

MINERAL SPRINGS PLANTATION

HISTORY

In 1707, Governor Alexander Spotswood was granted land from Chancellorsville to the confluence of the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers, in that area were natural supplies of water rising to the surface known to the native peoples as capable of restoring their sick to health. Drinking from these springs, likely supplemented the native American's diet with minerals. These minerals were able of curing anemia and other illness due to mineral deficiencies.

For the early Colonists, the mineral waters had the same beneficial effect as it had for the Indians. The area became known as Mineral Springs and it became an attraction for Colonist seeking cures for ailments more serious than the spring waters could likely heal.

More therapeutic for Governor Spotswood was the iron and gold to be taken from the area. Spotswood cleared forests for plantations, planted orchards and built mills to grind grain and to provide sustenance to workers at his mills and furnaces. He deeded plantations to gentlemen to bring efficiency to the economy and sociability for his family at the Enchanted Castle, his Georgian Home on the Rapidan at Germanna.

In 1795, Spotswood sold Mineral Springs to General Lighthorse Henry Lee who along with his brother Richard Lee helped establish self-supporting agriculture plantations. It became a center of activity for the local community until the War Between the States ended the prosperity of the area.

Nearby plantation homes were Forest Hall, Chancellor, and Tubal. All were of Georgian Architectural style.

During the Battle of Chancellorsville, these homes were heavily or completely destroyed. It is an unfortunate historical footnote that the son of Lighthorse Henry Lee, whose family name is closely associated with the English Georgian architectural style, was responsible for these architectural losses. The orders for the Southern artillery to create a diversion by a sustained engagement of all targets of opportunity within the Union lines came from none other than Robert E. Lee.

The historical significance of Mineral Springs Plantation subdivision was sufficiently noteworthy that the Director of the United States Park Service requested that the architecture of homes in Mineral Springs Plantation be "Colonial" with Williamsburg Colors. This request was placed in the restrictive covenants of the Mineral Springs Plantation subdivision.