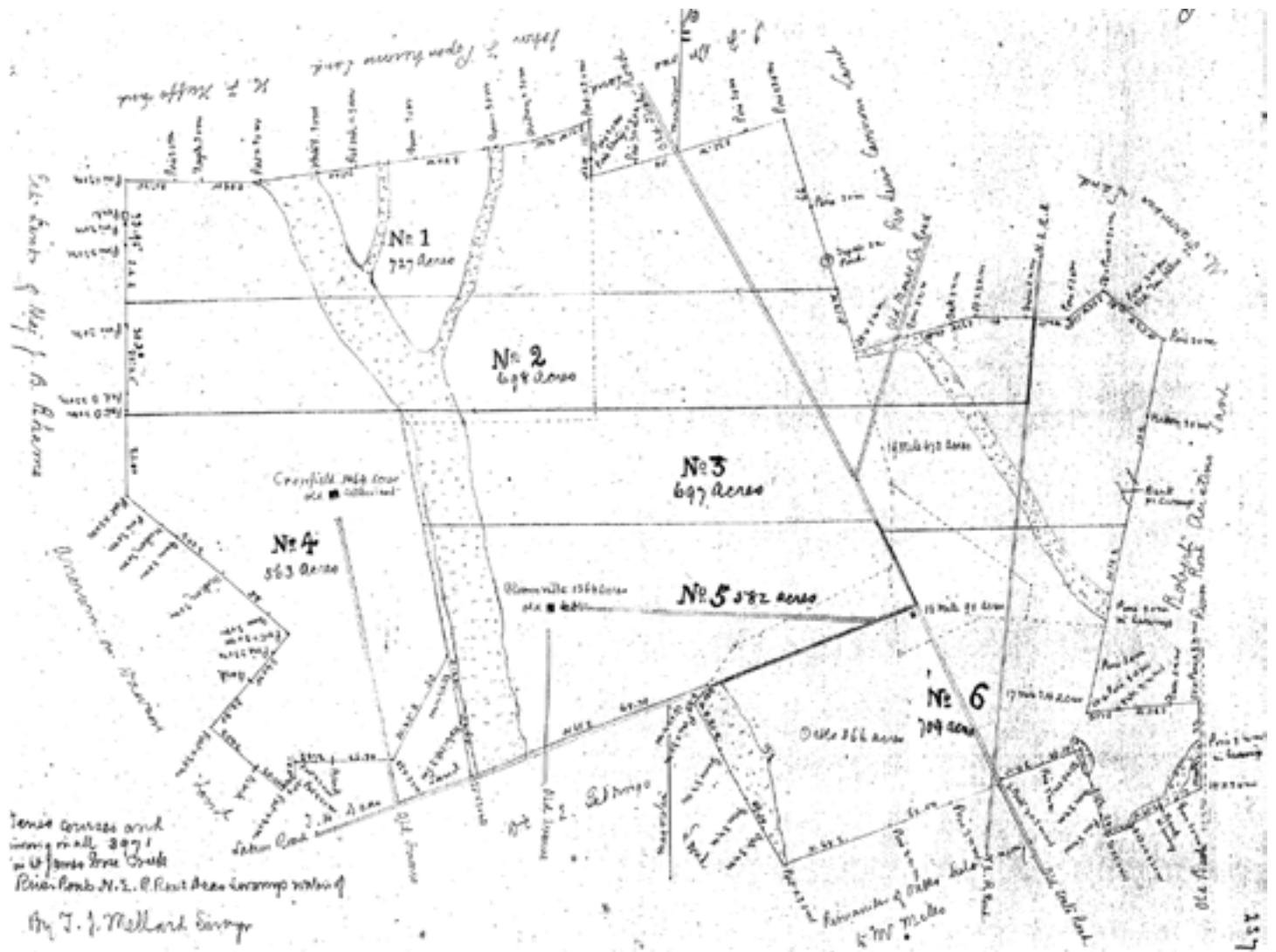
Langdon Cheves, a Charleston attorney, and businessman reigned as the most influential landowner in Goose Creek during the first three decades of the twentieth century.⁵⁴ He managed singularly or in partnership almost 4,000 acres of land that sprawled between the Otranto and Mount Holly Railroad Stations. Tracts called Crowfield, Bloomfield, Fredericks, Greenfield, Magnolia, and Seventeen, Eighteen and Nineteen-Mile-House tracts composed his properties, as well as large sections of the Oaks and Mount Holly Plantations.⁵⁵ He rented parcels to farmers during the time when automobiles and trucks increasingly displaced reliance on rail travel and roads extended farther into the obsolete St. James, Goose Creek Parish.

54 Langdon Cheves, Berkeley County Tax Records for the years, 1927, 1928, 1929 etc. Berkeley County Office Building, Moncks Corner, South Carolina and Cheves Papers, among the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina, SCHS.

55 Langdon Cheves inherited property and managed family lands. See Isabella Cheves et.al. Berkeley County, Book C.2, 550-553, Deed dated 10-7-1889, Recorded January 1-30-1890 and Isabella Cheves will, Charleston County Will Book K. 363, Will dated 6-11-1909, Probated December 1912.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, motor vehicles and improved roadways enabled more farm workers to commute to jobs in Charleston County, but farming persisted as the only livelihood for many and an important supplemental source of income for most.⁵⁶ Langdon Cheves appreciated the potential profitability of fertile land and thus he traveled to Goose Creek regularly to manage his properties. He seldom traded the convenience of automobile for train-travel and he often rode a rail coach from the city station near his Bull Street home in Charleston to the Otranto or Mount Holly Depots, his favored gateways to his rural domain.

56 Langdon Cheves, 1848-1939, Cheves property papers, 1844-1935. The Cheves papers, 1167.01.07.02 are among the collections of SCHS. Hereinafter this work cites it as Cheves Papers.



The plat (above) indicates the location and size of six farms within the vicinity of "Crowfield Plantation," owned and managed by Langdon Cheves, 1848-1939. Farm "No. 5:582 Acres." defines "Bloomville." See Cheves papers, 1844-1935, South Carolina Historical Society.

Born in 1848 to Isabella, daughter of Henry Augustus Smith, wealthy landowner, and Dr. Charles Manly Cheves, son of a President of the United States Bank, Langdon Cheves grew up among the landed and privileged class of Carolina. As a youth, he was an avid naturalist and an accomplished wildlife artist, and after graduating from the College of Charleston with advanced mathematical skills, he worked briefly outdoors as an engineer. Unhappy applying his engineering skills to surveying, he successfully apprenticed with General James Conner (1829-1883) at a Broad Street Law practice, where he eventually assumed partnership status. In that capacity, he combined his math, surveying, and legal skills with his penchant for the countryside to become an astute land property manager.⁵⁷

Langdon Cheves took a careful and abiding interest in his lands in Goose Creek and on a “sultry morning”⁵⁸ in May 1910, he disembarked at Otranto Depot to commence a familiar walk through his property to Mount Holly Station, four miles distant. Along the way, he measured the frontage of lots, evaluated the productivity of tenants, and searched for opportunities to consolidate his holdings. He made

57 Robert B. Cuthbert, *The Picture Man, A Biographical Sketch of Langdon Cheves*, and Karen D. Stokes, *Langdon Cheves Goes to War, Carologue*, Fall, 2009, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp.14-21 and 22, 23, SCHS.

58 Robert B. Cuthbert, *The Picture Man, A Biographical Sketch of Langdon Cheves*, and Karen D. Stokes, *Langdon Cheves Goes to War, Carologue*, Fall, 2009, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp.14-21 and 22, 23, SCHS.

copious notes and tiny detailed drawings of his properties, and at the age of sixty-two, a time when many consider retirement, Langdon Cheves sought ways to improve the yield of his rural demesne.

Langdon Cheves was well acquainted with the Otranto Hunting Club near the Otranto Station as well as the Goose Creek Club for the Preservation of Game, the sister association east of the Goose Creek Bridge. Since his youth, he frequented both places and serendipitously, his employer, General James Conner owned part of the Otranto retreat since it incorporated in 1872.⁵⁹

Edward L. Wells built and furnished the little Otranto clubhouse for hunters and leased the dwelling for \$3.00 per member each year.⁶⁰ One spring morning in 1910, Langdon Cheves walked past the Otranto Club House and continued 350 yards north of the station aside the Atlantic Coast Line tracks in route to the wooden Goose Creek Bridge. Near the bridge on the east side, the hunting club associates employed John Watson to stock another club house and to serve as gamekeeper and “deer driver,” paying him \$125.00 annually. Watson kept the house well supplied with firewood,

59 Langdon Cheves notations and sketches, Goose Creek, 5-19-1910, 7-2-1910, 1-21-1911, and 4-19-1913 among the Cheves Papers.

60 Henry Workman Conner, 1890-1948, no.1256.02.05 and 28-235-1, SCHS. Also see “Mitchell & Smith,” Records of the Otranto Club, 1916-1924, number 152.02.08 among the Conner Family Papers 28-235-3, SCHS. Hereinafter Conner Family Papers refers to this source.



John Watson (above), in addition to other duties at the hunting clubs served as sexton for the St. James, Goose Creek Church during the early decades of the twentieth century. The photograph shows Mr. Watson in his official church capacity wearing a sexton robe.

canned goods, and other essentials, such as playing cards and libations.

After Langdon Cheves crossed over the Goose Creek Bridge, he immediately approached John Watson's little clapboard home near the intersection of State Road and "Church Road" (AKA Snake Road). Watson, a tall, straight, and versatile man, grew up as a slave on James Island. Soon after the turn of the century, he found his way to Goose Creek to serve as a hunting guide and sexton for the old St. James, Goose Creek Church.⁶¹ The Goose Creek Club for the Preservation of Game occupied the church property and in partnership with the Otranto Association, the club leased great amounts of acreage for the various deer, turkey, and other bird hunting seasons. Additional arrangements extended the hunting territory beyond the boundaries of Otranto and the Parish lines.

Each year, on behalf of both clubs, Watson delivered bushels of peas to more than thirty-one nearby landowners as compensation for permission to shoot over their fields.⁶² That year landowners such as Maggie Johnson and Hampton Pringle received peas as payment, and the hunting range expanded accordingly. However, tenant farmers such as Lee Bennett and Robert Barnwell received

61 Interview with Vermel Watson, daughter-in-law of John Watson, at Westview Elementary School, 12-28-83.

62 List of Lessors, 1909, among the Conner Family papers. The list gives the names of landowners and the amount of peas delivered as compensation for hunting rights.



Map of Berkeley and Parts of Charleston and Dorchester Counties, S.C. (above), Compiled by J. P. Gaillard, C.E., 1926. The map identifies most of the farmland that was used as hunting grounds in the early 20th century.

no peas compensation. They, Richard Bryant and dozens like them, leased farms on Crowfield, Bloomfield, Fredericks, Magnolias, 17, 18 and 19-mile tracts, Bees, Howe Hall, Ararat, Gadsden, and Blue House tracts and surrendered hunting rights to the club members as a provision of their lease agreement with the landowners.⁶³ Consequently, hunting club members roamed a huge expanse of natural and planted properties reaching along the banks of Goose Creek from the southern extreme of the old Schenkingh Plantation on Goose Creek to the ruins of De La Plaine's house in Ladson.

The tenants, who plowed and planted, eked out meager livings and families at Broom Hall, enabled Middleton and later, his brother-in-law Langdon Cheves, to keep the tract partially intact, but sections sold until all that remained in 1920 was 588 acres of "Bloomville," when the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company (Westvaco) bought it.⁶⁴ Westvaco used all of it, as well as contiguous Crowfield for timber during most of the 20th century and sadly, during their tenure, almost all the

63 Cheves Papers, 1166-01-01, 11-1-1913 (perhaps 1903), tenant contract between Langdon Cheves and James Nelson, with John Jenkins as a witness. The contract reserved all hunting rights to the Goose Creek Club.

64 South Carolina Department of Archives and History, (S.C. Archives), Series L10005, Reel 5, Plat 3011. A plat drawn from a survey made in 1916 shows that "Bloomville" had decreased to 588 acres.

oak trees lining the avenues and shading the manors were ringed and felled to clear ground for the pines. By 1939 all but a few of the avenue or manor oaks had vanished,⁶⁵ but the land value steadily increased until the West Virginia Development Company, a subsidiary of the paper industry, purchased the old Broom Hall tract as part of the consolidated Crowfield Plantation and entered residential lot promotion in 1980.

Numerous minority settlements like Casey emerged as viable communities in the parish during the first half of the twentieth century. Each featured a place of worship from where ministers led from the pulpits. Mount Carmel Church (established 1880) assembled close to the rail crossing, St. Paul's appeared on the old Springfield lands, and African-American houses of worship such as Grove Hall broke off from white institutions along the State Road as far as Wassamassaw and Sandridge.

65 Michael Trinkley Ph.D., et. al. "Landscape and Garden Archaeology at Crowfield Plantation: A Preliminary Examination," Research Series 32, the Chicora Foundation, Inc. PO Box 8664, 861 Arbutus Drive, Columbia, South Carolina, p. 22.



This photograph (left) taken in 1928 show three men, Capers Johnson, Dr. W.H. Johnson and B.J. Reid Johnson. Jr. standing near the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue (AKA Westview Boulevard) and State Road (St. James Avenue, Highway 176) at the Eighteen-Mile Marker. The William Henry Johnson Scrapbook is among the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

The image (below) shows a Ford automobile owned by William Henry Johnson on the State Road one mile north of the Goose Creek Bridge at the intersection to Bloomfield Avenue, circa 1928. Langdon Cheves used this roadway to access much of his Crowfield property including Bloomfield and Fredericks. The image is in the William Henry Johnson Scrapbook, circa 1920-1923, among the photographic collections of the South Carolina Historical Society (34/293), Charleston, South Carolina.



Once past Casey Church, Langdon Cheves diverted from the Road to Moncks Corner along “Gibbes Path.” Since the colonial period, that path reached east from Crowfield to Back River, and for many years John Gibbes of Bloomfield, as well as landowners of other bordering properties, kept the road passable for wagons. It ran atop a narrow ridge separating the Foster Creek and Back River drainage fields, crossing the railroad track, and skirting Springfield Plantation to intersect Old Back River Road. By the twentieth century, the overgrown pathway was suitable for horsemen and pedestrians only and it often led Cheves to Springfield where he rented properties annually to J.H. and J.G. Harmon, W.H. Bell, Joel Huff and Joseph J.

Driggers for \$2.00 an acre. Those families produced vegetables, corn, peas, beans, sweet potatoes and hay for themselves and their animals,⁶⁶ but that day, after emerging from the lowlands, he stepped onto the railroad track and followed it north to the Mount Holly Train Station, where he waited two miles east of the brick lined pond at Bloomfield Plantation.⁶⁷

Today there is little evidence of grand Broom Hall (Bloomfield). Wide scatters of brick and roof slate turned up when Westview Boulevard was scrapped through the forest in 1990 and an archaeological study resulted. That work unearthed remnants of the house foundation, brick-lined pond, dairy, slave houses, barns, and portions of two approach avenues. Consequently, a roadside park noted for the large, fallen and charred oak trunks, was defined, to protect the ancient home



66 Cheves Papers, a letter from J.H. Knight to HAM Smith and Langdon Cheves dated 3-2-1910 reporting names and amounts of land rents, and plat of four tracts of land owned by Toney Gaillard, Richard Myers, James Stephens, and John Green, in 1874. Also, see the United States Census, 1880, Mount Holly District, Productions of Agriculture, St. James, Goose Creek.

67 Undated memorandum, Cheves Papers, SCHS. Langdon Cheves noted ruins of a “fine brick spring” at Bloomfield Plantation around the turn of the twentieth century.

The War Department, Corps of Engineers Map (left) shows details of the subject area near the turn of the twentieth century when Langdon Cheves managed dozens of farms. Red letters were added to this map to identify specific locations relevant to this Bloomfield study. The “A” identifies Frederick Plantation. The “B” identifies Crowfield Plantation. The “C” identifies Broom Hall (Bloomfield) Plantation. D identifies the 18 Mile House Tavern.

site. The park overlooks the defunct rice fields and nearby a pedestrian walkway leads to a wooden deck on Crowfield Lake. From that vantage point one can look to the northern edge of the upper water reserve, north of today's Crowfield Boulevard, to the tallest branches looming above the tree line. During most of the 1990s that tree held a nest and eagle brood in its top bough and harkened to an intriguing story told two hundred and fifty years earlier by Elizabeth, the daughter of Benjamin and Amaranthia Gibbes.

Elizabeth Gibbes told of a similar tree that, though dead, stood for many years above the forest canopy. The bark fell off, as did all the branches except a few at the peak. An eagle built a sturdy nest in the upper crotch, remaining for many years, and spiking the curiosity of the laborers.

An old African claimed that a white stone was nestled inside, and anyone who could climb to the top and retrieve the stone would be free.⁶⁸

No one climbed that high, the promise of freedom was never tried, and the nest fell away long ago, but today, whenever a raptor flies above the waters of Crowfield Lake one may recall an earlier time when the low wet soils produced great wealth for the privileged few, who reigned from the high ground that was Bloomfield.

68 Alston Deas Collection of Property Records, 1823-1895, manuscript 43/0014 and 11-516-70, among the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.

Developers flooded the Bloomfield rice lands to create Crowfield Lake (image below). One of the distant trees held an eagle's nest for many years that reminded many of a mythical promise of prior centuries.



RELEVANT HISTORIC MARKERS

The author collaborated with the City of Goose Creek and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History to erect historic markers at relevant locations. The following list gives the titles and locations of the markers pertaining to Bloomfield and vicinity.

Goose Creek Bridge: The marker stands at the intersection of Naval Ammunition Depot Road (NAD Road) and The Oaks Avenue, Goose Creek, South Carolina.

Button Hall Plantation: The marker stands at the entrance to the City of Goose Creek Fire Department near the Public Works Facility and hydro-pillar, at 200 Brandywine Boulevard, Goose Creek, South Carolina.

Oaks Plantation: The marker stands near the front gate of the Oaks Plantation, at 130 The Oaks Avenue, Goose Creek, South Carolina.

Yamasee War, 1715: The marker stands near the entrance to the Foster Creek Park, 300 Foster Creek Road, Goose Creek, South Carolina.

Crowfield Plantation: The marker stands at the circular drive near the front door of the Crowfield Golf and Country Club at 300 Hamlet Circle in the Hamlets neighborhood of the City of Goose Creek.

A French Huguenot Plantation: The marker stands near 102 Dasharon Drive in the Hamlets Subdivision of the City of Goose Creek.

The Elms: The marker stands at the entry road to Charleston Southern University, Exit 205B on I-26 and University Avenue, North Charleston, South Carolina.

The St. James, Goose Creek Church marker stands in the parking circle near the church cemetery at 100 Vestry Lane, Goose Creek. The secluded church setting is contiguous to Goose Creek Primary School at 200 Foster Creek Road in the City of Goose Creek, South Carolina.

BLOOMFIELD/BROOM HALL HISTORIC MARKER

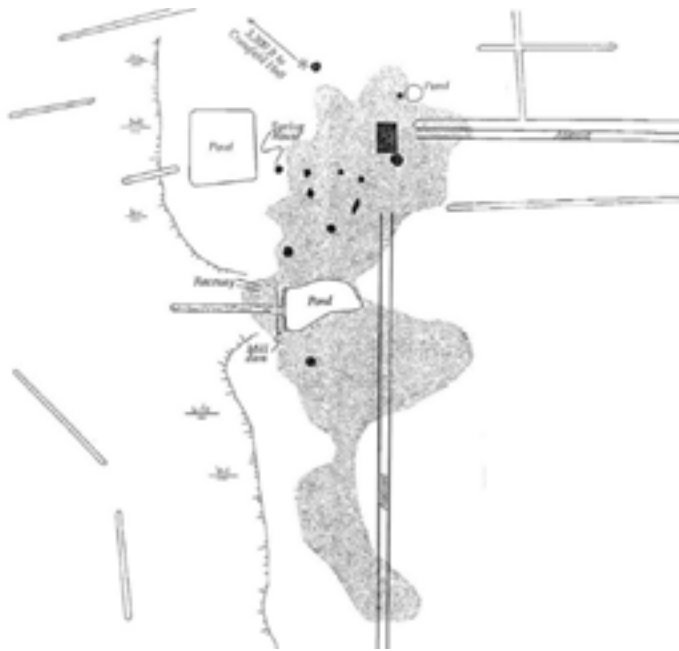
Front of Marker

“Broom Hall,” was granted to Edward Middleton in 1678. The land eventually conveyed to Benjamin and Jane Gibbes, whose family emigrated from Broom House, England Benjamin built the manor above lush lowlands where he planted rice. He left a large fortune to his widow who married Peter Taylor. Taylor developed the estate to its apogee in the mid-18th century. Thomas Smith acquired it prior to the American Revolution and used the showcase plantation as his country retreat.

Back Of Marker

Broom Hall survived the Revolutionary War with slight damage. Peter Smith II assumed its stewardship and improved the manor and gardens. One noted his “impeccable grounds,” and “...walks perfectly embowered with wild oranges.” The Smith’s reared six children including Henry Middleton Smith who remained on the land for many years. His descendent, Henry Arthur Middleton rented sections to formerly enslaved people after the Civil War and it continued to be farmed well into the 20th century when West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company acquired the property to harvest pine trees. Finally, the valuable properties converted to home sites after 1980.

ARCHAEOLOGY



The University of South Carolina Department of History and Archeology investigated the Bloomfield site in 1990 (image left). Two avenues access the main building. Shovel tests uncovered artifacts shown as dark spots near the main house. Man-made terraces are indicated projecting from two ponds.



Remnants of a colonial era rice field embraces many acres of clean water and rich soils (image above).



Artifacts (above) found buried in the contemporary Gibbes Forest residential neighborhood section of the Bloomfield Plantation include building materials, glassware debris and tool sections. A dollar bill gives perspective to the multiple images. A metal hoe head lays next to the dollar. A metal stud and a chip of roofing slate lay next to the hoe point. A broken brick marred by an animal footprint lays above two dozen pottery and porcelain chips. Meg Hudson and David Cantrell contributed these findings from their contemporary Gibbes Forest Residential homes.



Langdon Cheves, 1848-1939, Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, SC.

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“Preserve the Past, Protect the Present and Plan for Progress”

Michael J. Heitzler