



# *Listening to the Land*

## HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION OF MONTPELIER'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

By Carissa Demore

HISP 710/711 Final Project

School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation

University of Maryland, College Park

May 2012

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: LISTENING TO THE LAND: HISTORY AND  
INTERPRETATION OF MONTPELIER'S  
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Carissa Holly Demore, Master of Historic  
Preservation, 2012

Directed By: Dr. Donald Linebaugh, Associate Professor and  
Director, Department of Historic Preservation

The field of historic preservation has undergone dramatic changes since the early 1960s, when Montpelier Mansion, in Laurel, Maryland, became a public resource. One such change is the incorporation of cultural landscapes as significant, protected resources and keys to more fully understanding our history. Not only do cultural landscapes encompass the broader physical and temporal context of historic places, they also provide opportunities to examine previously untold stories. Prince George's County boasts one of the country's largest collections of 18th- and 19th-century plantation homes, but only a handful of these offer the public an interpretation of their broader landscape.

Montpelier has been owned and interpreted by the Maryland-National Capitol Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) since 1961. Although 75 acres of the original 10,000-acre plantation continue to be owned along with the house, little is known about the development of Montpelier's early landscape and no interpretation is

provided for visitors to the site. The landscape at Montpelier has undergone a multitude of typological changes, evolving from the relative wilderness inhabited by Native Americans, to its development as a formal plantation, undergoing Colonial Revival adaptation during the early 20th century, and ultimately becoming a house museum and interpreted site. Furthermore, a cultural landscape approach provides a rich context through which to discuss the history of diverse and often underrepresented groups within the landscape of Montpelier and the wider Chesapeake region.

This study investigates and interprets the history of Montpelier's landscape, including its grounds and outbuildings. As an account of Montpelier's broad cultural landscape, the report also illuminates connections between the environmental and cultural evolution of the site, considers Montpelier's involvement in the development of the City of Laurel and the surrounding area, and examines the transition of everyday lifeways over a period of several hundred years. The report also forms the basis of a self-guided walking-tour for Montpelier visitors. More than simply providing a brochure for Montpelier's visitors to reference, the integration of the history of Montpelier's landscape into the site's interpretive strategy provides M-NCPPC an opportunity to present a view of Chesapeake plantation development, use, and evolution that is, at this time, largely unavailable to the public.

LISTENING TO THE LAND: HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION OF  
MONTPELIER'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

By

Carissa Holly Demore

Master Final Project submitted to the Faculty of the  
Historic Preservation Program of the  
School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation,  
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Historic Preservation

2012

Advisory Committee:

Dr. Donald Linebaugh, Chair, Associate Professor and Director,  
Department of Historic Preservation

Dr. Sonja Duempelmann, Assistant Professor, Department of Plant  
Science and Landscape Architecture

Ms. Christine Henry, PhD Candidate, School of Architecture,  
Planning and Preservation

© Copyright by  
Carissa Holly Demore  
2012

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a number of people who have been instrumental in the completion of this project. My advisory committee, Dr. Donald Linebaugh, Dr. Sonja Duempelmann, and Ms. Christine Henry provided patient and persistent guidance throughout this project. The staff at Montpelier Mansion, particularly Mary Jurkiewicz and Holly Burnham, have been invaluable sources of encouragement and information and without them this project would not have been realized. Thank you to my final project peers: Kristin Britanik, Rachel Brown, Tom Hardej, Stephen Oetken, and Nancy Pickard. Their company on this journey has made the difference between an overflowing recycle bin and a finished product. I am forever grateful to the professors who first instilled in me the value of cultural landscapes: Merlyn Paulson, Brad Goetz, and Christine Dianni. Thank you to my parents, Jim and Jay Demore, for understanding and for finding ways to be supportive even when they didn't understand. Thank you to my very best friend, Kevin Illick, for all the things words cannot say. Finally, thank you to Shekoofeh Hamedanian for inspiring me to apply to graduate school in the first place and believing I could do this before I believed it myself.

# Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables .....	iii
List of Figures .....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2: Prehistoric Ecology, Prehistoric Native American Habitation, and Colonization (12,000 B.P.-1607) .....	11
Chapter 3: Snowden Family Ownership (1658-1888) .....	21
Chapter 4: Post-Snowden, Private Ownership (1888-1961) .....	49
Chapter 5: Public Ownership and Museum Use (1961-Present) .....	66
Chapter 6: Conclusion .....	78
Appendices .....	84
Bibliography .....	98

## List of Tables

	Page
Table 1: Montpelier Landscape 12,000 BP through 1658.....	20
Table 2: Montpelier Landscape 1658-1783.....	46
Table 3: Montpelier Landscape 1783-1888.....	47
Table 4: Montpelier Landscape 1888-1961.....	64
Table 5: Montpelier Landscape 1961-Present.....	76

## List of Figures

	Page
Figure 2.1.....	12
Figure 2.2.....	15
Figure 2.3.....	16
Figure 3.1.....	26
Figure 3.2.....	28
Figure 3.3.....	30
Figure 3.4.....	31
Figure 3.5.....	35
Figure 3.6.....	41
Figure 3.7.....	42
Figure 4.1.....	52
Figure 4.2.....	52
Figure 4.3.....	54
Figure 4.4.....	56
Figure 4.5.....	56
Figure 4.6.....	57
Figure 4.7.....	59
Figure 4.8.....	59
Figure 4.9.....	65
Figure 5.1.....	68
Figure 5.2.....	69
Figure 5.3.....	70
Figure 5.4.....	72
Figure 5.5.....	77

## Chapter 1: Introduction

From the mid-19th to mid-20th century, when historic preservation transformed from an avocational pursuit to a professional discipline, preservationists focused on the protection of high-style architecture associated with elite, powerful and prestigious people (such as George Washington's Mount Vernon). Likewise, museums cultivated collections of rare and exceptional objects, and art galleries developed canons of work created by renowned master artists. Those with the means, time, and social permission to visit these resources were generally mid- to upper-class and Euro-American, and the curated architecture, artifacts, and artwork in museums of the time matched the interests of this audience.

The field of environmental conservation developed independently from the framework of cultural preservation. Beginning around 1850, with both governmental and literary catalysts, the conservation movement was based upon the idealistic notion of nature as a "spiritual resource," rather than affiliated with cultural appreciation or socio-economic status.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the movement originated as a counter-balance to the increasingly industrialized urban environments developed during the 19th century and the accompanying frantic pace of life. Fueling public interest, New York revolutionized outdoor public space in urban settings in 1857 with the creation of Central Park. Yellowstone became the first protected wilderness area, called a National Park, in 1872. By the 20th century, conservation efforts had evolved

---

<sup>1</sup> Library of Congress, American Memory Collection (2002). *The Evolution of the Conservation Movement 1850-1920*. Accessed online at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html>

to incorporate a scientific methodology and the vast array of protected resources made nature, in some form, accessible to a wide range of visitors.

The divergence in the development of historic preservation and environmental conservation corresponds with an ever-expanding partition in American perception between culture and environment. While preservationists were focused on the values of human-created, cultural resources, conservationists focused on natural, ecological resources.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, Americans' daily interactions with the environment were transformed by industrialization and modernization of the workplace and home. The typical work-home environment reorganized during the 19th century from the integrated form of the family farm, dependent on natural processes, to the disconnected suburban house and office or factory building, which functioned fairly autonomously from nature. As everyday dependence on and connection to the land decreased in the 20th century, historic and cultural resources were often placed under one administrative jurisdiction and natural resources under another, as though there was no connection between the two.

During the second half of the 20th century, the United States underwent a major social transformation toward ethnic and socio-economic inclusivity, sensitivity, and awareness. For historic sites, museums, and galleries, this changing social consciousness resulted in a change in audience composition. At the same time, the types of resources being protected and made accessible to the public rapidly

---

<sup>2</sup> Further discussion of the divide between preservationists and conservationists can be found in the following article:  
Conard, Rebecca (2001). *Applied Environmentalism, or the Reconciliation Among "the Bios" and "the Cultural."* The Public Historian 23 (2). 9-18.

expanded. Historic preservation efforts began to include vernacular buildings and landscapes along with high-style architecture, exploring resources that represent a wider range of ages, genders, classes, and ethnicities. This new suite of resources allows preservation to more clearly and completely represent the entirety of cultural history, but it also presents new challenges, particularly for interpretation. By including a wider range of resource types, particularly with landscapes, it becomes difficult to identify clear boundaries to define a protected resource. Furthermore, when discussing the history of multiple cultures, accounts do not always agree on the facts, let alone the interpretation of events and contentious issues that must be handled carefully. The field of preservation is only beginning to develop effective methods for accommodating these challenges.

The broadening of the field of historic preservation to consider landscapes as historic resources throws into sharp relief the disconnect between cultural preservation and environmental conservation efforts. Since the 1960s and publications like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the conservation movement has focused on the impact of humans on the environment, creating opposition between concepts of culture and nature. One strategy employed today to discuss a landscape both in terms of its cultural and natural history and an attempt to bridge the gap between these philosophic groups is the "cultural landscape" approach. A cultural landscape is "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."<sup>3</sup> The cultural landscape model addresses the need to include natural and cultural resources under the same umbrella of research, funding, and protection. In ways that structures alone cannot, cultural landscape studies also provide broader context for historic resources by including expansive physical and temporal boundaries. Within cultural landscapes elements such as flora, fauna, humans, structures, roads and infrastructure are used simultaneously to provide context for a fundamental discussion: how cultures influence and act on their physical space and how physical space influences culture.

The use of cultural landscapes in preservation practice can now be seen in everything from national documentation programs like the Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) to the mission statements of state organizations like New York's Natural Heritage Trust, which administers grants for parks, recreation, cultural, land and water conservation and historic preservation purposes.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that because the study of landscapes as a cultural resource is relatively new, many significant historic landscapes remain undocumented, unprotected, and little known from a cultural perspective, even when their natural components fall under the protection of an environmental conservation entity and vice versa.

---

<sup>3</sup> Charles A. Birnbaum, *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1994). Available online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Natural Heritage Trust, The (2012). *Mission Statement*. Albany, NY: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Retrieved online: <http://nysparks.com/natural-heritage-trust/default.aspx>

While the field of preservation as a whole has slowly begun to include new resource types and social groups, it remains an even greater challenge for individual sites to accommodate this model. In particular, historic house museums struggle to meet the demands of increasingly diverse audiences who desire a more nuanced interpretation of history.<sup>5</sup> Historic house museums have traditionally been associated with the high-style architecture of relatively elite and exceptional individuals or families. Not only do these well-crafted buildings often withstand the test of time more successfully than their vernacular counterparts, their significance has traditionally been attached to noteworthy individuals and architecture.

Historic house museums are often one of the most accessible resources a community has to remember its past, due to their direct approach to public interpretation, accommodation of local school groups, and visibility as historic features in a modern landscape. As a result, museums face the challenges of providing interpretive programs that place buildings, artifacts, and sites in a historically accurate, inclusive, relevant, and dynamic context. To do so requires a revenue source that will support research efforts, development of materials and displays, and regular training for docents. Small house museums, which lack the revenue to make these course corrections, risk becoming increasingly irrelevant to a contemporary audience, resulting in a cycle of decreased revenue and an inability to make corrections to reverse the trend.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Barrientos, Tanya. (2008). "Houses, Histories and the Future." *The Pew Charitable Trust Magazine*. Retrieved online: [http://www.pewtrusts.org/our\\_work\\_report\\_detail.aspx?id=38618](http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=38618)

<sup>6</sup> Harris, Donna. (2007). *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History. 3-65.

Moreover, house museums have often not retained their landscape and outbuildings, sometimes selling the land to developers to help fund the museum. In other cases, the historic landscape and ancillary buildings of sites have not been well maintained because available funds were dedicated primarily to the main house.<sup>7</sup> The loss of these historic landscapes equates to a loss of contextual setting and information that would contribute to a modern audience's experience of the house and broader enjoyment and understanding of the significance of the site. Montpelier Mansion, a historic house museum surrounded by 75 acres of land, provides a case study through which to examine these issues.

Montpelier is located in southern Laurel, Maryland, near Route 197 and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. The site, one half-mile southwest of the Patuxent River, sits at approximately 200 feet above sea level, and is comprised largely of wooded areas and open lawns. The landscape includes several large specimen trees as well as a reconstructed herb garden. There are a few remaining outbuildings in addition to the main mansion, including an ornate summerhouse, a seven-bay garage, and a converted early 20th-century stable, which now serves as a community arts center. The landscape is open to the public year-round, free-of-charge and is rented for weddings and used for festivals during warmer months.

Since the mid-20th century, Montpelier has offered interpretation to visitors based almost entirely on the lifestyle of the original family who owned the property and within the limited context of the mansion. While this interpretive approach has

---

<sup>7</sup> Godfrey, Marian and Barbara Silberman. (2008). "A Model for Historic House Museums." *The Pew Charitable Trust Magazine*. Retrieved online: [http://www.pewtrusts.org/our\\_work\\_report\\_detail.aspx?id=38618](http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=38618)

been successful in attracting a particular audience with specific interests in the mansion's architecture or original owners, it is less appealing to a contemporary group of potential supporters, who are diverse in age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. The National Trust for Historic Preservation estimates that this group is made up of approximately 15-17 million potential supporters. Therefore, engaging this broader group is critically important to the development of successful and sustainable preservation efforts.<sup>8</sup>

Montpelier has been owned and interpreted by Maryland-National Capitol Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) since 1961. Although 75 acres of the original 10,000-acre plantation continue to be owned along with the house, little is known about the development of Montpelier's early landscape and limited interpretation is provided for visitors. The landscape at Montpelier has undergone a multitude of typological changes, evolving from the relative wilderness inhabited by Native Americans, through development as a formal plantation, undergoing Colonial Revival adaptation during the early 20th century, and ultimately becoming a protected historic resource and museum. Furthermore, hundreds of enslaved African-Americans lived and worked within the landscape during the time in which the original owners lived at Montpelier. While the presence of enslaved workers was often intentionally concealed inside the mansion, they would have been highly visible outside of the house. As a result, the landscape provides a rich context through which to discuss the

---

<sup>8</sup> Meeks, Stephanie. (October 19, 2011). Plenary Address. *2011 National Trust Conference*. Lecture conducted from: Buffalo, NY.

history of slavery and slaves' places within the cultural landscape of Montpelier and the larger Chesapeake region.

This study investigates and interprets the history of Montpelier's landscape, including its grounds and outbuildings through a series of historic periods. As an account of Montpelier's broad cultural landscape, the report also illuminates connections between the environmental evolution of the site and the human activities occurring there. It will discuss the everyday lives and cultures within the site and considers Montpelier's involvement in the development of the greater surrounding region. The report also forms the basis of a self-guided walking-tour for Montpelier's visitors, enabling them to envision the narratives of the everyday experience at the site.

The report is structured according to the four distinct periods of Montpelier's evolution. The first includes the broad time period from ca. 12,000 B.P. through 1607 during which Algonkian-speaking Native Americans included the site in their hunting grounds. Subdivided within the first period is the transitional time between 1498 and 1607 when Europeans arrived in the Mid-Atlantic and began developing colonial settlements. The second chapter in Montpelier's development is defined by the dates when the Snowden family owned and operated Montpelier as a plantation: 1658-1888. This period is subdivided from 1669 to 1783 before Montpelier mansion was constructed, from 1783 to 1811 when the Montpelier mansion was built and the plantation thrived, and from 1811 through 1888 when the plantation dissolved and was eventually sold out of the Snowden family. The third period in Montpelier's

development occurs from 1888-1961, after the Snowden family sold the home and it passed through several private owners. The final period begins when Montpelier was transferred into public ownership in 1961 and became a protected and interpreted resource, which it remains today. The final chapter of the report examines the value of the Montpelier landscape within the broader context of historic preservation practice, connecting this site to contemporary issues of cultural landscape preservation and making recommendations for further research.

In many ways, Montpelier is characteristic of a Chesapeake plantation and achieves its significance through its representation of the evolution of this type of landscape. The statement of significance for Montpelier's National Register of Historic Places nomination highlights notable visitors to the site during the 17th century (including George Washington), the architectural significance of the mansion, the Snowden family's extensive landholdings and use of slave labor during the 18th and 19th centuries, and elements of the formal landscape surrounding the mansion.<sup>9</sup> The site also exhibits atypical elements of plantation development which are mentioned in the National Register nomination. For example, the Snowdens were a Quaker family whose religious values conflicted with their practice of owning slaves. Also uncommon was the fact that Montpelier supported itself substantially through the industrial operations of the Patuxent Ironworks, rather than relying primarily on agricultural revenue. These uncommon characteristics increase the site's significance

---

<sup>9</sup> Ridout, Orlando. (1970). *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Snowden-Long House, New Birmingham*. Annapolis, MD: Maryland Historical Trust.

because they contribute to an expanded discussion and appreciation of Mid-Atlantic plantations.

While the National Register form highlights some cultural and historical points of significance, it is incomplete. This report will build on the National Register statement of significance, by addressing broader regional relationships, the important environmental impact of humans on the landscape, and incorporating more cultural groups into the site's narrative (including, among others, Native Americans, enslaved African-Americans, indentured servants, and women). To address the history and significance of the site in such a comprehensive way is more easily and effectively expressed through Montpelier's landscape than through the house (on which the National Register statement focuses) alone.

Montpelier's current managers recognize that the 75 acres of land associated with the house museum are an untapped resource that could provide new avenues of interpretation and relevance to a broader audience. This report examines the history of Montpelier's landscape, drawing on this setting as an important interpretive space. When coupled with a narrative that includes an extended timeline and perspectives of multiple genders, classes, and ethnic groups, the landscape can be used to expand the picture of everyday life at a Chesapeake plantation. The incorporation of the physical and cultural landscape into the interpretive strategy of the site enhances the relevance of Montpelier's history to a contemporary audience, aligning the preservation of the site with 21st-century values and asserting its importance in the ongoing dialogue about the relevance of historic fabric to contemporary life.

## Chapter 2: Prehistoric Ecology, Prehistoric Native American Habitation, and Colonization (12,000 B.P.-1607)

### *Prehistoric Ecology (ca. 12,000 B.P.-1607):*

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the New World, the site of Montpelier existed as an indistinguishable part of the natural ecosystem of the Atlantic Coastal Plain province. This Coastal Plain extends south through Maryland and includes parts of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. On its northern end, the Plain widens into the Atlantic Ocean, resulting in the many estuaries and river valleys which dominate the coastal regions of Maryland and Virginia and creating the Chesapeake Bay.<sup>10</sup>

The Patuxent River originates in the Piedmont province, characterized by rolling hills which are remnants of eroded prehistoric mountain chains, moving through relatively steep, narrow channels as three tributaries: the Little Patuxent, Middle Patuxent and Western Branch. As it progresses across the flatter Coastal Plain toward the Chesapeake Bay, the Patuxent widens and slows and was surrounded by broad wetlands prior to settlement. Montpelier is located along the Little Patuxent tributary, within the Upper Patuxent watershed and near the interface of the Piedmont and Atlantic Coastal Plain province (Figure 2.1).

---

<sup>10</sup> Trimble, Stanley W. "Nature's Continent." From *The Making of the American Landscape*. Michael P. Cozen, ed. Unwin Hyman, Inc. 1990. 25.

Redacted Image

Figure 2.1. Montpelier is located just south of the present-day City of Laurel, within the upper Patuxent watershed and at the boundary between the Piedmont (red) and Atlantic Coastal Plain (orange) provinces.

Prior to colonization in the 17th century, the area that would eventually be called Montpelier was a deciduous forest containing an abundance of hardwood trees. This old growth forest included varieties of oak, poplar, hemlock, beech, hickory, chestnut, and pine trees.

The riparian habitat that formed around the Patuxent and its tributaries was richly diverse, containing a wealth of floral and faunal species. Montpelier's forest would have provided conditions that supported diverse small fauna and insects. Larger herbivores, like deer, would have also frequented the Patuxent and its tributaries. Accordingly, large predators like black bear and bobcat would have included the vicinity of Montpelier within their hunting range. Based on its location between the Piedmont and the Chesapeake Bay, migrating species of birds, fish, and other animals would likely have moved through Montpelier's landscape seasonally.<sup>11</sup>

When all these components are viewed together, it becomes apparent that prior to settlement, the landscape of Montpelier served as an important ecological corridor, connecting extensive hardwood forests to the waterways of the Patuxent and stitching together the larger physiographic landscape from the Piedmont to the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

#### *Prehistoric Native American Habitation (ca. 12,000 B.P.-1607):*

During the Paleoindian and Archaic periods (prior to about 5000 B.P.), native peoples in North America lived as bands of hunter-gatherers. These nomadic peoples

---

<sup>11</sup> Walker, Mark, et al. (1990). *Archaeological Investigations at Montpelier (18PR393) Prince Georges County Maryland*. Washington, D.C.: Engineering Science, Inc. 6,7.

subsisted on a diet of megafauna, such as bison, caribou, and mammoths, as well as berries, nuts, fish, and birds. Generally, their visible impact on the cultural landscape was minimal because they had not developed in a way that would leave lasting markers on the landscape, for example, by constructing permanent structures.

These dispersed bands slowly coalesced into bands and small tribes during the late Archaic and early Woodland periods, from 5,000 to 3,200 B.P. By the late Woodland period (1,100 B.P.) native peoples were socially structured into larger tribes and chiefdoms. This change in social structure correlates with a transition toward agricultural practices, supplemented by hunting and gathering. These new farming practices begin to be evident in the landscape as areas of forest are cleared, new varieties of maize and beans are cultivated and traded across the continent, and more permanent structures are built.<sup>12</sup>

The landscape surrounding the Chesapeake Bay was populated by Algonquian-speakers, including the Mattapanient, Patuxent, Piscataway and Susquehanna tribes.<sup>13</sup> The forest provided wood that was used to make barrel-roofed houses and the forest, rivers, and bay provided plants and animals to be eaten and used as medicines. Rivers also provided a source of fresh water and a reliable navigation corridor.

---

<sup>12</sup> Middleton, Richard and Anne Lombard. (2011). *Colonial America: A History to 1763*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. 1-15.

<sup>13</sup> Walker, 10.  
Clark, Wayne E. (2007). "The Algonquian-Speaking Indians of Maryland." *Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail*. The National Park Service.

John White's late 16th-century watercolors of indigenous people are some of the earliest indications of what native peoples of the Chesapeake may have looked like (Figure 2.2). Captain John Smith also writes of various native settlements along the Patuxent during his 1608 exploration and there is extensive archeological evidence of prehistoric settlement in the Patuxent River valley (Figure 2.3). The limited prehistoric artifacts that have been uncovered at

Redacted Image

Figure 2.2. 1585 Watercolor by John White depicting the wife of a chief of the Pomeiooc. (Trustees of the British Museum).

Montpelier, as well as archaeological evidence from two sites across the Little Patuxent tributary and one downstream, indicate the presence of Woodland Period inhabitants in the area. It is possible that further archaeological research would uncover evidence of prehistoric settlement on-site. However, current archaeological evidence and the distance of the site from the Patuxent River indicate that the landscape of prehistoric Montpelier was likely used only for hunting camps and was not the location of a more permanent population.



Figure 2.3 Map drawn by John Smith during a 1608 exploration of the Chesapeake Bay.

#### *Colonization (1607-1658):*

Colonization by European nations resulted in massive changes to the physical and cultural landscape of North America. Not only did the impact of settlement and European exploitation of the landscape change the ecological and cultural fabric of the Chesapeake environment, but the practice of representing and documenting the landscape, its resources, and inhabitants in forms like maps and illustrations changed the entire relationship of people with the North American landscape.

The European process of creating maps was both a highly technical and an artistic pursuit in the 16th and 17th centuries. Maps from this period include elaborate drawings and symbols and are often accompanied by detailed descriptions of the landscape. These surveys and maps, commissioned by wealthy European rulers and colonial investors, served navigational, economic, and political functions. First, they depicted the landscape and its resources, allowing values to be placed on the land and

enabling decisions about future explorations and settlements to be made from across the Atlantic. As colonization took hold, maps also served as a mechanism of control, marking ownership and depicting the British Empire's ability to bound and master what it believed to be wild, uncivilized land.<sup>14</sup>

In order to move quickly and transport the goods and people required for such exploration, English explorers traveled largely by boat and relied on bays and rivers to penetrate the landscape and evaluate its resources. Early maps of the Mid-Atlantic region clearly depict the Chesapeake Bay and its major tributaries, including the Patuxent River.

Until the early 19th century, the Patuxent was a deep water access route for large ships to move several miles inland. Early maps, created by men on these ships and later by colonists, fairly accurately indicate the course of the river and often note the presence of native settlements.<sup>15</sup> In the earliest explorations, the Patuxent served as both a physical and cultural connection between incoming Europeans and the existing physical and cultural landscape.

Early exploration was often met with curiosity by native tribes, but as the English began settling and exerting control over native farming and hunting lands, amicable relations were tested. In some cases, Native Americans established formal agreements with English colonists, including trade of goods and services, while in

---

<sup>14</sup> Schmidt, Benjamin. (July 1997). "Mapping an Empire: Cartographic and Colonial Rivalry in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and English North America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series, 54 (3). 549-550.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix D for examples.

other cases brutal battles took place as divergent cultures attempted to assert their authority.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike the oral traditions practiced by native tribes, the English brought with them the convention of documenting their history in writing. Without access to native accounts of colonization, it is difficult for contemporary researchers to accurately assess the degree to which each culture was willing or able to accommodate the other. By the mid-18th century, as the British expanded west in an effort to proclaim their dominance over the New World to other European nations, Native American tribes were being eradicated from the Mid-Atlantic region.

*Summary:*

In the earliest stages of cultural development, the landscape of Montpelier was a component part of a large ecological environment spanning the Mid-Atlantic and forming a transitional space between the Piedmont and Atlantic Coastal Plain provinces. The cultural impact on Montpelier by native peoples was extremely limited. Even in later stages of development when tribes were forming permanent settlements, archaeological evidence indicates Montpelier was only used as part of a larger hunting area. Table 1 delineates the landscape features that are most significant to this period of development, largely natural rather than artificial, and highlights the relatively limited presence and impact of humans on the landscape during this time.

While colonization began in Maryland in 1634, when the Ark and the Dove arrived, cultural perception of the Chesapeake landscape was influenced by European

---

<sup>16</sup> Smith, Mark M. (2009). *Writing the American Past: US History to 1877*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 51, 52.

explorers, who documented the land, its resources, and inhabitants several decades earlier. Nevertheless, while this documentation changed the philosophic and ruling ideologies influencing the use of the landscape, physical ramifications of this shift are not visible in the Montpelier landscape until its second period of development, starting in 1658.

**Table 1: Montpelier Landscape (12,000 B.P. through 1658)**

<i>Landscape Feature Category</i>	<i>Elements Significant to Period</i>	<i>Visibility in Contemporary Landscape</i>
Incorporated Acreage	Not Applicable	Approximately 75 acres
Water	Patuxent River	River dammed in 1952; River not included in current property boundary
Forested Area	Variable quantity of virgin forest, transitioning to second-growth forest areas	Approximately 15 acres of second-growth forest
Agricultural Fields		
Gardens		
Specimen Trees and Shrubs		
Wild Animals	Diverse small fauna and insects; larger herbivores, like deer; large predators, like bobcat and bear; migratory birds; fish	Semi-diverse small fauna and insects; deer; some migratory birds
Domestic Animals		
People	Evolution of groups (see Appendix D), eventually including Mattapanient, Patuxent, Piscataway and Susquehanna Tribes	Members of the Piscataway Tribe occasionally provide public interpretive programs
Structures		
Roads	Possible footpaths and trails created by animals	
Cemeteries		
Miscellaneous		

## Chapter 3: Snowden Family Ownership (1658-1888)

By the 18th century, harbor cities like Boston, New York, and Annapolis were well established and families arriving from Europe seeking jobs, land, and some degree of independence began moving inland. Plantations, in which individual families acquired expansive portions of land, were the dominant agricultural model in the southern colonies and resulted in disbursed settlement patterns; towns and cities were small and scarce.

Although quite different from the practices of native peoples, the acquisition and development of land during the 17th and 18th century was, nevertheless, very dependent upon the landscape and environment. Development in Maryland was based on the metes and bounds system of survey, in which land is divided based on distances and degrees between physical markers in the landscape; large trees, distinctive rocks or stream bends are commonly referenced in Maryland survey documents from the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>17</sup> The result is an organic pattern of roads and fences that often follow topographic or environmental boundaries. The lack of developed infrastructure and the importance of exporting resources to England meant that rivers remained critical transportation corridors and the most influential towns of the time were often developed around a port.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Maryland State Archives. (2009) *Maryland State Archives Geographical Services*. Archives of Maryland Online. Accessed at [www.plats.net](http://www.plats.net).

<sup>18</sup> Carr, Louis Green, Philip D. Morgan and Jean B. Russo. (1988). *Colonial Chesapeake Society*. College of William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg: The Institute of Early American History and Culture. 371-375.

The New World was initially seen as an endless supply of material resources and the colonies existed primarily to extract those goods and make them available to the European market, increasing England's wealth and power. In the Mid-Atlantic, elite families acquired large tracts of land through charters from the English Crown. Lord Baltimore, having received a charter for much of Maryland, granted thousands of acres to immigrating gentry, often based on strange customs, such as the amount of land a man could ride around on horseback in a single day or the portion of a map that could be covered by a man's thumb.<sup>19</sup> Mid-Atlantic landscapes were quickly developed into profitable plantations, originally comprised of a few thousand acres and expanding over several decades to be upwards of 10,000 acres per family.<sup>20</sup>

Plantations were a specific type of agricultural land-use, involving production of a single type of cash crop. They operated through a hierarchical system of administration, with the plantation owner supervising one or more overseers and enslaved African-American labor constituting the majority of the work force.<sup>21</sup> In the Mid-Atlantic prior to the 19th century, the most prevalent cash crop was tobacco, due to the region's extended growing season (approximately 200 days per year were frost-free).<sup>22</sup> The soil in this region was also well drained, an important feature for tobacco cultivation. However, this sandy, clayey soil was not particularly fertile and required

---

<sup>19</sup> Carmondy, John M. (1940). *Maryland: A Guide to the Old Line State*. Federal Works Agency: Works Project Administration. 372, 418.

<sup>20</sup> Hilliard, Sam B. (1990). "Plantations and the Molding of the Southern Landscape." From *Making of the American Landscape*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman. 105.

<sup>21</sup> Hilliard, 106.

<sup>22</sup> Morgan, Philip D. (1998). *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press. 32-33.

careful management.<sup>23</sup> Toward the end of the 18th century, as a result of falling tobacco prices and unreliable returns, Mid-Atlantic plantations began to diversify, producing large quantities of grain in addition to tobacco.<sup>24</sup>

*The Immigration and Rise of the Snowden Family (1658-1783):*

In 1658, the family of Richard Snowden I immigrated from Wales to Maryland, seeking opportunities provided by the New World. In 1669 he and Thomas Linthicum purchased 500 acres of land called “Iron Mine” for 11,000 pounds of tobacco. Lord Baltimore granted Richard Snowden I an additional 1,976 acres of land, known as Robinhood’s Forest and located along the Patuxent River, in 1685. Robinhood’s Forest contains the current Montpelier landscape, and the original family home, Birmingham Manor, was built in 1690 across the Patuxent to the east what would become Montpelier. From 1715 through the early 19th century, the Snowden family continued to acquire land, ultimately amassing over 10,000 acres.<sup>25</sup>

As the Snowden family increased their landholdings, they struggled with native groups who were already inhabiting the larger landscape.<sup>26</sup> In September of

---

<sup>23</sup> Walker, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Clemens, Paul G.E. (March 1975). “From Tobacco to Grain: Economic Development on Maryland's Eastern Shore, 1660-1750.” *The Journal of Economic History* 35, (I). 256.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix B  
Scheele, George A. et al. (1988). *Snowden-Warfield Lineage*. Accessed online at: [www.snowden-warfield.com](http://www.snowden-warfield.com). 3.  
For more detailed history of lineage and landholdings see *Montpelier and the Snowden Family* by William G Cook.

<sup>26</sup> Extensive information on the ways in which Native and European land-use practices competed with one another is available in:  
Cronon, William. (2011). *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. London, England: MacMillan. Chapter 7.

1681, the Council of Maryland recorded letters from three plantation owners describing a conflict with local native groups:

*The 12th instant at a Plantation of Major Welch's the Indians have killed a negro and wounded with Tomohawkes two English men, one mortally to all probability at the same Plantation We have brought off the wounded and buried the dead, and are ranging and quartering our men some of them upon those frontire Plantations, the people being in greate distress, the Indians hollowing round their Plantations, & attempting their dwelling houses chiefly of Mr. Duvall and Richard Snowden.<sup>27</sup>*

As the original land grant indicates, the Snowdens achieved their economic success through the processing and trade of iron. Between 1700 and 1740, England was importing 180,000 tons of iron from Sweden and Russia at a significant cost. The colonies, with their vast iron reserves, were encouraged to export iron to England and reduce the country's dependence on foreign imports.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, colonial settlers depended on ironwares for construction and agriculture. Samples of Maryland iron ore were sent to England in 1718 and were deemed to be of extremely high quality. As a result, between 1718 and 1735, iron production in Maryland increased from 3 tons to 3,400 tons annually.<sup>29</sup>

In 1736, Richard Snowden II, having inherited his father's land in 1720, formed the Patuxent Ironworks Co. on the Patuxent River, a few miles downstream from what would become Montpelier. The Patuxent Ironworks Co. was ideally suited

---

<sup>27</sup> Cook, W. G.. (1976). *Montpelier & the snowden family*. Laurel, Md.: Cook. 282.

<sup>28</sup> Curtiss, George Boughton. (1912). *The Industrial Development of Nations*. Binghamton, NY: Curtiss. 29.

<sup>29</sup> Kranz, Peter M. (1996). "Notes on the Sedimentary Iron Ores of Maryland and their Dinosaurian Fauna." *Maryland Geological Survey Special Publication*, 3. Accessed online at: <http://terpconnect.umd.edu>.

as an ironworks, as its location contained high quality iron ore, was surrounded by hardwood forests which could supply endless amounts of charcoal fuel, and was near the river, which provided operating power and transport for the products.

Iron production in Maryland increased during this time period with the number of production facilities peaking just before the Revolutionary War at 14 furnaces and 18 forges.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, total iron exports to England decreased, a symptom of the heightened demand for iron within the colonies. In an attempt to control revenue, England imposed a series of Parliamentary restrictions on colonial iron production, severely limiting the manufacture of ironwares like nails.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the Patuxent Ironworks achieved great success, producing plough shears, cast andirons, and ornamental firebacks for local use, almost completely curtailing its exportation of pig iron to England.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Construction of Montpelier Mansion and Plantation Development (1783-1811):*

With Richard Snowden II's passing in 1774, his land was divided between three sons, Thomas, Samuel, and John. Major Thomas Snowden inherited the land he would call Montpelier and commissioned the construction of a mansion in 1783. The house at Montpelier is a Georgian-style mansion, following a typical five-part-plan consisting of a main, east-facing block with symmetrical hyphens and wings on

---

<sup>30</sup> Kranz, <http://terpconnect.umd.edu>.

<sup>31</sup> Curtiss, 29.

<sup>32</sup> Scheele, 3.



Figure 3.1. Riverside facade of Montpelier Mansion. (2011 Photo by author).

the north and south ends (Figure 3.1).<sup>33</sup> The design was extremely fashionable for the time, echoing features of Classical architecture. Moreover, the composition of the house within the landscape was significant. Montpelier Mansion sits atop a topographic rise and was oriented such that its main entrance overlooked the Patuxent River and its secondary, garden entrance overlooked the Old Post Road, the two major transportation corridors for the area. The front also looked toward the original Snowden family home, Birmingham, and the Snowden Ironworks.

The composition of the landscape surrounding the mansion would have played a key role in the social standing of the Snowden family. Landscapes of Chesapeake gentry in the 17th and 18th centuries symbolized a family's wealth, education, and

---

<sup>33</sup> The main block was constructed in 1783, while the hyphens and wings were added in 1795.

social status. The name Montpelier, given by Major Snowden's wife, Anne Ridgely, is a French derivation of the latin *montis*, meaning mound or mountain, and suggests the importance of the topographic location of the mansion.

Montpelier Mansion was constructed several decades after the Snowden plantation came into production, so in addition to the family's financial success through iron production, the Snowden plantation was already producing large quantities of tobacco and corn when the mansion was conceived.<sup>34</sup> Before they could even see their destination, guests of the Montpelier Snowdens would have been driven through the expansive agricultural fields surrounding the mansion or passed the Patuxent Ironworks in boats, thereby being presented with physical evidence of the family's wealth and prominence.

In the late 18th century, carriageways leading to the mansions of the elite were generally very formal, wide, tree-lined promenades that delineated the ceremonial landscape associated with the mansion setting from the surrounding agricultural landscape.<sup>35</sup> Although archaeological investigations have not been undertaken to determine the location of Montpelier's original driveway, vegetative signatures in the landscape indicate it was likely an extension of the walkway leading from the east facade of the house (Figure 3.2). Such a drive would have extended down the hill

---

<sup>34</sup> *1795 List of Bills against Major Snowden's Estate*. Maryland: Prince George's County Courthouse. 1-17.

<sup>35</sup> Sarudy, B. W. (1998). *Gardens and gardening in the chesapeake, 1700-1805*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 32.

toward the river, eventually connecting with the Old Post Road.<sup>36</sup> Upon arriving at the drive for the mansion, guests would have been ushered through the first of a series of checkpoints: a gate, which indicated the exclusivity of the Snowden's property.<sup>37</sup>

Redacted Image

Figure 3.2. 1934 Aerial Photo. Vegetative signature (appearing beneath the red arrow) extends from the mansion at the center of image, northeast across lighter agricultural fields, connecting with Laurel Bowie Road. (M-NCPPC).

The processional landscape continued in the formal gardens immediately surrounding the mansion. The main entrance of the house, which overlooked the Patuxent River, is seated above three broad terraces (often referred to as “falls”).

---

<sup>36</sup> See APPENDIX B

Snow Hill, located less than a mile to the north of Montpelier Mansion, retains its historic driveway and cedar allée, providing context for how Montpelier's entry may have appeared.

<sup>37</sup> 1795 *List of Bills against Major Snowden's Estate*, 1-17.

When viewed from the base of these terraces, the mansion appears taller and more imposing.<sup>38</sup> The terraces also enhanced the view of the surrounding landscape from inside the mansion. After passing through the terraced lawns, guests were confronted with a stair, then the door to the impressive mansion. This series of formal and informal thresholds, passed by a visitor on the way to the mansion, served to reinforce the success and power of the Snowden family.<sup>39</sup>

In 1796, a summerhouse was constructed at the end of a formal boxwood allée to the south of the mansion (Figure 3.3). With its oriental details (like the shape of the dome and the Chinese Chippendale window sashes), this small building indicated the worldliness and sophistication of the Snowdens.<sup>40</sup> The boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) was imported to North America as an ornamental shrub in 1750.<sup>41</sup> The boxwood is easily shaped, long lived, and produces a pleasant fragrance from the oils on its leaves (Figure 3.4). At Montpelier, boxwood was shaped into an ornate allée leading to the summerhouse. Further testing is needed to verify the exact age of the boxwood allée, but it is believed that they are over 200 years old.<sup>42</sup> Maintenance of this formal boxwood garden would have required regular care by the Snowden's slaves.

---

<sup>38</sup> Sarudy, 25.

<sup>39</sup> Upton, Dell (1985). "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia." In *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*. Ellis, Clifton and Rebecca Ginsburg ed. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT. 130.

<sup>40</sup> Sarudy, 23.

<sup>41</sup> Weishan, 89, 257.

<sup>42</sup> Ridout, 5.

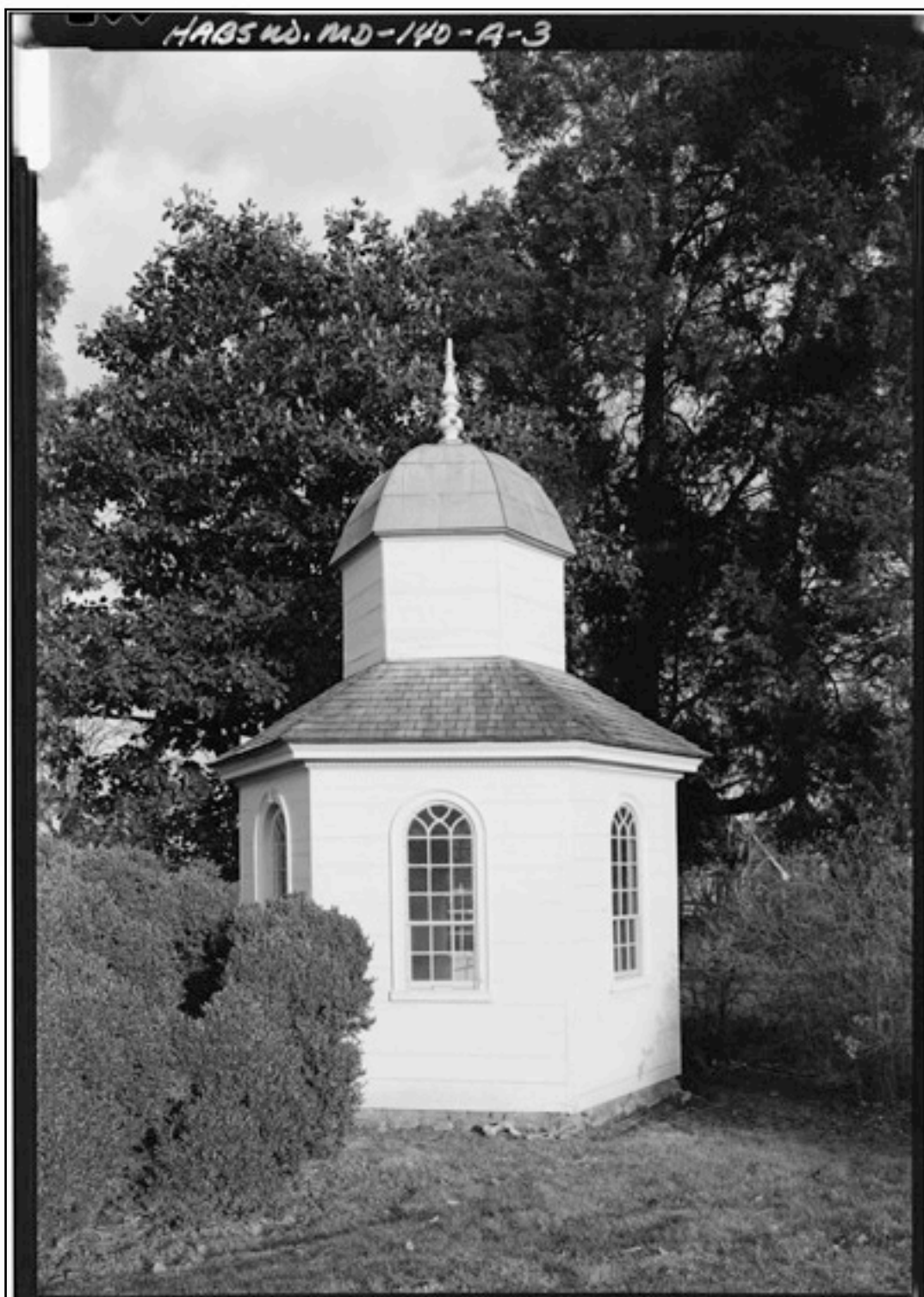


Figure 3.3. 1936 Image showing the c.1796 summerhouse and boxwood allée extending to the left out of the frame. (Historic American Building Survey).

Evidence of large quantities of oyster shells, pebbles, and small pieces of iron in the yard south of the mansion suggest paths were created in this area, likely to organize and frame planting beds of a kitchen or ornamental garden.<sup>43</sup> Combined with the position of the summerhouse and boxwood allée, the landscape surrounding the mansion seems to be organized along an axis extending from the side of the house. While atypical, this arrangement is not unique.

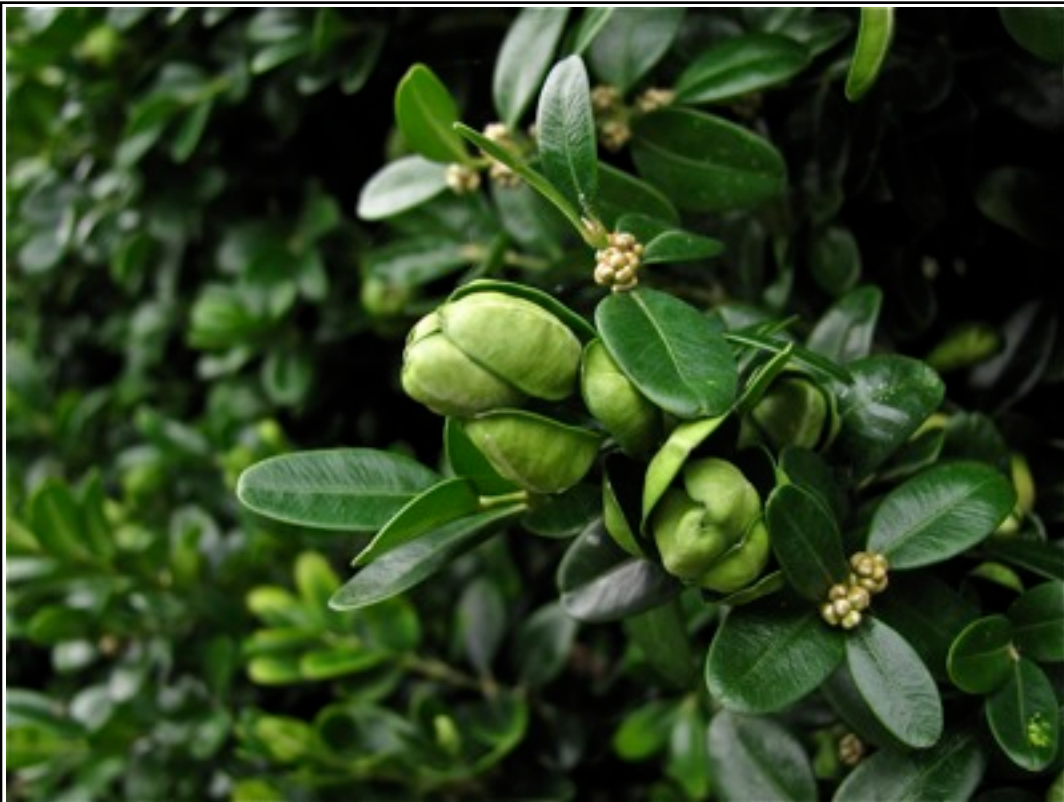


Figure 3.4. Montpelier boxwoods, 2011. (Photo by the Author).

Prior to the 20th century, when heating, air conditioning, and electricity became common features in American homes, relationships between houses and their surroundings were much more important. Lack of indoor plumbing meant privies were dug outside within a short walk of the house. During the summer, windows and

---

<sup>43</sup> Quilter, Jeffrey. (1980). *Archaeological Testing at Montpelier Mansion Prince George's County, Maryland*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland. 11.  
*1795 List of Bills against Major Snowden's Estate*, 1-17.

doors would have been opened to allow cross-breezes to circulate through the mansion. People would have been constantly entering and exiting the house to complete chores, discuss business, and participate in the operation of the plantation.

The Snowdens industrial success meant they were well connected to other plantation owners in the region; For example, whom Major Thomas Snowden served under George Washington during the Revolutionary War. Because Montpelier was located along the Old Post Road, which connected Philadelphia through Annapolis to Alexandria, George Washington was a frequent guest of Major Thomas Snowden and also purchased ironwares from the Patuxent Ironworks.<sup>44</sup> Various sources allege that slips from the boxwoods grown at Montpelier were used to grow the boxwoods at Mount Vernon.<sup>45</sup>

The choices the Snowdens made in crafting their gardens are indicative of larger stylistic trends in American garden design of the 18th and 19th centuries. Many of the features of the Snowden landscape, including the terraced garden, the use of boxwoods, and the construction of an oriental summerhouse, are common elements in 18th- and 19th-century gardens in the Chesapeake region. Moreover, the landscape at Montpelier represents the complex relationship between English traditions and the values of the New Republic that were shaping the recently liberated United States.

In order to project the proper Republican patriotism, Southern gentry at the turn of the 19th century employed a combination of practicality and refined design in their landscapes. Elements like terraced lawns added sophistication and their

---

<sup>44</sup> Cook, 23.

<sup>45</sup> Ridout, 4.

construction and maintenance requirements displayed the wealth and power of a plantation owner. Yet, they were also quite practical in that terraces reduced soil erosion during heavy rains.<sup>46</sup>

While English gardens of this period often incorporated expansive hunting grounds and carefully constructed scenic views of the countryside, garden owners in the U.S. found such measures unnecessary. Chesapeake gentry were surrounded by relatively untamed wilderness and were typically more concerned with keeping deer out of their vegetable gardens, than with artificially maintaining and creating habitat for them.<sup>47</sup> By carefully arranging his formal landscape, the late 18th-century plantation owner was able to simultaneously express his elite status and his adherence to the values of the New Republic.

*Productivity and Slavery at Montpelier (1783-1865):*

Members of elite society of the late 18th and early 19th centuries were engrossed in the ritual of obtaining new and exotic plant specimens for their gardens. The Revolutionary War and subsequent tensions between nations meant that, rather than importing seeds and bulbs from England, growers began developing new varieties of ornamentals in the U.S., importing from parts of Europe, and bringing species obtained during westward expansion back to the East Coast. In 1818, the Osage Orange (*Maclura pomifera*) was introduced to the Chesapeake from its native habitat of what is now the Red River drainage of Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas and

---

<sup>46</sup> Sarudy, 51.

<sup>47</sup> Sarudy, 32, 59.

the Blackland Prairies, Post Oak Savannas, and Chisos Mountains of Texas.<sup>48</sup> Not long after, the Snowdens planted a male of the species in the yard just south of the mansion (Figure 3.5). Archaeological evidence indicates the presence of an outbuilding, as well as a kitchen midden in this area. As a large and fast-growing shade tree, the Osage Orange would have provided shade for activities taking place in the yard. This tree and the boxwoods that are still visible in the landscape today, represent an important connection between the interests of the elite Snowden family in maintaining their ornamental landscape and the everyday work activities of enslaved African-Americans.

Prior to the industrial revolution, production of all kinds was dependent upon human labor. Plantations could not function without a large, inexpensive labor source. During the 17th and early 18th centuries, thousands of indentured servants were brought from Europe and during the late 17th and 18th centuries thousands more Africans were brought to the Mid-Atlantic by way of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. These people were involuntarily tasked with the maintenance of southern plantations.

The Snowdens were no exception to this labor system and Major Thomas Snowden appears in newspapers in the late 18th century, attending slave auctions and searching for runaway African-Americans and indentured Englishmen.<sup>49</sup> In 1804, the Snowdens owned 169 black slaves, ranging from an unnamed, one-week-old girl to

---

<sup>48</sup> Little, Elbert L., Jr. (1979). "Checklist of United States trees (native and naturalized)." U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Agriculture Handbook*, 541. Washington, DC. 375 Weishan. 275.

<sup>49</sup> Maryland Gazette, July 21 1773, Sept 6 1774, May 8 1777, May 15 1777, Nov 2 1787.



Figure 3.5. The osage orange tree in the yard south of the mansion is estimated to be nearly 200 years old, (2011 Photo by the author).

an 80 year-old blind man named Peter. Spread between Prince George's, Anne Arundel and Montgomery counties, these enslaved people worked in the Mansion, at the Ironworks, and in the fields.<sup>50</sup> Within the mansion at Montpelier, enslaved workers performed a variety of tasks, but were meant to be as unobtrusive as possible. Nevertheless, while enslaved African-Americans may have been somewhat invisible within the mansion, they would have been quite visible on the landscape where they lived and worked.

One of the main cash crops of Chesapeake plantations was tobacco and over 60,000 pounds of tobacco were grown on Snowden property annually during the early 1800s.<sup>51</sup> The price of tobacco and iron were both volatile, but with a generally decreasing return each year. Therefore, the Snowdens, like many Chesapeake plantation owners, sought to diversify their interests. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, large amounts of wheat, hay, oats, potatoes, corn, and rye were also cultivated. Some of these crops were used at the plantation to feed the cattle, sheep, pigs, and horses that the Snowdens kept. Much of the remaining harvest would have been sold, allowing the family to maintain their lavish lifestyle.

Because the mansion served as a sort of town center in relationship to the functions of the surrounding landscape, the composition of the landscape was, again, intentionally symbolic. The arrangement of the processional landscape was instrumental in creating an unmistakable hierarchy to be recognized by enslaved

---

<sup>50</sup> Hones, Josiah and Richard Cramphin. (1804) *Inventories PG County 1804 Thomas Snowden*. Upper Marlboro, Maryland: Prince George's County Register of Wills.

Hones, *Inventories PG County 1804 Thomas Snowden*.

workers.<sup>52</sup> A bell, used to call slaves from the fields and located on a post in the yard beside the mansion, emphasized the power relationships.<sup>53</sup> Based on evidence found at other Chesapeake plantation sites and debt records of Major Thomas Snowden, it is likely that the houses of slaves and possibly even their overseers, were simple wooden structures. Through their contrast with the mansion, they were meant to reinforce the success of the Snowdens.<sup>54</sup>

As a marginalized group viewed as property rather than as individual human beings, very little of the Snowden's economic return would have been appropriated to African-Americans. This does not mean, however, that enslaved African-Americans did not have any agency within the Montpelier landscape. Because the Snowden landholdings were so large, enslaved workers would have traveled great distances through the landscape, carrying materials and information both across the Snowden plantation lands and to other plantations throughout the Chesapeake region. This movement would have occurred independently from the formal landscape experience created for elite visitors, in part because enslaved workers would have used both roads, paths, and waterways dominated and controlled by elite white men and also informal trails and meeting points cutting through the landscape, independently of the established hierarchy. Moreover, these transitional spaces would have provided opportunities for African-Americans to exchange information and material culture

---

<sup>52</sup> Upton, 128.

<sup>53</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The* (Jul 22, 1923). "One Of Maryland's Most Noted Old Plantations, Distinguished By Its Architecture." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 39.

<sup>54</sup> Upton, 126.

relevant to their own lifeways, in addition to exchanging goods and information for their owners.<sup>55</sup>

It is also important to acknowledge the contributions of enslaved people within the formal landscape. For example, though the mansion was a formal space designed to serve and represent the Snowden family, it was constructed by African-Americans. Likewise, many elements of the formal landscape surrounding the mansion, including the boxwood allée, were planted or built and maintained by slaves. While these features of Montpelier's 19th-century landscape were meant to demonstrate the power of the Snowden family, they also prominently displayed the skillful craftsmanship of the African-Americans who created them.

Unfortunately, between the abolition of slavery and the 1980s, most recognizable traces of slave activity were obscured in Montpelier's landscape. For example, although plantation slave quarters were typically located near mansions, no evidence of slave housing, or even overseers housing, is mentioned in historic records or has been found onsite. Any archaeological evidence of such housing could have been destroyed by the 1966 subdivision development to the north and west of the mansion, or covered and possibly damaged by the installation of a large parking lot south of the mansion in the 1980s.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, while evidence of the Snowden family

---

<sup>55</sup> Upton, 129-137.

<sup>56</sup> More information on 20th century development is available in Chapter V. The theory of slave cabins being located south of the mansion is most widely supported, as this would have allowed an extension of the North/South axis along which the Snowdens designed the landscape surrounding the Mansion. Early 20th-century workers' housing was also located south of the mansion.

cemetery has been found just southwest of the mansion, evidence of burials of the Snowden's enslaved African-Americans has not been uncovered.<sup>57</sup>

While the cultural landscape at Montpelier provides new avenues for discussing the history of slavery at the site and in the Chesapeake region, it also sheds light on the enormity of the challenge. The fact that the presence of this majority population has been so completely erased or covered up speaks to a broader social perception that either African-American history and lifeways did not warrant acknowledgement or the manner of treatment of this cultural group throughout U.S. history was too shameful to admit in a public museum. The perpetuation of the invisibility of slaves underscores the lasting impact of that belief not just on the physical site, but on the entire cultural landscape. In the case of Montpelier, the absence of physical evidence of slaves in the landscape is as meaningful as the limited evidence that remains.

Further systematic archaeological study of Montpelier, particularly in areas beyond the formal mansion landscape, could yield additional evidence to expand the existing understanding of the everyday experience of slaves at the site. This evidence could provide a critical and tangible link between the traces of slavery that remain at the site and the narrative that is currently missing.

---

<sup>57</sup> Cozen, 55.

### *Decline of the Plantation System (1811-1888)*

The negative consequences of plantation agriculture on the landscape were inescapable. The introduction of new plant species through trade practices, coupled with the degradation of the pre-colonial ecosystem had begun transforming what was once predominantly old-growth hardwood into second generation forests dominated by softwood pines. As a result of forest clearing, short crop-rotation, and heavy fertilization, many of the rivers in the Chesapeake region had begun to fill with silt by the 19th century, washed from agricultural fields with every rain.<sup>58</sup> Not only did this affect the quality of soil and, therefore, the quality and quantity of crops produced, but for the Snowdens, the silting up of the Patuxent inhibited the large barges that were necessary for transporting materials to and from the profitable Patuxent Ironworks.

In 1803, Nicholas Snowden inherited Montpelier Mansion and 504 acres after the death of his father, Major Thomas Snowden. In an effort to evade the consequences of declining iron and agricultural profits, Snowden established a flouring mill, a few miles upriver from Montpelier, in 1811. At the time, the Snowdens also operated grist and lumber mills, as well as grocery, shoemaker, and blacksmith shops. When the B&O Railroad was constructed in 1835, the flouring mill had already restructured to produce cotton duck and the Patuxent Factory was constructed to produce cotton goods which could be shipped via the railroad. Not

---

<sup>58</sup> Schneider, Daniel. (1996). "Effects of European Settlement and Land Use on Regional Patterns of Similarity Among Chesapeake Forests." *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*, Vol. 123, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1996). 225-226.

Redacted Image

Figure 3.6. A cotton mill operated in Laurel from the 1830s through 1931. (Laurel Historical Society).

long after, Laurel Machine Company was built to manufacture parts for the local industrial machinery (Figure 3.6). Laurel quickly expanded into a company town, managed by members of the Snowden family (Figure 3.7). The town adapted to current economic conditions and soon surpassed the plantation in profitability. In 1870, Laurel incorporated and became independent from company ownership.

In addition to ecological challenges to the plantation lifestyle, social pressures also affected the Snowdens' success. When the Snowdens began managing a plantation in the 17th and early 18th century, the Quaker Meeting, of which they were members, was divided about the practice of owning slaves. In 1776, the Philadelphia Annual Meeting outlawed the ownership of slaves by Quakers, but by that time, many southern Quakers were already economically dependent upon the free labor that

Redacted Image

Figure 3.7. A portion of Martenet's 1861 Map of Prince George's County. Laurel, in the upper portion of the image, has begun to develop along Main Street and is connected to the B&O Railroad. Montpelier, owned by Dr. Jenkins, is located toward the bottom of the image. (Library of Congress, American Memory Collection).

slaves provided as was the case for the Snowdens. The division of the family over this economic, social, political, and moral quandary remained constant over more than two centuries. Mary Thomas Warfield-Snowden, sister-in-law to the Snowdens living at Montpelier, lived in Laurel and visited the plantation frequently. In a July 25, 1858, journal entry she wrote, “as I rode along over the beautiful county, I thought much of the evils of slavery.”<sup>59</sup> By 1860, with the Civil War underway and Union troops occupying Laurel to protect the railroad to Washington, DC, a portion of the Snowden family had established itself in Ohio as a way to escape the necessity of owning slaves. Meanwhile, members of the Snowden family who lived at the Maryland plantation played prominent roles in the Confederate Army.

The consequences of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery on Montpelier were remarkable. Although the plantation, with its hierarchical structure, had been the dominant socio-economic power for nearly two centuries, it was incapable of withstanding the costs of even the meagerly paid, free African-American workforce. Coupled with the inability of barges to reach the Patuxent Ironworks and the wasted condition of the soil, Montpelier was quickly overshadowed by the growing industry of Laurel. In 1888, the last remaining Snowden owners, Elizabeth Snowden Jenkins and Mary Eliza Jenkins, sold the mansion and remaining 220 acres of Montpelier out of the family.

---

<sup>59</sup> Warfield-Snowden, Mary Thomas. (1858). *July 25, 1858 Diary Entry*. Transcribed in 2008 by Caroline Fakady and Jean Keenan.

*Summary:*

Montpelier's development as a formal plantation can be placed within the historic timeline from 1658, when Richard Snowden I arrived in Maryland through 1888 when Montpelier was sold out of the Snowden family. During this period, the Native American cultures which had flourished in the area were forcibly removed and the land transformed into a component of a larger economic mainstay – the southern American plantation. The Snowden family, a wealthy, white, Quaker family, was one new cultural group within the landscape, joined by indentured servants and enslaved African-Americans. Although they lived and worked within the same physical landscape, the perceptions of and relationship to their physical space was vastly different between these groups. The cultural landscape of this period was transformed into a physical manifestation of power and dominance on the part of the Snowdens; a message which is undercut by less apparent evidence of vitality and strength in the face of social inequality on the part of slaves and indentured servants.

From 1658 through 1888, the ecological landscape was extensively altered from its previously diverse state into a carefully managed system of isolated functions relating to agriculture and industry. When Montpelier mansion was built in 1883, the residential landscape was given not just functional attributes, but also the symbolic purpose of displaying the power and status of the Snowdens in the New Republic.

Tables 2 and 3 summarize the transition of Montpelier's cultural landscape during this developmental period. Table 2 details the significant landscape features of Montpelier prior to its possession by Major Thomas Snowden and the construction of

the mansion. This table highlights the role of the landscape within the larger plantation and its transition away from a wilderness environment. In Table 3, the landscape features that are specific to the formal landscape around the mansion are identified and the social and political role of the landscape becomes apparent.

As a plantation, Montpelier is part of a widespread, regional pattern of disbursed settlement, characteristic of the development of the Chesapeake during the 18th and 19th centuries. Moreover, as the Montpelier landscape became less and less agriculturally productive, the transition away from plantation landscape and toward a denser, semi-urban landscape is revealed. Ultimately, the founding of Laurel, the abolition of slavery, the deterioration of the agricultural land, and the waning of the iron industry during the 19th century transformed the economic, cultural, environmental, and regional landscape and ushered in the next developmental period of the cultural landscape at Montpelier.

**Table 2: Montpelier Landscape (1658 through 1783)**

<i>Landscape Feature Category</i>	<i>Elements Significant to Period</i>	<i>Visibility in Contemporary Landscape</i>
Incorporated Acreage	Approximately 10,000 Acres	Approximately 75 acres
Water	Patuxent River	Viewshed relatively intact; River dammed in 1952; River not included in current property boundary
Forested Area	Variable quantity of virgin forest, transitioning to second-growth forest areas	Approximately 15 acres of second-growth forest
Agricultural Fields	Production of tobacco, wheat, barley, oats, rye, corn	Approximately 40 acres; Uncultivated
Gardens		
Specimen Trees and Shrubs		
Wild Animals		
Domestic Animals	Variety of domestic animals including cows, pigs, horses, sheep	
People	Richard Snowden I, wife and three sons; Hundreds of slaves; indentured servants; notable guests include George and Martha Washington, Robert Lewis, Abigail Adams	Interpretation mentions members of the extended Snowden family, as well as noted guests including the Washingtons; Limited information is given about enslaved African-Americans
Structures	Untold number of tobacco barns, and other agricultural outbuildings; Birmingham Manor (c. 1690); Snow Hill (c. 1755); Snowden Ironworks	
Roads	Old Post Road and other carriage roads	
Cemeteries	Richard Snowden I and other Snowden family members buried near Birmingham Manor	

<i>Landscape Feature Category</i>	<i>Elements Significant to Period</i>	<i>Visibility in Contemporary Landscape</i>
Miscellaneous		

**Table 3: Montpelier Landscape (1783 through 1888)**

<i>Landscape Feature Category</i>	<i>Elements Significant to Period</i>	<i>Visibility in Contemporary Landscape</i>
Incorporated Acreage	Approximately 10,000 Acres (504 acres directly associated with Montpelier)	Approximately 75 acres
Water	Patuxent River	Viewshed relatively intact; River dammed in 1952; River not included in current property boundary
Forested Area	Variable quantity of virgin forest, transitioning to second-growth forest areas	Approximately 15 acres of second-growth forest
Agricultural Fields	Production of tobacco, wheat, barley, oats, rye, corn	Approximately 40 acres; Uncultivated
Gardens		
Specimen Trees and Shrubs	Osage Orange tree; formal boxwood gardens	Osage Orange tree retained; hedges partially intact on lower terrace and south lawn by summerhouse
Wild Animals		
Domestic Animals	Variety of domestic animals including cows, pigs, horses, sheep	
People	Major Thomas Snowden and Ann Dorsey Ridgely, Nicholas Snowden and Elizabeth Warfield Thomas, Juliana Maria Snowden and Dr. Theodore Jenkins, Elizabeth Jenkins and Mary Eliza Jenkins; hundreds of slaves	Members of the Snowden family are acknowledged in the interpretation of the mansion; limited information is given about enslaved African-Americans

<i>Landscape Feature Category</i>	<i>Elements Significant to Period</i>	<i>Visibility in Contemporary Landscape</i>
Structures	Main block of Montpelier Mansion (c.1783); hyphens and wings (c. 1794-95); 19th century summerhouse (c.1796); untold number of tobacco barns and other agricultural buildings; several other Snowden family homes and associated outbuildings	Mansion and wings retained with few exterior alterations;
Roads	Old Post Road	
Cemeteries	Snowden family cemetery at Montpelier	One, unmarked grave detected through archaeological investigation
Miscellaneous	Bell mounted on post in south lawn (tradition alleges it was used to call slaves to the house)	Removed

## Chapter 4: Post-Snowden, Private Ownership (1888-1961)

Around the turn of the 20th century, the development of the streetcar, and subsequent advent of automobile transportation, made it possible for many American families to move away from the crowded, noisy, polluted environment of the city and commute to their downtown jobs from suburban developments.<sup>60</sup> As settlement throughout the country expanded into the suburbs and across the western frontier, the desire to recapture American identity through domestic architecture grew in response. The Colonial Revival movement was born from this desire and served as a means of recapturing the values of symbolic figures from America's founding, like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, through emulations of their architectural styles.<sup>61</sup>

Concurrently, plantations continued to shrink and their agricultural importance in the landscape decreased. Individuals with the means to do so often purchased aging plantation houses. These houses and their associated landscapes perfectly imbued the romantic and nationalistic values that appeared in prescriptive literature about country houses starting in the second half of the 19th century.<sup>62</sup> This sentiment was stated clearly in a 1905 edition of *American Architect*, which criticized wealthy Americans living in homes in Italianate or French architectural styles:

*It really does not seem as if Americans, however rich they may actually be, can ever really feel at home in buildings that have so little connection with the soil and the customs of the fathers. On the other hand, it is equally impossible*

---

<sup>60</sup> These families were typically young, white, and middle to upper class.

<sup>61</sup> Rhoads, William B. (1976). "The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35 (4). 239-244.

<sup>62</sup> Downing, Andrew Jackson. (1856). *Cottage Residences*. New York: Wiley and Halstad. 68-73.

*that they should not feel at home – and behave as they feel – in such home-like Colonial houses ...*<sup>63</sup>

The acreage associated with these homes set their owners apart from their suburban surroundings both physically and figuratively, while enabling them to project their traditional American values and fashionable taste in architecture.

These larger social trends are apparent in the history of Montpelier's landscape during the property's third period of development. Montpelier, the house and 220 acres, was sold out of the Snowden family in 1888. The property passed through a number of aristocratic private owners in fairly quick succession, most of whom kept the property as a country home. The property served as a status symbol and was used to entertain prominent and wealthy visitors, as evidenced by a 1905 newspaper article indicating that Montpelier's then owner, Edmund Pendelton, had recently hosted a party at which Secretary William Howard Taft was a guest.<sup>64</sup>

By this time, the Snowden family estate had been disbursed. Birmingham burned to the ground in 1891, and in 1898, 480 associated acres were sold in 10-acre house lots.<sup>65</sup> Walnut Grange was purchased by the Federal government in 1910 and Oaklands was sold out of the family in 1911.<sup>66</sup> This dissolution resulted from several sources, including the economic consequences of the 1863 Emancipation

---

<sup>63</sup> *American Architect and Architecture*, LXXXVII. (January-June 1905). 74.

<sup>64</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The*. (Nov 17, 1906). "Doing Good Work for Laurel," ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 12.

<sup>65</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The* (Apr 15, 1898). "The Snowden Family: Its Founder, His Vast Landed Possessions And His Many Descendants." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 8.

<sup>66</sup> Prior to the sale of the house, everything from the window weights to the garden topsoil was sold.

Proclamation, the division of land between an exponentially increasing number of heirs, and the concurrent demand for suburban parcels.<sup>67</sup>

Between 1916 and 1918, several changes were made to Montpelier under the direction of owner Emmanuel Havenith. Among them, a large addition was attached to the south wing of the mansion and included a modern kitchen and new servants quarters. A seven-stall garage was also built on the property (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2).<sup>68</sup> These changes coincide with Americans' greater dependence on automobiles and the advent of new domestic technologies, like modern kitchen appliances. The result of these modern amenities was a decreased reliance on the landscape, brought about by the ability to store and transport basic necessities, like food and medicine, over long distances.

*Eleanor Fitzgibbon's Ownership (1918-1928):*

Eleanor Fitzgibbon was introduced to Montpelier while on a tour of the Maryland countryside with an amateur artist. Although the property was in a state of decline due to continuously diminishing farm profits, followed by the disinterest in the landscape of post-Snowden private owners, she decided she would purchase and restore it. In 1918, after two years of leasing the property, Montpelier became her country manor and primary residence.

---

<sup>67</sup> Keenan, Jean Warfield. (1990). *A Tour of Snowden Land*. Laurel, MD: Friends of Montpelier.

<sup>68</sup> Historic American Building Survey. (1933). *Montpelier: Photographs and Written Historical Descriptive Data*. Washington DC, National Park Service. 12.



Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2. Upper image shows the northeast corner of the seven-stall garage, 1936; Lower image shows the southeast corner of the servants quarters and kitchen addition, 1936. Note the identical, mirrored design. (Historic American Building Survey: John O. Brostrup, Photographer).

As the landscape was no longer used for agriculture, many of the outbuildings on the property had fallen into disrepair and the landscape was overgrown. In 1918, Fitzgibbon described Montpelier as,

*little better than a wilderness. There were no buildings except the house, and only about ten acres of tillable land, the balance of the farm would have put Brer Rabbit's briar patch to shame, and the beautiful house was like a pearl in a pigsty in such a setting.*<sup>69</sup>

While she had a great impact on the landscape at Montpelier, Fitzgibbon also endeavored to change the image of the property, renaming it Montpelier Manor Farm. Several newspaper articles between 1916 and 1923 discuss her efforts to rehabilitate the property.<sup>70</sup>

Fitzgibbon was faced with the task of reviving the derelict property, but knew very little about farming, having grown up in a wealthy Pittsburgh family. She recounted an early instance of ownership when one of her hired “hands” told her, “ef we all’s gwin farm we’s better git a circu’ plow,” to which she responded, “What in heaven ... is a circu plow?”<sup>71</sup> Out of necessity, she engaged the Maryland Department of Agriculture which confirmed through soil tests that the land at Montpelier had been a victim of the plantation system’s devastating practices.

---

<sup>69</sup> Historic American Building Survey. (1933). 12.

<sup>70</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The* (Jun 24, 1923). “Laurel Stock Sale Draws Many Buyers: Woman Importer Of Jerseys Sells Purebreds.” ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 16.  
*Baltimore Sun, The* (Jul 16, 1923). “Woman Plays Role of Country Square: Only Member Of Sex In America To Attempt Cattle Importing.” ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 20.  
*Baltimore Sun, The* (Jul 22, 1923).  
*Baltimore Sun, The* (Sep 5, 1923). “Cattle Show And Horse Racing Features At Timonium Fair.” ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 4.

<sup>71</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The*. (Jul 16, 1923).

As the land was virtually unusable for cropping, Fitzgibbon was advised to breed cattle.<sup>72</sup> In the 1920's, it was highly unusual for women to be involved in cattle breeding, and only a few American men had import cattle-breeding businesses. Nevertheless,

Fitzgibbon decided to follow the

recommendations of the state agriculture officials and her research, all of which suggested importing Jerseys would be the most profitable option. Thus, she proceeded to transform Montpelier into a prize-winning bull-breeding operation (Figure 4.3).<sup>73</sup>

The process of converting Montpelier from an overgrown and unproductive estate into a successful dairy operation was costly and time consuming. Cattle experts, the Agriculture Extension, and many books convinced Fitzgibbon to travel to York, England, and acquire a controlling interest in Sybil's Gamboge, one of the finest Jersey bulls at the time. As her operation expanded, it was also necessary to extensively fertilize the land at Montpelier, eventually enabling her to put 120 acres

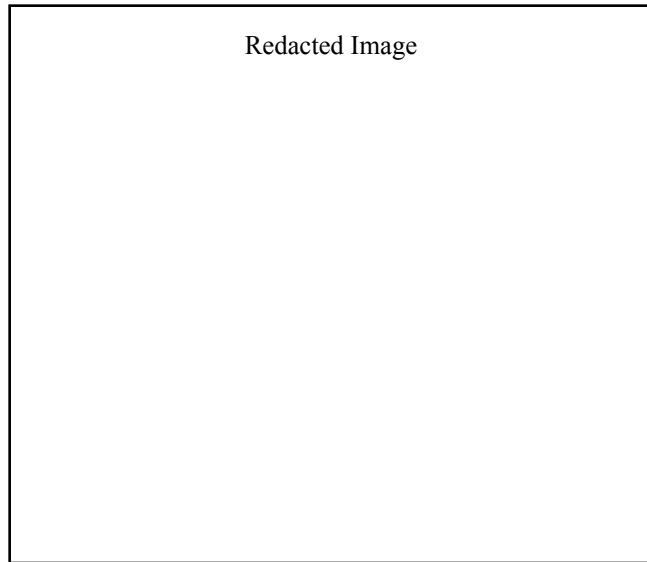


Figure 4.3. 1920 advertisement (*The Field illustrated: a journal of advanced agriculture, scientific breeding and rural sports*).

---

<sup>72</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The.* (Jul 22, 1923).

<sup>73</sup> Historic American Building Survey. (1933). 12.

back into agricultural use.<sup>74</sup> After a few years, Montpelier proved profitable enough that Fitzgibbon purchased Sybil's Gamboge and brought him to the property.<sup>75</sup>

Fitzgibbon was perceived as a shrewd businesswoman with an eye for Jersey cows but she was not inclined to live frugally, in spite of her insistence that Montpelier should "pay its way."<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, she bought not just a quality bull, but one of the best and most expensive in the world, valued at \$65,000 in 1919.<sup>77</sup> Sybil's Gamboge and his offspring appeared in stock shows around the state for several years, impressing judges and winning prizes (Figure 4.4). The animals sold for prices in the thousands of dollars.<sup>78</sup> Fitzgibbon continued to spare no expense and commissioned a 42-stall barn for her animals, designed by an architect (Figure 4.5).<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, Fitzgibbon was never able to achieve economic stability at Montpelier and, after repeated family loans and defaults, the property was put up for sale.<sup>80</sup>

Ironically, it was Eleanor Fitzgibbon's insistence on preserving Montpelier's historic landscape that ultimately cost her ownership of the property. In the late 1920's, the Montpelier boxwoods were worth more than enough to pay her debts, but

---

<sup>74</sup> Historic American Building Survey. (1933). 12.

<sup>75</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The*. (Jul 16, 1923).

<sup>76</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The*. (Jul 22, 1923).

<sup>77</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The*. (Jun 24, 1923).

<sup>78</sup> *Baltimore Sun, The*. (Sep 5, 1923).

<sup>79</sup> Historic American Building Survey. (1933). 12.

<sup>80</sup> Historic American Building Survey. (1933). 12.

she stubbornly refused to sell them, insisting that the boxwoods were as much a part of Montpelier as the mansion.<sup>81</sup>

Redacted Image

Image 4.4. Large image shows Green Farm Cybil, one of Ms. Fitzgibbon's prize-winning cows. Inset photo shows Eleanor Fitzgibbon with an unidentified cow. (July 16, 1923 edition of *The Baltimore Sun*).

Redacted Image

Image 4.5. Looking across the boxwood maze toward the northwest corner of Ms. Fitzgibbon's 42-stall barn. (July 16, 1923 edition of *The Baltimore Sun*).

---

<sup>81</sup> Friends of Montpelier. (2006). *A Brief Outline of the Snowden Family History and Montpelier Mansion*. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. 14.

*Breckinridge Long Family Ownership (1928-1959):*

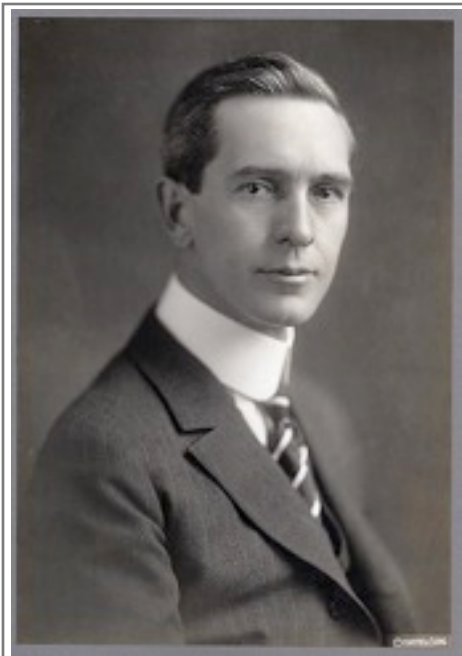


Image 4.6. Breckenridge Long c1918. (Harris & Ewing, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

In 1928, Montpelier was purchased by Breckinridge Long (Figure 4.6). During the time that the Long family owned Montpelier, Mr. Long worked in a variety of prominent positions for the Federal Government, including acting as U.S. Ambassador to Italy from 1933-1936. In 1940, Long was appointed Secretary of State and became rather infamous for obstructing Jewish refugees from entering the U.S. during World War II.<sup>82</sup>

Although an extreme example, Long's actions during the Second World War highlight his nationalistic views and underscore the reasons for his purchase and promotion of Montpelier as an important historic site. Montpelier exemplified Long's commitment to American ideals, his desire to escape the pressure of life in Washington during the war, and symbolized his wealth and authority.

During their ownership of Montpelier, the Longs accommodated many touring groups who came to see the garden and learn about the historic mansion. The Baltimore Chapter of the American Institute of Architects toured the property in 1930,

---

<sup>82</sup> Feingold, Henry L. (1973). "The Politics of Rescue. The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945" Review by: John Major *The English Historical Review* 88 (346). 227-228.

noting the magnificent boxwood gardens and the mansion.<sup>83</sup> From 1933 to 1937, the Longs hosted a series of benefit tours of Montpelier in an effort to raise funds for the restoration of Stratford Hall, Robert E. Lee's birthplace.<sup>84</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt was among the reported guests.<sup>85</sup> During 1936 and 1937, a total of four photographers from the Historic American Building Survey visited the site, photographing the mansion and portions of the garden area immediately surrounding the house.<sup>86</sup>

Among the few changes the Long family made to the property was the removal of an incongruous porch that ran the length of the mansion's garden facade and was likely added by Eleanor Fitzgibbon.<sup>87</sup> During the 1930s, the driveway to the mansion was routed around the northwest end of the house. Also, in 1937 Mr. Long replaced a mature shade tree at the garden entry with an unusual triple-flowering variety of dogwood (*Cornus florida*), which blooms every April (Figures 4.7 and 4.8).<sup>88</sup> The Longs also likely planted the Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) windbreak along the driveway between the house and the garage.<sup>89</sup> The family took

---

<sup>83</sup> Scarborough, Katherine. (May 25, 1930). "*The Typical Maryland House Baltimore: A Mention of Stately Mansion in and About the City.*" ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). SM6.

<sup>84</sup> Scarborough, Katherine (May 14, 1933). "Restoring the Home of the Lees: Montpelier Too Will Be On View For Stratford's Benefit." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). SM8.

<sup>85</sup> Baltimore Sun, The (May 16, 1937) "*Montpelier Manor Open to Public on Wednesday.*" ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 4.

<sup>86</sup> Historic American Building Survey. (1933).

<sup>87</sup> In spite of her staunch commitment to preserving Montpelier's historic boxwoods, Eleanor Fitzgibbon was criticized repeatedly for the alterations she made to the interior of the mansion, which included the removal of many original elements.

<sup>88</sup> Hamilton, Dane. *Double-Blossom Dogwood Not Unique to Montpelier*. Laurel, MD: *The News Leader*.

<sup>89</sup> Cook, 26.



Redacted Image

Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8. Upper Photo: West elevation (garden facade) of the mansion with mature shade tree, 1937. (Historic American Building Survey photo by Fred D. Nichols). Lower Photo: Unique triple-flowering dogwood installed by Breckinridge Long at the garden entrance to the mansion, 2004. (M-NCPPC).

advantage of the extensive landscape at Montpelier to breed horses, which they raced throughout Maryland. After he retired in 1944, Mr. Long became the director of Laurel Park Racetrack, located north of the property along Route 197.<sup>90</sup> Under the Long family's ownership, Montpelier experienced a shift in perception from what was previously viewed as an agricultural landscape and country manor to a historic landscape and mansion. It was during this time that the historic significance of Montpelier, as noted on its National Register of Historic Places nomination form, was established; although the house continue to be lived in, the number of changes to the property decreased and the site was re-associated with the original owners, the Snowdens. By 1955, articles were published about George Washington and other early presidents visiting the mansion.<sup>91</sup> The shift in public perception of Montpelier coincides with the transformation of the field of historic preservation into a professional discipline, concerned with the protection of high-style architecture associated with elite, powerful and exceptional people.

#### *Local Context:*

During the late 19th century, Laurel began to develop as a suburban town with access to Baltimore and Washington by stagecoach and rail. In 1870, Laurel incorporated and by 1890, it had established a Mayor and City Council. Because the town was surrounded by relatively undeveloped countryside, it became an economic

---

<sup>90</sup> Baltimore Sun, The. (September 27, 1958). "Long's Rites Set Monday: Lawyer, Diplomat, Horse Fancier Died Thursday At 77." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). 8.

<sup>91</sup> Scarborough, Katherine. (Feb 20, 1955). "Washington Slept Here." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986). MA5.

and cultural hub, providing Prince George's County's first public library, public high school, and national bank. By 1902, Laurel was also connected to Washington by trolley. By 1930, Laurel had a population of 2,500 and by 1960 there were 8,503 city residents.<sup>92</sup>

Because of the many plantations that once existed in the area and the nationwide Great Migration of African-Americans moving out of the South, Laurel attracted a notable African-American community by the end of the 19th century. The Grove, Laurel's segregated area for black residents, developed around St. Mark's United Methodist Church and the Laurel Colored School. This development pattern was typical for African-American communities in Maryland at the time. The name "The Grove" evolved from the African-American community's use of an old oak grove on the south side of Laurel as a gathering place. The property was provided free of charge by Charles Stanley, husband of Major Thomas Snowden's granddaughter, Margaret Snowden.<sup>93</sup>

The practice of treating enslaved African-Americans as identity-less property makes it difficult to determine whether any residents of The Grove were former Montpelier slaves or slave descendants, but it is likely that some were. It was not uncommon for freed slaves to adopt the last name of their former owners and according to an 1894 city directory one of the families that lived in The Grove went

---

<sup>92</sup> More detailed history of the city can be found at: History of Laurel Mill to Present, Laurel Historical Society <http://www.laurelhistory.org/pages/history.html>.

<sup>93</sup> Johnson, Sandra. (2003). *The African American Experience in Laurel*. Laurel, MD: Laurel Historical Society. 1.

by the name Snowden.<sup>94</sup> Montpelier slaves would not have had to move far from their former home and residents of The Grove worked at the Muirkirk ironworks and as laborers, servants, and drivers in Laurel, utilizing skills they could have acquired at Montpelier.<sup>95</sup> It is also likely that some former slaves continued to work at Montpelier, maintaining the grounds and caring for the house. To this day, many of Laurel's African-American residents are descendants of families that lived in The Grove and may be able to trace their heritage to Montpelier.

*Summary:*

During the 20th century, Montpelier's social and cultural role underwent a significant shift. Impacted by regional and national economics, industry, technology, and politics, Montpelier's economic contributions were quickly outpaced by the growing City of Laurel. As its productivity waned, the importance of Montpelier as a historic and cultural resource emerged, catalyzed by the Colonial Revival sentiment that overtook the U.S. during the first few decades of the 20th century and ushered in by the wealthy and prominent owners of the property. This growing appreciation for the mansion and the legacy of the site emphasizes the increasing disconnect between Montpelier's cultural and ecological significance. What had once been a vast ecological corridor, became a fragmented patchwork of second generation forest, growing cities, and suburban developments. The land formally associated with

---

<sup>94</sup> Ross and Fairall. (1894). *Residence and Business Directory*. Laurel, MD: Laurel Historical Society Collection.

<sup>95</sup> Johnson, Sandra, (2003). 2.

Montpelier shrank to 2% of its historic size and while the formal residential landscape became somewhat overgrown and picturesque, the surrounding fields could only support minimal agricultural activities bolstered by huge amounts of fertilizer.

Within the landscape at Montpelier, the changing cultural dynamic of the early 20th century is clearly evident through Eleanor Fitzgibbon's struggle to make Montpelier Manor Farm profitable. Table 4 highlights the significant landscape features, such as additions to the house and new garage, that indicate the availability of new technologies for the home, the popularity of the automobile, and the continued necessity of accommodating servants to maintain the mansion and grounds. With the exception of these structural modifications, the table shows that changes to the landscape were generally small and made with regard for the Snowden history at the site. Coupled with this, the enthusiasm with which the Long family marketed Montpelier to the public and early preservation professionals as a historically significant house not only reflects the values of wealthy and prominent families in the early 20th century, but also sets the stage for the subsequent period of Montpelier's development.

**Table 4: Montpelier Landscape (1888 through 1961)**

<i>Landscape Feature Category</i>	<i>Elements Significant to Period</i>	<i>Visibility in Contemporary Landscape</i>
Incorporated Acreage	220 Acres	Approximately 75 acres
Water		
Forested Area		
Agricultural Fields	120 acres restored to productivity	Approximately 40 acres; Uncultivated
Gardens		
Specimen Trees and Shrubs	Triple-flowering Dogwood, cedar wind-break	Retained
Wild Animals		
Domestic Animals	Jersey Cows; Horses	Not visible
People	Private Owners, Servants	Not visible and uninterpreted
Structures	Addition to South wing of mansion; seven-stall garage; servants housing; 42-stall barn; full-length porch on mansion's garden facade	Porch removed during period; All other features retained with modifications in use
Roads	Driveway added to north side of mansion	Path is made visible by large vegetative borders; driving surface has been sodded over
Cemeteries		
Miscellaneous	Ivy allowed to cover large amounts of mansion	Entirely removed

Redacted Image

Figure 4.9. The south elevation of the mansion is visible in the center of the frame. The seven-bay garage is visible in the lower left corner of the image next to servants housing and the 42-stall barn is apparent in the lower right. The historic boxwood maze is visible in the center of the lawn on the south side of the mansion and an immature cedar windbreak is apparent between the western field and the driveway. Agricultural fields are visible to the east and west of the mansion as is a large wooded area to the north. (1937 Aerial Photo, US Army Air Corps, Langley Field Virginia).

## Chapter 5: Public Ownership and Museum Use (1961-Present)

By the 1960s, public appreciation of local, state, and national history was changing from a relatively elite activity to one appealing to a wider audience. Social changes like the African-American Civil Rights movement, coupled with the “New Social History” movement among academic historians, which advocated “bottom up history,” spurred new interest in the history of minority groups. Meanwhile, the sweeping consequences of Federal projects like urban renewal and interstate highway development generated increased public support of historic preservation efforts. This resulted in public pressure on government agencies to consider the physical evidence of history that was being lost. Moreover, the Bicentennial celebrations of 1976 generated renewed interest in historic sites associated with America’s colonial history. Momentum behind the historic preservation movement increased steadily through the 1980s, and resulted in a diversified perspective, which included broader categories of race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status as significant in U.S. history. New sites were explored and preserved to protect these new interests and existing sites were re-examined from new perspectives.

### *Montpelier Conveyed to Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission:*

Between 1961 and 1971, as Laurel rapidly expanded, Christina Long Willcox carried out the wishes of her deceased parents and conveyed Montpelier mansion and its remaining landscape to Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, so that it could remain a protected historic resource available to the

public.<sup>96</sup> During this time, much of the remaining 220 acres was sold to Levitt and Sons, developers who became famous for their post-World War II, suburban housing developments. The Planned Urban Development, which is also called “Montpelier,” was completed in 1966.<sup>97</sup> The remaining 75 acres were retained as part of the historic site (Figure 5.1).

In the early 1970s, fairly extensive changes were proposed for the landscape surrounding Montpelier’s mansion. Nevertheless, progress in restoring the neglected property was slow. The site was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, at which time the boxwood hedges in front of the house were described as “over 9 feet high.”<sup>98</sup> In 1976, the non-profit organization Friends of Montpelier was chartered to assist M-NCPPC in maintaining the property.

---

<sup>96</sup> Willcox, Arnold A. Christine Willcox. (December 1961). Deed 2633:599 and Lease 2633:602. Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives. Retrieved online from: <http://mdlandrec.net>.

<sup>97</sup> Lancaster, Carlyle J. et al. (1966). *Articles of Incorporation of Montpelier Community Association, Inc.* Laurel, MD: Montpelier Community Association, Inc. Liber 74, 576.

<sup>98</sup> Ridout, 5.

Redacted Image

Figure 5.1. 1980s development map of the portion of the Montpelier Landscape acquired by M-NCPPC (outlined in red) with some proposed, but never completed, alterations to roadways. To the north and west of the site, portions of the Levitt and Sons subdivision are visible. (M-NCPPC).

*Restoration, Reconstruction, and Development of the Landscape:*

In 1980, the first archaeological investigations were done in the 9 acres immediately surrounding the mansion. Although limited in size and scope, the study provided information on areas likely to contain significant archaeological resources.<sup>99</sup>

In the mid- to late 1980s some of the proposed changes to the landscape were completed. Worm fences were built to delineate various parts of the landscape, including the orchard and the drive near the carriage house (Figure 5.2).<sup>100</sup>



Figure 5.2. Worm-rail fences installed near the orchard, 2011. (Photo by the author).

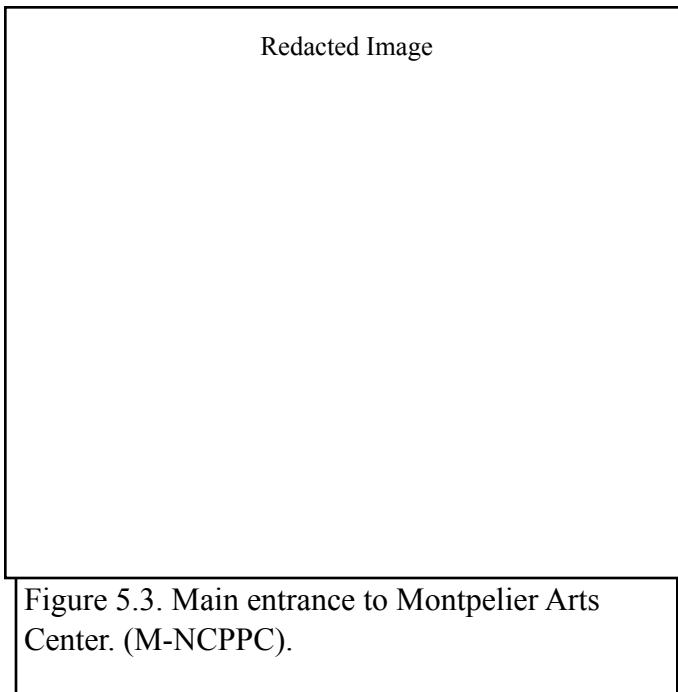
---

<sup>99</sup> Quilter, 1-17.

<sup>100</sup> McGovern, John H. (1971). *Montpelier Mansion Orchard Landscape Plan (Preliminary)*. Wheaton, MD: Prince George's County.

H. F. Raup. (Jan., 1947). "The Fence in the Cultural Landscape." *Western Folklore*, Vol. 6, (1). 3. Though specific evidence of this fence type has not been found at Montpelier, the origin the worm or snake fence is attributed to various Native American peoples and is believed to have been adopted by early European colonists in areas of abundant wood and large amounts of cultivatable land.

The boxwood hedges were removed from their original location on the upper and middle terraces and lining the walkway to the front door of the mansion, but were retained on the lower terrace and to the southeast of the house leading to the historic octagonal summerhouse. One of the most substantial changes was the construction of



a new access road from Muirkirk Drive and a parking lot south of the 7-stall garage. It is unclear whether caretakers' housing, constructed by Eleanor Fitzgibbon in the location of the parking area, was removed at that time or at a prior point. The parking lot construction also

accompanied the conversion of the Fitzgibbon barn into the Montpelier Arts Center (Figure 5.3). In 1989, M-NCPPC contracted with HABS to research and document the history and current condition of the house and the approximately 9-acres immediately surrounding it.<sup>101</sup>

According to the agreement between Christina Long Willcox and M-NCPPC, in which the historic property was to be made available for the benefit of the public, Montpelier mansion was converted into a museum. The house was furnished with material culture from the early 19th century, when the Snowden's owned the home,

---

<sup>101</sup> HABS, 25.

and interpretation has been provided based on that period. The 7-stall garage was converted into additional interpretive space, which is currently used for temporary exhibits. The former garage also houses Montpelier's archived materials.

In 1990, a second archaeological investigation occurred, again including the area immediately surrounding the mansion. The purpose of the study was to further investigate the resources outlined in the 1980 study, more accurately locating, identifying, and defining them. Particular emphasis was placed on artifacts from the Snowden occupancy of the site. Excavations included some 247 shovel test pits, 35 auger tests, 16 three-foot square test units, and a single test trench. These excavations were combined with geophysical investigations. The results of this survey confirmed the presence of artifacts from both prehistoric and Snowden occupancy.<sup>102</sup> The results of the study were used to determine the best location and composition of a reconstructed herb garden, which was subsequently constructed in the lawn beside the south wing of the mansion and used to aid in interpretation of the historic site (Figure 5.4).

#### *Local Context:*

Laurel's population nearly doubled in the 1960s and development shifted away from the historic core, south along Route 1, but still within the landscape formerly controlled by the Snowdens. Evidence of Laurel's heritage is discernible

---

<sup>102</sup> Walker, 58-74.

The specific results of this study have been included in Chapters II and III of this report.



Figure 5.4. Reconstructed flower and herb garden. The south wing addition to the mansion is visible in the background, 2011. (Photo by author).

across the recently developed landscape, through the names of municipal buildings, streets, and neighborhoods. Laurel has both a Montpelier and an Oaklands Elementary School, each named after Snowden properties. Street names include Chestnut Ridge, Contee Road (named for the Contee family, related by marriage to the Snowden's), and a dozen variations including the name Snowden. Components of Laurel's historic landscape have also been reserved as protected historic resources, including Snow Hill, another Snowden home just north of Montpelier. Dinosaur Park is a recently protected paleontological site in Laurel, commemorating the discovery of dinosaur bones and fossils by Muirkirk ironworkers in 1858.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation. (2011). *History of Dinosaur Park*. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Obtained online at: [www.pgiparks.com](http://www.pgiparks.com).

*Development of Landscape Interpretation:*

Among M-NCPPC staff and the Friends of Montpelier, interest in the historic landscape at Montpelier was documented as early as 1970. Efforts to ascertain the significance of various elements, the orchard and the herb gardens being two such features, were spearheaded by individuals or small groups and the 1980 and 1990 archaeological investigations mark the first structured, academic attempt to determine the composition of the historic landscape. In 1991, Doell and Doell Garden Historians and Landscape Preservation Planners were commissioned to provide a preliminary report on the degree of authentic historic fabric that remained within the larger landscape and to provide suggestions for future restoration and management.<sup>104</sup>

At this time, much of the Doell and Doell report has gone unheeded for a variety of technical and bureaucratic reasons. While not the focus of this report, future efforts should include a thorough analysis of the current landscape condition and development and implementation of an appropriate restoration and management strategy. The historical information contained in this study can serve as an initial step toward the completion of a comprehensive cultural landscape report.

The catalyst for the research and documentation contained in this report was the need to develop an interpretive program for visitors to Montpelier who are interested in the site's landscape. Visitors have been allowed to access Montpelier's grounds as public open space for many years, but for those concerned with the

---

<sup>104</sup> Doell and Doell, Garden Historians and Landscape Preservation Planners. (1991). *The Historic Landscape at Montpelier Manor: Recommendation for a Preservation Program*. Syracuse, NY: Doell and Doell, Garden Historians and Landscape Preservation Planners.

historical significance of the site, the only interpretation available has been provided through the context of the mansion interior.

The content of this report has been distilled into a 28-page, self-guided walking tour brochure, which was made available to Montpelier's visitors on April 28, 2012. The brochure highlights eight stopping points within the Montpelier landscape, providing information on all four, key stages of the site's history (see Appendix C). This new approach to interpreting Montpelier's cultural landscape is both a proactive step toward providing a more inclusive narrative, as well as a relatively inexpensive and unobtrusive medium, which will not conflict with existing landscape use.

*Summary:*

The second half of the 20th century includes a noticeable shift in the availability of historic resources to the community of Laurel. As the population of the city and its corresponding impact on the landscape grew, sites whose express purpose was to provide access to and interpretation of local history became increasingly prevalent. Because it was such a magnificent architectural work with clear historic ties to the local community, Montpelier Mansion became a cornerstone of this preservation effort. Since 1961, when Montpelier was conveyed to Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the mansion has been transformed into a publicly accessible historic house museum, relating the history of the Snowden family through the architecture and material culture. As the broader field of historic

preservation continues to involve more diverse perspectives and resource types, the importance of incorporating Montpelier's cultural landscape into the site's interpretation has become increasingly apparent. The pressures on the contemporary landscape were both social, from the diverse groups with stakeholder interests in the site, as well as physical, in order to accommodating new, public uses. These resulting expression of these forces in the Montpelier landscape is highlighted in Table 5.

While discrete investigations into aspects of the history of the grounds have occurred since the 1970s, this study represents the first comprehensive synthesis of the cultural landscape history at Montpelier. Its content has been distilled into a brochure for Montpelier's visitors, providing a more nuanced portrayal of the site's history and generating new avenues for the engagement and education of a diverse audience.

**Table 5: Montpelier Landscape (1961 through Present)**

<i>Landscape Feature Category</i>	<i>Elements Significant to Period</i>	<i>Visibility in Contemporary Landscape</i>
Incorporated Acreage	Approximately 75 Acres	Approximately 75 acres
Water		
Forested Area		
Agricultural Fields		
Gardens	Reconstructed, six-bed herb garden with oyster shell walkways, picket fence, and two pergola-enclosed benches	All features intact
Specimen Trees and Shrubs		
Wild Animals		
Domestic Animals		
People	M-NCPPC staff, volunteers; Friends of Montpelier; visitors to the site	All groups remain engaged with the site; composition of each has varied over time
Structures	Conversion of barn into Montpelier Arts Center	All features intact
Roads	Large parking lot and entrance drive south of garage; paved access road extends from historic driveway into center of east fields	All features intact
Cemeteries		
Miscellaneous	worm fencing added around parts of south lawn and orchard; interpretive signage added around Arts Center; commemorative bench installed along historic driveway	All features intact

Redacted Image

Figure 5.5. The southwest corner of the mansion is visible toward the lower right corner of the image. The reconstructed herb garden extends from the south wing of the mansion in the south lawn. The public parking area and main entrance can be seen at the bottom of the screen. A traffic circle connects the parking area to the Montpelier Arts Center. The historic driveway extends from the top of the image, at the intersection of Route 197 and Montpelier Drive, toward the mansion. Additional access road extends from the historic driveway into the center of the property. The Planned Urban Development community of Montpelier wraps around the site to the north and west (top and left of image). (Microsoft Corporation and Pictometry International Corporation retrieved from [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com), 2011).

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

For the last 350 or more years, the landscape at Montpelier has been diminishing in usefulness and relevance to the people who lived there. Native Americans were forcibly removed from the area, the Snowdens exhausted the productive capabilities of the land for farming through plantation planting practices, and while subsequent owners have put portions of the land to use supporting large animals, the land generally valued by Montpelier occupants has shrunk to the portion immediately surrounding and providing a picturesque setting for the house. Even as M-NCPPC and the Friends of Montpelier work to transform the site into a teaching tool and historic setting, their focus has been on the ornamental landscape between the parking lot and the mansion. Although the property name has long been Montpelier, a reference to the topography of the site, even this aspect has been re-focused through the years to reference the house rather than the land.<sup>105</sup>

Within the larger context of historic preservation practice, the fact that the value of the house has superseded the value of its surroundings is not surprising. House museums like Montpelier extend from the scholarly work of art historians, historians, and architectural historians, which, until the late 20th century have focused almost exclusively on high-style, exceptional works created by and for elite, powerful men. They have developed independently from the environmental conservation movement, which has origins as a counterbalance to industrialization, urban and

---

<sup>105</sup> Montpelier Manor Farm, then Montpelier Mansion

suburban growth, and many related aspects of cultural history that are often interpreted by house museums.

While Montpelier's landscape is beautiful, it was never highly ornamental. Furthermore, it no longer contains the Snowden's herb and kitchen gardens, its boxwoods have been relocated, and its historic drive has been extensively altered, to list a few of many changes. In short, Montpelier's landscape has evolved throughout its lifetime and represents a diverse group of people and practices. The landscape is in the inconvenient position of being too affiliated with cultural development for the naturalists and not historically authentic enough for the traditional historians. The mansion, on the contrary, continues to exemplify the accomplishments cherished by a traditional historic preservation approach: it is still an exceptional example of Georgian architecture and is associated with a wealthy and extremely powerful 18th- and 19th-century family. As a result, for the last fifty years, Montpelier Mansion has been carefully restored, curated, and preserved for the public while the land on which it sits has been underutilized. The 1970 National Register of Historic Places statement of significance for Montpelier reflects this disconnect.

As is true for most historic sites, Montpelier cannot sustain itself on such a disjointed approach. Since the social revolution that began in the 1960s, the composition of audiences for historic sites has been diversifying. With the addition of new types of technology, outreach efforts of preservationists have had to alter to accommodate new or expanded audiences interested in topics that directly address previously avoided issues of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and age. The

economic, social, and political support of these new audiences is critically important to ongoing preservation efforts. Additionally, these new patrons have a growing appreciation for multiple resource types, including vernacular buildings and landscapes which create avenues for discussing history base on multiple narratives.

Likewise, public awareness of the impact of humans on ecological process has increased steadily since the 1960s. Unfortunately, the impassioned rhetoric of the environmental movement has resulted in the perception that humans are the enemy of nature and the cause of its demise. The terms “culture” and “nature” are discussed as opposing and incompatible forces. Traditional interpretation available at many house museums, according to this viewpoint, could be seen as an affront to the natural world – a celebration of the people who destroyed the environment.

Within the expanded group of stakeholders from the 1960s forward, preservation of historic houses has become contentious. Not only do the narrowly focused interpretations at these museums alienate or anger many minority groups who feel their history is being marginalized or denied, these museums compete for funding sources that could potentially be used for new, inclusive preservation and interpretation efforts at other, more culturally diverse sites that have proven significant in the last few decades. Moreover, historic house museums rarely retain their landscapes, let alone interpret the ecological processes taking place within them. Once again, house museums are viewed as competition for funding sources that could be used toward ecologically significant sites addressing issues relevant to contemporary society.

The 75-acre landscape at Montpelier provides an opportunity for M-NCPPC to investigate and interpret the diverse history associated with the site beyond the walls of the Montpelier Mansion museum. By engaging the entire landscape, Montpelier could transform its public perception from a socially disconnected house museum to a valuable resource, providing insight into the evolution of cultural and environmental relationships in the Chesapeake through the past several centuries. This expansion in the site's interpretive strategy will have positive financial and social impacts for M-NCPPC. At the same time, it will benefit the entire field of historic preservation by continuing the effort to acknowledge the connections between the lifeways of a multitude of cultural groups, the built environment, and the natural landscape.

The philosophic term *Gesamtkunstwerk* refers to an artistic work that makes use of all or many forms of art (painting, music, theater, etc). Many architects have employed the term as a way of describing the totality of influence an architect should have over a project.<sup>106</sup> In essence it is suggested that a building's interior spaces, its architectural envelope, and the landscape setting are all parts of a composition and should be viewed and addressed as such. This idea can also be used in historic preservation.

Although the profession of historic preservation may not have employed the term directly, over the past several decades, preservationists have begun to see historic fabric as a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or complete work of art, which includes

---

<sup>106</sup> Vidalis, Michael A. (2010). *Gesamtkunstwerk: total work of art. Architectural Review*, June 30 2010.

structures, interiors, and surrounding contexts. This universal-artwork concept has been expanded to include flora and fauna, high-style and vernacular architecture, archaeology, landscapes, and diachronic and synchronic perspectives. The term most often employed to describe this comprehensive view of the environment is *Cultural Landscape*. Within cultural landscape studies, diverse resources provide context for a discussion of how cultures change their physical space and how physical space influences cultures. That continuously evolving relationship, visible through this study of Montpelier's cultural landscape, is the fundamental reason why Montpelier, and all historic places, are significant.

This report has begun to define the landscape according to historical, cultural, environmental, and regional theoretical categories: as a remote setting for prehistoric Native American tribes, as a 17th- to 18th-century plantation, as a 20th-century Colonial Revival adaptation, and as a 21st-century interpreted historic space. The accompanying walking-tour begins to bridge the gap between the interpretation provided within the mansion and the additional history revealed in the landscape. It attempts to link the natural and artificial processes shaping the landscape and to connect the 75-acres belonging to M-NCPPC with their larger context: Laurel, the Patuxent and Chesapeake Regions, and the Mid-Atlantic states.

Despite centuries of widening disconnect between elements of Montpelier's cultural landscape, attempts are now being made to acknowledge the deep connection between the physical space and the culture that developed from and in it. Montpelier is more than a house, 75-acres of land, or the stories of the Snowden family, in spite

of how compelling those components are. Montpelier is the physical manifestation of centuries of interaction between humans and their environmental setting.

The walking tour booklet is only the first step in what could be the next stage of Montpelier's development: a stage where groups like Native Americans and African-Americans are given their rightful place in the heritage of this site. It is meant, at the very least, to enliven the discussion of how these different histories shape the world today. The publicity garnered from this new brochure should be leveraged to support additional research and the creation of interpretive material, continuing the process of making Montpelier relevant to a contemporary audience.

For Montpelier to continue to develop in this way, it is imperative that the walking tour become one of many component parts addressing issues of cultural and environmental justice in the landscape. For example, additional archaeological study within the site, along with ethnographic research involving the long-established African-American community of Laurel and the Piscataway tribe are crucial to providing a richer, more meaningful interpretation of these cultures at Montpelier. An effort to change the name of the property from Montpelier Mansion to something more indicative of the significance of the entire cultural landscape, such as Montpelier Historic Site, should also be made. At the very least, a thorough assessment of condition of natural and cultural features throughout the landscape is needed, in order to develop a long-term preservation plan.

## Appendices

### **Appendix A:**

The following images show the evolution of the Montpelier landscape within the larger Chesapeake region through various map and aerial photograph sources. The transition of the Montpelier landscape from relative wilderness (in early maps, Montpelier is not indicated), through plantation (the Snowden property is indicated), through the development of the City of Laurel as the more dominant feature in the area, through its existence today as a protected historic site, contrasting with its suburban surroundings because of its large, undeveloped landscape, is evident in this sequence of maps. In these maps, the approximate location of the present day, Montpelier historic site has been indicated by a red circle.

Redacted Image

Image courtesy of Maryland State Archives, William T. Snyder Map Collection.  
“Noua Terrae-Mariae Tabula” drawn by John Ogilby, 1671.



Image Courtesy of Maryland State Archives, Mrs. John W McCaughey Collection. "Virginia and Maryland" drawn by Herman Moll in 1708.

Redacted Image

Image courtesy of Maryland State Archives, William T. Snyder Collection. "A New and Accurate Map of Maryland and Virginia" drawn by Emanuel Bowen in 1747.

Redacted Image

Image Courtesy of the Library of Congress. 1841 "Map of the State of Maryland. Constructed from the best authorities by Fielding Lucas, Jr." Engraved by John Warr.

Redacted Image

Image courtesy of Maryland State Law Library. 1794 “Map of the State of Maryland” by Dennis Griffith, specifically indicating the location of the Montpelier Estate (owned by T. Snowden).

Redacted Image

Image Courtesy of the Library of Congress. 1878 “Map of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad with its Branches and Connections” by Walter F. Elmer. This map indicates the transition of the Chesapeake region from its reliance on river corridors to rail transportation during the second half of the 19th century.

Redacted Image

1938 aerial photo of Montpelier. This photo highlights the disconnect of Montpelier from the urban and suburban development of Laurel, Baltimore and the DC Metropolitan area. (M-NCPPC).

Redacted Image

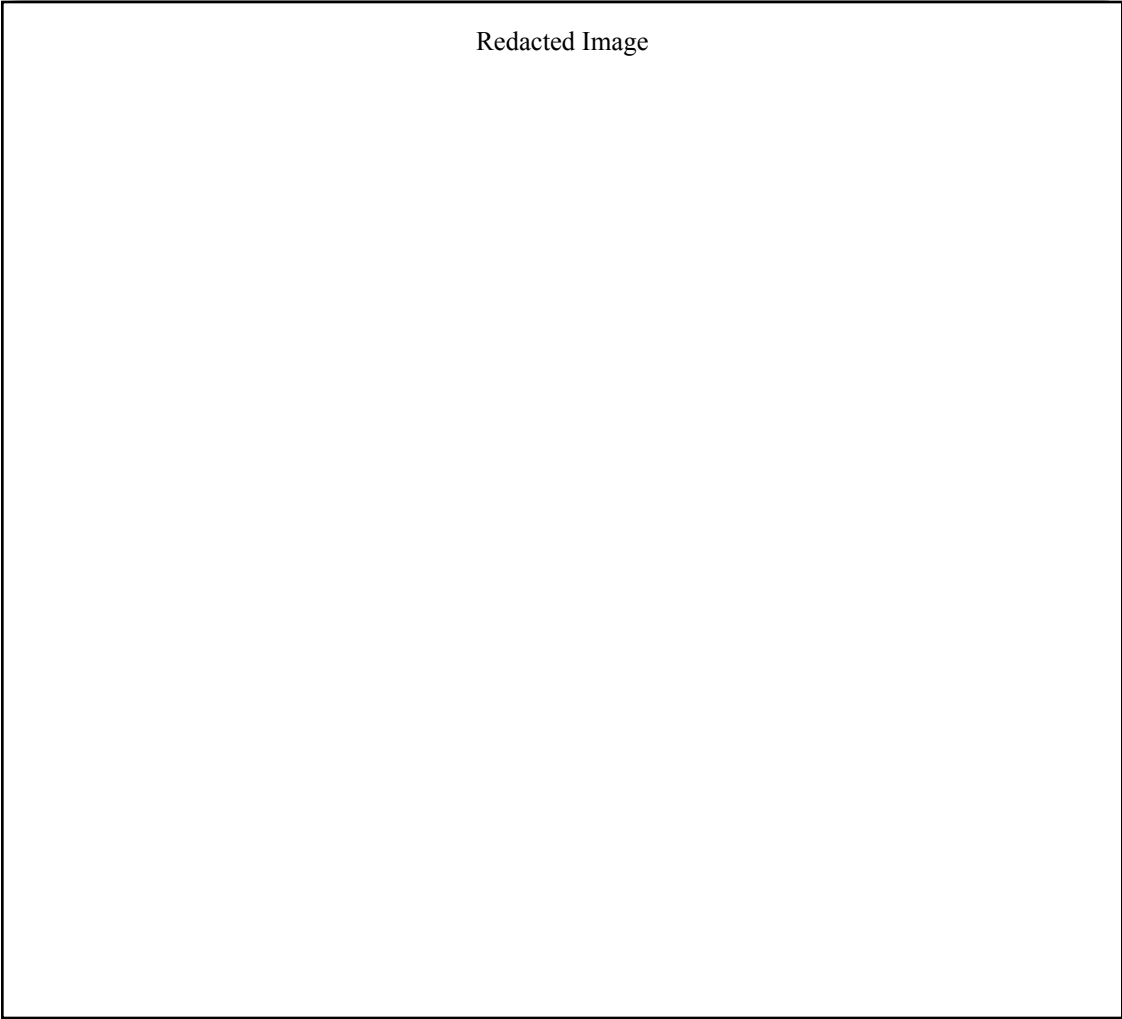
1977 Aerial Photo courtesy of M-NCPPC depicting Montpelier and the surrounding development. In this image, it becomes apparent that Montpelier is a preserved open space, within a larger industrial and suburban residential landscape.

Redacted Image

Image courtesy of Google Maps. 2012 map of the Chesapeake region surrounding Montpelier. This image indicates the density of development in the region and the importance of preserved landscapes, including Montpelier, within this area.

## **Appendix B:**

The following images show the extent of Snowden family landholdings. The first image shows the approximate boundary of the largest contiguous landholdings of the Snowden family overlaid on a 2012 Google Map of the area. The second image indicates various Snowden family homes and churches owned through the 18th and 19th centuries.



Redacted Image

Redacted Image

### **Appendix C:**

The following is the self-guided landscape walking-tour brochure, now a part of the permanent interpretation at Montpelier.

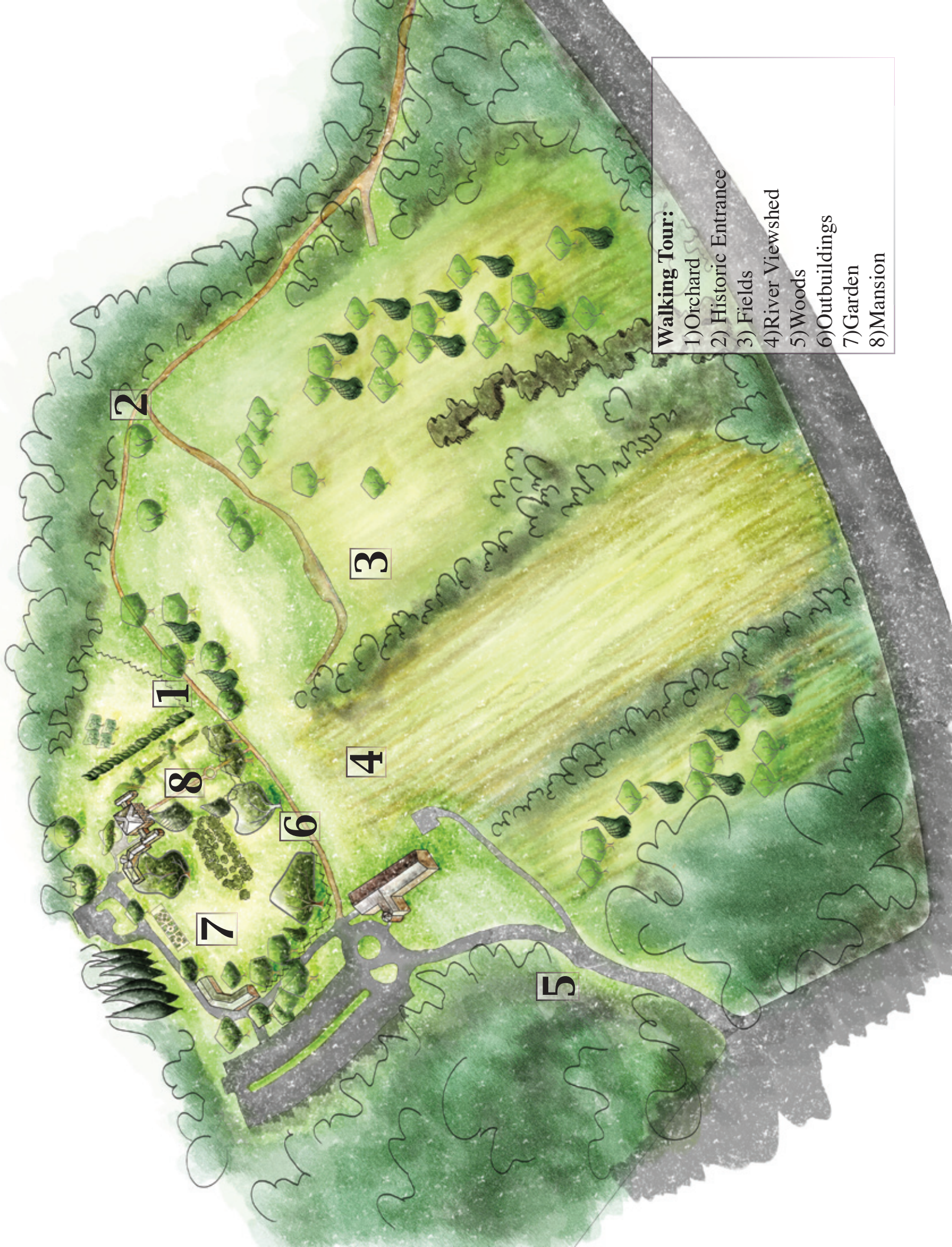


# MONTPELIER'S HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

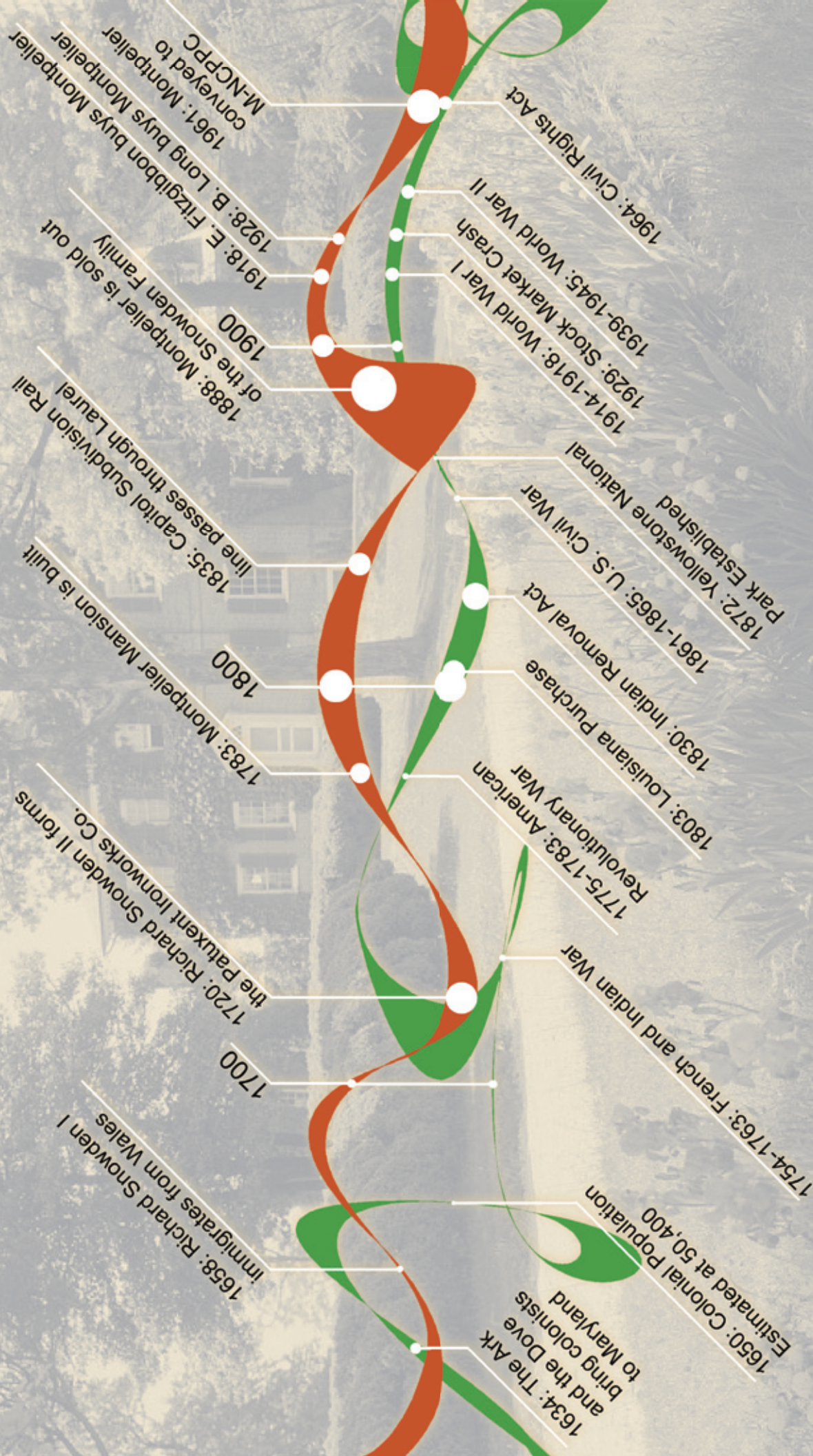
*A Self-Guided Walking Tour*

**Walking Tour:**

- 1) Orchard
- 2) Historic Entrance
- 3) Fields
- 4) River Viewshed
- 5) Woods
- 6) Outbuildings
- 7) Garden
- 8) Mansion



# Major Historic Events at Montpelier



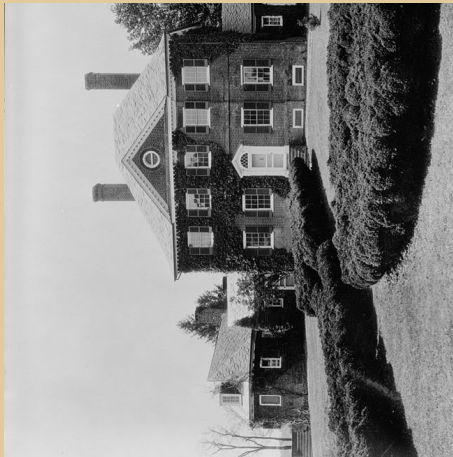
Markers in US History



exceptional woman bull-breeder, and a US Ambassador to Italy. Over the course of time, Montpelier's landscape has undergone multiple changes, reflecting the lifestyles and occupations of the people living here. The physical form of the land, the plants and animals, and the spatial organization of the site have changed. Buildings have been torn down and new ones have been built. Even the property boundary has changed significantly, from what was once a 9,000-acre plantation to the 70 acres you see today.

In many ways, these changes are typical of many plantations that existed throughout the Chesapeake region, while in other ways Montpelier is unique. This self-guided walking tour will help you examine Montpelier's landscape in order to discuss the cultural history of this place and connect you with the lives of those who walked through this landscape during the past centuries.

As you take this self-guided tour, pay attention to the multitude of sights, sounds, and smells that color this landscape. To begin, simply follow the sequence indicated on the map at the front of this brochure and, at each location, read the corresponding information provided. Montpelier's staff are happy to answer any questions you may have when you return to the house.



# W

elcome to Montpelier.

There's much to learn about the history of this place and the people who lived here. Many different people have called Montpelier's landscape home, including Native American people, the wealthy and powerful Snowden family, an

exceptional woman bull-breeder, and a US Ambassador to Italy.

Over the course of time, Montpelier's landscape has undergone multiple changes, reflecting the lifestyles and occupations of the people living here. The physical form of the land, the plants and animals, and the spatial organization of the site have changed. Buildings have been torn down and new ones have been built. Even the property boundary has changed significantly, from what was once a 9,000-acre plantation to the 70 acres you see today.

In many ways, these changes are typical of many plantations that existed throughout the Chesapeake region, while in other ways Montpelier is unique. This self-guided walking tour will help you examine Montpelier's landscape in order to discuss the cultural history of this place and connect you with the lives of those who walked through this landscape during the past centuries.

As you take this self-guided tour, pay attention to the multitude of sights, sounds, and smells that color this landscape. To begin, simply follow the sequence indicated on the map at the front of this brochure and, at each location, read the corresponding information provided. Montpelier's staff are happy to answer any questions you may have when you return to the house.

#1

# Orchard

Prior to the 17th-Century, the landscape at Montpelier looked nothing like what you see now.

At that time, Montpelier was an indistinguishable part of the natural ecosystem of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. The nearby

Patuxent River provided a valuable source of fresh water and facilitated transportation for the native people who lived in the area and hunted in Montpelier's forest.

During the 1700s and 1800s the Patuxent River expedited development of the Snowden's 9,000-acre plantation, which included Montpelier. Much of the wooded landscape was cut or burned down and replaced by planted fields of tobacco, wheat, and other crops. Permanent buildings replaced the transient Native American camps and enslaved Africans were brought to live and work here. Roads were cut through the land and formal gardens were planted around the mansion.

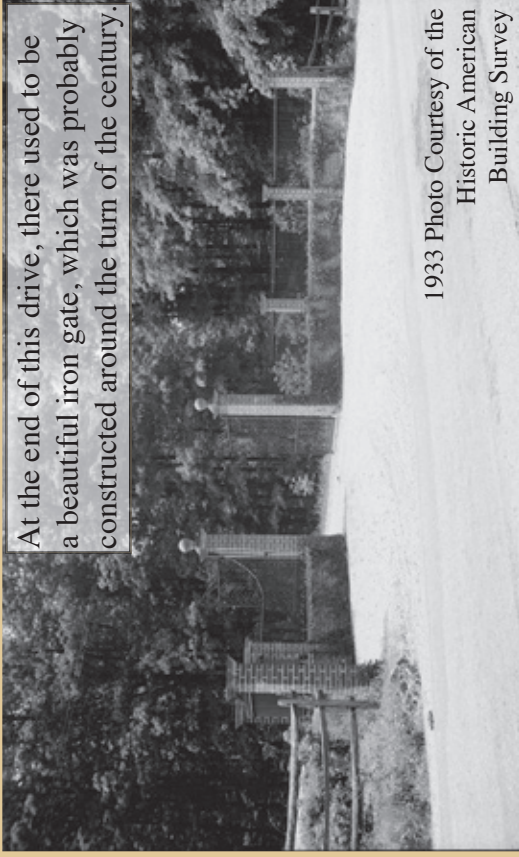
Many of the everyday items needed by those living at the plantation were provided by the land, including fruit, which may have been grown in the orchard you see here. Other items would have been purchased from nearby towns or as far away as Europe.

In 1890 the Snowdens sold the property. Montpelier passed through several private owners in the early 20th century, who transformed the landscape and buildings to accommodate livestock and a create a picturesque vision of a historic, country retreat.

The landscape changed again when it became a public historic site, adding a parking lot and modifying features. While the landscape is no longer used for agriculture, it has become a valuable teaching tool through which to understand the diverse history of the site.



## #2 *Historic Entrance*



At the end of this drive, there used to be a beautiful iron gate, which was probably constructed around the turn of the century.

1933 Photo Courtesy of the  
Historic American  
Building Survey

Montpelier has always been a social space in which groups of people came and went, sharing goods, services, and information. The road you are standing on is part of the original driveway for Montpelier Mansion, built about 1783. This drive connected the property to the Old Post Road, linking Annapolis and Washington.

The Snowden family was wealthy, well-connected and frequently entertained guests. There were no hotels at that time, so travelers along the road would stop at Montpelier, whether or not they knew the family.

George and Martha Washington spent several nights with the Snowdens at Montpelier in the time after the Revolutionary War. As George Washington traveled between Annapolis and his Mount Vernon estate in Virginia, he not only slept at Montpelier, he also conducted business with Major Snowden, including purchasing plows from the Snowden Ironworks, located just a short distance down the Patuxent River. Elite families often shared resources including plant materials and design and construction ideas. It's likely that Montpelier's landscape was inspired by some of the other plantations in the area as well as providing ideas to guests who stopped over.

During the 19th century, the Snowdens were involved in the contentious debate between Northern and Southern states over slavery and the fate of the nation. While the Snowdens were typical plantation owners, holding hundreds of slaves on their plantation at various times, they were also practicing Quakers and the Quaker Church condemned slavery. Members of the Snowden family fought on both the Union and Confederate sides, unable to reconcile their religious and economic differences of opinion.

After the Civil War, the Snowden landholdings shrank and Maryland developed new and increasing forms of transportation infrastructure. The B&O railroad reached Laurel in 1835, allowing the town to grow as an industrial center and shifting social focus away from plantation life at Montpelier. Maryland's designation and maintenance of Route 1 as a state road in the early 20th century and Baltimore Washington Parkway in the 1950s continued to bypass Montpelier. The City of Laurel provided goods, services, and entertainment, so the estate was not connected to suburban car-culture as it had been to a society dependent on horse-carriages and river barges in the previous century. No longer an industrial and agricultural power, Montpelier became a rural country estate outside of Laurel.

It was the Breckenridge Long family that restored Montpelier's social role in the 1930s and 40s. As a prominent political figure in Washington DC, first serving as US ambassador to Italy and then Assistant Secretary of State under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Breckenridge Long invited prominent DC families to the mansion for parties. The Longs also cared deeply about the historic importance of the site and invited touring groups to stop at the mansion as they traveled throughout the state.

In 1961, guided by her late parents' wishes, Christine Long Wilcox made arrangements for Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to acquire the property, assuring it would be preserved and made available to the public.

# #3 Fields

Montpelier is made up of 70 acres of landscape, including the fields that stretch before you. Yet, these 70 acres are only a tiny fraction of the land owned by the Snowden family. The Snowdens acquired much of their land through a grant from the Lord Baltimore during the 18th century. At the height of Snowden prosperity, Montpelier was one of nearly a dozen large homes and approximately 9,000 acres stretching from Anne Arundel, through Howard, Prince George's and Montgomery counties. As portions of land were bought, sold and divided among heirs, the exact property boundary and number of mansions owned by the family changed. A map showing the extent of Snowden property is included in the back of this brochure.



The Snowden plantation was more than just a family farm. It functioned like a large corporation, with investments in land, industry, and raw materials. The Snowden plantation produced tons of iron at their nearby Ironworks, which was both traded to Europe and turned into tools and equipment sold in the Mid-Atlantic.

Prior to the industrial revolution, production of all kinds was dependent upon human labor. Plantations could not function without a large, inexpensive labor source. During the 17th and 18th centuries, thousands of indentured servants were brought from Europe and during the 18th-Century thousands more Africans were brought to the Mid-Atlantic through the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

In 1804, the Snowdens owned 169 black slaves, ranging from an unnamed one-week-old girl to an 80-year-old blind man named Peter. These people worked in the Mansion, at the Ironworks, and in the fields. They would have had specialized roles including blacksmithing, quarrying, cooking, cleaning, gardening, working as fields hands, and more. Slaves were as vital to Chesapeake plantations as the land they worked.



Over 60,000lbs of tobacco were grown on Snowden property each season during the early 1800s. Large amounts of wheat, hay, oats, potatoes, corn, and rye were also farmed. Some of these crops were used at the plantation to feed the cattle, sheep, pigs, and horses that were raised here. Much of the harvest would have been sold, allowing the Snowdens to maintain their lavish lifestyle.

# View of the Patuxent

The Patuxent River originates in the Piedmont near the intersection of Howard, Montgomery, Carroll, and Frederick counties. It travels through this hilly region until it reaches the Atlantic Coastal Plain, a much flatter area of land in which the river slows, broadens, and its three branches eventually combine. It travels approximately 115 miles from its origins to the Chesapeake Bay.

Prior to the construction of Rocky Gorge Dam in 1952, the Patuxent River was much broader and deeper than it is now as it flowed across the area just east of Montpelier. From this rise, people could look out toward the river and across the Patuxent watershed.

Native Americans who lived in this area relied heavily on the river as a source of fresh water and food and it provided a

transportation corridor through the wilderness for early European colonists and explorers, including Captain John Smith.

The Snowden Ironworks was located on the Patuxent in order to conveniently ship materials to larger ports down river. The Snowdens at Montpelier would have used the river for transportation as well. Unfortunately, the farming practices involved in tobacco cultivation, which was prolific in the Mid-Atlantic, were extremely degrading to the land. Overused plantation fields, including those at Montpelier, created huge quantities of silt that washed into the river, ultimately making the Patuxent impassable to the large barges used to transport the plantation's goods.

The Patuxent River was instrumental in enabling the creation of a mill in 1811, which eventually expanded to become the City of Laurel. In 1952, the Patuxent was dammed to create the Rocky Gorge Reservoir, which supplies electric power and drinking water to Montpelier and the current residents of Laurel.



Image Courtesy of Kristin Britanik

## Laurel's Beginning

As profits from iron manufacture declined, the plantation diversified its investments. The Snowdens operated grist and lumber mills, as well as grocery, shoemaker, and blacksmith shops. Nicholas Snowden, the second owner of Montpelier, was responsible for construction of a flouring mill in 1811 that eventually grew into the City of Laurel.

When the B&O Railroad was constructed in 1835, the mill had already begun producing cotton duck and the Patuxent Factory was constructed to produce cotton goods that could be shipped via the railroad. Not long after, Laurel Machine Company was built to manufacture parts for the local industrial machinery. Laurel's

industrial factories relied on water and steam from the Patuxent to generate the power needed to produce their products.

Laurel quickly expanded into a company town, managed by members of the Snowden family. The Patuxent Manufacturing Company regulated housing, schools, churches and most other aspects of daily life for workers and their families. During the Civil War, Laurel was occupied by Union troops, protecting their railway connection to Washington DC.

In 1890, Laurel incorporated and became independent from company ownership. Since then, it has grown extensively, but its original connections to the Snowdens are evident in many street, school, and neighborhood names.

# Woods

Prior to 17th-century colonization, Montpelier was a deciduous forest containing an abundance of hardwood trees. This relatively untouched forest contained varieties of oak, poplar, hemlock, beech, hickory, chestnut, and pine trees. Through the course of history, Maryland's forests have undergone significant changes, including the extinction of the American Chestnut and increased abundance of softwood pines. Many of the plant species you see here today were introduced in the centuries after colonization.

The riparian habitat that formed around the Patuxent and its tributaries was richly diverse. Montpelier's forest would have supported a variety of small animals like squirrels and opossums and larger herbivores like deer would have frequented the Patuxent. Large predators like black bear and bobcat would have included Montpelier within their hunting range, as well. Based on its close proximity to other ecological zones like the Piedmont and the Chesapeake Bay, migrating species of birds, fish, and other animals would have moved through Montpelier's landscape seasonally. Prior to the 17th century, Montpelier's landscape served

as an important ecological corridor, connecting extensive hardwood forests to the waterways of the Patuxent and stitching together the larger landscape of the Piedmont and the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Evidence of native tribes exists in the Patuxent watershed as early as 12,000 years ago and as tribes eventually began to settle across the East Coast, agricultural practices developed and a broad trade-network formed. The landscape surrounding the Chesapeake Bay was populated by several Algonquian-speaking tribes. The forest provided wood that was used to make barrel-roofed houses and the forest, rivers, and bay supported plants and animals to be eaten and used as medicines. Rivers also provided a source of fresh water and a reliable navigation corridor. Archaeological evidence suggests tribes certainly hunted and may have formed more permanent settlements near what would become the Snowden Ironworks.

Native peoples often combined seasonal farming practices with hunting and gathering. They also tended to hunt only those species that were most prolific, meaning their hunting territory shifted regularly, at times incorporating the area we now call Montpelier.

Native peoples were still in this area when the Snowdens established their plantation. As was typical, tensions and hostility manifested between the two groups as the native tribes were forced to leave.

# *Landscape of the Mansion*



**Key:**

- 6) Outbuildings
- 7) Garden
- 8) Mansion

# Outbuildings

When the Snowdens lived

The cultural landscape at Montpelier can be broken into four major periods. The first human use of the area happened in the centuries before colonization, when Native American tribes used the landscape to hunt and fish. From 1669, when Richard Snowden I purchased 500 acres and established his ironworks until 1890 when Montpelier was sold out of the Snowden family, the landscape was transformed by plantation development, farming, and industrial practices. During the first half of the twentieth century, Montpelier was privately owned and the landscape was used as a picturesque setting for the house and, at times, to support livestock. In 1961, the property became part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and was made available to the public as a historic resource.

at Montpelier, the diverse ways in which they used the land would have necessitated a much greater number and variety of outbuildings than you see today. Agricultural practices required large barns to store tobacco and grain and to house livestock. Slave quarters of some kind would have existed near the mansion. Records indicate a stable and carriage house were constructed by 1796. Aside from the mansion, one structure remains from Snowden ownership: the hexagonal summerhouse near the boxwood hedges southeast of the mansion, built in 1796.

By the time Eleanor Fitzgibbon acquired the property in 1918, only the mansion and a couple of crumbling barns were left from the Snowden empire. Between 1916 and 1918, the caretakers addition, now the office, was constructed on the southern wing of the mansion. In 1928, the large garage was built by the Long family.



Jersey Cattle. Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

By way of rehabilitating the landscape, Ms. Fitzgibbon began breeding English Jersey cows and operating a dairy. In 1919, she bought Sybil's Gamboge, one of the best and most expensive bulls in the world, valued at \$65,000. He and his offspring appeared in stock shows around the state for several years, impressing judges, winning prizes, and selling for thousands of dollars.

Among her changes to the landscape, Eleanor Fitzgibbon built tenant houses and a new 42-stall barn for her animals. She also added a large porch to the mansion, which was removed by the next owners.

Despite her efforts, Ms. Fitzgibbon struggled to make her cattle operation economically viable and went into default on the property several times before it was eventually put up for sale.



1933 photo looking toward the northeast corner of the mansion. Courtesy of the Historic American Building Survey

# #7 Garden

The landscape immediately surrounding the mansion contains many significant elements, from the reconstructed herb garden to the boxwood maze, and the many varieties of large specimen trees.

Along with the crops of the large agricultural fields and orchard, the residents and guests of Montpelier would have depended on the products of several types of gardens located nearer to the mansion. The fenced, ornamental herb garden is a reconstruction of the type of garden that may have existed when the Snowdens lived at Montpelier. Records and archaeological investigations indicate there were one or more gardens in this area, which would have been both practical and ornamental. Gardens were used by elite homes during the 19th century, not only to grow herbs, vegetables, and fruit to sustain residents and guests, but also as a way of organizing and adorning the land around the mansion. Fairly symmetrical gardens with walkways of oyster shells, pebbles, and (in the case of the Snowdens, bits of discarded iron) existed at plantations throughout the Chesapeake region. They highlighted the practicality and

independence of gentry in the new Republic while also reflecting the tastes and styles in garden design and planting that were popular at the time.

A magnificent Osage Orange tree is located near the mansion. While its exact age has not been determined, this tree was likely planted about 1835. The large Sycamore tree beyond the boxwood maze (with light colored bark on its upper branches) was planted in the 20th century and is descended from the tree that grew outside the building where Betsy Ross sewed the first American Flag. The row of cedars that line the drive from the parking lot to the mansion once separated the house from another large agricultural field to the west. Many of the other beautiful specimen trees in this area have been carefully labeled with their Latin and common names, so keep an eye out as you stroll through the grounds.

The boxwood maze between the herb garden and the historic driveway is particularly interesting because it is likely more than 200 years old. Boxwoods were historically used to line garden beds and walkways. At Montpelier, boxwoods once lined the walkway to the main entrance of the mansion.

Gardens of this kind required constant maintenance by indentured servants, slaves, and eventually hired help who had to trim, clean, weed, and harvest. Plantation gentry would have been regularly researching the latest designs, purchasing new seed varieties from salesmen, and exchanging plants with each other.

A large bell mounted on a post survived in this area until the mid-1900s. It was originally used by the plantation managers to call slaves from the fields.



# Mansion

The final part of this tour returns you to the mansion where you began. As you are now aware, the mansion sits at the highest point of the landscape. When the Snowdens first constructed the house, guests would have arrived by the Old Post Road and driven through the expansive fields surrounding the mansion, slowly making their way through physical evidence of the family's wealth and prominence. The summerhouse in the distance, with its oriental details, indicated the worldliness and sophistication of the Snowdens. Guests would have arrived at the mansion at the base of three broad terraces. These simple planes were designed to enhance the view from inside and to make the mansion seem large and powerful to visitors.

Prior to the mid-twentieth-century when heating, air conditioning, and electricity became common features in homes, relationships between houses and their surroundings were much more important. Lack of indoor plumbing meant privies were dug outside, close (but not too close!) to the house. During the summer, windows and doors would have been opened to allow cross-breezes to circulate through the mansion. People would have been constantly entering the exiting the house to complete chores, discuss business, and participate in the operation of the plantation.

While enslaved African-Americans may have been somewhat invisible within the mansion, they were instrumental in its construction. Its presence speaks to the beautiful craftsmanship and accomplishments of this historically marginalized group.

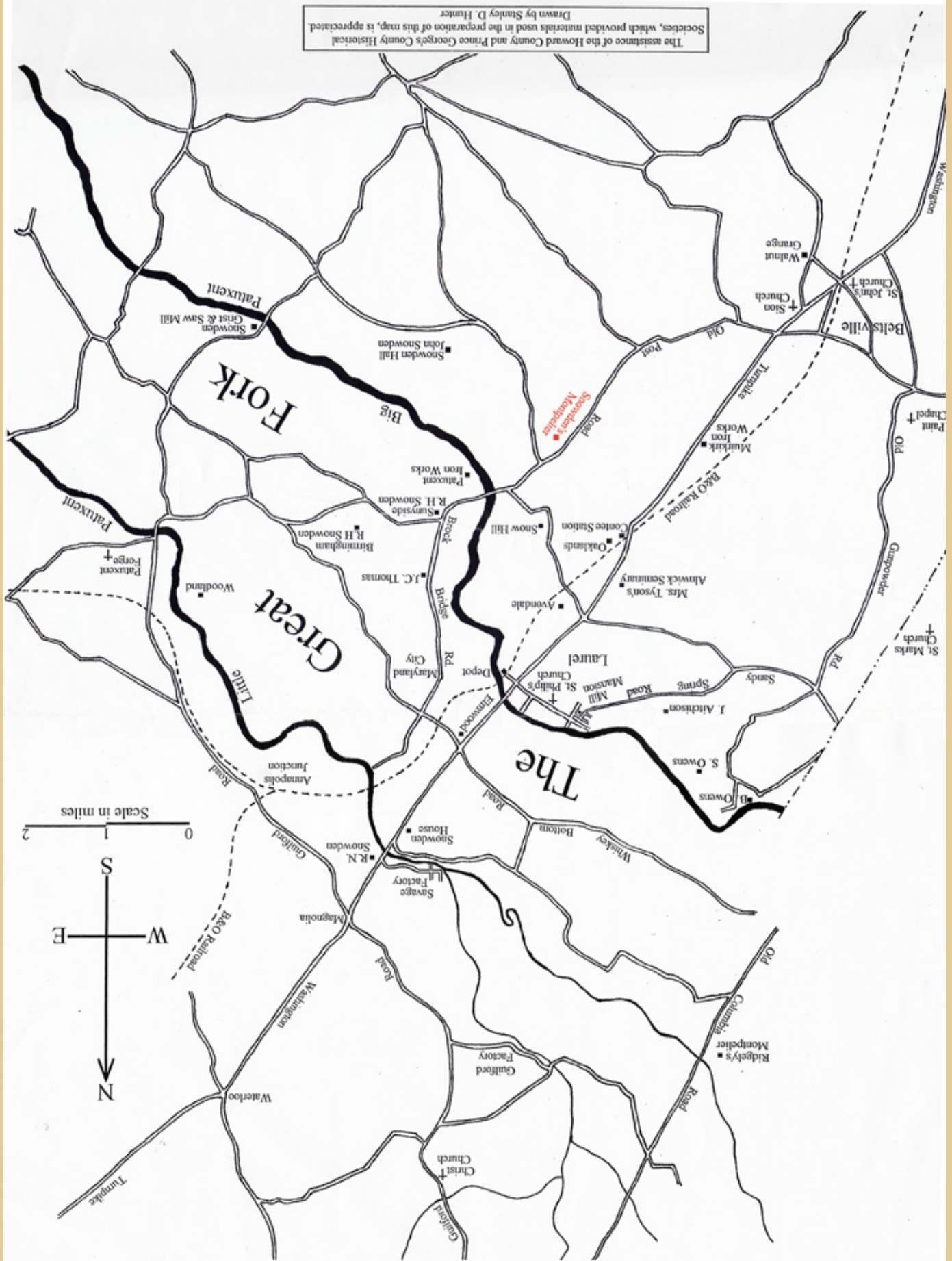
The mansion is one component of a vast landscape that reflects the local economy and ecology, as well as the tastes and occupations of the many people who have called Montpelier home during the past several centuries. If you would like to learn more about the Snowden family and the mansion, a tour of the interior is available in the office. The landscape at Montpelier is constantly changing, so come back throughout the year to learn how the different seasons influence this historic place.

M-NCPPC also maintains a number of other historic sites, so if you are interested in learning more about aspects of Prince George's County history that were touched on in this tour, speak with the mansion staff to find out about additional resources.



The Dogwood tree at the west side of the mansion (upper right) was planted by Breckenridge Long as an anniversary gift for his wife. This specimen has a unusual triple flower and blooms in April.

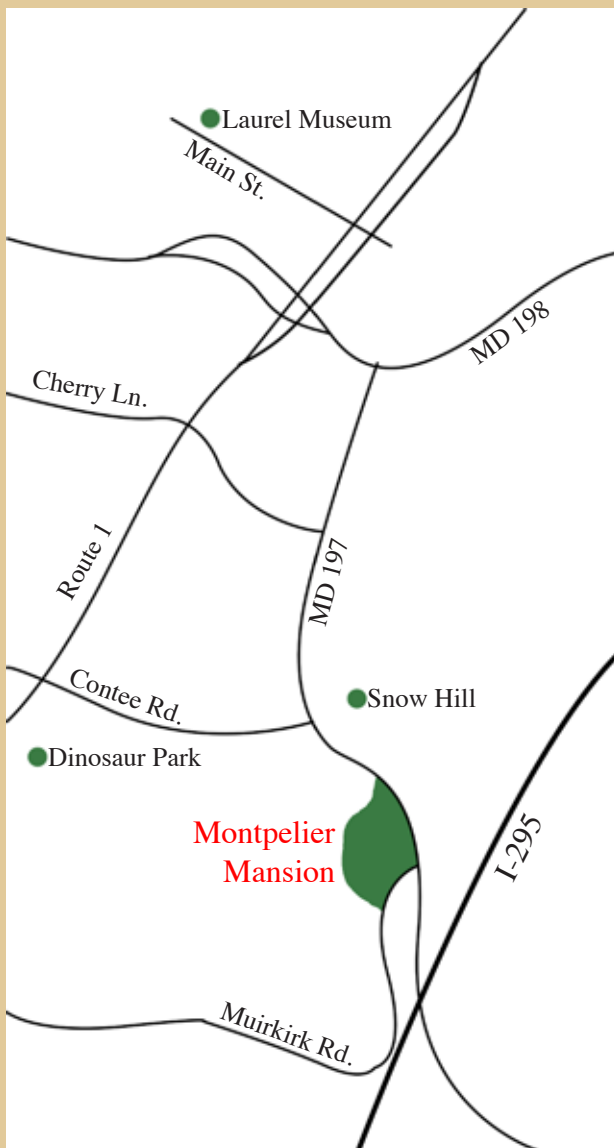
# A Timeless Map of the Episcopal Churches and Snowden Residences in the Upper Patuxent Region



The assistance of the Howard County and Prince George's County Historical Societies, which provided materials used in the preparation of this map, is appreciated.  
 Drawn by Stanley D. Hunter



Montpelier Mansion is located at  
Route 197 and Muirkirk Road  
Laurel, MD 20708



[www.pgparcs.com](http://www.pgparcs.com)  
(301)377-7817  
[montpeliermansion@pgparcs.com](mailto:montpeliermansion@pgparcs.com)

## Appendix D:

The following chart shows the evolution of Native American groups in the Chesapeake Region from 12,000BP through European Contact and Colonization.

Stage	Period	Years BP	Subsistence	Organization
Paleoindian		12,000BP		Dispersed Bands
	Early Archaic	10,000BP	Hunting and Gathering	Bands
	Middle Archaic	8,500 BP		
Archaic	Late Archaic	5,000BP	Intensified Hunting and Gathering	Bands/Tribes
	Early Woodland	3,200BP		
	Middle Woodland	2,500BP	Hunting and Gathering with Incipient Horticulture	Tribes
Woodland	Late Woodland	1,100BP	Horticulture with Hunting and Gathering	Tribes/Chiefdoms
		400BP-0	European Contact and Colonization	
	Historic			

## Bibliography

- 1795 List of Bills against Major Snowden's Estate*. Maryland: Prince George's County Courthouse.
- American Architect and Architecture*, LXXXVII (January-June 1905).
- 1831 Inventory of Nicholas Snowden*. Laurel, Maryland: Montpelier Archives.
- Alanen, Arnold R. and Robert Z. Melnick. (2000). *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press.
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (Apr 15, 1898). "The Snowden Family: Its Founder, His Vast Landed Possessions And His Many Descendants." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (Jul 16, 1923). "Woman Plays Role of Country Square: Only Member Of Sex In America To Attempt Cattle Importing." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (Jul 22, 1923). "One Of Maryland's Most Noted Old Plantations, Distinguished By Its Architecture." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (Jun 24, 1923). "Laurel Stock Sale Draws Many Buyers: Woman Importer Of Jerseys Sells Purebreds." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (May 16, 1937) "Montpelier Manor Open to Public on Wednesday." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (Nov 17, 1906). "Doing Good Work for Laurel," ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (Sep 5, 1923). "Cattle Show And Horse Racing Features At Timonium Fair." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Baltimore Sun, The*. (September 27, 1958). "Long's Rites Set Monday: Lawyer, Diplomat, Horse Fancier Died Thursday At 77." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The*. (1837-1986).
- Barrientos, Tanya. (2008). Houses, Histories and the Future. *The Pew Charitable Trust Magazine*. Retrieved online: [http://www.pewtrusts.org/our\\_work\\_report\\_detail.aspx?id=38618](http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=38618).
- Carmondy, John M. (1940). *Maryland: A Guide to the Old Line State*. Federal Works Agency: Works Project Administration.
- Carr, Louis Green, Philip D. Morgan and Jean B. Russo. (1988). *Colonial Chesapeake Society*. College of William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg: The Institute of Early American History and Culture.
- Charles A. Birnbaum, *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1994). Available online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>.

- Clark, Wayne E. (2007) "The Algonquian-Speaking Indians of Maryland." *Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail*. The National Park Service.
- Clemens, Paul G.E. (March 1975). "From Tobacco to Grain: Economic Development on Maryland's Eastern Shore, 1660-1750." *The Journal of Economic History* 35, (I).
- Conard, Rebecca (2001). *Applied Environmentalism, or the Reconciliation Among "the Bios" and "the Culturals"*. *The Public Historian* 23 (2).
- Cook, W. G.. (1976). *Montpelier & the snowden family*. Laurel, MD: Cook.
- Cronon, William. (2011). *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. London, England: MacMillan.
- Curtiss, George Boughton. (1912). *The Industrial Development of Nations*. Binghampton, NY: Curtiss.
- Doell and Doell, Garden Historians and Landscape Preservation Planners. (1991). *The Historic Landscape at Montpelier Manor: Recommendation for a Preservation Program*. Syracuse, NY: Doell and Doell, Garden Historians and Landscape Preservation Planners.
- Downing, Andrew Jackson. (1856). *Cottage Residences*. New York: Wiley and Halstad.
- Feingold (1973). "The Politics of Rescue. The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945." Review by: John Major *The English Historical Review* 88 (346).
- Friends of Montpelier. (2006). *A Brief Outline of the Snowden Family History and Montpelier Mansion*. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.
- Godfrey, Marian and Barbara Silberman. (2008). A Model for Historic House Museums. *The Pew Charitable Trust Magazine*. Retrieved online: [http://www.pewtrusts.org/our\\_work\\_report\\_detail.aspx?id=38618](http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=38618).
- Hamilton, Dane. "Double-Blossom Dogwood Not Unique to Montpelier." Laurel, MD: *The News Leader*.
- Harris, Donna. (2007). *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History.
- Hilliard, Sam B. (1990). "Plantations and the Molding of the Southern Landscape." From *Making of the American Landscape*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- Historic American Building Survey (1933). *Montpelier: Photographs and Written Historical Descriptive Data*. Washington DC, National Park Service.
- Hones, Josiah and Richard Cramphin. (1804) *Inventories PG County 1804 Thomas Snowden*. Upper Marlboro, Maryland: Prince George's County Register of Wills.
- Johnson, Sandra (2003). *The African American Experience in Laurel*. Laurel, MD: Laurel Historical Society.
- Keenan, Jean Warfield. (1990). *A Tour of Snowden Land*. Laurel, MD: Friends of Montpelier.
- Kranz, Peter M. (1996). "Notes on the Sedimentary Iron Ores of Maryland and their Dinosaurian Fauna". *Maryland Geological Survey Special Publication*, 3. Accessed online at: <http://terpconnect.umd.edu>.

- Lancaster, Carlyle J. et al. (1966). *Articles of Incorporation of Montpelier Community Association, Inc.* Laurel, MD: Montpelier Community Association, Inc. Liber 74, 576.
- Library of Congress, American Memory Collection. (2002). *The Evolution of the Conservation Movement 1850-1920*. Accessed online at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html>.
- Little, Elbert L., Jr. (1979). "Checklist of United States trees (native and naturalized)." U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Agriculture Handbook*, 541. Washington, DC.
- Maryland Gazette. (July 21 1773, Sept 6 1774, May 8 1777, May 15 1777, Nov 2 1787). *Untitled Advertisements*. Greenbelt, MD: Prince George's County Historical Society.
- Maryland State Archives. (2009) *Maryland State Archives Geographical Services*. Archives of Maryland Online. Accessed at [www.plats.net](http://www.plats.net).
- McGovern, John H. (1971). *Montpelier Mansion Orchard Landscape Plan (Preliminary)*. Wheaton, MD: Prince George's County.
- Meeks, Stephanie. (October 19, 2011). Plenary Address. *2011 National Trust Conference*. Lecture conducted from: Buffalo, NY.
- Middleton, Richard and Anne Lombard. (2011). *Colonial America: A History to 1763*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Morgan, Philip D. (1998). *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Natural Heritage Trust, The. (2012). *Mission Statement*. Albany, NY: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Retrieved online: <http://nysparks.com/natural-heritage-trust/default.aspx>.
- Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation. (2011). *History of Dinosaur Park*. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Obtained online at: [www.pgpc.com](http://www.pgpc.com).
- Quilter, Jeffrey. (1980). *Archaeological Testing at Montpelier Mansion Prince George's County, Maryland*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland.
- Rhoads, William B. (1976). The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35 (4).
- Ridout, Orlando. (1970). *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Snowden-Long House, New Birmingham*. Annapolis, MD: Maryland Historical Trust.
- Ross and Fairall. (1894). *Residence and Business Directory*. Laurel, MD: Laurel Historical Society Collection.
- Sarudy, B. W. (1998). *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake, 1700-1805*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Scarborough, Katherine (Feb 20, 1955). "Washington Slept Here." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986).

- Scarborough, Katherine. (May 14, 1933). "Restoring the Home of the Lees: Montpelier Too Will Be On View For Stratford's Benefit." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986).
- Scarborough, Katherine (May 25, 1930). "The Typical Maryland House Baltimore: A Mention of Stately Mansion in and About the City." ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Baltimore Sun, The* (1837-1986).
- Scheele, George A. et al. (1988). *Snowden-Warfield Lineage*. Accessed online at: [www.snowden-warfield.com](http://www.snowden-warfield.com).
- Schmidt, Benjamin. (July 1997) "Mapping an Empire: Cartographic and Colonial Rivalry in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and English North America". *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series, 54 (3).
- Schneider, Daniel. (1996). "Effects of European Settlement and Land Use on Regional Patterns of Similarity Among Chesapeake Forests." *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*, Vol. 123, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1996).
- Smith, Mark M. (2009). *Writing the American Past: US History to 1877*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Trimble, Stanley W. (1990 ). "Nature's Continent." From *The Making of the American Landscape*. Michael P. Cozen, ed. Unwin Hyman, Inc.
- Upton, Dell (1985). "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia." In *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*. Ellis, Clifton and Rebecca Ginsburg ed. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT.
- Vidalis, Michael A. (2010). "Gesamtkunstwerk: total work of art." *Architectural Review*, June 30, 2010.
- Walker, Mark, et al. (1990). *Archaeological Investigations at Montpelier (18PR393) Prince Georges County Maryland*. Washington, D.C.: Engineering Science, Inc.
- Warfield-Snowden, Mary Thomas. *July 25, 1858 Diary Entry*. Transcribed in 2008 by Caroline Fakady and Jean Keenan.
- Willcox, Arnold A. and Christine Willcox. (December 1961). Deed 2633:599 and Lease 2633:602. Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives. Retrieved online from: <http://mdlandrec.net>.