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CUSTIS-LEE MANSION

HISTORICAL DATA - GROUNDS



June 1, 1968

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Historical Data for Grounds

by
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DIVISION OF HISTORY
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

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PREFACE

This report has been prepared to fulfill the requirements of Historical Resource Study Proposal PWFP-GWMP-H-7. It attempts to document as fully as possible both with direct and comparative evidence the appearance of a 3.5 acre portion of the old Arlington estate as the Lees left it in May 1861. The area covered includes that part of the original estate currently under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service and the contiguous lands which might eventually be acquired by the Service through agreement with the Department of Defense. For convenience, the area to be discussed has been divided arbitrarily into convenient units: the east front grounds, the courtyard west of the house, the ravine and ice house, the stable and forest, and the vegetable garden. No discussion of the flower garden or the major structures such as the mansion, servants' quarters, etc., has been included since these either have been or ought to be subjects of separate reports.

Historical research has been underway in connection with Arlington for many years. Unquestionably most of the work has been done. The United States Army began work during the first restoration of Arlington in 1925-1933, but it is fair to say that the major work was done by Dr. Murray H. Nelligan of the National Park Service in the early 1950's. In succeeding years, Mrs. Agnes Downey Mullins made substantial additions to previous research. I have made very extensive use of these materials,which are

collected in the Master File and the various special files at the Custis-Lee Mansion, along with other materials turned up more recently. In fact I have added little information that is new, except for some work on nineteenth-century vegetable garden practices. Instead, I have attempted to organize available information and bring it to bear on a specific problem--the provision of historical data for the support of possible restoration and/or reconstruction of the grounds within a limited area near the Mansion. Thus it should be understood that while I take full responsibility for errors of fact and interpretation in this report, the credit for the basic research that made it possible belongs substantially to Dr. Nelligan and Mrs. Mullins.

Several persons have been most helpful to me in the preparation of the report. Mrs. Ann Fuqua was most courteous in providing access to the materials in the Mansion collection and permitting me the use of her notes on various subjects. Mrs. Emily Driscoll, who is working on a study of the conservatory, kindly exchanged information with me, and Park Guide Joseph Bush helped with bibliographical work at the National Archives and the Library of Congress. Landscape Architect, Thomas De Haven of the National Capital Region helped to identify plant materials in Civil War period photographs. His report appears below as an appendix. Finally, Mrs. W. Hunter DeButts gave permission to examine the Lee Family and DeButts Family Papers on microfilm in the Manu-

script Division of the Library of Congress.

The cover is from a water color, "Arlington House," 1853, by Benson J. Lossing.

ABBREVIATIONS

CLMF: Custis-Lee Master Files. Most of the information in this report is derived from the chronological and subject files at the library of the Custis-Lee Mansion. For convenience, those sources taken directly from the mansion files have been cited below as CLMF. For more detailed information on the sources the master files themselves may be consulted.

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INTRODUCTION

In May 1861, the family of Robert E. Lee left its cherished Arlington House forever. Close behind came Union troops moving to protect the Capital by occupying and fortifying the Virginia heights overlooking it. Today the old mansion still stands, and from its massive portico there still unfolds a grand scene--the sweep of the Potomac, the sprawling city, and the hills beyond. That scene has changed much since 1861, and so has the setting of old Arlington House. The forests and farmland of the approximately 1100-acre estate have become the site of the nation's most famous military cemetery. The graves of 45 Union officers mark the border of the old flower garden and grove south of the mansion; the remains of 2111 unknown Union soldiers lie beneath a granite monument in the old pleasure grove, sharing that site with the old amphitheatre where Memorial Day was once honored. At one end of the Custis-Lee vegetable garden north of the mansion is the museum, a former potting house that once furnished plants for the ornamental beds of the cemetery. East of the mansion, a part of the vista towards Washington, are a towering flagstaff, the tomb of Pierre L 'Enfant, and the graves of Generals Philip Sheridan and Horatio Wright, and Admiral David Porter. Most recently, the topography in front of the mansion has been redefined by the construction and landscaping associated with the John F. Kennedy tomb. And frequently the halls of Custis-Lee Mansion resound to the dirge and the cadence of

marching troops as a military funeral procession makes its way to the northern sector of the cemetery. Beginning at the site of the old Arlington stable, it winds past the grove and flower garden, servants' quarters, and disappears beyond the old vegetable garden.

In the present situation so dominated by cemeterial functions, the task of restoring and meaningfully interpreting the scene of antebellum Arlington House is most difficult. However, long range plans of the Department of Defense call for the relocation of Cemetery Headquarters and the transfer of certain lands to the National Park Service. When carried out these plans would enlarge the Park Service holding in the cemetery to 3.5 acres and make it possible to restore and reconstruct much of the immediate setting of the Custis-Lee Mansion as it was in 1861.[1] This report attempts to provide information to assist in planning future developments.

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1. See Master Plan, Custis-Lee Mansion, WSC, NPS approved with reservations Jan. 10, 1967.

THE GROUNDS

General Description of the Estate, 1861

In essence, Arlington was a partially self-supporting country seat, not a full-fledged commercial plantation in the trational sense. Of the total 1100 acres, only 300 were cultivated in 1860. Cereal crops, potatoes, hogs, dairy cattle and a truck garden accounted for the commercial agricultural activity at Arlington.[2] Most of the agricultural activities were centered at the farm area near the Georgetown-Alexandria Road and the Georgetown-Alexandria branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.[3]

South of the farm between the bank of the Potomac and the Alexandria-Georgetown Canal was the locally famous Arlington Spring, a favored spot for picnickers and patriotic celebrants from Washington, Alexandria, and Georgetown. The area stretching from the front (east of the mansion to the Alexandria-Georgetown Road) which cut across

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2. Schedule of Products of Agriculture, for the year ending June 1, 1860, Alexandria Country, Virginia, 8th U.S. Census (1860), Microfilm, Virginia State Library. Although G. W. P. Custis was famous for his experiments in breeding native American sheep earlier in the century, both the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census records at the Virginia State Library do not record the presence of sheep at Arlington, Will-book #7, Alexandria County, Va., p. 485, records the sale in 1857 of 12 lambs as a part of the Custis estate, CLMF.

3. The overseer's house, barn, poultry yard, truck garden, and some of the quarters for field slaves were located here. Cultivated fields were scattered about the estate, generally east, north, and south of the mansion.

the estate, was in grass and was partially cleared of trees. Clumps of oaks, chestnuts, evergreens, and a variety of native trees dotted the landscape as the hill descended from the mansion toward the river. Over this placid scene one gazed from the portico at distant Washington. Although much of the estate was cleared for farm, recreation, and decorative purposes, most of it remained in natural forest. Dominated by native oak, the forest closed in on the mansion complex on the north, south, and west sides. Visitors to Arlington were impressed by these unspoiled woods abounding with birds, wild flowers, and small game.[4] The quiet beauty of the setting of Arlington House was one of its most delightful features and drew frequent comment.[5]

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4. See Benson Lossing, "Arlington House, the Seat of G.W.P. Custis," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 7 (1853), 434-36. Eleanor Gibbon Randolph Calvert recalled hunting for bird's nests in the ravine west of the mansion when she visited the house as a child. See her unsigned "Childhood Days at Arlington," MS [c. 1875] Custis-Lee Mansion Collections. Mrs. Calvert (b. 1833, d. 1911) was the granddaughter of Mary Randolph who is buried a few yards northeast of the mansion. Although her manuscript is undated, it must have described the period roughly 1840-1845. It is a very careful and detailed description of many aspects of Arlington before the Civil War and the information contained in it correlates with other sources. It will be cited frequently below as Calvert, "Childhood Days."

5. Charles Russell Lowell reported in May 1861 that he had "seen no place like it in this country--for position and well-improved natural advantages." Letter to Mrs. Lowell, CLMF.

The Condition of the Estate in 1861

When the Lees left it in 1861, the estate wore the aspect of decay arrested by partial renovation. In his declining years, George W.P. Custis, the owner and builder of the estate, had permitted affairs of his several Virginia plantaions and Arlington to lapse into financial chaos. He had made fitful attempts to keep the house and grounds at Arlington in a state of good repair, but by the time of his death in 1857, they were in a rundown condition. In his will Custis provided a life interest in the Arlington estate to his daughter, Mrs. Robert E. Lee, which at her death was to devolve upon her son George Washington Custis Lee. Another of her sons, William Henry Fitzhugh Lee was to inherit Custis' White House Estate in New Kent County, while Robert E. Lee, Jr. was to receive Romancock in King William County. In addition each of the Lee daughters, Mary Custis, Anne Carter, Eleanor Agnes, and Mildred Childe, was to receive a bequest of $10,000 from the sale of various lands, while the Custis slaves were to be freed, "the said emancipation to be accomplished in not exceeding five years from the time of my decease."[6] As Mrs. Lee wrote in 1858, "My Dear Father

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6. Murrary H. Nelligan, "Old Arlington," National Capital Parks, National Park Service, April 12, 1953, p. 560.

in his usual entire ignorance of the state of his affairs has left provisions in his will which it will be impossible to fulfill in even Double 5 years." [7] It fell to Robert E. Lee as the only qualified executor of the will to carry out its provisions, to turn the Custis estates into self-supporting, profitable economic units to ensure fulfillment of his children's legacy.

At Arlington this meant austerity, organization and pruning of the labor force, and investment for repairs and renovation. Taking leave from the Army from late 1857 until the end of 1859, Lee set about raising farm productivity and improving the physical appearance of Arlington. A major effort was expended in attempting to put to work the able bodied among the estate's 63 slaves. The effort was only partially successful, although by hiring out a number of slaves and sending runaway or otherwise unruly persons to the more southern Custis holdings, he was able to reduce overhead at Arlington. For both Lee and his wife, the difficulties with the slaves were annoying and somewhat bewildering. As Lee wrote, George Washington Parke Custis had left an "unpleasant legacy." [8]

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7. Mary C. Lee to [W.G.] Webster, Feb. 17, 1858, MS., Acc. No. 22404, Virginia State Library.

8. Lee was by temperment and training very much different from G.W.P. Custis, who had been an easy going and absent minded master of Arlington. Pressed by his responsibilities to his family, Lee sought to make over slaves used to light toil into efficient "operatives." His efforts naturally evoked hostility and resentment among the slaves, many of whom believed that G.W.P. Custis had freed them on his death bed.

The effect of austerity was expressed by Lee's inability to do all he wished to put Arlington in top shape. The general appearance of the estate grounds did not suit him, for he was unable to do all that he wanted. But for the purposes of this report, it is important to note that Lee worked to clean up and improve the appearance of the "hill"--the immediate vicinity of the mansion.[9] He repaired the stable,

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The ill-feeling was exacerbated by denunciations of Lee and Custis in the abolitionist press and by local abolitionists who began "lurking" about Arlington shortly after Custis' death attempting to incite the slaves to rebel for their freedom. In February 1858, Mrs. Lee in some frustration over the situation, wrote that she wished they could let the slaves go. She and Col. Lee

> would be most indebted to . . . the abolitionists if they would come forward & purchase their time and let them [the Slaves] enjoy the comforts of freedom at once [.] Col. Lee to whom they have given an great [sic] amount of trouble already & who can devise no profitable benefit from their services would I am sure let them all go for a very moderate sum at least all at this place.

The quote is from Mary A.R.C. Lee to [W.G.] Webster, Feb. 17, 1858, Va. State Library. For a discussion of Lee's difficulties with the slaves see Nelligan, "Old Arlington," pp. 558-66, 571 and R.E. Lee to G.W. Custis Lee, July 2, 1859, CLMF.

9. "You will find things, I fear, rough and unsightly," he wrote, "as much as I desire to polish up your mother's habitation." Ibid. In spite of such self deprecation, Lee must have accomplished much. He repaired the overseer's house, put the Arlington grist mill in order, resumed operation of Arlington Spring, and in general improved agricultural efficiency. See Nelligan, "Old Arlington," pp. 569-70, 577-79. However, money remained a problem. In the summer of 1860, Lee warned Custis Lee "It does not require me to tell you that it will take a stronger man than I am to supply the wants at Arlington & White House, & if this state of things is to continue where will it end [?]" R.E. Lee to G.W. Custis Lee, July 4, 1860, CLMF.

roofs of the wings of the mansion, and made some interior improvements. To judge by the accounts of most of those who saw and recorded their impressions of the Mansion at the time of the military occupation of the estate in the Spring of 1861, the grounds were left in a fairly neat condition by the Lees. One New Yorker noted that the grounds were neatly sodded and kept. Another reported "the place is most beautiful--on top of a hill sloping gradually back from the Potomac."[10] Another correspondent described the scene in July 1861 as a "lovely picture of rural beauty." The house, he wrote:

> stands on a grassy lot surrounded with a grove of stately trees and underwood, except in front where is a verdant sloping ground for a few rods when it descends into a valley spreading away in beautiful and broad expanse to the lovely Potomac. This part of this splendid estate is apparently a highly cultivated meadow, the grass waving in the gentle breeze, like the undulating bosom of Old Atlantic. The south, north, and west, the grounds are beautifully diversified into hill and valley, and richly stored with oak, willow, and maple, though oak is the principal wood.[11]

Yet another was impressed by the trees and turf in their "June luxuriance and beauty," the garden "a mass of flowers." [12]

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10. William Swinton, History of the Seventh Regiment, National Guard State of New York During the War of the Rebellion ...(New York, 1870), p. 200 and New York Times, June 1, 1861, CLMF.

11. New York Daily News, July 9, 1861, quoted in W.P. Snow, Lee and His Generals, (New York, 1867). p 39.

12. New York Daily Tribune, May 26, 1861, CLMF.

Even so prejudiced an observer as Theodore Winthrop, who inclined to believe that fine oaks and a fair view accounted for what beauty Arlington possessed, had to admit that the "domain" was "really quite grand, but ill-kept." [13] It seems fair to conclude that the general appearance of the grounds near Arlington Mansion, as the Lees left them in 1861, was one of beauty if not opulence or extreme formality.

Roads

The present road system in the immdeiate vicinity of the Custis-Lee Mansion is based on the historic road pattern, but has been considerably modified to serve the needs of pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the modern cemetery. Maps and photographs from the Civil War period and scattered documentary references from the prewar period constitute the evidence of the historic roads. The main entrance to the estate complex (as opposed to the farm) was from the Alexandria-Georgetown Road. This was the most convenient route for those approaching the estate from Georgetown, Alexandria, and Washington via Long Bridge.[14]

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13. Theodore Winthrop, Life in the Open Air and Other Papers (Boston, 1863), p. 287.

14. Calvert, "Childhood Days", recalled following a portion of the road from Long Bridge to the entrance of the Park as it passed under the Alexandria branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and by the farm, garden, and slave quarters to intersect the Georgetown-Alexandria Road.

From the Georgetown-Alexandria Road visitors to the Mansion on horseback or in carriages entered through a gate to follow an unpaved road up toward the heights and were afforded occasional glimpses of the mansion as the road climbed sinuously up through the trees.[15] As the road approached the crest of Arlington Heights, it swept past the Mansion on the south below the top of the hill until it reached a point approximately due south of the stable. Then the road turned north and climbed steeply to emerge on the hilltop opposite the stable at the southwest corner of the grove. Here it became part of a 5-point intersection. As one faced the stable the road at the extreme left of the intersection entering at a right angle led to the western entrance to the estate. Straight ahead was the short road to the front of the stable. To the right of this road was another leading generally northeast to the rear or west entrance to the Mansion. The road at the extreme right of the intersection was the main formal entrance road to the porticoed east front of the Mansion. This road passed east along the crest of the heights at the southern edge of the

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15. R.E. Lee to Mrs. Lee, Oct. 16, 1837, CLMF mentions the construction of gates in progress at that time. "I suppose the Major's [Custis'] enclosures have been sometime finished, and gates up, which will be a comfort to the whole establishment." Lee wrote in 1860 directing that "you might clean up that part of the Park just after entering the gate." Lee to ? [Custis Lee] Mar. 9, 1960. The winding road leading up to the Mansion is mentioned in Theodore Winthrop, Life in the Open Air and Other Papers (Boston, 1863), p. 287.

grove and the fence of the flower garden until it turned abruptly north along the east boundary of the flower garden and then directly to the portico steps.[16] Just north of the portico steps opposite the north wing of the Mansion a circular turn-around for carriages was provided. The visitor arriving at the Mansion by this road was offered on the one hand a lovely vista of the estate and the Potomac. On the other he was presented with the attractive flower garden and grove, which were not only pleasant to look at, but also screened from view the rather unimpressive west facade of the mansion, the outbuildings, and the domestic activities taking place behind the house. Once past the garden the visitor approached and entered at the portico, the most impressive architectural feature of the Mansion. Apparently even members of the family returning from long trips away from Arlington sometimes entered by the east front. In April 1855, Agnes Lee recorded her return from a long sojourn at West Point, N.Y.[17] She recalled that "it seemed an age before we dashed around the garden

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16. In 1864 a broad path or road branched off from the road along the East side of the flower garden to join the carriage drive at the rear (West) of the house. In addition a broad path or road had been worn along the south side of the house from the east drive to the west. One is inclined to believe that these roads or paths date from the military occupancy, when virtually all grass in the immediate vicinity of the house was worn away by heavy military traffic. See illustration No. 7, below.

17. Eleanor Agnes Lee, Journal, April 16, 1855, Micro. , Lee Family and DeButts Family Papers, Micro., Library of Congress, [RESTRICTED].

fence. I sprang out on the steps and kissed Grandpa & Cousin Markie . . ." The carriage could have dashed "around" the garden fence only by taking the road to the east front.

The sources are ambiguous on the matter of roads to the Mansion from the north and northeast. A military map of 1861, shows a road leading to the north side (rear) of the stable from the Georgetown-Alexandria Turnpike northeast of the Mansion. This road does not appear on other maps of the period. The "Environs of Washington" map (1864-1865) shows a road leading up toward the Mansion from the northeast, but instead of terminating at the rear of the stable the road forks several hundred yards northeast of the Mansion: one branch connecting with the main road passing west of it (approximating the course of today's Sheridan Drive). We have no photographs or sketches of the roads northeast of the Mansion in the historic period and no firm evidence of their existence at that time. An Army inspector reported in 1874, that the road passing the east front.[18] The detail of the Van Horn photo of the east front (c. 1864) suggests that during the late Civil War a road or at least a well beaten path did exist. A worn area that appears to be a road is visible passing northeasterly in front of the vegetable garden to connect presumably with the road to the Georgetown-Alexandria Road northeast of the Mansion. It is

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18. Report of the Inspector of National Cemeteries for the Year 1874, Ex. Doc. 28, Senate, 43rd. Cong. 2d Sess., p. 38.

moot whether or not this road was an innovation of the Civil War period or whether it existed in 1861.[19] If it did exist in the historic period, it must have been a secondary road used for local plantation access and possibly as a shortcut to the Georgetown ferry. It would have been much more significant during the war when vehicular communications between Georgetown and the Arlington area were improved by the seizure of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Acqueduct over the Potomac at Georgetown and its conversion into a wagon bridge. After the conversion of the aqueduct, troops, supplies, and couriers could flow over it and the route to the Mansion from the northeast very readily.[20]

As nearly as it is possible to determine, all road surfaces on the estate in the antebellum period were dirt or gravel. Photographs and sketches show no paved or flagstone surfaces in the vicinity of the Mansion.[21] In 1839, G.W.P. Custis reported that he just completed

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19. David H. Rhodes, "Historic Memories of Arlington National Cemetery," MS, CLMF, states that when he arrived at the cemetery in 1873, the following roads existed: 1. an "old road" running west from the Sheridan gateway site to a point near the mansion; 2. a narrow road from the northeast gateway to the cemetery (Ord-Weitzel) to a point near the mansion and north of it; 3. a road from the site of the McClellan gateway to a point near and west off the old amphitheatre; a roadway from the mansion a small gate at the Fort Myer entrance to the cemetery; and the "short approach" to the stable area. He also notes that there was no roadway at that time around the north end of the mansion, a fact which created a traffic problem in front of the mansion.

20. The Civil War Maps show that the Army built a stable along this northeast access road about 120 yards from the Mansion.

21. The paving of road and walk surfaces at Arlington dates mostly from the late nineteenth century. It was in 1892 that the

grading and putting gravel on the "hill" at Arlington.[22] We know that the paths in the flower garden were graveled and that this was the common method of surfacing local roads during the period. Therefore we can assume that, where practical, the estate roads would have been gravel-covered or else they would have been virtually impassible, particularly the grades, in inclement weather. What sort of drainage for the roads existed in the historic period is not clear. There may have been roadside ditches to allow for the runoff of water, but we have no explicit references to them.[23]

Because the Civil War maps of the estate are drawn to so small a scale it is difficult to estimate the width of the access roads with precision. The map (c. 1864), Illustration No. 1, which can be scaled,

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area surrounding the mansion was covered with "granolithic" pavement, which was later removed as a part of the restoration of mansion and grounds. See Blueprint to accompany Articles of Agreement between Lt. Col. George H. Weeks and Henry L. Cranford for Granolithic pavement at Arlington, Index 22785, Office of the Quartermaster General, R.G. 92, National Archives for construction of asphalt roadway from the Mansion to the western entrance of the cemetery see "Estimate," March 2, 1895, Index 71463, Ibid. See also Rhodes,"Historic Memories."

22. G.W.P. Custis to Mary L. Custis, Sept. 16, 1839, CLMF.

23. In the period immediately after the Civil War, the construction and paving of drainage ditches became a major project, possibly due to the excessive runoff produced by the destruction of the Arlington Forest to make way for the Defenses of Washington and then for the cemetery. See Report of Inspector of National Cemeteries...1874, p.38 and Superintendent's Monthly Report, Arlington Cemetery, Aug. 1870, Photostat in CLMF.

suggests that the width of the roads near the Mansion varied from about 10 to about 30 feet; the widest point being at the 5-point intersection west of the Mansion. The 10-feet width was probably closer to the average, for in this period it was a rare road indeed which was more than wide enough for two horse-drawn carriages to pass.

Footpaths associated with the immediate vicinity of the Mansion-garden-stable complex will be treated below in connection with their specific areas of the grounds. It should be noted here that in addition to those paths to be discussed there may have been a path which made its way up the hill from the main gate at the Georgetown-Alexandria Road to the vicinity of the east front of the mansion. It is clear just where this path reached the top of Arlington Heights but probably it was somewhere near the south wing or the flower garden for the path approached the hill from a southeasterly direction. It was probably a well-used path for it would have been convenient for those traveling on foot between the house and the farm and Arlington Spring.[24]

The East Front Grounds

The grounds now under the control of the Park Service immediately in front of the mansion may be discussed in brief compass so far as

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24. Eleanor Randolph Calvert recalled this path in her "Childhood Days."

their appearance c. 1861 is concerned, it may be stated there were few plantings and much grass.[25] Civil War photographs are quite explicit, showing no trees directly east of and close to the mansion.[26] The only significant plantings close to the east front in 1864 were two shrubs or small trees about 5 feet tall, one at the northeast corner and the other at the southeast corner of the mansion.[27] None of the photographs or drawings suggests the presence of magnolia grandiflora in the vicinity of the east front during the historic period.[28] Except for the drive and carriage turn-around in front of the mansion, the area was in grass.

The development of Arlington National Cemetery has brought many changes to the grounds immediately in front of the mansion. The hill in front sloping toward the Potomac has been regraded several times,

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25. This discussion excludes the north and south gardens, which are treated below.

26. The 1853, watercolor of Arlington House by Benson Lossing does show two trees or one double-trunk tree not far from the northeast corner of the portico steps. This tree or trees does not however appear in Markie Williams sketch of the front of Arlington House (1843) or in the sketch "Arlington, dear Arlington" in Mary Lee's Scrapbook (privately owned). Copies of Lossing's watercolor may be seen at CLMF and on cover above.

27. See Illustration 5 below. There are a variety of plantings including cedar trees along the north side of the north wing. These will be discussed in connection with the vegetable garden. Along the south side of the south wing was a single shrub or small tree near and slightly east of the office or studio window. See Illustration 7 below.

28. For the controversy about the magnolia trees planted by the Army after the Civil War, see Murray H. Nelligan, Memo to Superintendent

most recently in connection with the construction of the permanent grave of John F. Kennedy.[29] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ornate flower beds, ornmenetal urns, decorative trees and shrubs, and a wide granolithic walkway completely surrounding the mansion all contributed toward radically altering the grounds at the east front of the mansion from their rather simple aspect of 1861. The restoration of the mansion (1925-1933) under the supervision of the Quartermaster General, U.S. Army with the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts removed many intrusions and restored much of the antebellum scene. Since 1933, when the Park Service acquired the mansion more has been done but much remains, if the pre-Civil War atmosphere is to be restored.

A tall flagstaff, not on National Park Service land, now towers over Arlington House. It was not there before the war. When Federal troops occupied the estate in May 1861, the mansion became a military headquarters and a flagstaff was erected atop the portico roof.[30] Sometime before the end of the war, probably in the summer of 1864,

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[National Capital Parks], Through Chief, National Memorials and Historic Sites, May 26, 1953, NCR-NPS Decimal Files, 1100/338 #6.

29. The most detailed description of the selection of the grave-site so far published is William R. Manchester, The Death of a President, (New York, 1967), pp. 481-97. It should be used with care.

30. See sketch in Pictorial War Record, 1, (Oct. 7, 1882), 90 and William Howard Russell, My Diary North and South, 1 (New York, 1863), 394.

this flagstaff was replaced by a tall, two-part ship's mast type wooden pole placed about 50 feet in front of the center of the portico steps.[31] Official reports prior to 1874, do not mention this flagstaff. In that year the Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery reported it to be in "tolerable good condition," suggesting it had been standing for some time.[32] A photograph acquired recently by the Custis-Lee Mansion taken c. 1864, shows that the flagstaff existed at that time.[33] The original flagstaff has been replaced and its style changed

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31. The legend persists that President Lincoln ordered the flagstaff placed there in 1864, but it is without documentation except for assertions long after the event. For example, see letter of Ida H. Rokes, National President of the Sons of Union Veterans Auxiliary, to Charles Moore, April 14, 1925, CLMF.

32. Memo, Randall B. Truett, Report on Flagstaff at Lee Mansion National Memorial by Murray Nelligan, Historian, February 16, 1951, NCR-NPS Decimal Files, 1100/338 #6.

33. The photograph, Illustration No. 5 below, was originally the property of Union Colonel Daniel Webster Van Horn. It is undated but an examination of its detail--the exterior appearance of Arlington House, the height and location of weeds or saplings growing through holes in the rotten wooden steps around the portico, and the condition of vegetation--shows it to have been made about the time of the Brady photograph of the east front, CLMF, June 29, 1864. One might guess from the presence an awning on one of the windows that it was made later the same summer. Nelligan, Report on Flagpole, argues that the flagpole in front of the mansion was not placed there before 1870, because it is not mentioned in official documents or newspaper accounts and because photographs taken during the 60's do not show it. It is also suggested that ship's mast type flagpoles were not popular before the Spanish-American War. Both conclusions are incorrect. The photographs of the Civil War period, except the Van Horn, do not show the flagstaff because they do not show the area 50 feet in front of the portico steps where it stood. The ship's mast type flagstaff was much used in the Civil War Defenses of Washington, especially where a particularly tall pole was desired. See photos in the Matthew Brady Collection, National Archives.

several times over the years. Since the dedication of the present Arlington Memorial Amphitheatre in 1925, it has not flown the official post flag of the cemetery, customarily a post has but one flagstaff.[34] In 1924, the War Department contemplated removal of the flagstaff, and the same action has been recommended many times since, both by those who object to its presence on aesthetic grounds and by those who resent it is a symbol of Northern conquest of the South in the Civil War. Because of the objections to its removal by other groups it still remains.[35] Objectively, from the standpoint of historical authenticity, it can only be reaffirmed that the flagstaff was not a part of the historic scene prior to the Civil War.

The Flower Garden

Although the flower garden is one of the most important ground features of the Mansion area, it would serve no purpose to cover it in detail in this report. Plans for its restoration have already

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34. Nelligan, Report on Flagpole.

35. Dwight F. Davis, Secretary of War, to Charles Moore, June 3, 1924. According to Nelligan, Report on Flagpole, the flagstaff was actually removed in 1928 or 1929, but had to be replaced, albeit on a more artistic base, because of the ensuing public outcry. Enoch A. Chase claimed that the restoration of Arlington House was hampered because the flagpole could not be removed. He believed that the symbolism of the Union flag flying over the mansion deterred many Southern ladies from participation in or donation to the restoration. See his "The Restoration of Arlington House: and Addenda," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, 33-34(1932), 241-42.

been formulated and are proceding based on a completed and approved report.[36]

The Civil War Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

The Civil War Tomb of the Unknowns has occupied a portion of the old pleasure grove section of the flower garden since 1866. Beneath the rectangular monument that marks its site, are buried the remains of 2111 Civil War Union soldiers gathered from unmarked graves and various battlefields in Virginia. The remains are entombed in a vault sunk 21 feet in the ground and about 20 feet from the floor to the top of its semicircular domed arch.[37] Although the tomb was not a part of the scene in 1861, it must of course remain a part of the scene of the restored grounds of the Custis-Lee Mansion.

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36. Staff, National Capital Region and National Capital Office, "Design and Construction, Historic Grounds Report, Part II, on the Custis-Lee Mansion Flower Garden," March 1964, USDI-NPS-NCR, particularly Chapter II, Historical Data by Agnes D. Mullins.

37. The floor of the vault is brick, the sides are 3-foot thick rubble work of blue building stone. The opening or aperture in the vault was 4 feet by 6 feet 6 inches in the shape of an ellipse. Complete Specifications may be found in Specifications for the Construction of a Circular Arched Vault at Arlington Cemetery, Consolidated Correspondence File, Office of the Quartermaster General, Box 28, Records Group 92, National Archives. The vault was ready to be sealed in September 1866. See Col. Marshall I. Ludington to Brig. Gen. Montgomery Meigs, Sept. 21, 1866. Ibid.

The Old Amphitheatre

Two hundred feet west of the Civil War Tomb of the Unknowns is the decaying arbor-like structure known as the old amphitheatre. Built in 1873-74, it was for many years the site of Decoration or Memorial Day ceremonies honoring the dead of the Civil War. The central feature of the amphitheatre, located at its northern perimeter, is

> a platform built on brick, 40 X 28 feet in dimensions [sic], with twelve columns of brick 18 feet high, on which is supported the roof. This portion is . . . composed only of stretchers, sufficient in number to afford ample support for vines, which will constitute the roof . . . Attached to the stand is an auditorium or amphitheatre in oval form, with forty-six pillars, supporting stretchers, the same as the grand stand, and to be roofed with vines. The capacity of the amphitheatre is such that eight thousand people can comfortably be accommodated within its space. The ground bordering on the amphitheatre is terraced, with an incline, and the entrance is made by four points.[38]

The construction of the present Arlington Memorial Amphitheatre in 1924 brought an end to the ceremonial use of the old one. Its eventual removal would help restore the antebellum scene at the Custis-Lee Mansion.

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38. Washington Daily National Republican, May 30, 1873, CLMF.

The Colored Schoolhouse

A structure labeled "Colored School Ho." appears on one historic map c. 1864, Illustration No. 1, below. A small structure about 12 by 16 feet, apparently of frame construction, it was located about 350 feet southwest of the west main entrance of the Mansion in the southwest corner of the grove about 25 feet north of the entrance road to the east front. The structure is not now extant and appears on no other map consulted in this study. The descriptions of the garden and grove area by Agnes and Mildred Lee, Eleanor Randolph Calvert, D.F. Rhodes, and "Uncle Jim" Parks make no allusion to this structure. Neither does the correspondence examined in connection with this study. We do know that the Custis and Lee women devoted considerable energy and interest to the education of Arlington slave children even though this was technically illegal after Arlington and adjacent District of Columbia lands west of the Potomac were retroceded to Virginia in 1846.[39] Several sources mention the

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39. Both the Custis and Lee family members were most interested in the American Colonization Society, apparently, like Lincoln, seeing gradual emancipation and expatriate resettlement as the solution to the problem of slavery.

slave "school house" and the education of the slave children. Mrs. Calvert states:[40]

> In the East [North] wing [of the Mansion] is a room corresponding to the studio [in the South wing] which is the scene of the artistic endeavors of the mistress; here clothes for the slaves are cut out & made . . . here every Sunday a class of boys and girls assemble to be instructed by . . . [Mrs. Custis], not only in the ways of righteousness but the ways of letters and words.

In her Journal, Agnes Lee made frequent references to the education of the slave children and to the meeting house or school house. In 1855 she wrote:[41]

> In the evening [on Sundays] we have a meeting house held chiefly for the servants who attend. It is about a mile from the house. After that--a doz. or more little children of the sable race come up to say their hymns &c.

In July 1853, she remembered, "We went to the school house Sunday and saw the sacrement administered, it was very impressive."[42] But

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40. Childhood Days. In a roundabout way she does connect the education of the slaves with the flower garden, noting that the girls of the Lee family made strings of flowers and bouquets to sell in Washington. The proceeds of the sales went to a fund maintained by Mrs. Custis for the colonization of ex-Arlington slaves in Liberia. Education was of course a part of the slaves' preparation for freedom. Whether or not Mrs. Lee continued this policy after the death of Mrs. Custis is not known.

41. Agnes Lee Journal May 13, 1855.

42. Ibid., July 6, 1853.

her Journal makes it clear that the "school house," presumably because of the statutory restrictions on the education of slaves, was being used primarily as a meeting house or chapel for the slaves and was located quite a distance from the house. The education of the slave children on the other hand was taking place at the house, most likely in the north wing as Miss Calvert maintained.[43] In March 1855, Agnes and Annie Lee "walked" to the "school house" and heard a good sermon from the minister, Mr. Rodman.[44] One Sunday afternoon in April 1856, Blanche Berard and Mildred Lee

> walked through the beautiful Arlington woods . . . to a little school house where there are services for the negroes. It was a charming day and we found the first spring wild flower--beautiful beds of trailing arbutus. The services at this little station were very interesting--servants of all ages and all so attentive.[45]

Had the school been in the grove near the mansion it seems unlikely that both Agnes and Miss Berard would have noted that they "walked." Discussing the selection of the site for Mrs. Custis'

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43. Ibid., July 18, 1854 complains that the teaching of "Ebony mites" was tedious work, because the children did not appear on time for class and were poorly prepared. In February 23, 1853, she wrote that she had her "little dark scholars" for class one Sunday evening but they had been loathe to leave their sleigh riding.

44. Ibid., Mar. 2, 1853. Mr. Rodman was probably a theological student from the Episcopal seminary near Alexandria. In 1858, Blanche Berard, a visitor to the mansion, noted that a seminarian was used to preach to the slaves. Augusta Blanche Berard, "Arlington and Mount Vernon in 1856," with Introduction and Notes by Clayton Torrence, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 57 (April 1949).

45. Ibid.

grave in 1853, Mrs. William Fitzhugh wrote:

> After breakfast she [Mrs. Lee] went with William to mark out a spot where the precious remains were to be buried. She fixed upon one between the road leading to the Park, and the gate. The gate open into the road leading to the old school house. There the grave was made.[46]

Her description clearly places the old school house outside the immediate vicinity of the mansion; thus it could not have been the structure appearing on the map.

It is possible that the "Colored School Ho." in the grove area was built by the Army during the Civil War. There is no documentary evidence to support such a surmise except that on the only map on which the structure appears it resembles--is about the same size and is shown in the same way--the barracks, barns, and miscellaneous structures used by the occupying forces.[47] Mention of the structure does not occur in the monthly reports of the superintendent of the cemetery after the war, nor do the reminiscences of those who knew Arlington in the mid-nineteenth century mention it. Of course no visible trace of it remains today.

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46. Mrs. William Fitzhugh to Mr . Abby Nelson, April ?, 1853. CLMF. The chapel or school house or meeting house was apparently destroyed during the war. Nelligan, "Old Arlington," p.666n.

47. By 1864, the Government had established a school for the inhabitants of Freedman's Village located near Arlington Spring. See Harper's Weekly, 8 (May 7, 1864), 294. It is remotely possible that at the same time a school was set up for the ex-slaves who remained in their homes near the mansion.

The Kitchen or Vegetable Garden

Like most nineteenth-century country houses and cottages, Arlington House had its vegetable garden to provide the family table with fresh vegetables in season and canned vegetables out of season. Located just north of the mansion convenient to the summer kitchen, the garden occupied the site of the present rose garden, comfort station, heating plant, museum, and employee parking lot--an area of about 0.8 acres.[48] When the garden was first cultivated is not known, but presumably it dates from the early nineteenth century.[49]

Unlike the flower garden south of the mansion, the vegetable garden seems to have been more functional than decorative. This is a point of basic importance. It was in the flower garden that Mrs. Custis and Mrs. Lee spent long hours and about which they left much correspondence. It was the flower garden, where Robert E. Lee's

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48. The undated Map c. 1864, shows just about this area (Illustration No. 1) The Environs of Washington Map, 1864-65, which gives some details of the garden plan, shows almost an acre and one half as I compute it. There just was not that much level acreage available on the hill top on which the garden was laid out.

49. George Washington Parke Custis apparently established his truck garden in 1803 or 1804, for his overseer John Ball advertized in the Alexandria Daily Advertizer, (Nov. 15,26, and Dec. 6, 1803) for someone to manage a large market garden at Mt. Washington (Arlington). It seems plausible that if Custis was operating a truck garden, probably in the farm area near the river, he would have also had some vegetables growing convevient to the house he was building upon the heights. The garden was in existence in the 1840s for Eleanor Randolph Calvert in her "Childhood Days at Arlington" remembered and described it.

daughters had their individual garden plots, buried their dead pets, had their secret places, and when grown strolled with suitors among the flowers. And of course it was the flower garden that visitors approaching by the main road up from the Georgetown-Alexandria Road saw as they neared the mansion from the east. On the other hand the vegetable garden was largely hidden from the casual eye--by hedging from east; by foliage, the north servants' quarters, and the north wing of the house itself from south; and by the Arlington forest on west and north. This arrangement was an apparent departure from general practice in antebellum Virginia but not from principle. It was customary to grow vegetables of "compact foliage, of pleasant leafage or color" among the flowers in the garden, and to place the gardens before the mansion in order to provide the most attractive view and vista to approaching visitors.[50] The restored gardens at Mt. Vernon are an example of this technique.[51] The situation at Arlington, however, was different. There was but a single major approach to the mansion and that was from the southeast. In addition visitors were expected to approach not the west but the east front necessitating a swing around the flower garden to the portico. Thus

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50. Frances Archer Christian and Susanne Williams Massie, Homes and Gardens of Old Virginia, rev. for the Garden Club of Virginia by Ella Williams Smith, et al. (Richmond, 1962), pp. 7-8.

51. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association, The Mount Vernon Gardens (Mt. Vernon, [c. 1941]), pp. 20-21.

the environs of the house to the west and north of the house were hidden from those making the formal approach. With this controlled access the application of the principle of impressing the visitor suggested that the one garden before the house might be devoted totally to decoration while more mundane and functional food plants could be grown conveniently but out of sight on the north side of the house. Custis never seems to have discussed or recorded his thinking on the placement of the gardens, but the final arrangement was the logical one in the given situation and was in keeping with the recommendations of one of the few antebellum gardening guides directed to gardeners of the American South. The author, William N. White of Athens, Georgia wrote:

> The situation of the flower-garden and lawn should be immediately adjacent to the dwelling, in order to yield the highest degree of pleasure. The most satisfactory arrangement is to form the lawn directly in front, and the flower-garden on the side, sufficiently near to be overlooked by the drawing room windows, while the sides of the dwelling, in part, and its entire rear, including the kitchen and servants' yard are sheltered and concealed by trees . . . As neither the fruit or kitchen garden, especially the latter, can be considered ornamental, they should not, though near the dwelling, be placed obtrusively in view.[52]

If function rather than appearance was the rationale of the well-planned nineteenth-century vegetable garden, then the placement and

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52. William N. White, Gardening for the South, or the Kitchen and Fruit Gardener with the Best Methods for their Cultivation Together with Hints upon Landscape and Flower Gardening (New York, 1856), p. 11. Excepting the fact that the drawing room at Arlington did not overlook the flower garden, White had described the scene at Arlington.

amount of space allotted to the various crops was dependent less on how they looked than on efficient utilization of available space. In part of course the allotment of space was a matter of the family's culinary likes and dislikes. But aside from taste, the governing philosophy of the vegetable garden was to produce a wide variety of fresh vegetables from early spring to late fall. By cultivating various early and late maturing varieties or by planting successive crops of the same variety, fresh vegetables would be available for table use through most of the growing season. Through the use of various forcing devices some crops could be grown even in the coldest winter months. In the case of cabbage, for example, one might sow the early York, a popular variety cultivated in America from colonial times, and large early York, which would ripen a little later. Then came early Dutch which would mature between the early and late varieties, and finally the late crops of flat Dutch (or drumhead), which was good for late keeping, Bergen (also a drumhead) which was the best for late keeping, and green glazed, which resisted insects that attacked the other varieties. Sown with the drumheads, Red Dutch cabbage was good for "cold slaugh," or for sauerkraut or pickling in the winter months.[53] What was true of cabbage was true also of many other staple vegetables such as lettuce, carrots, turnips, peas, and radishes.[54]

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53. White, pp. 165-71

54. Ibid., pp. 179-80, 222-24, 231-34, and 250-53.

The growing period of other kinds of vegetables could be partially controlled by their location within the garden. Asparagus, for example, might be planted in two beds, one at each end of the garden. One with a sunny southern exposure would mature early "for it should be a matter of pride to have this delicacy as early as possible," while the other with a northern exposure would come along later.[55] The size of beds or patches for the various vegetables would depend on the ground space required to meet the requirements of anticipated consumption and the exigencies of cultivation. Most garden books of the period assumed that the hoe rather than the plow would be the principal implement.[56] Thus the width of the beds, particularly of close cultivated crops, were to be sufficiently narrow to permit easy access with hand implements from the sides. For asparagus, White recommended 4 1/2 foot wide beds with two foot wide paths between the beds. For lettuce the beds were to be 4 feet wide.[57] For

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55. Ibid., pp. 148-51. A few crops like cress or peppergrass had to be resown every week or two to be properly flavorful and tender for garnishing.

56. A discussion of garden tools would be extraneous to this report. Illustrations and descriptions of period tools and implements may be found in numerous books and horticulture magazines of the antebellum period. Ibid., pp. 9-18, is a useful and well illustrated discussion.

57. Ibid., pp. 151 and 233.

crops grown in wide rows, plots could be any convenient size.[58]

Different kinds of vegetables could also be planted together in the same bed or plot to their mutual advantage. Radishes, for example, did well between rows of other vegetables, or if planted with leeks, carrots, parships, parsley, or celery, the radish tops would provide shade for the young plants of the other species.[59]

Today vegetables are an integral part of our daily diet. We speak about vitamins and minerals but largely take the availability of vegetables for granted. Before the development of modern transportation and refrigeration facilities vegetables were not so readily available

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58. Philadelphia nursery and seedman Robert Buist in The Family Kitchen Gardener . . . (New York, 1852), p. 18, offered a sample list of seeds to cultivate in a ½ acre garden during a year at a cost of about $10.00.

1 oz. asparagus	1 oz. carrot	½ oz. okra
3 qts. beans of sorts	1 qt. early corn	2 oz. onions of sorts
4 beets of sorts	1 pkt. egg plant	1 pap. parsley
¼ oz. broccoli	½ oz. endive	1 oz. parsnips
¼ oz. cauliflower	¼ oz. leek	1 pap. peppers
4 oz. cabbages of sorts	1 qt. lima beans	½ oz. pumpkin
¼ oz. celery	1 oz. lettuce of sorts	8 qts. peas
8 oz. cress	4 oz. mustard	8 oz. radishes
½ oz. cucumber	½ oz. melons	½ oz. salsify
6 pap. sweet potatoes and sweet herbs	1 pap. tomatoes	8 oz. spinage [spinach]
	8 oz. turnips	

59. Ibid., p. 250. Although it may be impractical to do more, interpretation of the restored nineteenth-century vegetable garden should recognize that insecticides as we know them did not exist then. For example, the ancestors of the rabbits that may now be seen occasionally in the north garden of the Custis-Lee Mansion would have been kept away from the tender lettuce in the vegetable garden by ashes sprinkled on the leaves. Ibid., p. 233.

but their importance was well understood. Vegetables were not only for eating but for other uses, principally medicinal. Carrots, which when grated were used to artifically color butter in certain seasons, were also thought to be good in poultices for cancerous sores. It was said that strawberries were good for gout and "stone" and eating them would induce perspiration. Lettuce made a healthful tea.[60] And by the 1850's attempts were being made to analyze the mineral content of vegetables to determine their relative nutritional value. The vegetable garden, then, was considered an important part of the surburban or farm household. To restore the vegetable garden at the Custis-Lee Mansion would thus restore an integral part of the way of life of the Lees and their American contemporaries.

The shape of the north garden at Arlington was rectangular, although not perfectly so. The Mansion occupies a hilltop and the steep side of the hill on the east caused that side of the garden boundary to curve slightly in order to conform to the terrain.[61] The level of the garden was about the same as that of the mansion through the center but dropped off about 5 feet along the sides especially near the south end. The general rectangular arrangement and the slope or "aspect" of the garden are understandable in terms

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60. White, pp. 224, 234, and 337.

61. See Illustrations No. 1 and 5 below.

of nineteenth-century gardening practices. Authorities agreed that the square or rectangle was the most suitable and practical shape for a vegetable garden. What was required was a large open space free of large trees whose roots, droppings, and shade might interfere with vegetable growth. Within this open area beds could be laid out in any convenient size on either side of a straight central path, which bisected the whole plot.[62] The central path served as the principal access route to the beds and White recommended that it be wide enough in extensive gardens to permit the passage of a manure cart.[63] The only extant map giving information on the shape of the Arlington garden beds shows clearly a broad central path through the center of the vegetable garden running north and south, but gives no information on the shape of the beds or their extent.[64] Neither does it show the border paths of the garden although there certainly must have been such paths. There was of course no arbitrary arrangement as to size

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62. See Thomas Bridgeman, The Young Gardener's Assistant, 8th ed. (New York, 1840), pp. 7-11 and his The American Gardener's Assistant in Three Parts . . . New ed., revised and enlarged (New York, 1867), pp. 9-11; Thomas G. Fessenden, The New American Gardener . . . (Boston, 1828), p. 9; Buist, The Family Kitchen Gardener, pp.16-17; and White, p. 14. The influential John C. Loudon in An Encyclopedia of Gardening, new ed., corrected and improved by Mrs. Loudon (London, 1850), p. 741, wrote that although there might sometimes be irregular compartments or borders in a vegetable garden, rectangular shapes were almost universally preferred.

63. White, p. 14

64. Illustration No. 2, below.

or specific location of the individual beds, but general practice was to set aside the borders of the garden (between the border paths and garden fence or hedge), which might vary in width from 6 to 15 feet, for smaller and more delicate vegetables and/or herbs, and miscellaneous garden outbuildings and forcing houses.[65] The slope or aspect of the garden was a matter of some importance. To facilitate drainage a slope in several directions was recommended. It was also believed that a slope toward the south would bring crops to maturity more quickly by increasing their exposure to the sun. While this might be an advantage in northern climes, some authorities believed that the sun in the South was too intense for delicate crops and a northern exposure or aspect was preferred.[66]

The vegetable garden at the Custis-Lee Mansion, from what we know of it, conformed in many respects to the practices recorded in the period gardening books, particularly those by Loudon and White. The maps and photographs show that the central area of the garden was cleared of large trees. As was frequently recommended a row of fruit

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65. Buist, p. 16; Bridgeman, Young Gardener, p. 11; Loudon, p. 741. White, p. 15, suggests 8-12 feet widths for Southern gardens.

66. Ibid., pp. 12-13, argues that strawberries, spinach, cabbage and lettuce grew best on a northern slope. English guides generally recommended a slope of one foot in 20, but the more torrential rains in North America caused those adapting the English guides to American conditions to advocate more gentle slopes (one foot in 40) or none at all.

trees lined either side of the central path. The aspect of the garden was slightly northerly, but with a good southern exposure. Tall trees and hedging protected the garden from storms and winds out of the northwest, and an open fence along the south border exposed that portion to the sun. Direct evidence for the fencing or hedging on the north and west sides of the vegetable garden prior to the war has yet to appear, but there is source material on the appearance of the south and east sides.[67] Photographs, c. 1864, indicate that the garden was bounded by a composite of hedging, planting, and fencing. Although several drawings of the mansion show a picket or board fence along the east side of the garden extending right up to the north wing, and the "Environs of Washington" map (1864-1865) shows the garden completely fenced, such does not seem to have been the case in 1864. Instead the southeastern corner of the garden is enclosed by a variety of plantings including evenly spaced small cedar trees.[68] A hedge extends northerly from these along the east side of the garden until eventually a fence becomes visible (See Illustration No. 5). The fence is

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67. See Illustrations 4,5,8,10, and 11 below.

68. One point is very clear: in historic times there was no path or road around the north wing between the north wall of the house and the vegetable garden as there is today. The sketches and photographs show this and David H. Rhodes, who was assoicated with the cemetery from 1873 until 1930, stated in his Historic Memories of Arlington National Cemetery, CLMF, that no access around that side of the house existed until many years after he came to work at the cemetery.

a post and 3 or 4 rail type, wooden. No fence is visible along the south side of the garden near the north wing of the mansion. Instead thick shrubbery, which may have served both to prevent access around the north wing of the house from front to rear and to screen the rather unattractive vegetable garden interior from viewers in the north wing, grows close to the foundation of the house. From the north wing to the rear of the north servants' quarters, a two-rail rustic fence guards the south boundary of the garden. Near the southeast corner of the quarters is a gate flanked by square gate-posts about three feet tall. If the sketch, c. 1854, (Illustration No. 11) is correct, a single vertical picket gate painted white, hung at this entrance in the historic period. There is no direct evidence, but it seems reasonable to assume that the method of inclosure including the gate on the south side of the garden was duplicated at the north end,and the fence-hedging combination on the east side was duplicated on the west. Fences were probably painted a light color or white-washed.[69]

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69. No descriptions of the vegetable garden fence have turned up. In his Personal Remininscences of R.E. Lee (New York, 1875), opp. p. 366, J. William Jones shows a white vertical picket fence around both the flower and vegetable gardens. Inaccurate in other details, the sketch seems to be wrong here too. It is questionable that the picket fence existed around the flower garden before the military occupation of Arlington and the pre-war sketches on the northeastern and southern sides of vegetable garden do not indicate such a fence there either. In 1848, George Washington Parke Custis described a fence-embankment he was building to enclose his "Pocosin" or tidal flatlands reclaimed from the river for agricultural purposes.

Little is known about the interior of the garden except that there was a central path transversing the garden from south to north lined with fruit trees. There was a central arbor in the flower garden south of the mansion, but there is no evidence to indicate any such structure here. Garden plans of the period sometimes showed a fountain in the center of the vegetable garden, but there was no need for such here, because the well was just southeast of the garden gate. There is no documentary evidence of borders or border paths in the vegetable garden, but one suspects they existed. All the plans in the guide books recommended them. Shaded by the fence and hedges beds along the borders would have been suitable for seedlings, the more delicate plants, and border herbs. Gooseberries, currants, raspberries, strawberries, and the like were usually grown in the borders.[70] The paths along the borders would have been gravel covered as in the flower garden. Authorities could not agree on the optimum width for the borders or the paths that gave access to them. A composite of their advice indicates a border between 3 and 12 feet wide[71]

In the fence portion of the enclosure he used chestnut rails 10 feet long, the bottom rail 7 inches wide and those above it 5 inches wide. Posts were made from locust "of the first quality." Such a fence, Custis believed, "will be good for 40 years to come." G.W.P. Custis to F. Nelson, c. 1848, CLMF.

70. Bridgeman, American Gardener, p. 10.

71. For example, White suggests 8-12 feet, p. 15; Bridgeman, American Gardener, p. 10, recommends 3-4 feet; and Loudon, p. 741, offers the axiom that the borders should be the same width as the height of the garden enclosure.

and paths between 3 and 6 feet.[72] Inside the border walk, between it and the central path, was the vegetable garden proper to be laid out in convenient plots for the standard vegetable crops.

Vegetable in the Garden

No complete description of the vegetable garden during the Custis-Lee occupancy exists, but a number of partial descriptions and casual comments may be pieced together to provide an idea of the variety of crops grown there. To this information may be added comparative evidence from the gardening books and horticultural exhibitions of the period in order to determine what species might appropriately supplement those for which there are specific references in the sources pertaining to the mansion.

Recalling her childhood visits to the mansion, Mrs. Calvert wrote fondly that from the vegetable garden were:

> gathered in the prime of freshness and age what the vegitable [sic] world offers to the needs and enjoyment also of man for there is pleasure mixed with a tone of loftier feeling in a dish of asparagus just from the earth, white, tender, sweet and cooked as George the cook knows how to do it. There is joy of no mean kind in the young peas that know no pause between the

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72. Bridgeman, American Gardener, p. 10 and White, p. 15. Walks were to extend completely around the garden within the borders.

> gathering and the being placed on the table, young green, sweet and buttery. And what emotion of delight green corn that is fifteen minutes from the stock [sic] and fifteen minutes in the pot inspire.[73]

In 1860 Mrs. Lee, who was away on a trip, wrote to her daughter Annie at Arlington directing her to see that manure was hauled for the gardener Ephriam Derckers' strawberry bed and that when "you get tomatoes enough, have some cans filled and sealed up." She also directed that some mushrooms be gathered and "my [grape] vines must all be spread out and tied up well and the young twigs broken off and some of the leaves taken off if they are too thick . . . and have plenty of catsup made." [74] In 1836, the "Arlington Gardener" exhibited two carrots weighing 7 pounds, "a very fine specimen of cabbages, the largest weighing 181/2 pounds," and a blood beet.[75] In 1839, G.W.P. Custis sent beets and squash to an agricultural exhibition.

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73. Calvert, "Childhood Days." She reported that asparagus shoots were used for decoration in the fireplace of the mansion parlor in the summer, a common practice at the time.

74. Mrs. Lee to Anne Carter Lee, July ?, 1860 CLMF. The mushrooms were probably growing wild rather than formally cultivated because Mrs. Lee advised Annie that one of the servants knew how to get them.

75. Columbian Horticultural Society, Report of the Committee of Arrangements for the Third Annual Exhibition, June 8 and 9, 1836 . . . (Washington, 1836), pp. 31, 34. These were probably from the market garden, but it is fair to assume that these same varieties would have been grown in the kitchen garden as well in order to be convenient for family use.

That year he also had cabbage and celery in the ground.[76] In 1851, he exhibited what may have been a kale plant at a Fairfax County exhibition.[77] Among recipes attributed to Mrs. Lee in a book about Virginia Housekeeping were those for currant, blackberry, and fox grape wines.[78] Long after the fact, George L. Upshur, who visited Arlington as a small boy before the Civil War, remembered sunflowers and cornstalks in the garden.[79] When she was at Fortress Monroe in the 1830's Mrs. Lee wrote to her mother asking her to bring along some currants and gooseberries when she came to visit.[80] In an interview, a former employee of the cemetery reported that the

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76. G.W.P. Custis to Mary L. Custis, Sept. 16, 1839, Collection of Lucius S. Ruder, copy in CLMF.

77. Mary L. Custis to G.W. Custis Lee, Oct-Nov. ? 1851, Va. State Library, CLMF. The letter states that he took a exhibit a "single curled ***** plant 4 feet in Diameter." Dr. Nelligan makes the illegible word kale. It may well be.

78. Marion C. Tyree, Housekeeping in Old Virginia (New York 1877), pp. 463, 465-66. It seems fair to assume that these were available to Mrs. Lee at Arlington and the logical place for their cultivation would have been the vegetable garden.

79. George L. Upshur, As I Recall Them (New York, 1936), p. 14. Upshur is perhaps not the most reliable witness for he could remember only one garden at Arlington.

80. Rose Mortimer Ellzey MacDonald, Mrs. Robert E. Lee (Boston 1939), p. 52.

vegetable garden contained turnips, celery, and the double row of fruit trees along the central path included cherry, pear, plum, and appricot, but no apple.[81] There were peach and apple orchards on the Arlington estate and so it is possible that the family relied on these resources instead of planting individual peach and apple trees in the garden.[82] Census returns for 1850 and 1860 show that peas, beans, and Irish potatoes were produced at Arlington.[83] Presumably the vegetable garden would have contained plots of these for family use. Writing from Texas in 1860, Robert E. Lee urged his daughter Mildred to eat plenty of cheeries and raspberries with cream since he could not be at Arlington to enjoy them.[84]

Based on the evidence above, the following can be assoicated with Arlington estate in the historic period and could approriately be cultivated in the vegetable garden:

peas cabbage gooseberries mushrooms

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81. Interview [William] Marcey by Agnes Downey. I have been unable to locate a tape of this interview and have had to rely on unsigned manuscript notes in CLMF.

82. Mrs. Lee to Mary L. Custis, Oct. 27, 1844, CLMF and G.W.P. Custis to Mary L. Custis, Sept. 23, 1832, CLMF mention the orchards.

83. Schedule of Products of Agriculture, Alexandria County, Va., 7th (1850) and 8th (1860) U.S. Censuses, Microfilm, Virginia State Library.

84. Margaret Sanborn, Robert E. Lee, (Philadelphia, 1967), 296.

beans	celery	beets	raspberries
Irish potatoes	turnips	carrots	currants
corn	asparagus	strawberries	tomatoes
kale	cherries	blackberries	grapes
pears	squash	apricots	

Analysis of vegetables and fruits exhibited at the Columbian Horticultural Society in 1835, 1836, and 1840, and various period gardening books indicates that a very wide variety of vegetables was grown in local kitchen gardens. Based on this information, it seems likely that in addition to the plantings listed above the following vegetables would have been grown at Arlington: lettuce, radishes, onions, and snap beans. Other vegetables grown in the Washington area but perhaps less common were: okra, brussel sprouts, rhubarb (pie plant), sweet potatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, artichokes, cardoons (similar to artichokes), mangel-wurzel, red and green peppers, and spinach.[85]

No direct evidence of the cultivation of either medicinal or pot herbs at Arlington has been found. However, there may well have been herbs in the kitchen garden. Fresh herbs, like fresh vegetables, were preferred for seasoning and the making of salves and elixirs. Gardening books of the time assume the herb garden as a part of the kitchen garden. If the vegetable garden is to be reconstructed it might be appropriate to include herbs and garnishes. A sample

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85. Columbian Horticultural Society, Report (1835), pp.8-9, 18-19 and Report (1836), pp. 21, 25-26.

of those cultivated in the South, c. 1855, might be taken from White's list:[86]

angelica	coriander	horehound	southerwood
anise	clary	liquorice	spearmint
borage	dill	peppermint	sage
balm	elcampane	pennyroyal	thistle, blessed thoroughwort, or boneset
chamomille	fennel	rosemary	
caraway	hyssop	rue	tansy
			wormwood

Other common herbs and salading included thyme, rampion, basil, parsley and cress.[87]

Structures in or Near the Garden

Maps, photographs, and documentary evidence record the presence of three structures and an apparent pit in or near the vegetable garden. There may have been others. None of these structures appears to have been of permanent or very substantial nature. Two of the structures can be described but not identified. A third can be identified but not described. The first appears in Illustration No. 5 below, c. 1864. It may be seen through the cedar trees near the southeast corner of the garden. If the topographical maps of the period are correct, it is a low structure, rectangular, about 3 feet by 5 feet, with a sloping roof about 3 feet high on the south and 2 on the north. The roof overhangs the south side although the detail is indistinct, the walls

86. White, table of contents, n.p.

87. Ibid., pp. 144, 185, and 236.

appear to be made of vertical boards. One may only speculate on the function of this structure. It is too small and too prominently placed to be a privy, although we know that it was customary to place "necessary buildings" near the gardens. It is unlikely that it is a forcing structure of any sort for plants, because if it were the slope of the roof should be toward the south to more readily admit sunlight, and because such structures were normally placed unobstrusively at the northern end of the garden. The most likely possibilities in connection with this structure are: 1) It was erected by the army for some purpose, perhaps a woodshed or a structure related to the telegraph headquarters at the mansion. 2) It was a tool shed or storage structure remaining from the Lee occupancy. Pending further information, it must remain an unidentified structure.

According to several maps of the Civil War Period, there was a small square structure just beyond the border of the vegetable garden near its northwest corner. The maps are drawn to such a small scale that it is not possible to estimate its size accurately except to guess that it is about one-fourth as large as the North Servants' Quarters. One may only guess its use. On the map (Illustration No. 1) something like the letter "P" appears indistinctly on the structure. Possibly the "P" means the privy "common to black and white some distance from the house" mentioned by the cemetery chaplain in 1867.[88]

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88. William Vaux, "A Peep Behind the Scenes. 'That's the way the money goes: Pop Goes the Weasel.' " Feb. 1, 1867, Arlington

Or it may be a tool house, root shed or some other outbuilding used to support gardening activities.[89] Another possibility, somewhat remote, is that the mysterious "P," stands for pigeon or poultry house. As children, Agnes and Mildred Lee were fond of their pet chickens and spent much time with them. Pigeons and ducks were also kept somewhere on the estate where the children had access to them. In January 1857, Lee wrote to "Precious Life," Mildred, wondering if she had gotten her winter hen house built.[90] There was a poultry yard near the overseer's house at the farm near the river, but it was a long distance from the house. One suspects that the pets were domiciled at some point nearer the house, most likely near the vegetable garden or stable.[91]

In 1853, Agnes Lee made reference to a third structure associated with the vegetable garden near the site of the unidentified structure

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Cemetery, Quartermaster General's Office, Cemeterial File, Record Group 92, National Archives.

89. Nelligan, "Old Arlington" p. 217, guesses it may have been a gardening equipment shed.

90. Lee to Mildred, Jan. 9, 1857, CLMF.

91. In her Journal, MS, Microfilm, Library of Congress [Restricted], Agnes wrote on Feb. 9, 1854, from West Point, N.Y. that she longed to return to Arlington to "the dear old servants, and my pets my bunnys, my cats, pigeons, garden . . ." Her pet chickens (in 1853) included a little hen "Bernetta with nine little chickens and another fine pullet Aunt Stella has just presented me with called Eudora. She is very wild yet." Ibid., Apr. 6, 1853. Mildred Lee also kept pet hens and ducks. See Robert E. Lee to Mildred, Apr. 28, 1856. CLMF. A childhood companion of Mrs. Lee recalled chasing chickens around the foundations of the incompleted mansion. Nelligan, "Old Arlington", p. 198.

described in the preceding paragraph. This was the enclosure built in the northwest corner of the vegetable garden by her brother Fitzhugh (Rooney) for her pet English rabbits, one black and the other white.[92] If they were a mated pair, their descendents might have survived and occupied the area until 1861.

In addition to the structures discussed above, the map (Illustration No. 1) shows an apparent circular pit approximately 25 feet from the northern boundary of the vegetable garden, it is about 25 feet in diameter. I do not know what it might be and have found no other reference to it. An ash or trash pit is a possibility.

It is probable that there were also other structures associated with the garden which were too insignificant to be mapped or described in the documents. Primarily these would have been devices for protecting or forcing culinary plants. As Robert Buist categorized them they were the hand glass, the glass case, the sunk pit, the sash light, and the common hotbed frame. The hand glass was a simple portable device for growing seeds of early plants such as celery, tomato or egg plant. Made of red cedar or cast iron, it consisted of a separable frame bottom and glass top. By piling a series of bottom portions of hand glass on top of each other and adding one top

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92. In her Journal Agnes made frequent reference to her rabbits. See entries for June 15, 22, and Aug. 26, 1853 and Feb. 9, 1854.

portion it was possible to build a glass case of any height. A sunk pit was useful to preserve vegetables such as endive, celery, lettuce, cauliflower, and broccoli. Dug into the ground, it had sides of brick, stone, or locust, cedar, or chestnut boards. The top was formed by placing removable glass frames, shutters, or mats across the sides. The walled pit was one of the most useful garden structures. A partly sunk structure with stone or brick walls furnished with wooden coping into which cross rafters were mortised (but movable) to support top sashes, it was two feet underground, two feet above ground in the back and one foot above ground in front. About six or seven feet wide, it could be used successively from the early spring through summer to grow cauliflowers, cucumbers, salading, radishes, and fine varieties of grapes. The sash light and common hot bed frame were used together. The hotbed frame was a bottomless and topless wooden box, subdivided at the top by rafters. It was portable and on top of it was placed one or more sash lights, made of seasoned white pine, 1 1/2 to 2 inches thick and 3 feet, 8 inches wide, by 6 or more feet long. The wood was painted and held in place a window of 6 inch by 6 inch by 8 inch glass panes embedded in soft putty.[93]

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93. Buist, pp. 14-16.

The Grape Arbor

In view of the possibility that an arbor of native American grapes is to be established at the Custis-Lee Mansion, a discussion of the evidence for the cultivation of grapes at the Mansion and of period grape culture is in order. In 1890, Mildred Lee recalled the grove, "a part of the Park enclosed in the [south] garden." As she described it the grove was the

> especial resort of squirrels & blue bells of Scotland & grape vines, where we used to swing. Here, too, was an arbor covered with a grape vine, with a big mossy natural stone for a seat, a capital place to crack hickory nuts. [94]

The grape arbor then was in the grove. But the grove has since been obliterated to make way for the old Memorial Amphitheatre and the Civil War Tomb of the Unknowns.[95] It appears unlikely that the arbor could or should be restored there in the forseeable future.

Some evidence suggests that there may have been grape vines in the vegetable garden as well as in the grove. In his interview with

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94. Mildred Lee, July 20, 1890, in Agnes Lee Journal, Lee Papers, Microfilm, Library of Congress. For a more detailed discussion of the grove see Staff, NCR and NCDC, Historic Grounds Report, Part II, The Custis-Lee Mansion Flower Garden, NCR-NPS, March 1964, Chapter II.

95. Ibid., p. 9.

Miss Downey, Mr. Marcey remembered grape vines near the center of the vegetable garden near the path.[96] Statements by others long after the fact point to scuppernong grape vines in the east and/or north border.[97]

In 1860, Mrs. Lee directed her daughter Annie, who was temporarily in charge of domestic affairs at Arlington, to keep the wine cellar locked and not to leave the key to it about or the scuppernong wine might be stolen.[98] A book published in 1877 gives three wine receipes attributed to Mrs. Lee: for currant, blackberry, and fox grape wines.[99] When she left Arlington in 1861, the family wine was among the valuables taken along by Mrs. Lee in her southward journey.[100] George Washington Parke Custis, as a dedicated booster of native American agricultural products noted with pride that at the Arlington sheep-

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96. Notes of Interview, CLMF.

97. In a Memorandum to Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Oct. 30, 1950, Custis-Lee Mansion, NCR Decimal File 1100/338, Stanley W. McClure and Dr. Nelligan reported there was "some evidence" of grape vines in the north and east borders. The Van Horn photograph c. 1864, shows the east border of the vegetable garden but from a distance that does not permit confirmation of the presence of the vines. There are no photographs of the central interior of the vegetable garden.

98. Mrs. R.E. Lee to Anne Carter Lee, July ? 1860, CLMF.

99. Tyree, pp. 463, 465-66.

100. Mrs. Mary Custis Lee, Statement of September 1866, MS, Typescript in CLMF.

shearing of 1805, that only American wine was served, currant and cherry wines not from "cobwebbed bottles" but new ones. The berries from which the wine was made had "blushed in the garden but the year before."[101] Little evidence points to viticulture as a serious avocation of either the Custis or Lee families. The cultivation of many varieties of grapes would have been a considerable chore, and one that should have occasioned some comment in the family correspondence, from visitors, or from other grape enthusiasts. No such comment has been found. It is quite likely that berries for wine-making and scuppernong grapes, and possibly two or three other common native grapes were grown at Arlington, but it is exceedingly doubtful that a large experimental grape culture existed there.

A wide variety of native American grapes were grown in the nineteenth century and authorities could not agree among themselves about how to classify them.[102] Gardening and grape cultivation manuals of the antebellum period assume that grapes may be cultivated in the vegetable garden and offer a variety of places within the garden

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101. Nelligan, "Old Arlington," p. 125.

102. For example C.S. Rafinesque, American Manual of the Grape Vine and the Art of Making Wine (Philadelphia, 1830), classifies 62 species and about 300 varieties. On pp. 16-17, he asserts that the Vulpina or Muscadine and the Bullet, Fox,and Scuppernong are all the same. Conversely, White in his Gardening for the South, pp. 400-01, classifies the scuppernong as not a fox grape, but Vitis Rotundifolia.

where they may be placed along with a variety of structures upon which the vines may be trained. John Adlum, a local viticulturist of antebellum Georgetown, cultivated a vineyard, made wine and presented specimens of it to Congressmen.[103] He also traveled in the vicinity inspecting vineyards, sampling wine, and seeking new varieties. And he published information on what he found. He described the arbor of Mrs. Scholl at Clarksburg, Maryland in 1819. She grew the popular Catawba grape there. The arbor was 16 feet long, 7 feet high, and 8 inches wide. Across the top was a curved framework making a segment (or arc) of a circle about 12 to 18 inches higher at the center than at the sides.[104] If the arbor was one way of training vines, the vineyard arrangement, in which the vines were planted in rows 12 feet apart, the plants spaced about 5 or 6 feet apart, was another.[105] Whatever the method of training the vines, according to Adlum, the vineyards should always be open to east, be located on high ground

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103. See John A. Saul, "Tree Culture, or a Sketch of Nurseries in the District of Columbia," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, 10 (1907), 38-62. Custis may have known Adlum. He mentions a "venerable neighbor" Major Adlum who furnished him Revolutionary War information on page 264 of his Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington . . . (New York, 1860).

104. John Adlum, A Memoir of the Cultivation of the Vine in America and the Best Mode of Making Wine. (Washington, 1823), p. 109.

105. Ibid., p.26.

away from trees so that they would get the morning sun and be sheltered from northwest winds. Planted rows should run northeast-southwest.[106] According to Robert Buist of Philadelphia, the trellises upon which vines were to be trained should be poles of red cedar or white oak. A height of 8 feet was optimum, but any convenient height would do. He recommended the arbor or trellis be placed near the vegetable garden gate inside the garden.[107] None of these training devices was de rigeur. The garden fence itself might have been used to train the vines.[108]

What kind of grapes should be included if any in a restored vegetable garden at Arlington? Specific evidence, except for the mention of Scuppernong wine, is lacking. Comparative evidence will have to be heavily relied upon.

Although they disagreed about the specific number of varieties and their merits, most authorities seem to have agreed several varieties were most popular. In the South, the scuppernong was a most valuable

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106. Ibid., pp. 256. It should be noted that this situation fits the northeast corner of the Arlington vegetable garden, where there is some evidence that vines may have existed.

107. Buist, p. 182. William Prince, A Short Treatise on Horticulture (New York, 1828), p. 59, suggested 5 feet as the proper height for vine-training posts.

108. A vineyard in Croton Point, N.Y. has rows of vines 6 to 8 feet apart. The space between the rows was kept neat and clean. The vines were supported by stout wire strung between wooden posts 10 feet apart. Alden Spooner, The Cultivation of American Grapevines and Making Wine (Brooklyn, 1846), p. 58.

grape. Apparently a native of the Scuppernong River region of North Carolina, it was much esteemed for the table and for wine. It was a white grape (although an inferior purple grape was also called scuppernong) and the vines were both productive and hardy.[109] According to White it was the most valuable southern grape because it did not rot in the heat and humidity of the Southern climate.[110] The vines, said to bear to the age of sixteen years, grew well in sandy, poor soil and were according to one authority never trimmed.[111] If any grape vines are restored at the Custis-Lee Mansion, the Scuppernong should be among them.

John Adlum's favorite grape was the Catawba, which Spooner ranked third among the American grapes in utility. It was a pale red or lilac color, grew in large bunches and ripened in September.[112]

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109. Spooner, pp. 48-49.

110. White, p. 396.

111. Ibid., p. 49. Mrs. Lee was likely following this practice until 1860, not knowing that grape vines should be trimmed. She wrote from New York in [July ?] 1860, CLMF, ordering the trimming of her vines, apparently having discovered the technique. She wrote "The vine [on the cottage where she was staying] is loaded with grapes which I am told all come to perfection--and they are spread out so the air and sun can get to them."

112. Ibid., pp. 13, 50.

Another very popular grape was the large, oval, purple Isabella. It may have come from Spain, but it was cultivated all along the Atlantic coast, and was said to be particularly adaptable to city conditions. It grew best on Long Island.[113]

In a catalogue of his vineyard near Georgetown published in 1823, John Adlum listed 22 kinds of grapes then growing there. The list supplemented by the information given above and compared with the varieties offered commercially by Joshua Peirce at his Linnaean nursery in 1846 and 1857 should provide useful information for the selection of grapes for Arlington. Adlum's list:[114]

No. 1. Hulin's Orwigsburg. Adlum had been led to believe that this was a very fine white grape, but his vines had not yet produced any grapes.

No. 2. Bland's Madeira. He called this a very great bearer and good for the table. It made a very fine wine and the juice was sweet and vinous. The grape varied in color from place to place. In some areas it was amber, in others pale red, but in his vineyard it was purple with a bloom on it.

No. 3. Clifton's Constantia. Reputedly brought from the Cape of Good Hope, this vine produced a grape deep purple approaching black, that had a pulp, was a great bearer, and made a good wine.

No. 4. Tokay. Where he got these cuttings (he does not say where), the grapes were a beautiful lilac color and

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113. Ibid., pp. 13, 16, and 49.

114. Adlum, pp. 139-43.

possessed a delicate taste for the table, but in his vineyard they developed a much higher color and a mushy taste only tolerable for table use. However they were great bearers and made excellent wine.

No. 5. Schuykill Muscadel. He claims that these were native to the Philadelphia area and were cultivated in "Mr. Penn's garden when he was Governor of Pennsylvania before the Revolution." They were a variety of fox grape with a pulp that dissolved in fermentation and made an excellent wine.

No. 6. Worthington Grape. This was a very great bearer, the fruit somewhat smaller than a fox grape with a highly covered red juice. He used them to mix with other wines to add flavor and improve color.

No. 7. and 8. Two nameless varieties brought from Lycoming County, Pa. He had been told that one was a very fine white, the other a black grape.

No. 9. Carolina Purple Muscadine. His had produced no fruit.

No. 10. Red Juice. This had produced fruit but he had made no wine from it. The wine was supposed to be similar to Claret.

No. 11. Unnamed, from North Carolina. It looked like Bland's Maderia but was more tender. It was a sweet grape with a fine vinous juice.

No. 12. Uncommonly large Fox Grape from Elkton, Md. It had a very mushy smell and beautiful red juice.

No. 13. True Madiera. It was very hardy and the vines grew luxuriantly. The grapes hung in long purple bunches, but were not good for table use. He opined they would do better farther south.

No. 14. Malmsey. A fine white grape suitable for eating.

No. 15. Purple Frontinac. This was a very highly flavored grape, but it did not do well in the District of Columbia, though it might farther south.

No. 16. Royal Muscadine. Very similar to the Malmsey.

No. 17. Black Hamburgh. It had produced no fruit for him.

No. 18. Black Cluster. It had produced no fruit for him.

No. 19. Syrian. It had produced no fruit for him.

No. 20. Clapiers. It had produced no fruit for him but was said to produce a fine white grape in one pound bunches.

No. 21. Miller Burgandy or Munier. This was a small black grape, oval shaped, which grew thickly on the bunch and yielded a sweet, pleasant juice good for table and wine.

No. 22. White Sweet Water. The vine produced a large, white, sweet grape which ripened to a russet color and was considered one of the best table grapes.

It is interesting to compare Adlum's list with those grapes actually offered for sale by Joshua Peirce, the prominent Washington horticulturist, who had his principal nursery at Linnaean Hill within the confines of what has since become Rock Creek Park. In 1846, he offered only 5 varieties: Clifton's Constantia, Chesselas de Fontainebleau, White Sweetwater, Catawba, and Isabella.[115] In 1857, he continued to offer the Catawba and the Isabella, both of which made good wine and good eating. In addition he advertised, at $1 per dozen

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115. Joshua Peirce, Catalogue of Fruit and Ornamental Trees and Plants and Bulbous Flower Roots, Greenhouse Plants, etc., Cultivated at Linnaean Hill, Rock Creek, near Washington, D.C. to which is added an Essay on Planting and Cultivation of Orchards (Washington, 1846), p. 11. Reinforcing the idea that Catawba and Isabella were the most popular local grapes is the fact that they were the only kinds exhibited at the Columbian Horticultural Society exhibition in 1840. See The Magazine of Horticulture, 6 (1840), 455.

cuttings, Northern Muscadine, "a superior fox grape, cultivated at New Lebanon Pa. for wine, highly recommended by the Shakers," and at the same price, the Concord and Diana, "New native varieties highly recommended by the American Pomological Society.[116] Other local grapes of the period were the Woodson Grape and Cunningham Grape of Prince Edward County, Virginia. The former was red, medium sized between a "chicken" and large fox grape. It grew in compact bunches, had a single seed, and was good for table or wine. The Cunningham was black or deep purple, grew in ragged, irregular bunches, had a thick, leathery skin and was rich in "sacharine matter." [117]

Based upon direct and comparative evidence, it is doubtful if more than two or three varieties of grapes were grown at Arlington. Custis was most interested in agricultural matters, including the cultivation of unique specimens of common vegetables, the use fertilizers, and the breeding of native sheep. However, his interest in grape culture remains undocumented. Mrs. Lee was interested in gardening in general and certainly had some vines in the grove and possibly in the vegetable garden, but apparently knew little about the growing and care of grapes. The family used wine and, indeed, valued

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116. Joshua Peirce, Catalogue . . . (Washington, 1857), p. 9.

117. Spooner, pp. 51-52.

the contents of the mansion cellar enough to take them along when it was forced to leave. However, pending the discovery of new information, a strong or highly developed interest in viticulture at Arlington cannot be established.

The Courtyard Area

The courtyard (the area immediately behind or west of the mansion) is bounded by the gardens, the west wall of the mansion, and by the road leading to the stable and park. Principal improvements to the area prior to 1861 were the north and south servants' quarters,[118] the well, and the circular entrance drive, which surrounded a grassy lawn and scattered trees. The principal evidence for the appearance of the area in 1861 comes from a pencil sketch c. 1854, showing the north servants' quarters, and from photographs taken in June 1864. These, supplemented by written descriptions such as Mrs. Calvert's, give an impression of the area.

Principal access to the area was by a carriage drive curving around the ravine from the stable and park road intersection to a point northwest of the south servants' quarters. From this point the road began a counterclockwise circle passing close in front of the

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118. The servants' quarters are not properly a part of this report and will not be discussed except as they relate to the system of paths in the area. The well will be covered as a feature of the grounds because the sources conflict about it.

south servants' quarters, curving past the west center steps of the mansion, then close to the front of the north servants' quarters, and finally completing the circle by rejoining the road to the stable at the point northwest of the south servants' quarters where it began. A similar road pattern exists today west of the mansion, except, as I understood the historic maps and photographs, the historic drive made a larger circle than does the present one, curving right up to the walls of both servants' quarters that fronted on the courtyard.[119] A simple post and single rail fence apparently circled the interior of the carriage drive in the historic period. A portion of this fence was extant, or had been replaced by the army, in the 1864 photographs. The fence was made of wood and was either unpainted with the bark left on the posts and rails or had been darkened by the application of some preservative. There were no other fences evident in the vicinity. George Upshur many years later recalled a hitching post in front of one of the gardens prior to the Civil War, but it does not appear in the photographs and there is no mention of a hitching post in connection with the cemetery until after the war when one was built near the conservatory.[120]

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119. The 1854 sketch clearly indicates this in the case of the north quarters. Although the grass has been worn away from virtually the entire courtyard in the 1864 photographs, the fences and tree pattern tend to confirm the larger circle.

120. Upshur could remember only one garden at Arlington, which he said was on the right side of the house as one faced it. This would put the hitching post in front of the vegetable garden. However,

The historic maps and photographs do not show the width of the carriage drive, but it was probably no more than 10 feet. By modern standards, the roads of those days were very narrow and the drive was probably designed to accomodate the one-way flow of single-lane traffic. The sketch and photos indicate that the drive was not surfaced but was bare earth. Gravel may have been used in the historic period but there is no evidence of it in 1864. In addition to the circular carriage drive, the Civil War photographs show a path around the south wing of the house (and close to it) connecting the east front and west front drives, which may possibly date from the antebellum period. There was no path around the north wing of the house. The area not occupied by buildings, drives, or other improvements was no doubt left in grass. There are no available descriptions or persuasive evidence of ornamental plantings or flowers in the courtyard. In fact the only detailed description of the courtyard is Mrs. Calvert's:

> Occupying the length from east to west [she means north to south] of the house in the rear is a lawn

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it is very unusual for a visitor to Arlington before the war to have remembered the vegetable garden and not the much more impressive flower garden on the left of the house. See his As I Recall Them, p. 14 CLMF. Military officials requested the installation of a hitching rail in Dec. 1871, Superintendent's Monthly Report, Arlington National Cemetery, National Post & Cemeterial File, Box 132, Record Group 66, National Archives.

> or court yard with two or three large trees, a road passes around this, thense [sic] to the stable being the carriage way to the back door. Opening onto this road at equal distances from the house, and as near as proportion will allow are two long buildings consisting of three rooms each on one floor [.] The one to the east [north] contains the kitchen and furnishes homes for the house hands [.] The opposite one accommodates a storeroom, wash, and sleeping room.[121]

One of the two or three trees of which Mrs. Calvert writes was possibly a specimen of Pope's Willow. One of George Washington Parke Custis' favorite stories was about Pope's Willow. In 1775, the story goes, a captured British officer presented John Parke Custis a willow shoot supposedly taken from a large willow growing over the grave of Alexander Pope in England. The elder Custis planted the slip by the banks of the Potomac and from it were descended all the willow trees in America.[122] Slips were taken from this tree and, according to G. W. P. Custis, were, in 1840, flourishing near Arlington House.[123] Whatever the merit of the tale, the 1854 sketch of the north servants' quarters and the 1864 photographs show a large willow tree in the courtyard area approximately half way between the north wing of the

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121. "Childhood Days."

122. Nelligan, "Old Arlington," p. 305.

123. Boston Daily Evening Transcript, Apr. 1, 1840, reprinted from Washington Daily National Intelligencer, Mar 24, 1840, CLMF.

mansion and the well. A large boxwood stands near the spot today.

In general the courtyard area was the center of outdoor domestic activities at the mansion. The carriage drive was the route of the comings and goings of the family and visitors and was no doubt a principal route for the movement of supplies, provisions, furnishings, etc., into and out of the mansion. It was the area through which people moved between the gardens and the house, kitchen, storeroom, well, privy, stable, ice house and other outbuildings. It was the front yard for the servants living in the quarters along its sides. Behind the south servants quarters, between it and the garden, and beside (east of) the north quarters clothes lines were strung to dry the wash on balmy days, well away from the dust of carriage drive (See Illustration 9). And Mrs. Sanborn claims that one of Robert E. Lee's uncompleted improvements to the grounds in October 1859, was the projected movement of a pigpen from behind the north quarters to the ravine north of the ice house.[124] In summary, the courtyard was essentially an outdoor domestic living area rather than a formal, decorative, or stately mansion lawn. Trees were present but did not

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124. Sanborn, 1, 284. The area near the southwest corner of the south quarters was a rubbish heap. See Memo, Murrary H. Nelligan to Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Subject "Conservation of the Historic Scene," Jan, 29, 1954, NPS-NCR Decimal File, 1100/338 #6 and Nelligan to Messrs. Kelly, Thompson, Gartside, and Jett, June 29, 1854, Ibid, re the discovery of artifacts under the site of an old locust tree.

rather oppressively dominate the scene and overmaster the architecture of the house as does the giant deordora cedar that is there today.

Well

A structure which still exists and about which there is some confusion is the well. Its original date of construction is not known, but presumably it dates from 1802-1830 period when the Mansion and other outbuildings were built. The sources conflict about whether in 1861 the well was of the classic rope-and-bucket variety or if it was served by a wooden pump. Two credible sources suggest the latter. The sketch of 1854 (Illustration No. 11 below) shows a wooden pump at the well site and Robert E. Lee in his application for fire insurance for the mansion and barn called the well a "pump".[125] This seems conclusive. However, on December 2, 1862, Union Captain Williard Glazier wrote "Near the house stood an old-fashioned 'well sweep' which carried a moss covered basket on trips down the well, to bring up the most sparkling of water." [126] In support of Glazier, the two photographs taken in 1864 of the rear of the Mansion show a stone well housing with sweep and rope. In one of them a wooden bucket may

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125. Hartford Fire Insurance Company, Facsimile of Application of Robert E. Lee, October 17, 1859, for Fire Insurance on Arlington House and Barn. CLMF.

126. Quoted in John A. Owens, Sword and Pen; or the Adventures of Williard Glazier (nd., np.) p. 123, photostat in CLMF.

may be seen nearby (See Illustrations 9 & 12 below). In 1873, Cemetery officials had a cistern constructed near the well in order to supplement it.[127] If one can assume continuity, it was not until 1884 that a pump was actually put into the well. In his June report on activities at the cemetery, Superintendent E.H. Main noted that a "good pump" had replaced the bucket and rope.[128] It is difficult to account for the discrepant sources. Possibly both a well and a cistern with a pump existed in 1859 when Lee applied for insurance. Yet during the war there clearly was no cistern, else why would the

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127. Monthly Report, Arlington National Cemetery, June 1873, CLMF. During the Civil War rain barrels were kept at the house to supplement the water supply.

128. Superintendent's Monthly Report, Arlington Cemetery, April 1884, National Post and Cemeterial Files, Record Group 66, National Archives. In the decades after the Civil War, the cemetery water supply, especially in the vicinity of the mansion, was a major problem. As the cemetery grew and with it the amount of decorative planting, greater demands were made on the old well. Greenhouse plants were the source of most of the increased demand. A cistern was constructed near the well in 1874. It was at this time that the well house or "neat covering" which existed even after the War Department restoration was built (See Superintendent's Monthly Report, Arlington Cemetery, Aug. 1874, CLMF). For a time water was pumped from nearby Fort Whipple but this supply was shut down in 1879. After that cemetery officials arranged to have a separate water works. Water was pumped from springs on the reservation in a large tank in the courtyard. Superindent's Monthly Report, Arlington Cemetery, July 1879, CLMF; Brig. Gen. Montgomery Meigs, Memo for Arlington Rostrum, May 17, 1881, Quartermaster Consolidated Files, Record Group 92, National Archives; and Arlington National Cemetery, Historical Records of the Cemeterial Division, Quartermaster General, 1892, CLMF.

military personnel occupying the house have been required to use water butts or rain barrels to catch rain water? It seems unlikely that Lee in his modernization of the estate would have removed a pump which was in place in 1859 and installed in its place an old-fashioned rope-and-bucket well. It is quite as unlikely that the army would have done so. A rope-and-bucket well was on the site of the present well in 1862 and doubtless remained there for 22 years. It is there today and barring further contradictory evidence it should remain.

Ravine and Ice House

Between the courtyard west of the Mansion and the stable was a wooded ravine. Beginning as a shallow ditch about 20 feet deep, approximately southeast of the stable, the ravine deepened and broadened toward the northeast until opposite the northern boundary of the vegetable garden it became about 50 feet deep and over 500 feet wide.[129] Available evidence suggests that the ravine during the Custis and Lee occupancy was left in a natural state. Writing of the 1840's, Eleanor Randolph Calvert remembered it as a dell where the childred could play in the forest without venturing too far from the house. She recalled as a child entering it near the stable and following it as it grew deeper and deeper until "we seem lost to the outside world." There the children searched for birds' nests and played

129. See (Illustration No. 1 below).

among "trees draped with wild vines sun flecked shade ferns moss & wild blooms." [130]

Across the ravine there ran a fence, according to Miss Calvert. The fence, of which we have no description, limited the rambles of the children and defined the mansion complex on the north side.

There is now a bricked path across the ravine area from Sheridan Drive to Cemetery Headquarters. Whether such a path existed in 1861 is unknown. We have no evidence that it did, but it would have provided a logical shortcut between the Mansion complex and the stable area. If it did exist,it would no doubt have been unpaved, no more than three or four feet wide, and would have followed the natural contours of the area more nearly than does today's brick walk.[131]

On the east slope of the ravine about 75 feet west of the north servants' quarters several maps of the Civil War period show a structure which was apparently the Custis-Lee ice house. On the only map that can be accurately scaled for such small structures, the ice house appears as a square structure about 25 feet by 25 feet, which from its shading on the map seems to be a sunken or partly sunken structure.[132]

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130. "Childhood Days."

131. It was probably the short way to the stable spoken of by David H. Rhodes in his "Historic Memories of Arlington National Cemetery," CLMF.

132. Illustration No. 1.

It is not known when this structure was built, but there was an ice house at Arlington as early as the 1840's. Writing in that period about visitors to Arlington Spring, Eleanor Randolph Calvert, noted that Custis' "ice house yields it[s] hoarded Zero products, and often some of the party are privilidged [sic] to go to the house, empowered to make a requistion on the dairy." [133] Miss Calvert was in this passage describing the activities of visitors to Arlington Spring, which was far from the Mansion near the Potomac River and the implication is that the ice house was not at the Mansion. In her journal, Agnes Lee mentioned the ice house twice. Both references tend to support the idea that in the 1850's, it may have been located near the Potomac instead of on the hill west of the Mansion. On January 19, 1853 she wrote, "We are watching with great anxiety the ice on the river for fear of losing it before our ice house is filled." In February she recounted "we took a long walk down to the Spring, rock, ice-house and all about. Grandpa's ice-house is quite full. So now we care not whether it freezes or does not freeze."[134] It seems unlikely that a long walk in the vicinity of the Spring would have included as one of

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133. Eleanor Randolph Calvert, "Childhood Days." The dairy was under the south wing of the mansion.

134. Agnes Lee Journal, Entries for Jan. 19 and Feb. 2, 1853, Library of Congress, RESTRICTED.

the landmarks an ice house about 100 yards from the Mansion.

On the other hand the structure known as the ice house appears in its location west of the mansion as late as 1888 and in 1867 it was reported by Cemetery Chaplain William Vaux that the ice house was being kept full.[135] In addition "the situation of this building was apparently common knowledge among old employees of the Cemetery . . ." [136] By 1894, the structure had disappeared from the scene. Since then, according to an official of the cemetery, the site of the structure has been regraded and efforts to find its exact location by archeological reconnaissance have been unsuccessful.[137]

Based on the evidence so far available, there may have been two structures at Arlington described as the ice house. The true "ice house" for preserving ice cut from the river was near the river itself

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135. Vaux, "Pop Goes the Weasel."

136. See Memorandum, Franklin A. Smith to Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Subject: Unidentified Structure, Custis-Lee Mansion, Aug. 21, 1956, NPS-NCR Decimal Files, Custis-Lee Mansion 1100/338, #6. See Memorandum, Murrary H. Nelligan to Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Subject: Unidentified Structure, Custis-Lee Mansion, August 27, 1956, NPS-NCR Decimal Files, Custis-Lee Mansion, 1100/338, #6.

137. Preliminary exacavations uncovered two contiguous trash disposal areas but not the foundations of the ice house in 1955. See Franklin G. Smith to Chief Historian, Sept. 13, 1955, NPS-NCR Decimal Files, 1100/338, folder 6. Based on my examination of the Illustration No. 1 (c. 1864), I believe the site of the structure lies partially under Sheridan Drive.

in the vicinity of the Spring and farm. The second structure, which appears on the maps west of the mansion may have been a spring house or cool house or ice house--all these names being applied to a structure in which ice was used to preserve meat, butter, delicate fruits, and other perishables.[138] It is not certain if the spring house or ice house was a structure above or below ground, but Illustration No. 1 suggests the latter. If so it was then probably an old-fashioned common ice house.

According to Charles M'Intoch, writing in 1853, the "good old plan" for an ice house, which he considered outmoded, was based on the idea that the structure should be in deep shade because the trees would keep off the rays of the sun, would give off water to help absorb heat, and the dew and moisture dripping from the trees would cool and moisten the ground around it:[139]

> The best of all places for an ice-house is the side of a hill covered with large trees, three-fourths of the house being sunk beneath the surface of the ground, and the top being covered with earth and planted with ivy.

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138. According to Andrew Jackson Downing, "How to Build an Ice-House" in Rural Essays ed. by George W. Curtis, (New York, 1853), p. 272, an ice house was a part of the home of every substantial farmer. Charles M'Intosh, The Book of the Garden, 1 (London, 1853), 499, added that in America the ice house made it possible to enjoy iced drinks and preserve jellies and dilute wines and spirits.

139. Ibid., pp. 504-05. He added, p. 502, that ice houses were seldom ornamental.

Downing remarked that an ice house might be combined with a woodhouse, toolhouse, or other outbuilding. If it was an above-ground structure it would be of sufficient size to attract attention and in that case it should be a decorative building. However, the common below ground ice house "is so inconspicuous on [sic] object, that it is easily kept out of sight, and little or no regard may be paid to exterior appearance."[140] As he described the common below-ground ice house, it had an exterior brick or stone wall lining the pit dug to accommodate it. Within this wall the builder should set joists and build a light wooden partition against which to set ice. Over the ice compartment was to be a wooden covering with a door to get at the ice. Above ground would be a gabled roof and the door to the ice house would be in the gables. There would be latticed windows for ventilation and in clay soil a drain pipe with an air trap would be required to carry off water. In Boston's cool climate an ice house 12 by 14 feet, if properly constructed, would hold 50 tons of ice and would last through the season.[141] In a warmer climate such as Washington's, a larger house would be required.

We have no photographs, drawings or descriptions of the ice house or spring house west of the Mansion. Pending the discovery of additional

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140. Downing, p. 272.

141. Ibid., p. 275.

evidence, reconstruction of the ice house would have to be based on speculation and comtemporary practice. But even comtemporary practice poses problems since we do not know when the ice house was built, if it was a spring house such as the one extant near Peirce Mill or an underground structure such as the one described by Downing. Possibly it would be appropriate for the immediate future merely to mark the site.

The Stable Area

Most of the wedge-shaped area west of the ravine behind the mansion which is to be transferred to the National Park Service is now occupied by cemetery administrative structures and parking lots. In 1861, however, it was largely in natural woodland, a part of Arlington forest. The maps of the period show it in this condition and we have no documents indicating the presence of any structures or estate functions in this parcel of land except near its eastern extremity where the mansion stable and possibly several slave cabins were located. The nature of the forest was presumably like the rest of Arlington forest, natural local forest with oak the predominant species. The forest was largely destroyed by Union troops during the Civil War.

The principal structure in the area was the stable for Arlington House. It occupied the present site of the cemetery headquarters building, the southern portion of which is in fact a modified partial reconstruction of the old stable which was destroyed by fire in 1904.

The date of construction of the stable is not known although Dr. Nelligan estimates it may have been about 1825.[142] Certainly it was a Custis building for its design and wall structure largely conform to the other permanent structures of the mansion complex. Writing about the 1840's, Mrs. Calvert recalled:[143]

> Beyond the gardens and the lawn to the north [she means west] and some distance from the house is the stable built on the plan of the house with its wings and pillared portico and like the house unfinished. Trees growing in close array close in the scene.

By 1851, the stable was in such poor condition that Custis planned to put a new roof on it.[144] Just before his death the stable was "pronounced unsafe" and a carpenter was brought in to make repairs.[145] After his death the repairs became a virtual reconstruction. In October 1858, Agnes described the stable renovation to her brother Fitzhugh. She wrote that her father was busy with the workmen all the time mending and building. The stable was nearing completion and she thought it would "be very handsome." She said her father was "repairing the sheds to both wings and rebuilding the 'planks' of brick," possibly

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142. Nelligan, "Old Arlington," p. 216.

143. "Childhood Days."

144. Mary Custis to G.W.C. Lee, Oct.-Nov. 1857, CLMF.

145. Mrs. Robert E. Lee to Robert E. Lee, October 7, 1857, CLMF.

suggesting that until then the wings of the stable had been clapboard instead of stuccoed brick.[146] By January, 1859, Lee had also repaired the roof to the stable.[147] So at the time of the seizure of the estate in 1861, the stable was probably one of the best maintained buildings of the Mansion complex.

Two nineteenth-century photographs (Illustrations 14 & 15) offer the best evidence of the external appearance of the stable. It was stuccoed like the two servants' quarters west of the Mansion. It was essentially a one-story structure built in the shape of a cross, the portico in front and the projection at the rear forming two short arms of the cross and the wings the long arms. The main entrance on the south had a wide double wooden door which opened outwards, a feature presumably repeated in the rear. The portico on the south was supported by four stuccoed brick columns, two of them spaced evenly on each side of the entrance. The portico floor was at ground level. There were doors at the ends of both wings. Two louvred, demi-lune windows marked the south side of each wing, a feature presumably repeated in the north side.

There is little comtemporary source material to describe the

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146. Agnes Lee to Fitzhugh Lee, Oct. 2, 1858, CLMF.

147. Robert E. Lee to G. W. C. Lee, Jan. 2, 1859, CLMF.

interior arrangements of the stable during the Custis-Lee occupancy; however, it is presumed that the stable housed the family carriage,[148] along with the horses of the family and guests.[149] According to David H. Rhodes, who came to Arlington in 1873, over the central section of

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148. Frequent references occur in the documents to matters pertaining to the family carriage. Robert E. Lee's Letterbook No. 1, Baltimore Jan. 20, 1840 indicates that at that time the Lees had both a coach and a carriage for he notes to William L. Marshall that the coach should be lined inside at an agreed upon individual price and that Mary (Mrs. Lee) is waiting for him at the door in the carriage. In a letter to Mrs. Lee dated June 23, 1849, he instructs her to have a cotton cover made for the carriage and describes the cover in some detail. On August 31, of the same year he discussed repairing the Arlington carriage, wanting it done thoroughly and well and gives her permission to decide if it should have leather or linen curtains. In a letter dated Mar. 17, 1857, Mrs. Lee reported to Lee that the carriage had cost nearly $100 to repair. All references are from CLMF.

149. Will Book 7, Alexandria County, p. 279, Dec. 28, 1857, CLMF appraising the goods and chattels left by G.W.P. Custis records four horses on the estate (2 bay and 2 black) worth $15 each. Schedule 4, Productions of Agriculture during the Year Ending June 1, 1860, Alexandria County Virginia, 8th U.S. Census (1960), Virginia State Library, lists 4 horses, 4 asses or mules, and 2 working oxen as present on the estate. The mules and oxen were probably kept at the barn at the farm near the Spring. There do not seem to have been as many draft and pleasure animals at the estate as the family might have liked, and those available not of the highest quality. Agnes in her Journal, July 21, 1854, remarked that the family had not been anywhere recently because one of the carriage horses was just then recovering from "laziness". Lee commented on the inflexibility of the estate's arrangements in 1857, that he had to use the carriage horses to haul the winter's coal for the mansion. Lee to "Cousin Anna," November 22, 1857, CLMF. Presumably the acquisition of mules relieved the carriage horses of this onerous duty. In the 1850's, the family had three riding animals, "Grace Darling," "Ann," and the pony "Santa Anna." For Robert E. Lee's care of horses, see Douglas S. Freeman, R. E. Lee, 1 (New York, 1934), 644-47.

the stable was a hayloft.[150] Rhodes wrote:

> The lower floor of [the] central section had inclosed rooms, one being used as harness-room and the other for storing horse feed such as oats, corn, etc. These rooms were located in the N.E. and N.W. corners of said floor. Carriages and other vehicles were also stored on this floor . . . The two wings provided stabling for about 20 animals, there being five separate stalls on each side of each of the two wings.[151]

Other structures in the vicinity of the stable in 1861 are difficult to document. During the war the occupying forces constructed a number of wooden stables, barns, barracks, etc. on the estate. Two of these barn structures (southwest of the Custis-Lee stable) and 7 barracks (along the edge of the ravine southeast of the stable) were located in the area under discussion here. About the two barn structures there can be little doubt: they were built by the army for wartime use and were demolished soon after the war. On the other hand the 7 barracks structures require some comment. They appear both on the Map (Illustration No. 1) and in a photograph taken June 29, 1864 (Illustration No. 13). In both sources the structures are identified as barracks: "Soldier's Barracks" in the case of the photo and "U.S. Barracks" on the map. They were single-story, frame with vertical

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150. David H. Rhodes, "Historic Memories of Arlington National Cemetery," MS, CLMF. This use of the partial second story of the stable is corroborated by the Superintendent's Monthly Report, Arlington Cemetery, August, 1874, CLMF.

151. Ibid.

board siding painted a light color or whitewashed. The entrances to these structures do not face the stable yard; possibly they front on the ravine. The question is: were they built by the military authorities during the war or were they converted to military use from slave cabins extant before the war?[152] I have been able to find no mention of them as quarters in the pre-war sources nor in the recollections of the Arlington ex-slaves. Census figures for 1860, list 36 slaves at Arlington living in a total of 5 "slave houses."[153] If we assume that the 5 houses include the quarters at the farm near Arlington Spring, and the north and south quarters west of the mansion, then it is not possible to account for these buildings as Custis-Lee period slave cabins. The structures are not now extant and would not need to be either marked or reconstructed.[154]

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152. Murray H. Nelligan, Memo to Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Aug. 27, 1956, NPS-NCR Decimal File 1100/338 #6, call these structures slave quarters.

153. Noted in CLMF.

154. They were probably demolished shortly after the war. Authorities disposed of most of the temporary structures built in connection with the Civil War Defenses of Washington in 1856-1866. In September 1865, Brig. Gen. Montgomery Meigs requested permission to dispose of 5 stables, 3 sheds, 4 quarters, a kitchen, a barracks, and a "sink" hear Arlington. Meigs to Edwin M. Stanton, Sept. 23, 1865, Consolidated Correspondence File, Office of the Quartermaster General, Records Group 92, National Archives.

There is no specific evidence of ornamental plantings near the stable. The photograph of June 1864, taken after more than three years' occupation by Federal troops, shows no vines, shrubbery or ornamental trees in the immediate vicinity of the stable.[155] The area in front of the stable and the vicinity of the 5-point intersection is given over to well spaced trees of middle age. The turf has been mostly worn away to expose the bare earth except for several islands of unkept grass among the trees. Scattered tree stumps are visible and one, about halfway from the stable to the intersection, supports a barrel for some undetermined use. From the general appearance of the place, two short entrance roads from the 5-point intersection to the two military barns southwest of the stable have been made by removing several trees. If, as seems likely, these two roads did not exist before the war, the area would have been in grass with enough trees to provide a pleasant partial screen for the stable. This would have been in keeping with the idea that the main approach to the house was consciously designed to divert attention from the functional structures of the mansion complex and focus it upon such attractive features as the flower garden, the broad vista to the east, and the east front

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155. Based on a view of the south and west sides of the stable, we have no views of the other sides.

of the house. It would also explain Mrs. Calvert's remark that the road from the west side of the house, the rear, led primarily to the stable instead of the Park.[156]

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156. "Childhood Days."

APPENDIX

Horticulturists' Report on plant materials in 1864

from photos of Custis-Lee Mansion grounds.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
1100 OHIO DRIVE, S. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242

IN REPLY REFER TO:
D24-NCR(RB)

Memorandum

To: Mr. Charles H. McCormick, Historian

From: Tom DeHaven

Subject: Photos of Custis-Lee Mansion

The enclosed photos of Custis-Lee Mansion, dated 1864 to 1867, were studied with hopes of determining the type and variety of plant material which was growing near the Mansion at that time.

The three or four shrubs on the south and southeast corner of the Mansion could have been one of the Viburnums or a variety of Philadelphus. The picture taken during the winter of 1867 defines the branching structure quite well against the house. I would lean toward calling it a Viburnum. There is one other possibility that might explain their location and apparent growth. It is possible these plants were all seedlings that sprung up and grew unattended after the Lees had vacated the property. Since they are growing right next to the foundation and since they apparently doubled their size in approximately three years, it is possible to assume that they may have been trees rather than shrubs. If we assume they are tree seedlings, they could well be one of the maple family--possibly Striped Maple (Acer pensylvanicum.)

The tree which has a hatless soldier seated nearby in the photo labeled "Arlington House - June 29, 1864," is about 16 to 20 feet south of the south wing and appears to me to be a Black Locust. I am able to isolate at least one pinnately compound leaf silhouetted against the building wall and the general upright growth and branching structure tends to confirm this identification. This is the same tree that Mr. Wester identified from this photograph last year as an English Elm. Although I am not familiar with English Elm, I did find it described as having alternate simple leaves rather than the pinnately compound leaves which appear on this tree as I see it.

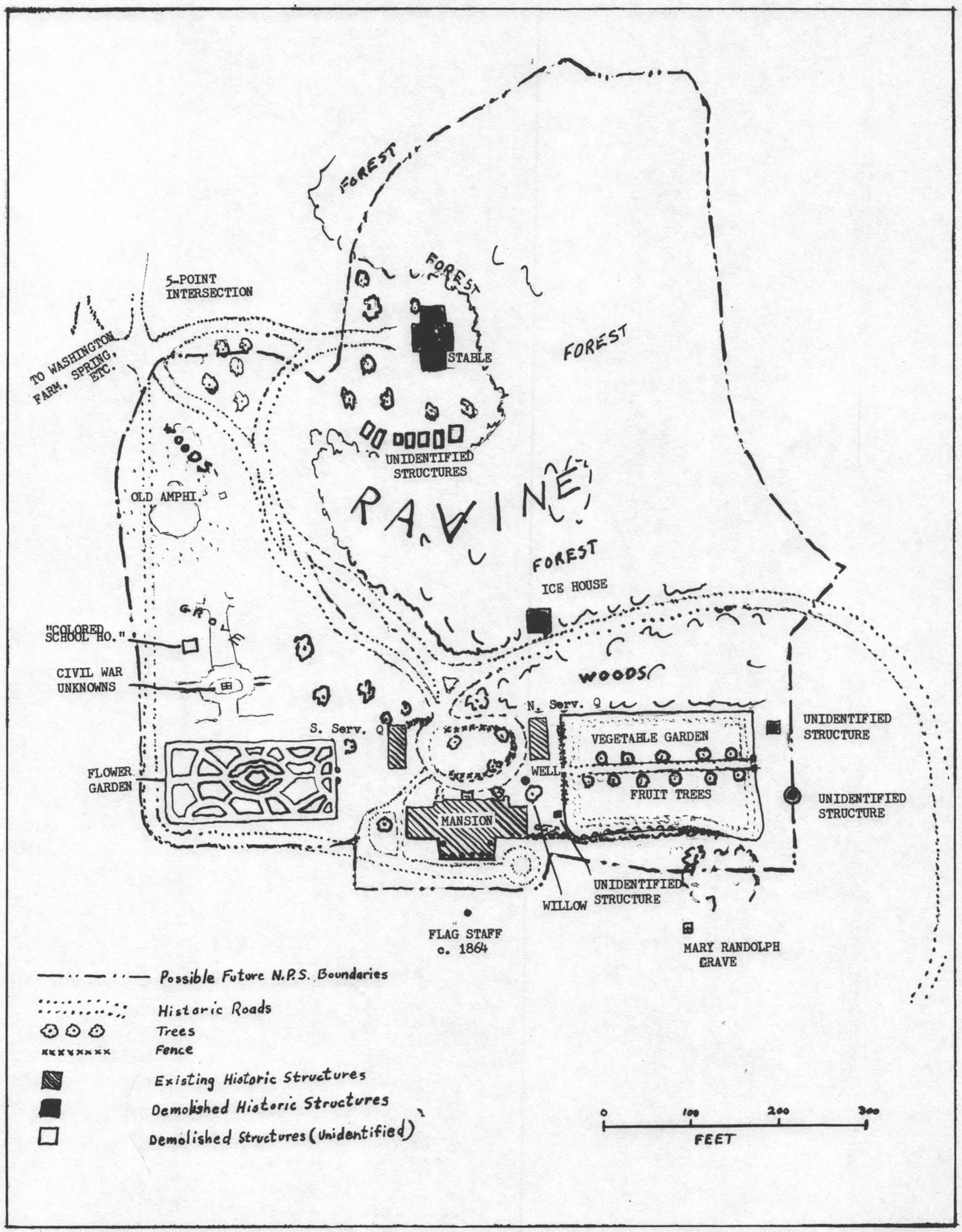
The picture showing the court area between the servant's quarters and the rear of the house does have at least one elm tree in the foreground

and off the northwest corner of the Mansion there appears to be a large willow tree, possibly the "Willow Slip" from the "Popes Willow" mentioned in Nelligan's book on Arlington House.

Most of the pictures of the shrubbery on the north side of the house are too indistinct for me to do more than guess at their identity. There is one exception and that is the picture showing eight soldiers in front of the portico steps. An enlargement of this picture shows what appears to be two closely planted, large holly trees north of the Mansion and east of the telegraph line that comes up to the northeast corner of the Mansion.

Landscape Architect

Enclosures



BASE MAP OF AREA COVERED BY THIS STUDY, c. 1861. Location of demolished structures are approximate. Border paths in vegetable garden are speculative as are roads north of mansion and north gate of vegetable garden.

ILLUSTRATIONS

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1. Detail of Map of Arlington Estate c. 1864. A photostatic copy of this map appears as Illustration VI, Chapter II, Historic Grounds Report, Part II, Custis-Lee Mansion Flower Garden, March 1964, NPS-NCR. It is believed to be a map produced as the result of the 1864 U. S. Coast Survey "minute plane table" five foot contour survey of Arlington Estate performed by M. E. Hergesheimer, assisted by R. E. McMath and 169th Ohio Militia at the request of Brig. Gen. Montgomery Meigs. It is by far the most detailed and apparently authentic map we have of the estate during the Civil War period.

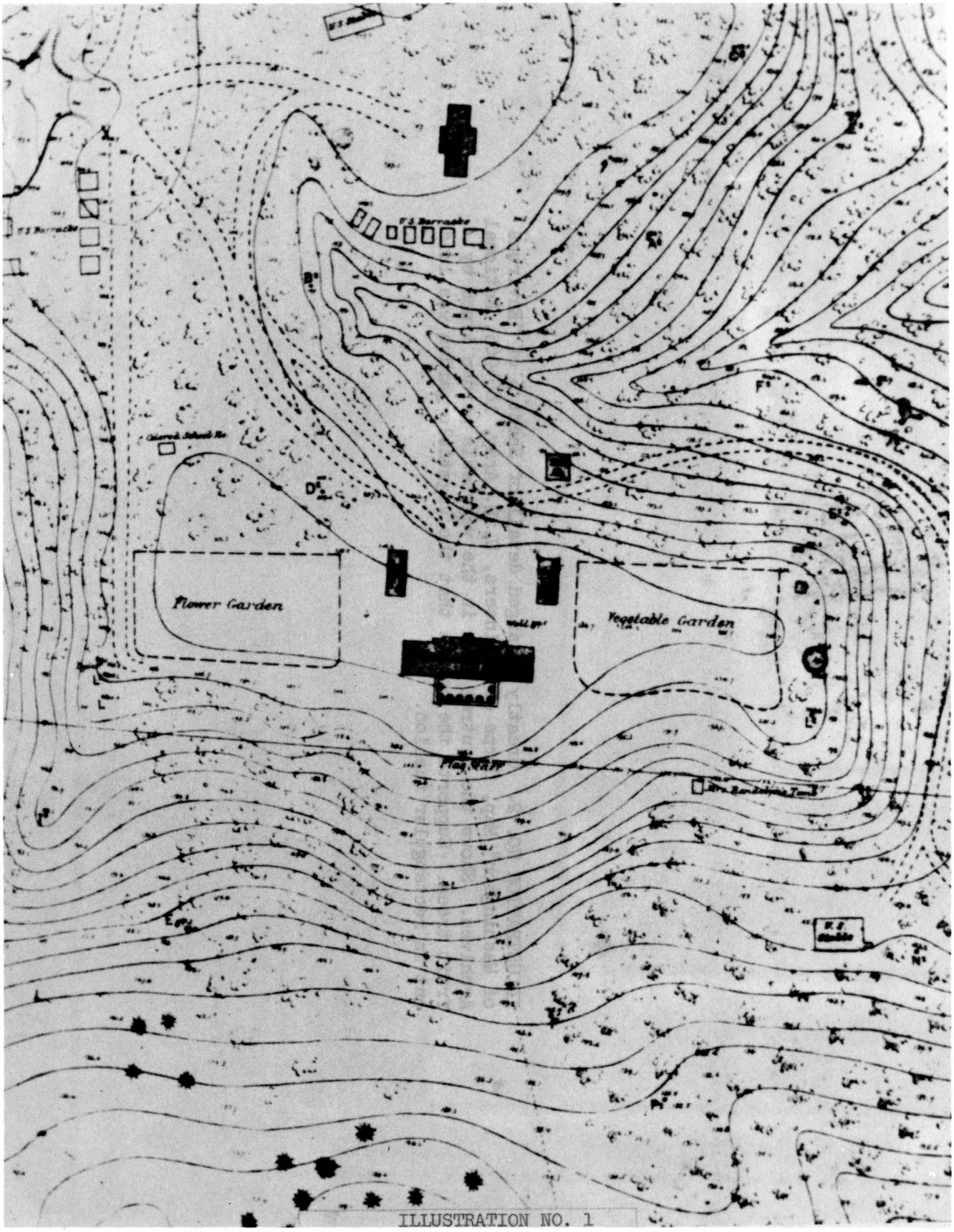


ILLUSTRATION NO. 1

ILLUSTRATION NO. 2. Greatly enlarged detail of Sheet 5 of "Environs of Washington" Map, Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, 1864065, National Archives. Shows the central path in the vegetable garden lined by fruit trees. Supports the notion that the vegetable garden was laid out in rectangular fashion.

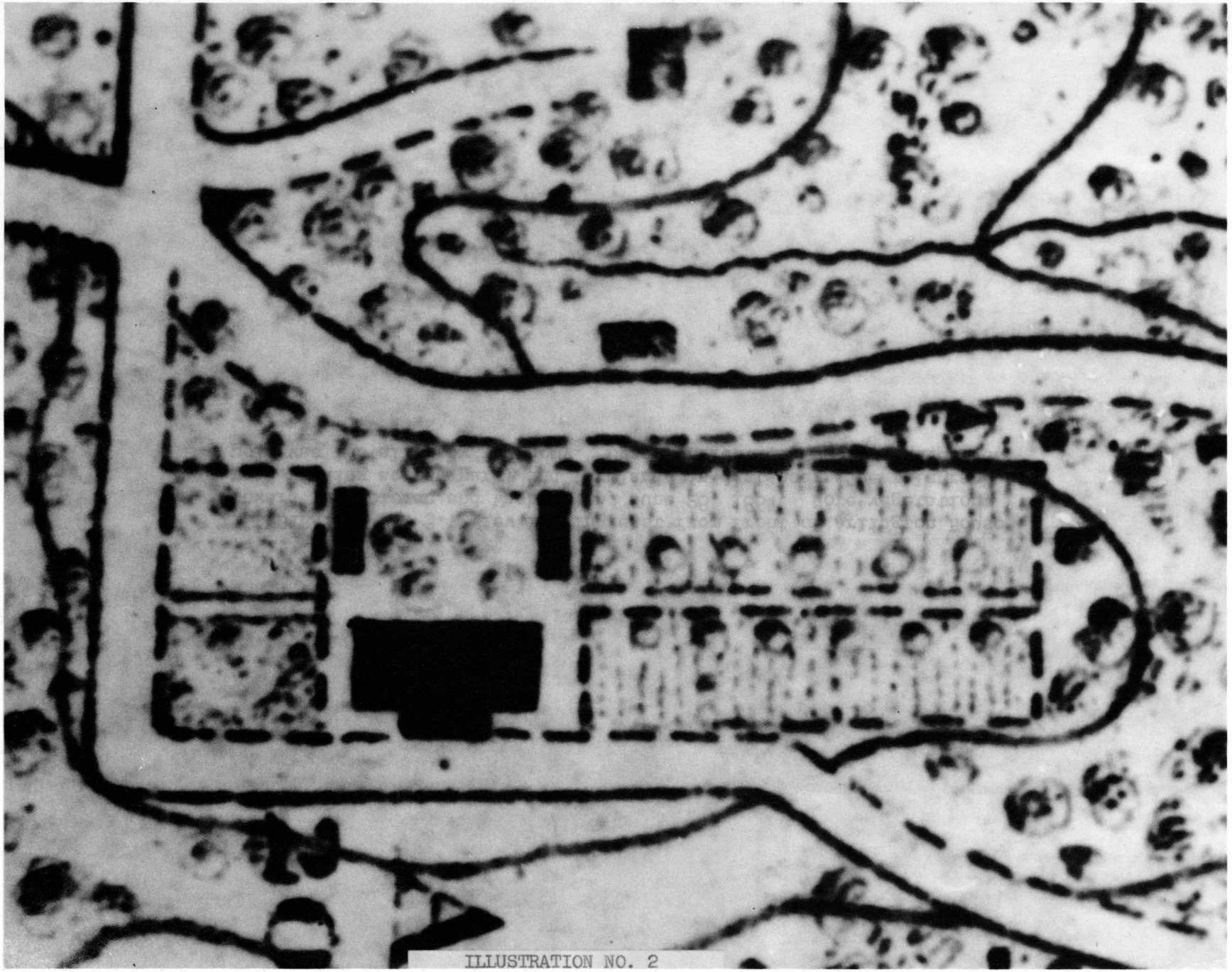


ILLUSTRATION NO. 2

ILLUSTRATION NO. 3. View looking east from front of Arlington House toward the Potomac and Washington, June 28, 1864. Note vegetation, road winding across park, and farmlands in distance. The telegraph pole was installed by the Army. Brady Collection, National Archives.

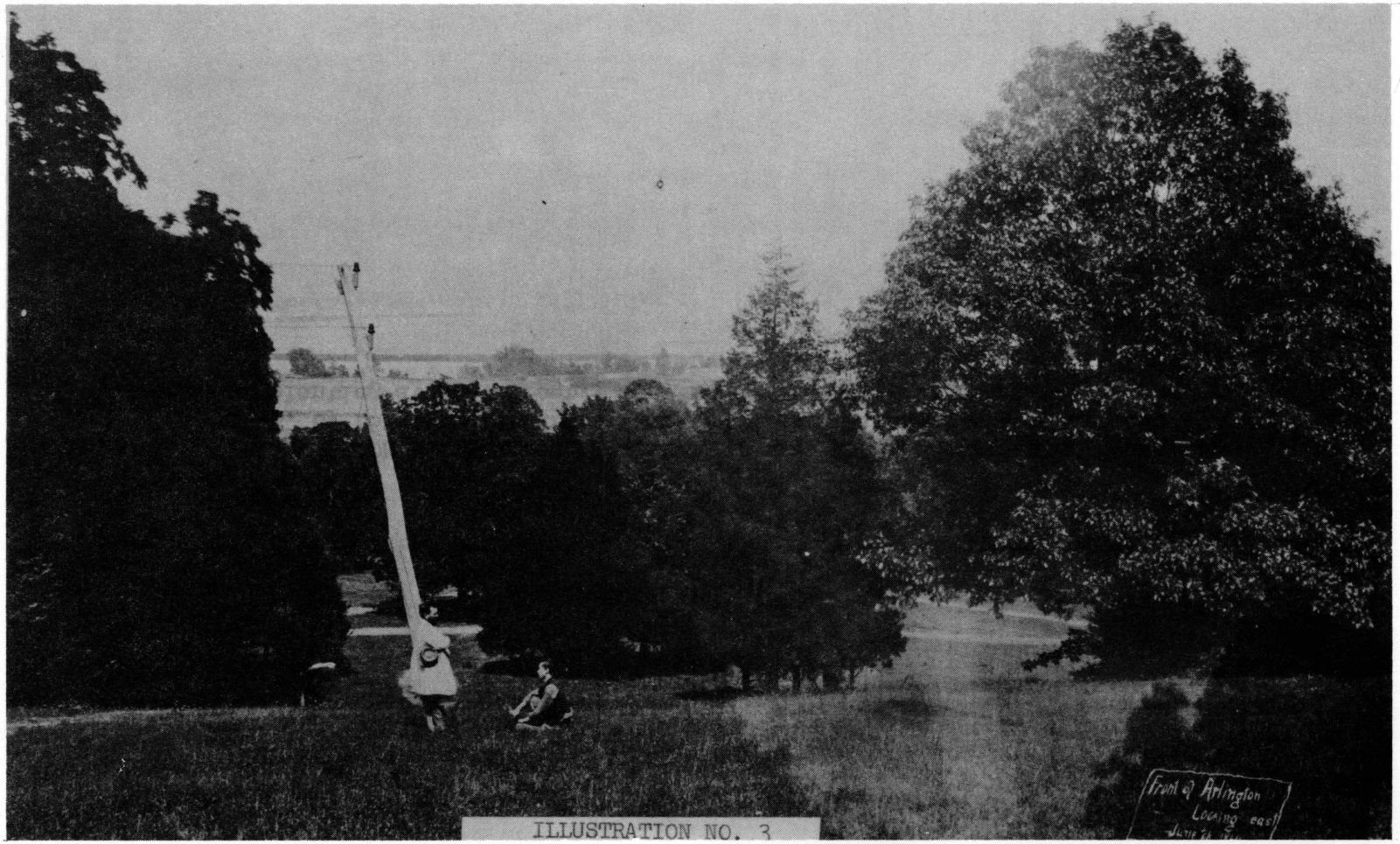


ILLUSTRATION NO. 3

ILLUSTRATION NO. 4. Pencil sketch of east front of Arlington House, 1843, by 16 year old Martha (Markie) Custis Williams. Note absence of planting at east front. Copy in Custis-Lee Mansion Files.

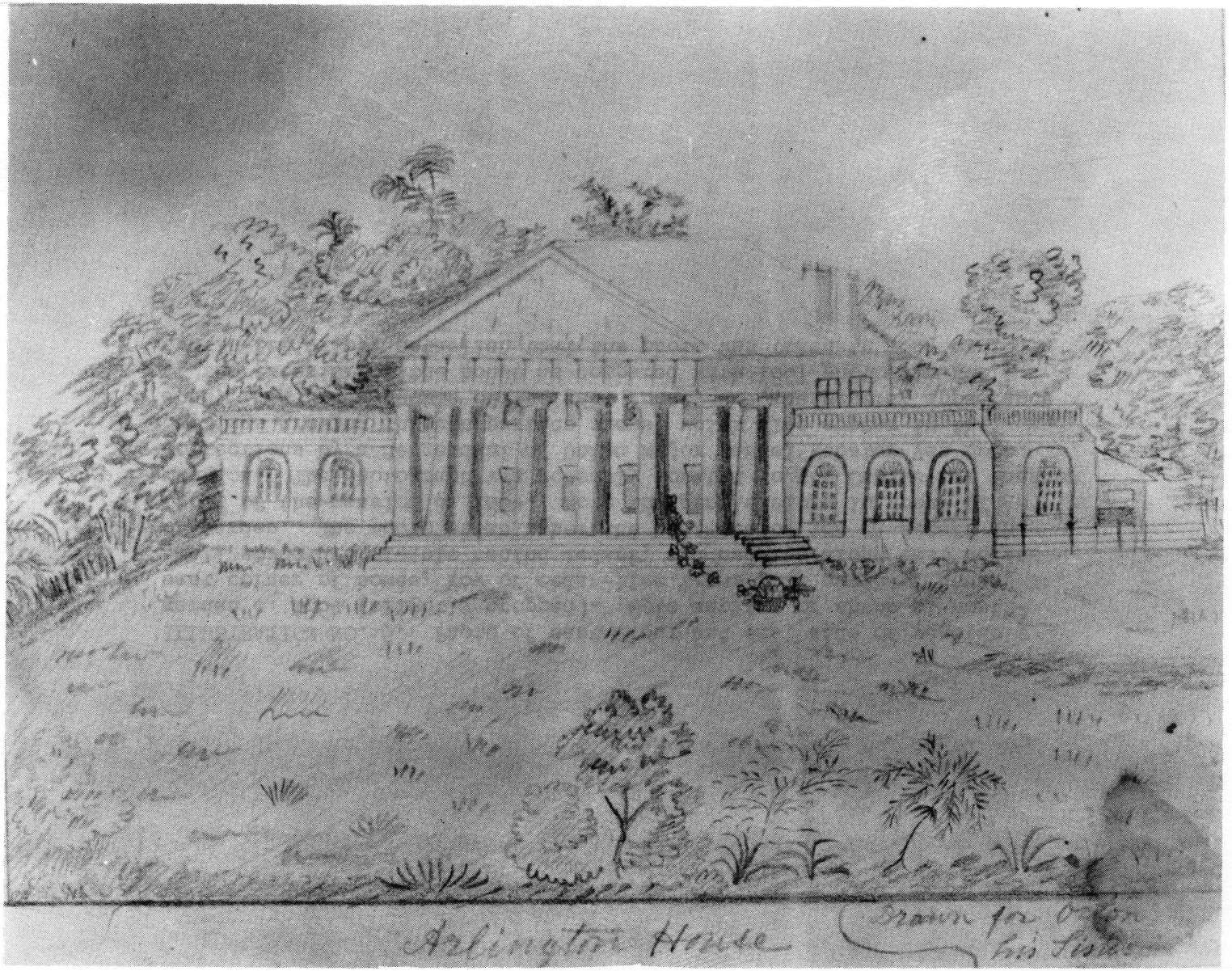


ILLUSTRATION NO. 4

ILLUSTRATION NO. 5. Photo of east front and east side of vegetable garden c. 1864 (slightly cropped). Note sapling or shrub at northeast corner of house, row of cedar-like trees just north of house, small structure visible behind cedars, and hedging along east border of garden. The photo establishes the presence of the flagstaff in front of the mansion c. 1864. Note the gentle slope in front of mansion. The photograph was recently donated to the Custis-Lee Mansion Collections by a descendant of Union Major Daniel Webster Van Horn. Saplings growing through portico steps, which also appear in the June, 1864 Brady photos of the east front, and the general appearance of the exterior of the house as compared with 1867 photos in the Custis-Lee files, establish that the photo was taken in 1864 or 1865.

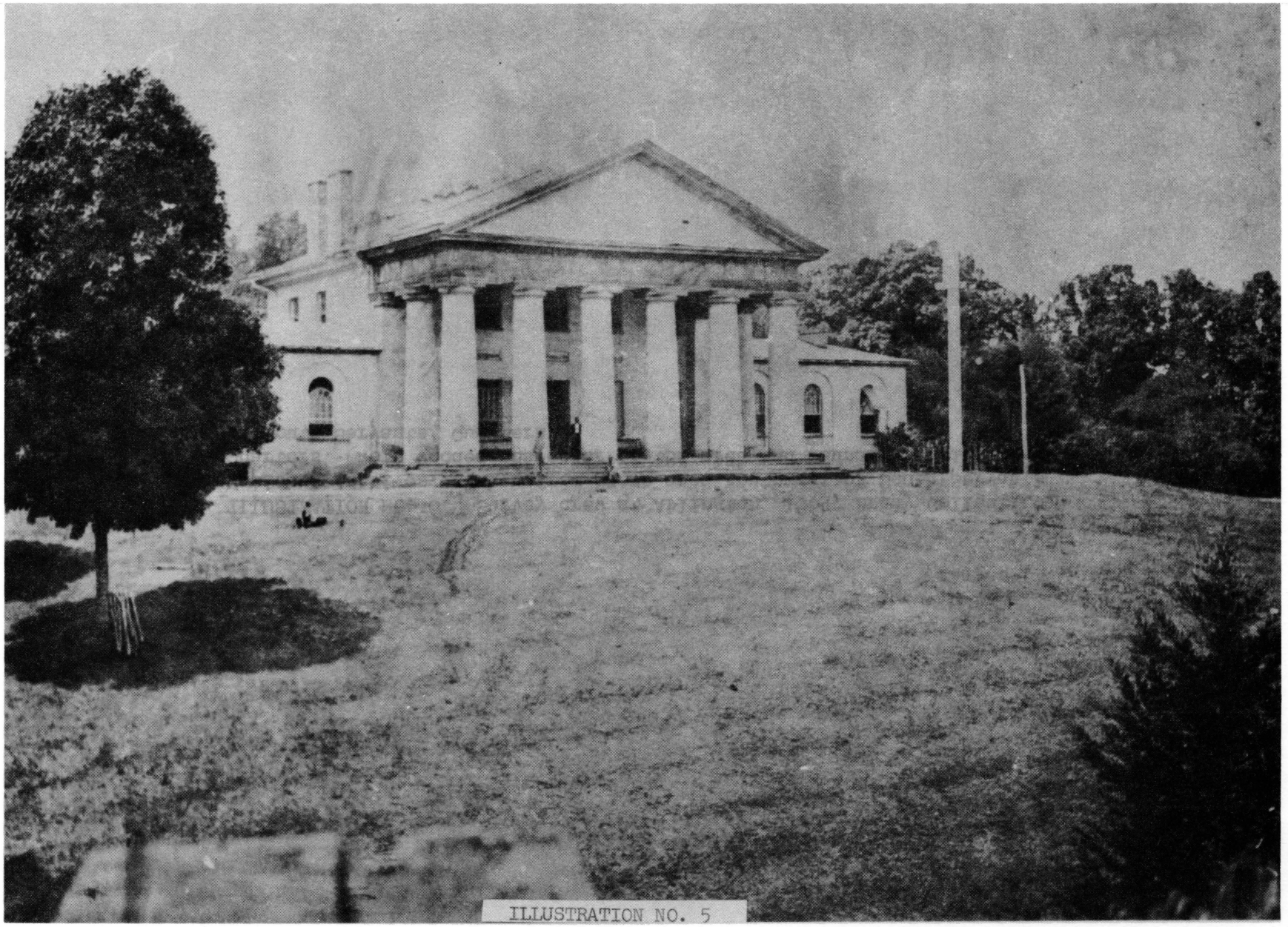


ILLUSTRATION NO. 5

ILLUSTRATION NO. 6. Survey crew at Arlington, 1864, Brady Collection, National Archives. Taken from grove area southwest of South Servants' Quarters. Note wooded character of the area and laundry hanging rear of South Servants' Quarters.

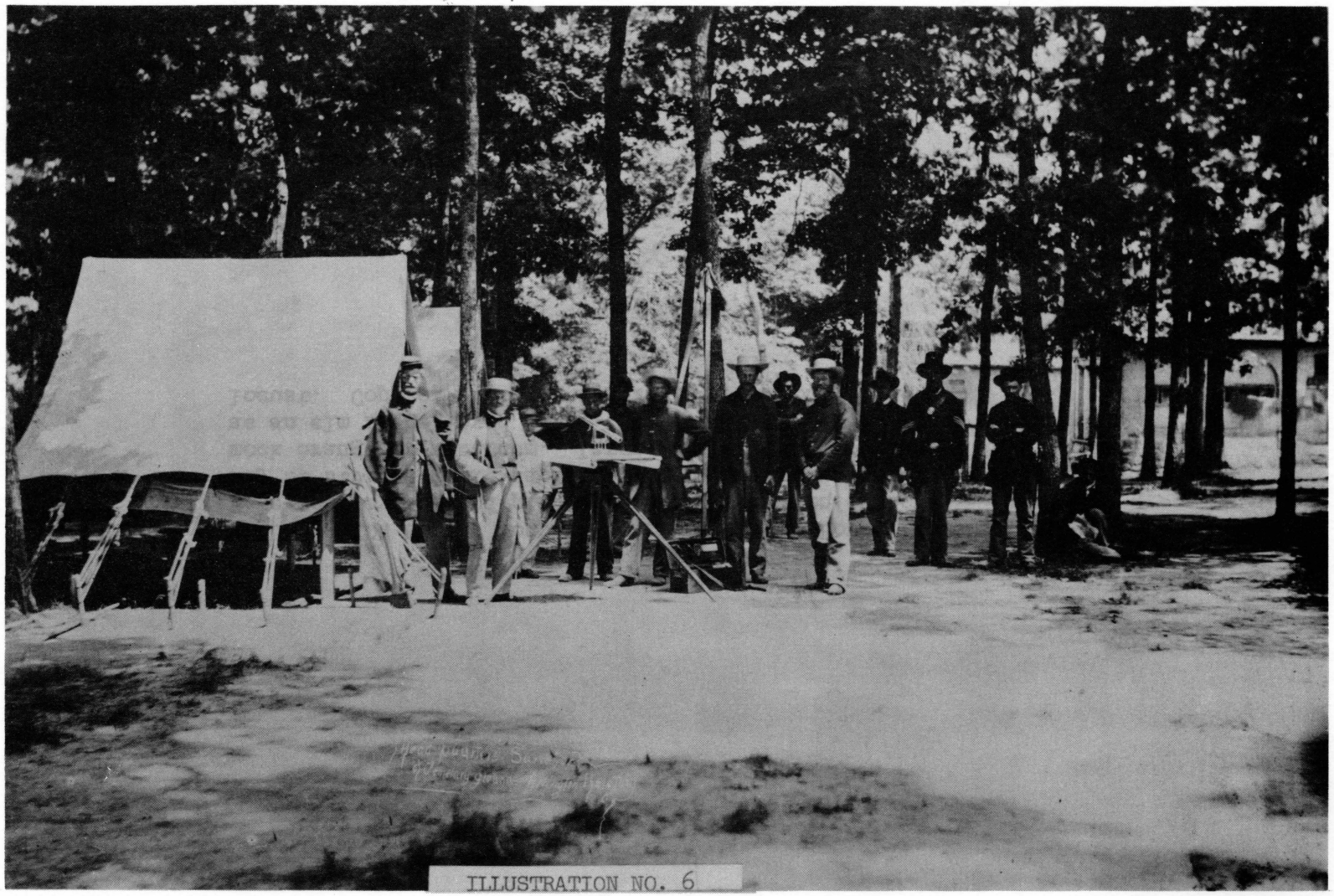


ILLUSTRATION NO. 6

ILLUSTRATION NO.7. South side of Arlington House, June 29, 1864. Note road system and planting near foundation of house. Plantings may be striped maple saplings which grew voluntarily, or cultivated mock orange or viburnum. Large tree at left previously identified as an elm is believed by Mr. De Haven of N. C. R. to be a black locust. Copy of photo in Custis-Lee Mansion Files.

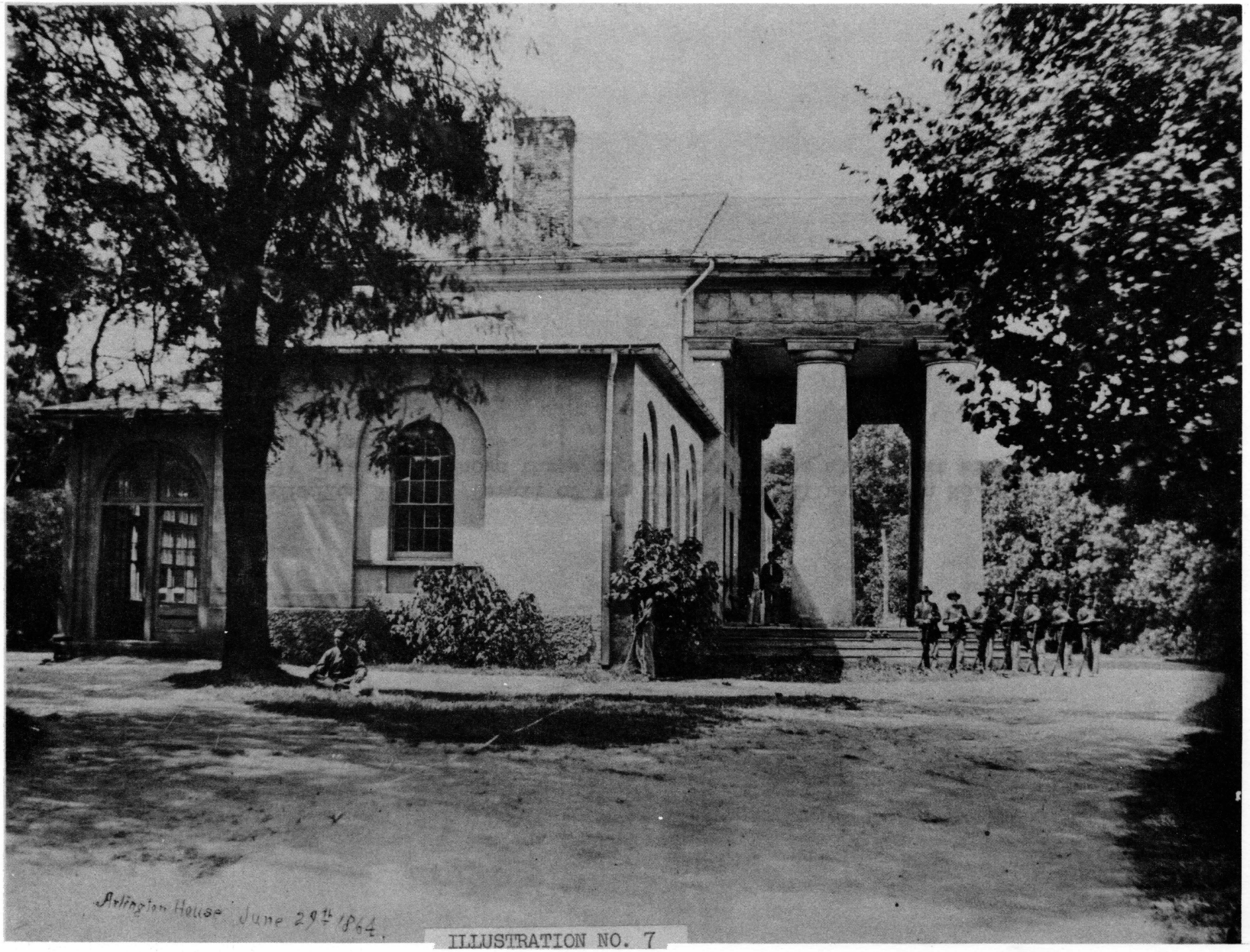


ILLUSTRATION NO. 7

ILLUSTRATION NO. 8. Detail of Van Horn photo (Illustration No. 5) greatly enlarged. Shows three or four rail fence along east side of vegetable garden c. 1864.

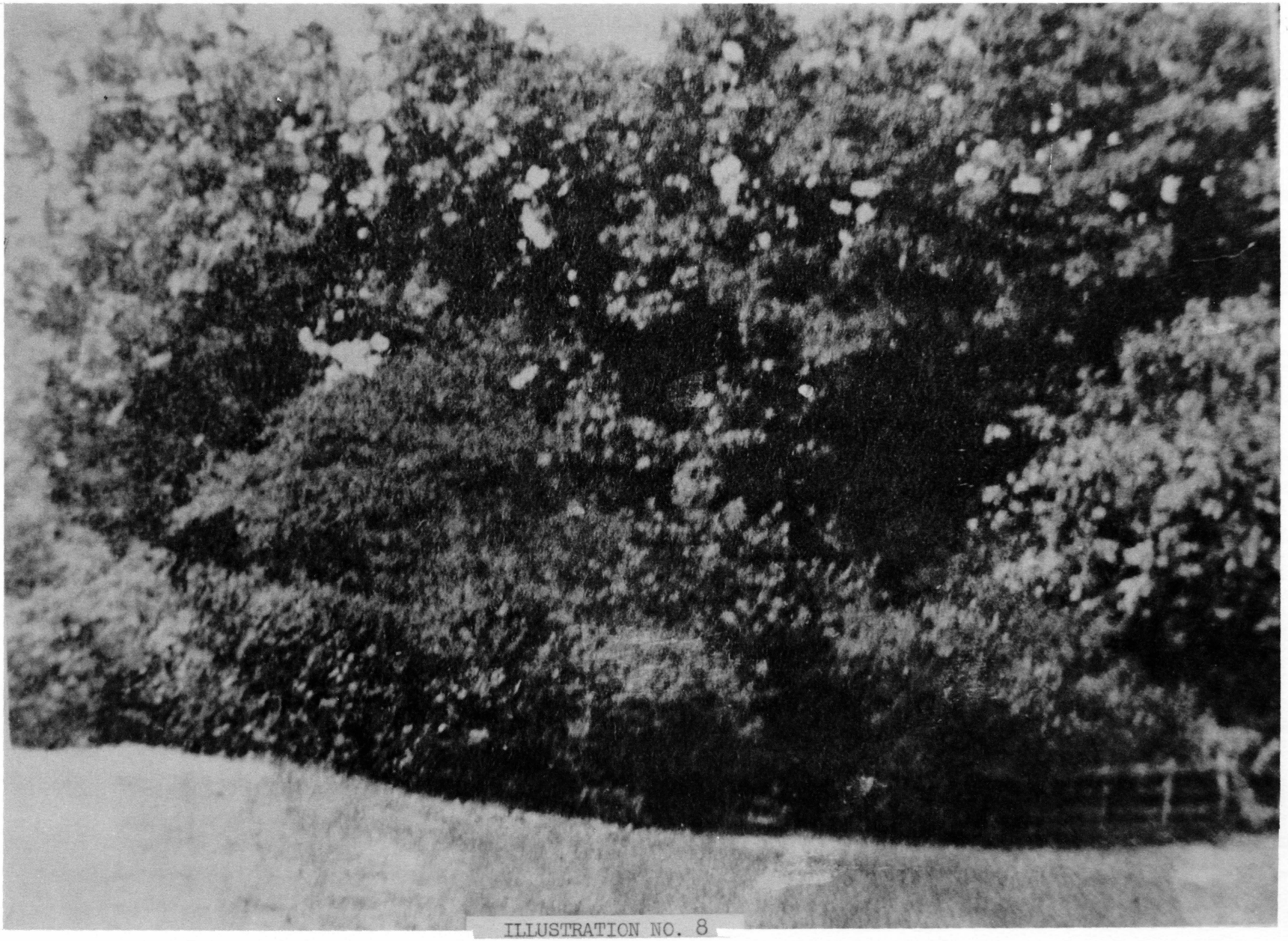


ILLUSTRATION NO. 8

ILLUSTRATION NO. 9. View of courtyard west of mansion June 29, 1864. Note tree placement, well (behind trees left to sentry center background), vegetable garden south fence, and behind it the open area of the garden itself. Photo copy in Custis-Lee Mansion files.



969

ILLUSTRATION NO. 9

ILLUSTRATION NO. 10. Detail of Illustration No. 9, showing exposed brick west center wall of mansion, well bucket, and large tree which may be a willow. Light colored structure is unidentified, possibly sentry station or privy.



ILLUSTRATION NO. 10

ILLUSTRATION NO. 11. Sketch of North Servants' Quarters and courtyard by a member of the Lee family c. 1854. Note fencing around carriage drive and vegetable garden, wooden well pump, picket-type garden gate, and grassy courtyard. Copy in Custis-Lee Mansion Files.



ILLUSTRATION NO. 11

ILLUSTRATION NO. 12. Photo of west front and courtyard from southwest of South Servants' Quarters. Note fencing, tree cover, well and willow near vegetable garden. Photo dated June 28, 1864. The west front of the house is overexposed or was burned out in processing, making it appear to be stuccoed, but a close examination of the shadow area will show it to be bare brick. Copy in Custis-Lee Mansion Files. Negative in National Archives.



ILLUSTRATION NO. 12

ILLUSTRATION NO. 13. View from 5-point intersection opposite stable looking northeast, June 29, 1864. Shows stable and trees between intersection and stable. Structures at left are U.S. Army "barns." Those visible through trees in right background are U.S. Army barracks, possibly (not probably) former slave quarters. Copy of photo in Custis-Lee Mansion Files.



ILLUSTRATION NO. 13

ILLUSTRATION NO. 14. Detail of Illustration No. 13, showing architectural detail of stable.



ILLUSTRATION NO. 14

ILLUSTRATION NO. 15. Stable from southeast c. 1900. Note architectural detail. The arched brick structure adjoining the stable at left is a post-Civil War addition, the so-called Meigs outbuilding. Copy of photo is in Custis-Lee Mansion Files.

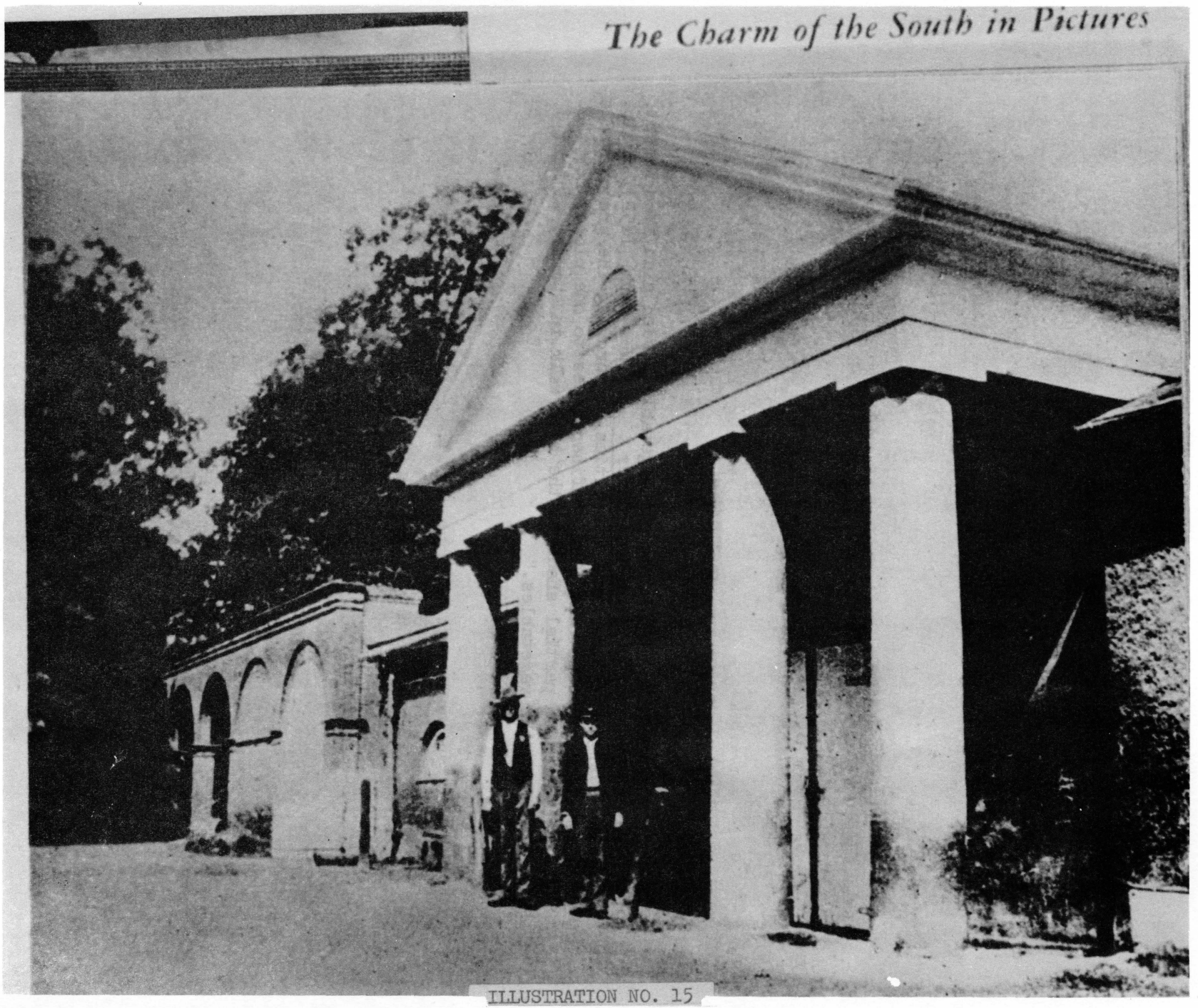


ILLUSTRATION NO. 15

ILLUSTRATION NO. 16. A sample vegetable garden plan from Robert Buist, The Family Kitchen Gardener . . . (New York, 1852), p. 16. The design "affords great facilities for croping the ground and a rotation of crops. It also confines trees to one place, for the purpose of a partial shade to the main walk in summer, without injuring the vegetables."

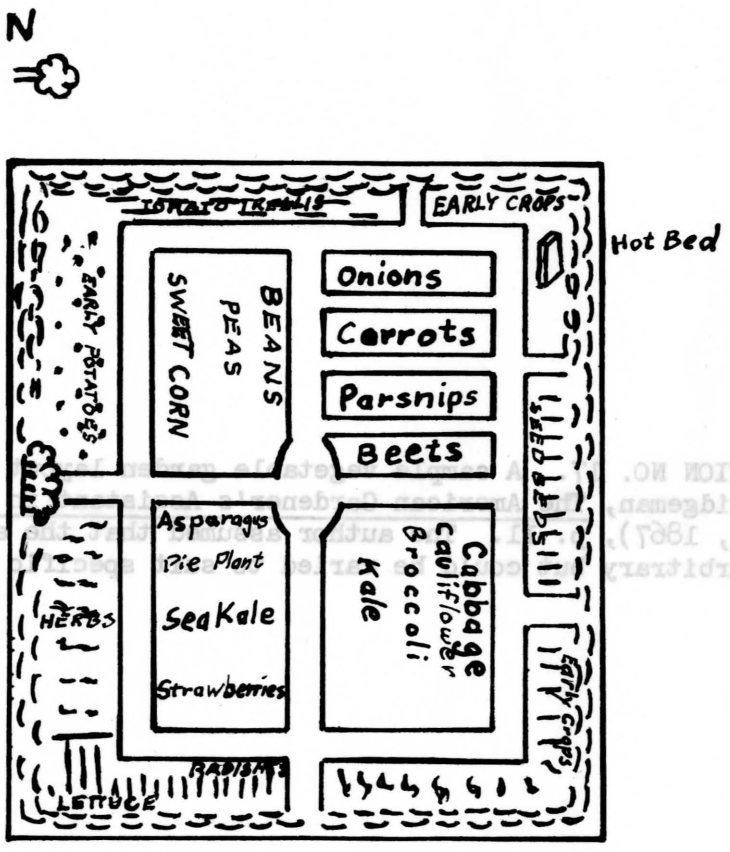
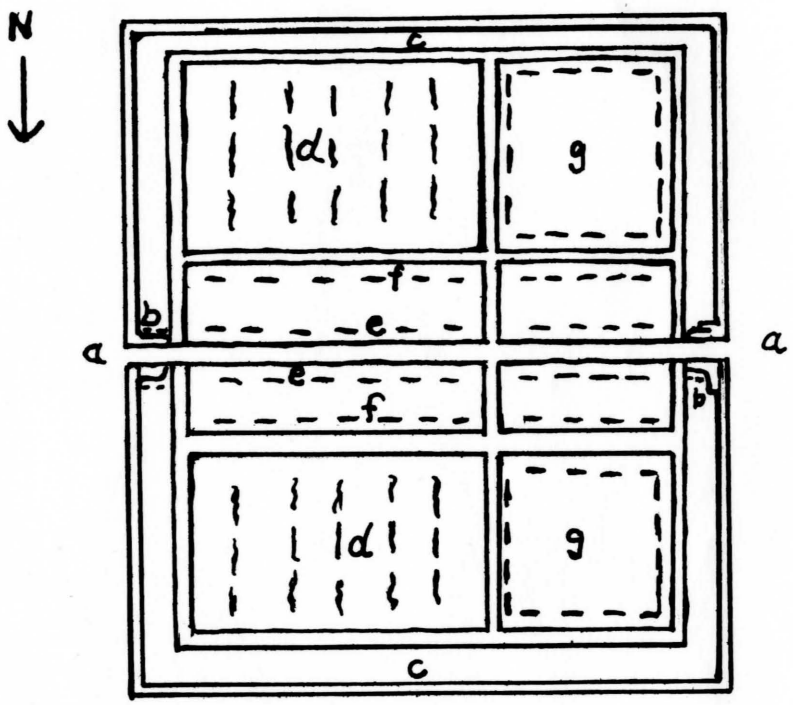


ILLUSTRATION NO. 16

ILLUSTRATION NO. 17. A sample vegetable garden layout copied from Thomas Bridgeman, The American Gardener's Assistant in Three Parts . . . (New York, 1867), p. 11. The author assumed that the arrangement was not arbitrary but could be varied to suit specific situations.



a Main Entrance
b Grape Vine Arbor
c Ten to 12 foot border for smaller and finer sorts of vegetables
d Compartments for vegetables divided by alleys
e Rows of Pear trees for shade
f Rows of dwarf trees, plum, Quince, peach, apricots or dwarf trees.
g Large compartments surrounded by currant or raspberry bushes, for early corn, early potatoes or any quantity vegetables, pits or frames can also be in here.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 17

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