

Courtesy Peachtree Garden Club, Atlanta

A plan of Bellevue and Fairfield Plantations, drawn from an old legal paper

as visited by men and women of distinction. He remained in charge of the properties until 1857; then his duties were taken over by Mr. William Audley Couper. It was about this time that he built the Dower House of Altama, which is still standing.

The mansion-house, built in 1805, was constructed of "tabby" and was distinctly Italian in its architectural style. It stood on a bluff above the Altamaha River and was surrounded by a wide lawn of Bermuda grass, a feature peculiar to all Couper houses. The land approach was by an avenue of sixty live-oaks, while a canal a quarter of a mile long, cut through the rice fields, made the water approach from the Altamaha River. As Hopeton was used exclusively as a winter residence for the Hamilton and Couper families, there was no formal garden, but an elaborate use was made of rare flowering shrubs about the lawn and house. Unfortunately Hopeton was destroyed in the twenties and is now too overgrown to show any trace of the planting.

The Dower House of Altama was situated on a large knoll, an unusual feature in this section. The house of "tabby," Italian in type, surrounded by its lawn of Bermuda grass, remains practically unchanged. In the garden grew yucca, crêpe-myrtle, oleanders, roses, a large sour orange tree, snowdrops, and narcissus.

This property, in conjunction with Elizafield, is owned by Cator Woolford, who holds it as a hunting preserve, and sometimes occupies the Dower house during the hunting season.

ELIZAFIELD PLANTATION, ON THE ALTAMAHA

Another of the rice plantations on the Altamaha River is Elizafield. Long before the arrival of Oglethorpe its acres were under cultivation by the Spaniards, the Fran-

ciscan monks having had a mission there in the last decade of the sixteenth century. This mission was called Santo Domingo del Talage, and its ruins are still to be seen.

The house, a large building with a two-story veranda, was built between 1820 and 1839 by Doctor Robert Grant, of Leith, Scotland. In 1834 Doctor Grant gave the estate to his son, Mr. Hugh Frazier Grant. The house was surrounded by a grove of live oak, and stood at right angles to a fine avenue of the same trees.

The burying-ground is all that is left of the planting, but we are able to reconstruct the plan of the garden from a very clear drawing made by a member of the Grant family who spent most of her life there.

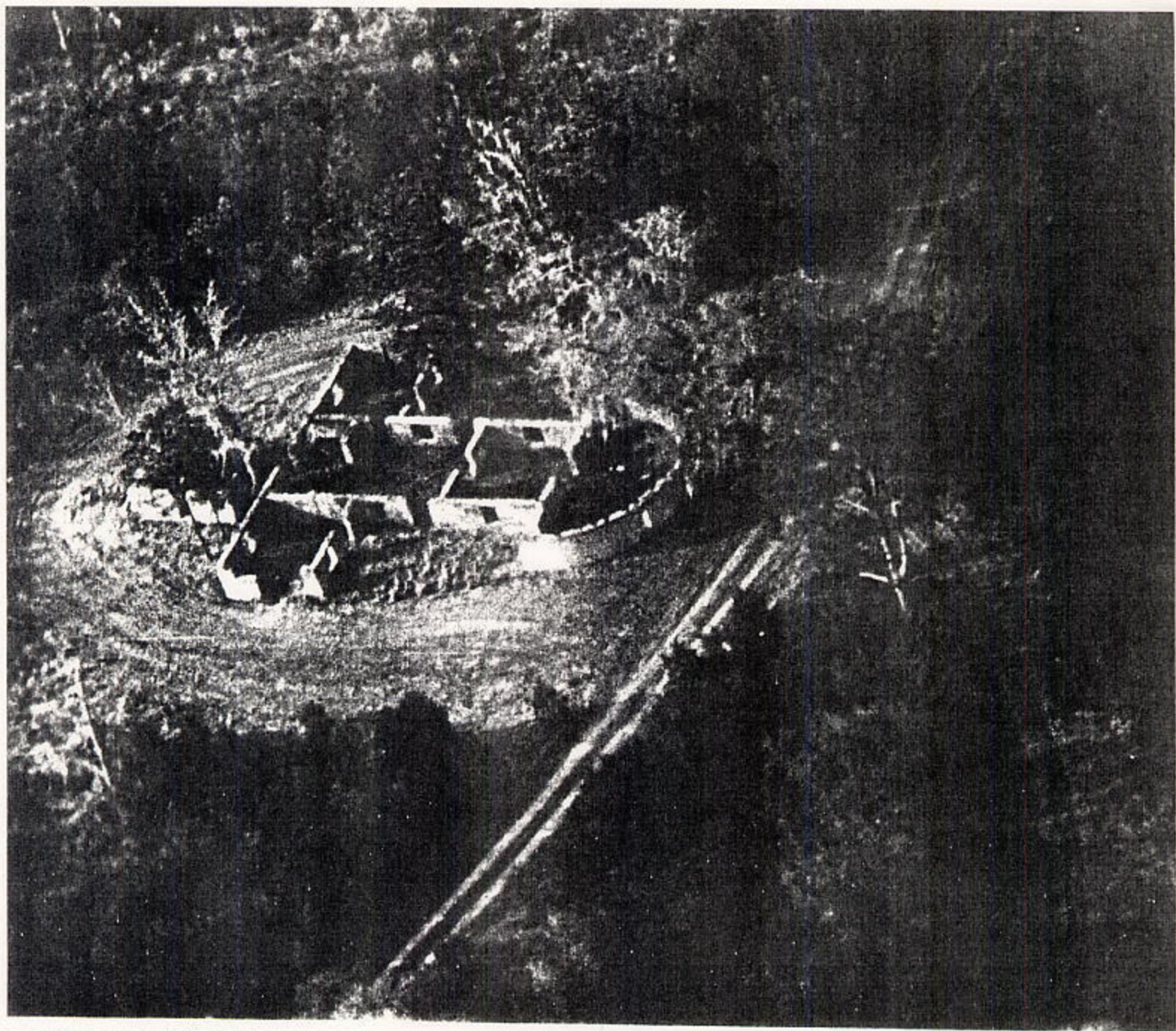
Flower beds flanked the entrance to the house, and at the rear curved hedges of oleander, crêpe-myrtle, mock-orange, dogwood, holly, and cissena formed a frame enclosing a semicircular lawn bisected by a shell walk on each side of which were beds of roses and small shrubs. A large formal garden enclosed by a picket fence lay at the end of the right-hand lawn. Close to this garden was the family burying-ground, surrounded by a tabby wall. A flight of steps ascended to the top of this wall, and another descended to the interior. In one corner is cut the date 1830.

Elizafield is now owned by Cator Woolford, who uses it in conjunction with Hopeton and Altama as a hunting preserve.

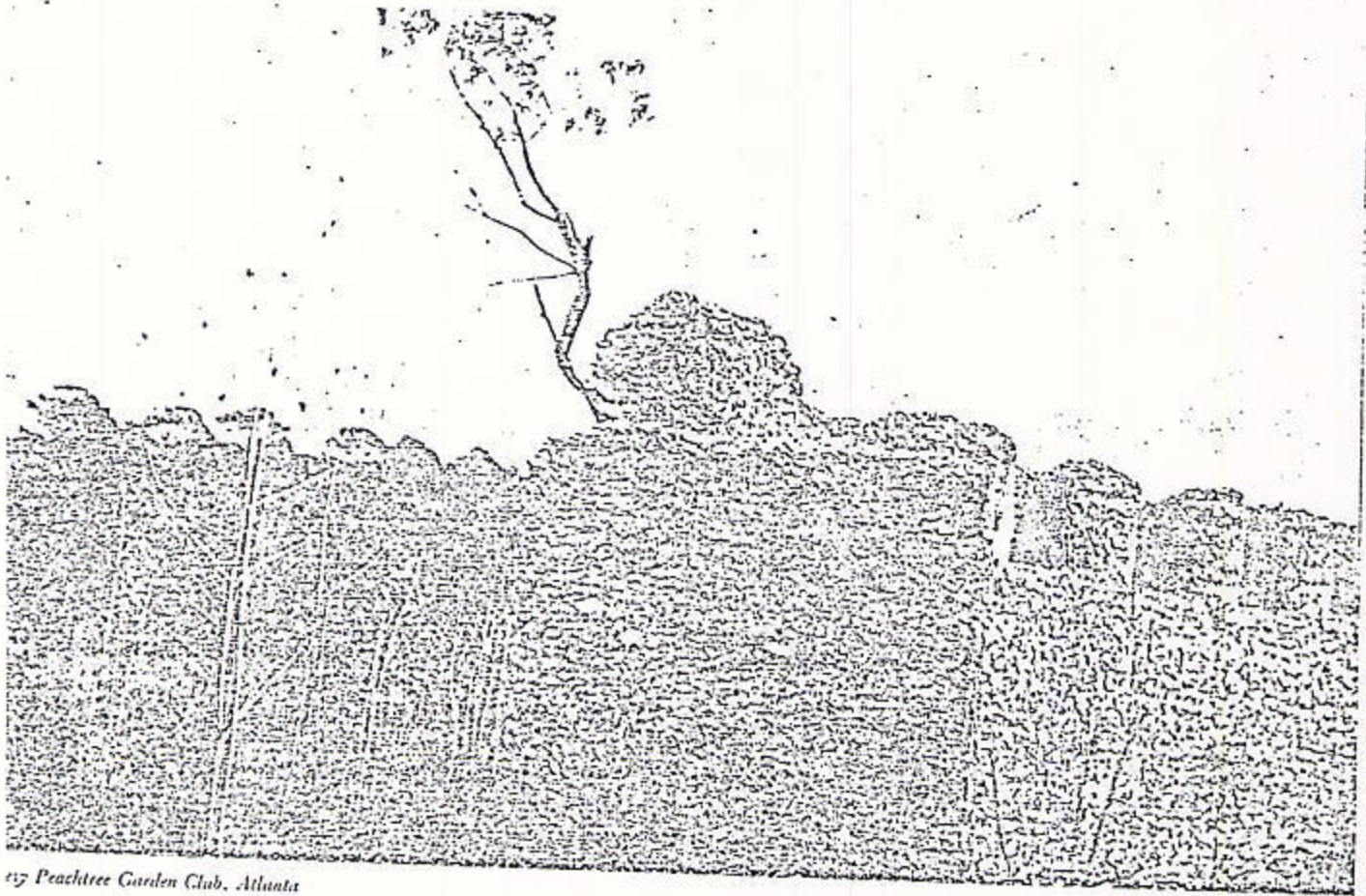
THE GARDENS AT BELLEVUE AND FAIRFIELD, IN CAMDEN COUNTY¹

The gardens at Bellevue and Fairfield, adjoining plantation seats on the coast in Camden County, Ga., were

¹The authority for the statements in this account is Mrs. Wymberley De Renne, who was Augusta Floyd.



Copied from Gardens of Colony and State, p. 314 (Picture would have been made prior to 1934)



by Peachtree Garden Club, Atlanta

All that remains of the "lobby" foundation of Bellevue, built in 1797 by Colonel Charles Floyd

Bellevue and Fairfield, The Twin Plantations

On the Satilla

Camden County

COLONEL CHARLES FLOYD, a native of Northampton County, Virginia, settled on St. Helena, South Carolina, and took an active part in the Revolutionary War as leader of the St. Helena Guards. His home on that Island having been destroyed by the British, he moved first to McIntosh and then to Camden County, where he commanded a fort protecting the border against the Spanish in Florida.

In 1800 he purchased eight hundred adjacent acres consisting largely of lands cleared and cultivated first by the Indians and later by their Spanish conquerors.

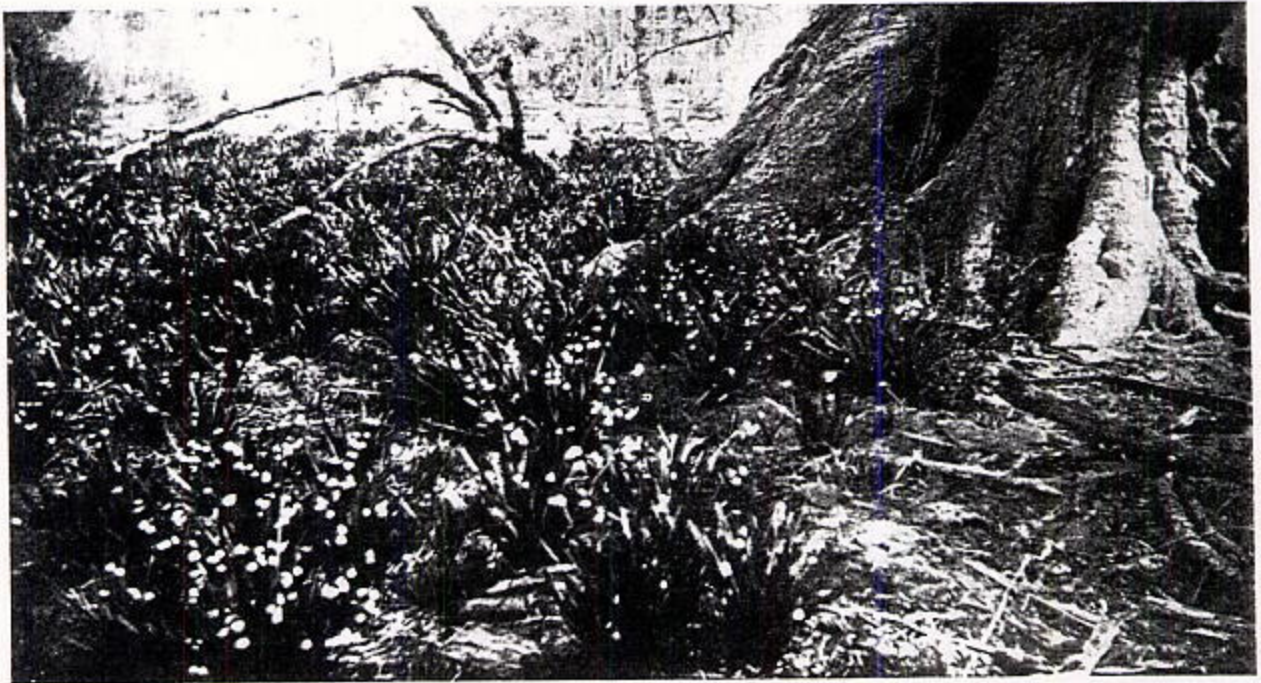
Two handsome homes were erected. Bellevue for the Colonel, and a mile away, Fairfield, for his son, John. An avenue of live oaks and cedars bordered the connecting road. Under its shade was a hedge-like planting of myrtle imported from Germany, edged with thousands of bulbs. Both houses had formally laid out gardens set in lawns graced by shrubs and flowering trees. Half an acre of roses framed the great semi-circular drawing room at Bellevue, known from its plan as the Anchor House. When these garden developments were undertaken, one of Colonel Floyd's vessels constructed at his own ship yard in McIntosh

County brought a full cargo of tropical and semi-tropical plants from the West Indies.

General John Floyd, and his brother, General Charles R. Floyd, both distinguished soldiers and successful agriculturists, extended and beautified the grounds and gardens of these extensive plantations, where first indigo and then cotton were successfully cultivated.

Surviving the devastation of the eighteen sixties, when both houses were burned, there can be found on the sites of the gardens of Bellevue and Fairfield silver maples, pecans, crepe myrtles, sweet and sour oranges, figs, quinces, plums, peaches, pears, ribbon grass, roses, jonquils, snowdrops and violets.

The outline of the Avenue can still be seen and there are long stretches where the limbs of great cedars meet overhead. The "Parade Ground" used by the garrison, about two hundred acres that was kept in turf, is covered with low brush but no trees have grown on it. The tabby foundations of the houses remain and the family burial ground with its dignified monuments is still cared for. These properties form a part of the Sea Island Shooting Preserve.



1800

Snowflakes at the foot of an ancient white mulberry. These little flowers bravely survive in all coast gardens.