

**‘An account of a Cucumber’
The Nelsons and the Botanical Kitchen Garden**

Emma Earnst
University of Virginia

On September 1, 1738, the *Virginia Gazette* reported an astounding 40-inch “Cucumber of the *Turkey* or *Morocco* Kind” growing in Thomas ‘Scotch Tom’ Nelson’s garden in Yorktown.¹ This fascinating occurrence was no extraordinary phenomenon, however. In fact, this small episode speaks volumes on the nature of colonial gardening. The exotic cucumber was imported via England, from Peter Collinson of London to his friend and business correspondent, John Custis of Williamsburg. Collinson, a wealthy English merchant and botanist, had many such trade partnerships expressly to share plant seeds. In England, American plants became the backbone of new landscape designs for wealthy landowners and part of a garden obsession that crossed social barriers. Custis distributed his seeds to others in the colony, including Thomas Nelson, a gentleman who served with him on the Governor’s Council. Nelson was a well-connected and prominent Virginia merchant who resided in the port city of Yorktown. Despite his wealth and affluence, his garden served practical purposes: it supplied vegetables and herbs for kitchen and medicinal use. A case study of the Nelson family of Yorktown, an affluent and trans-Atlantic people, demonstrated that the role and derivation of the colonial garden was quite similar to that of an English garden. These influences, however, were implemented in a different garden style for the Nelsons than they were for citizens of England.

Scholars have documented the role of gardening in Virginia as secondary to the landscape changes that were simultaneously occurring in England. Both these movements were inextricably tied to the cultural and environmental histories of their respective locations. Previous historians have acknowledged the English landscape movement as rational, practical, and linked to imperial expansion as a means of ‘improvement.’² In the most recent treatise on the subject, *The Brother Gardeners*, Andrea Wulf explores the exchange networks between American colonists and their British counterparts in the context of the changing landscape of eighteenth century England. She effectively incorporates the American settlers’ influence on these changes but fails to look at landscape in America itself. Richard Drayton similarly evades discussing American landscape in *Nature’s Government*. He instead focuses on the intertwining themes of imperial expansion and scientific discovery as a means of ‘improvement’ to the British Empire, as demonstrated at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. As a part of the British Empire, Virginia experienced changes for similar reasons as those described by Drayton and Wulf, but the Virginians’ medium differed from that in the mother country. The Virginians were well-connected to England and to imperial expansion, and their gardens told an analogous story to that

¹ William Parks, ed, *Virginia Gazette*, September 1, 1738, 4.

² ‘Improvement,’ an idea originally attributed to landscape designer Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1716-1783), refers to an eighteenth-century design practice focused on enhancing the monetary, physical, and emotional value of a property. Smooth grading and design frame-by-frame sense similar to moving through a painting were used to convey an idyllic natural scene. See Humphrey Repton, “Observations on the Theory and Practice of Modern Gardening”, *The Art of Landscape Gardening* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1907), 65-69.

in England. Instead of informal “landscaping” and botanical gardens, however, Virginians like the Nelson family used practical kitchen gardens as a means of enjoyment and ‘improvement.’

The Nelson family of Yorktown was arguably the most prosperous and acculturated family in Yorktown in the eighteenth century. Thomas ‘Scotch Tom’ Nelson (1677-1745) settled in Yorktown in 1705 as an import merchant.³ The ideal placement of his business encouraged his prosperity, and within less than a decade, he became one of the wealthiest members of Virginia society. He purchased property lots 46, 48 and 52 of “Yorke’s port town” between 1705 and 1707.⁴ His eldest son, William, was born in 1711 of ‘Scotch Tom’ Nelson’s first wife, Mary Reade. William was educated in England with the intent of taking over the family business, while his younger brother, Thomas the Secretary (1715-1782), was educated in law. William married Elizabeth Burwell in 1738, and the couple gave birth to a son, whom they named Thomas Nelson Jr., later that year. Thomas Jr. (1738-1789) was likewise educated in England, at Christ College and then Cambridge. Both William and Thomas Nelson Jr. were heavily involved in politics. William served on the Governor’s council and served as Virginia’s interim governor in 1771. Thomas Nelson, Jr. was an intense patriot; he served as a general during the Revolutionary war, was elected as one of the first governor’s of Virginia, and signed the Declaration of Independence in 1775. His epitaph at Grace Episcopal Church reads,

In the Virginia Convention, Instructing her Delegates in Congress, To move that Body to declare the colonies, Free and Independent States, Signer of the Declaration of Independence, War Governor of Virginia, Commander of Virginia’s Forces, He gave all for liberty⁵

The Nelson House has far more disputed origins than its residents. The house is located on lot 52 in Yorktown, which was purchased by ‘Scotch Tom’ in August 1706.⁶ According to

³ Borrowing from Evans, “In all fairness, the reader deserves forewarning that the Nelson family subscribed to a very confusing practice: successive generations used the same given name over and over again” (1). Because of this fact, I will distinguish between our three Nelsons accordingly: the eldest will be referred to by his nickname ‘Scotch Tom’; the youngest of our subjects will be Thomas Nelson, Jr.; Nelson Jr.’s uncle will be noted by the name he is often designated, “Thomas Nelson the Secretary.”

For a full biography of the Nelson family, see: Evans, Emory G., *Thomas Nelson of Yorktown: Revolutionary Virginian* (Charlottesville: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1975), 6.

⁴ “Building Yorke’s Port Town,” *York County History* (York County Historical Committee, York History Series #A-7, 1992), 1-3. Though in 1663, Yorke Village, located on Wormley Creek, was the designated Yorke River port, business moved to the shore of the river where there were deeper waters. The Cohabitation Act of 1680 provided the establishment of a new town in this location. This new town, known as Yorktown, prospered in a short time. For a complete history of the beginnings of the town, see Charles E. Hatch, *Colonial Yorktown’s Main Street* (Eastern Acorn Research Series, 1980).

⁵ “Who Was Thomas Nelson?” *Thomas Nelson Community College*, http://www.tncc.edu/about/who_thomas_nelson.php. Thomas Nelson, Jr. died on January 4, 1789, extremely in debt, and “was buried in an unmarked grave at Yorktown’s Grace Church so that his creditors could not hold his body as collateral.” The current epitaph was added in the mid-twentieth century. See “Brigadier General Thomas Nelson Jr.” *National Park Service*. <http://www.nps.gov/york/historyculture/nelsonjrbio.htm>.

⁶ According to York County Land Records, Nelson was sold lot 48 (next door to lot 52) in 1709, after the former owner, William Cary forfeited the lot according to the details of his deed, because he did not build a home on the plot within a year of purchase. Nelson was required under a similar deed to build a home within 12 months of purchase. Nelson was never forced to forfeit the property. See Mary Marshall Brewer, ed, *York County, Virginia Land Record: 1694-1713* (Delaware: Colonial Roots, 2006), 129.

architectural historian Clyde Trudell, the Nelson House's architectural details indicate it was built in the mid-eighteenth century, no sooner than 1745.⁷ Dendrochronologist Herman Heikkenen, however, estimates that 'Scotch Tom' erected the house in 1729.⁸ Alternatively, the York County Historical Society dates the building date at or before 1711.⁹ Regardless, these sources agree that William Nelson and his son Thomas Nelson Jr. were assuredly residents of the stately mansion. The house was one of the largest in town and occupied a prominent location overlooking the water.¹⁰ The Nelson residence is representative of Georgian architecture and was clearly meant to convey the power and wealth of its inhabitants. Despite this fact, the land surrounding the Nelson House did not evoke such a clear response.

The Nelsons' affluence as a leading family of Virginia and their clear connections with England provided them with a knowledge of contemporary English social trends that other settlers did not have. Before moving to Virginia, 'Scotch Tom' Nelson resided in Westmoreland, Scotland. Both William and Thomas Jr. received formal education in England, a rarity in their time, which provided them with knowledge of the proper social customs of the day. In addition, the Nelson family business, an export company, required constant contact with English residents. If colonists were aware of and imitating the landscape changes in England, these men would have demonstrated such techniques. Though it was rooted in the same political and social motives, their garden exemplified a completely different trend. The plant content of their garden represented British imperial expansion and new scientific discoveries. Rather than being manifestos of power and their new wealth, their garden was simple; it was based on sustaining more than beautifying. Even frivolities were limited to interesting food items and medicinal ingredients. Thus, while the new "landscaping" was accompanying architecture as a show for power in England, the garden of the most prosperous family in York remained modest.

The modest kitchen garden was common in the colonial port, Yorktown. A simple sketch from 1755 offers the only contemporary view of the town, and provides a wealth of information about the town and the Nelson's place in it, including their garden (Appendix A). An unknown artist sketched this view of colonial Yorktown from aboard an English naval vessel stationed on the York River. His rendering illustrates the natural landscape of the town, details of residencies, and even fencing and trees in distinct places around the town. This sketch has been compared to the contemporary Bodleian plate of Williamsburg as a meaningful tool in understanding the landscape of the township.¹¹ While in no way does the sketch of Yorktown show the same details as the Williamsburg plate, it does indicate the horticultural makeup of the town in broad

⁷ Trudell asserts the house was built by William Nelson upon inheriting the property after his father's death in 1745. See Clyde F. Trudell, *Colonial Yorktown: Being a brief History of the Place; together with Something of its Houses and Publick Building* (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1938), 137.

⁸ Heikkenen uses tree-ring techniques to date historical properties. See Carl Lounsbury, ed, "Nelson House," *Early American Architecture in New England, the Delaware Valley, and the Chesapeake* (Colonial Williamsburg Vernacular Architecture Group, 2004), 72.

⁹ This estimation appears to be based off county land records. See note 6 and "Building Yorke's Port Town," *York County History* (York County Historical Committee, York History Series #A-7, 1992), 3.

¹⁰ Edward M. Riley, "Suburban Development of Yorktown, Virginia, during the Colonial Period," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Vol. 60, No. 4, October 1952), 522-536.

¹¹ The 1929 discovery of a mid-eighteenth century copperplate illustrating architecture details and gardens of several important buildings in Williamsburg, including the Wren Building, the Governor's Palace, and the Capitol, was the foundation for major restorations of the town in the early twentieth century. See *A Handbook for the Exhibition Buildings of Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, 1941) and Lillian K. Stevens, "The Bodleian Plate," *College of William & Mary* (September 1, 2007), <http://www.wm.edu/news/ideation/fall2007/fall-2007-sidebars/the-bodleian-plate.php>.

strokes.¹² The settlement was situated on bluffs overlooking the York River, its source of trade and connection. Land was cleared to make room for the buildings, though a few prominent trees remain in the center of town. The Nelson House, a two-story brick house, stands prominently in the center of town against a backdrop of 1½ story dormers. A simple wooden rail fence encloses the yard, indicating the presence of a vegetable garden. The simplicity of the grounds juxtaposes the splendor of the house. Whereas the house stands out, similar ‘well pailed in’ gardens are numerous in the prospering town; the Lightfoot house, the Sessions House, the Archer House, and several properties under the hill all have small gardens in their yards.¹³ While these simplistic developments were taking place in Yorktown, far larger projects were underway in England.

Design historian Andrea Wulf explores landscape changes occurring in eighteenth century England as a bi-product of rationalization and a reliance on contacts in America. She describes a growing “obsession with American plants” in eighteenth century England that was voraciously reciprocated in time.¹⁴ Noting the differences of American gardening and classifying, Wulf shows how important American contacts mutually aided Peter Collinson of London and his clients, influencing the course of landscape design in England. Trees supplied by colonists allowed wealthy English landlords to paint their property in the new landscaping fashion made available by the likes of William Kent, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown and Humphrey Repton, and first demonstrated by Lord Petre at his home in Essex.¹⁵ Landscaping as a term and as an art form was closely connected to the fine art of landscape painting. Landscape theorists suggested that property be designed in the idyllic manner represented in landscape paintings by Claude Lorraine (1600-1682) and Nicholas Poussin (1594-1665).¹⁶ The new plant varieties provided by Americans allowed landscapers to implement their designs with more diversity in their palettes.

These appealing landscapes were rooted in and the result of rational thinking. A new cogent naming system, developed by the Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus, was slowly adopted in England in the eighteenth century. As Wulf describes, the new binomial nomenclature “gave every plant a two-word name”: the first word indicated the genus and the second the species.¹⁷ As horticulturalists and scientists explored and better understood the workings of plant life, new possibilities arose for English plant-lovers. Richard Bradley, an early eighteenth century horticultural writer, predicted that new plants could then be made according to the fancy of men.¹⁸

As these scientific movements were occurring, landscape theorists and practitioners were abandoning the cold reason of French-inspired baroque gardens in England. Charles Bridgeman, William Kent, and Lancelot Brown extinguished the *parterres* of the previous century, replacing

¹² E.G. Swem, ed, *Views of Yorktown and Gloucester Town, 1755* (Newport News: The Mariners’ Museum, 1946), inserts. See Appendix A for “A View of Yorktown, Virginia”

¹³ In the colonial era, the term ‘well pailed in’ was often used in *Virginia Gazette* advertisements for houses for sale. It refers to fencing in the yard to protect against animals that could destroy the crops. See William Hunter, ed, *Virginia Gazette*, November 7, 1754, 2.

¹⁴ Wulf, 134-136.

¹⁵ See Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 234- 251 and Wulf, 99-102, 108-111.

¹⁶ For landscape paintings see “Claude Lorraine” *Web Gallery of Art*. <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>; and “Nicolas Poussin” *Web Gallery of Art*” <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>.

¹⁷ Wulf, 117.

¹⁸ Such thoughts were also soundly based in the recent sexual theory of reproduction in plants. Thomas Fairchild first formally experimented with this idea in England in the early 1700s. See Wulf, 6-33.

them with open landscapes. As contemporary Horace Walpole described, these designers “leaped the garden fence,” exponentially increasing expanse into the form of a park.¹⁹ These new landscapes took on political connotations and were propagated as great Whig triumphs by landscape theorists like Horace Walpole and Thomas Whately. Tyranny and topiary, the products of absolutist France and supposedly encouraged by Tories were contrasted with the liberty expressed by the new Brownian landscapes.²⁰

Besides a new way of thinking, the colonization of America provided Britons with a new palette of plant materials with which to work. English landscapes were founded in new reforestation practices propagated by John Evelyn a century before. The parks of wealthy landlords were locales for renewed tree growth. When explorers and colonists discovered the New World was plentiful in trees and seed, new plants helped fill the void in English scenery. At the time, according to Andrea Wulf, Britain only possessed “four native evergreens: the Scots pine, the holly, the box and the yew.”²¹ By the end of the eighteenth century, however, thousands of new species graced the landscape of the country. Britain was using her power as an empire to improve her appearance. Not only were American plants integrated into the basic horticultural makeup of Britain, new botanical gardens served as showcases of power and empire for the nation. The Royal Botanical Gardens, the subject of Richard Drayton’s treatise, particularly served such an interest as the largest state-sponsored botanical garden.

Using trade relationships, a number of American colonists asserted a place in the changing English landscape. As Wulf describes, Peter Collinson of London worked closely with John Bartram, John Custis, and other settlers in order to supply himself and his clients with exquisite new plants for their landscapes and gardens:

Cedars, pines and other evergreens provided winter interest, while rhododendrons paraded showy blossoms in late spring. In early summer magnolias and tulip trees flowered and in autumn the russet foliage of American deciduous trees set the landscape alight.²²

As Palladian architecture was revived in the 1700s, landscapers utilized the *Juniperus Virginiana* (a native Virginian conifer) to enhance the effect of column use.²³ Colonists provided the

¹⁹ Horace Walpole, “The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening,” (1771) from I.W.U. Chase, ed, *Horace Walpole, Gardenist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 25.

²⁰ The landscapes of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown were characterized by excavation and regrading of the land to produce a simple and sinuous view. The landscapes were often associated with the idea of ‘improvement’ of the landscape for betterment of its owners, or at times, the general public. For a contemporary political characterization of ‘improvement’ see Thomas Whately, *Observations on Modern Gardening, Illustrated by Description* (London: Printed for T. Payne, 1770); Horace Walpole, “The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening,” (1771) from: I.W.U. Chase, ed, *Horace Walpole, Gardenist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943); and Humphrey Repton, “Observations on the Theory and Practice of Modern Gardening,” *The Art of Landscape Gardening* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1907), 65-69. For modern interpretations and arguments against such associations, see John Dixon Hunt, *Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination: 1600-1750* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1986), 180-222; and Richard Quaintance, “Walpole’s Whig Interpretation of Landscaping History,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (1979).

²¹ Wulf, 92.

²² Wulf, 15.

²³ Palladian architecture derives its name from its creator, Andrea Palladio (1508-1580). During his career, he designed Italian villas which contained columned facades like Roman temples in spaces which would offer

English with plants, feeding the obsession for botanical and pleasure grounds. In exchange for their efforts, English plants collected either from the mother country or various other colonies in the British Empire were sent to American settlers. Trade relationships were open; Britons on both sides of the Atlantic valued their native and imported plants. The colonists' implementation of design with their plant material, however, was quite different.

Virginians valued English plants for their agricultural and medicinal uses. In the colonization of the New World, plants were valued for their life-sustaining abilities, rather than as means of artistic expression. Especially in the first generations after the settling of Jamestown, survival was the major factor, so plants were valued for their nutritive purposes. By the eighteenth century, however, the harsh realities of starvation had passed. Yorktown and Williamsburg were established and growing exponentially. Landed gentry arose, and they used architecture, fashion, and society as a means of confirming their place as British ladies and gentlemen. They were well-connected to the homeland, and like the Nelsons, some were even able to send their children to be properly educated in Britain. Nonetheless, landscape design did not develop in Virginia in the same way it did in England. Instead, a reversion to the simple fenced-in kitchen garden was the norm.

While horticulture maintained rational personal appeal, planting developed in the form of kitchen gardens rather than artfully designed landscapes. The Nelsons, in particular, expressed themselves according to the context in which they lived. This meant the family, though wealthy and well-connected, maintained a simple, functional kitchen garden. No physical representations of the garden remains, but a general view of the garden can be established through the Nelson's annual seed orders and contemporary artwork (Appendix B).²⁴

Plant exchange provided Virginians with new plants for their kitchen gardens, just as it provided the English with new plants for their evolving landscape. Peter Collinson and John Custis developed an imperative trans-Atlantic relationship that provided the Virginian Custis with new plants. Custis furthered the exchange by then distributing seeds in the local community. The long cucumber seeds that he received from Collinson in 1737 were distributed across the local area, evidenced by 'Scotch Tom' Nelson's own cucumber a year later. Correspondence shows that by the 1770s, Turkey cucumbers seeds had become commonplace in Virginia planting. Numerous Virginians ordered the seeds from their various contacts in England. One of these Virginians, William Nelson, developed a friendship with John Norton, much as Williamsburg's John Custis had with Collinson. Unlike Custis, however, Nelson was far more concerned with the functionality of gardening than with flowers and cropped trees. There also does not appear to be any indication that Nelson would send seeds back to his friend. Instead, theirs was more of a business relationship than a mutual exchange.

perspectival views by elevating the central block of the villa. He stressed the nature of the ground plane as a means to view the surrounding landscape. In the early eighteenth century, English architects revived Palladio's traditions when creating country homes for Whig landowners. See Wulf, 76 and Rogers 234-235.

²⁴ Mutual Assurance Society, *Mutual Assurance Society Declarations and Revaluations of Policies, 1796-1867* (Architectural Drawings and Plans collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia), accessed 6 Nov 2008, Policy 98.

See Appendix B for the Mutual Assurance Society plat. In much historical garden preservation, principally those in Williamsburg from a contemporary period, historians excavated and performed pollen analyses to discover where beds and structures were located. The Nelson House, however, was restored in the early twentieth century by the renowned landscape architect Charles Gillette. New gardens were made with "colonial revival" intent, though to all appearances, that referred only to generic colonial-era plant content. Revamping the property required earth-moving, so digging or pollen testing for the remains of beds would be fruitless.

Plant exchange and propagation were growing phenomena in Yorktown prior to the Revolutionary War and were not limited exclusively to the Nelsons. The Yorktown area offered appropriate conditions for certain plants to flourish. ‘Scotch Tom’ Nelson’s cucumber was one of such plants. *Allium ampeloprasum*, also known as the Yorktown onion, flourished remarkably well in the area. After being introduced to England in the sixteenth century, it made its way to Yorktown during the Revolutionary War period.²⁵ By the 1950’s, however, York County was the only place the plant had survived.²⁶ The soil, climate, and atmospheric conditions specific to this locale allowed the plant to thrive.

From the 1760s until his death in 1772, William Nelson maintained a lively correspondence with his friend John Norton, a London commodities trader. Their correspondence evidences the importance of kitchen gardening to the affluent family. Nelson’s yearly garden seed orders provided important vegetable and herb crops to the family.²⁷ William specifically mentions carrots, parsnips, turnips, various types of peas, and cloves in his letters.²⁸ The garden at the Nelson House was practical in nature, and it demonstrated the importance of plant exchange for Virginians and Britons.

In a series of letters, Nelson’s anxiety over receiving garden seeds and tools shows the realistic importance of the garden to him. He repeatedly expresses concern that he will receive garden seed from his London correspondent in a timely manner. In one instance, his care even extends to gardening tools. In a letter from mid-1766, William Nelson wrote anguished that he had not yet received “the Hose you mention, to water the Garden” and prayed he would receive one shortly.²⁹ Nelson’s desires were rooted in realism; since he was purchasing particular vegetable and herb seeds, he would have to receive and sow them by February or August (depending on whether they were a summer or fall harvest) to obtain a good crop. He promised to be “daily looking for them,” and rejoiced when they finally arrived.³⁰ Upon receiving a batch “come in good time . . . this being the season of the year for sowing them,” he showed great relief.³¹ When a faulty batch of seeds arrived in April 1771, he lamented their tardiness: “the Seeds are but of Little Use for this year’s Crop.”³² In fear that his seeds would not arrive on a timely schedule in 1772, he requested that Norton send the seeds via the James River instead of the York.³³ Though it was more inconvenient for Nelson to travel across the peninsula to obtain his seeds, they were of such great importance to him that he was willing to make the trip.

Even in face of the Townsend Acts, when Nelson’s political sympathies forced him to abandon all other trading, he continued to request garden seeds from his London friend.³⁴ The

²⁵ William C. Snyder, *Wildlife Neighbors of the Williamsburg Area: Jamestown, Williamsburg, Yorktown*, http://www.baylink.org/wpc/3fr_wpc.html.

²⁶ The National Park Service, “Yorktown Battlefield,” *National Park Service*, <http://www.nps.gov/york/index.htm>.

²⁷ Frances Norton Mason, ed, *John Norton & Sons: Merchants of London and Virginia, Being the Papers from the Counting House for the Years 1750 to 1795* (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1937), 35.

²⁸ Nelson Family, *Papers, 1743-1880* (Personal Papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia), accessed 6 Nov 2008, and Nelson, William, *Papers, 1785-1790* (Accession 29474, Personal papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia), accessed 6 Nov 2008.

²⁹ Mason, 14.

³⁰ Mason, 18, 31, 38.

³¹ Mason, 38.

³² Mason, 156.

³³ Mason, 268.

³⁴ Mason, 113. The Townshend Acts were a series of acts passed in 1767, including the Revenue Act of 1767, the Indemnity Act, the Commissioners of Customs Act, the Vice Admiralty Court Act, and the New York Restraining Act. Taxes were placed on external goods in the Revenue Act, which is what Nelson was protesting against when

seeds were not one of the taxable items under the law, but neither were other things, like clothing, that William typically ordered from Norton. However, Nelson opted to purchase locally-made clothing, abandoning his typically English attire. In 1770, he wrote to Norton describing his nouveau attire: "I now wear a good suit of Cloth of my Son's wool, manufactured, as well as my shirts in Albemarl[e] & Augusta Counties, my Shoes, Horse Buckles, Wig, & Hat etca of our own Country."³⁵ Despite this powerful show of non-importation, Nelson insisted on ordering seeds from England. They were considered so necessary that they remained the single matter of trade for the next year. Norton and Nelson remained in close contact until William Nelson's death in 1773. William's son and heir, Thomas Nelson, Jr. attempted to retain the correspondence for sometime, but the war and larger issues soon ended the correspondence.

The Nelsons expressed themselves according to the context in which they lived, including a town where gardens were both useful and profitable. By the mid-1700s, Yorktown was beyond the fear of starvation in a New World, but its citizens continued to use their gardens for the primary purpose of nourishment and supplement. According to the anonymous sketch of Yorktown, the homes of the Lightfoots, Digges, Nelsons, and other leading families in the town used their gardens as sensible additions to the kitchen, rather than elegant extensions of the main house. Fellow Virginia colonist Robert Carter Nicholas ordered good quantities of kitchen vegetables for the upcoming year from John Norton of London, including many celery, watercress, mustard, cauliflower, cabbage, and the "Turkey" cucumber 'Scotch Tom' Nelson had introduced to the town in 1738. Rather typically, he endorsed that "if these seeds are not quite fresh & good it will not be worth while to send them," as "many of those last sent faild to my great disappointment [sic]."³⁶

There is only one record of a Yorktown estate that used landscaping as a means of conveying importance and beauty. The Ringfield house, built in the late seventeenth century by Joseph Ring, a wealthy planter and one of the two trustees in the founding of Yorktown in 1691, was situated "at the end of a long avenue of cedar trees."³⁷ Such a design was typical of fashions in England at the time and far more related to style than function.³⁸ The Ringfield house was a rare exception in Yorktown, however. According to Colonial Williamsburg officials, most gardens in colonial Virginia were "simple, functional, and even somewhat bare."³⁹

Like the Nelsons, leading families across Virginia used their gardens as simple functionalities. In 1737, English merchant Peter Collinson warned his trade partner John Bartram to be fine company on a trip to Virginia, for those "wealthy Virginians had a reputation for snobbish affectation."⁴⁰ Their pretentiousness, however true in other social arenas, did not

he refused to buy products from Norton during the period. This policy of boycotting was referred to as 'non-importation' and was adopted by a number of patriotic colonists. See British Parliament, 1767, "The Townshend Act" America's Homepage, http://ahp.gatech.edu/townshend_act_1767.html (Accessed 8 March 2009).

³⁵ Mason, 122.

³⁶ Mason, 185.

³⁷ The Ringfield House burnt down in 1920 and little more is known of the original state of the grounds. See "Historic Echoes at King's Creek," *York County History* (York County Historical Committee, York History Series #A 3.2, July 2003), 1.

³⁸ Note the tree-lined central axis and approach road at Castle Howard: Barlow, 241, 244.

³⁹ M. Kent Brinkley and Gordon W. Chapell, "A Williamsburg Perspective on Colonial Gardens," *Colonial Williamsburg*, <http://www.history.org/almanack/life/garden/garintro.cfm>.

⁴⁰ Wulf, 67 in reference to John Clayton, John Bartram, Peter Collinson, William Byrd, and Isham Randolph, "Letters of John Clayton, John Bartram, Peter Collinson, William Byrd, and Isham Randolph" *The William and Mary Quarterly* (Second Series, Vol. 6, No. 4, October 1926), 304.

extend to the garden.⁴¹ In fact, gentlemen across the state focused on the garden for its function over its form. Like William Nelson, lawyer and planter Mann Page was in correspondence with John Norton of London during the colonial period. In 1770, he placed an extensive order of garden seeds for the upcoming fall, consisting mainly of garden vegetables. He also tended to his plants carefully, requesting knives and spades for planting and upkeep. When ordering them, he insisted they be insured. They were obviously highly valued to the Virginia planter, though the quantities he ordered them in (between ¼ and 2 oz.) made it obvious they were only for private kitchen use, not to be planted for a selling harvest.⁴² Dr. James Carter of Williamsburg also insisted that Norton insure his kitchen seeds of cabbage, cauliflower, and turnips for their spring shipment.⁴³ In addition to the usual cabbage, lettuce, and flowering vegetables, the Anglican minister Thomas Fields of Gloucester, Virginia ordered more exotic plants in 1772, including coriander, caraway seeds, cardamom, and those same green “Turkey” cucumbers that Custis had introduced to Virginia in 1737. Even the great plantation owner William Byrd, reputed to have one of the greatest collections of native plants and imperial imports in Virginia, focused on the practicalities of plant form and function. He particularly enjoyed pruning his own trees in the orchard.⁴⁴ The practicalities of gardening were of utmost importance to colonial gardeners, regardless of wealth.

Looking through the perspective of the Nelson family of Yorktown, it is demonstrated that the role and derivation of the colonial garden was quite similar to that of an English garden; these influences, however, were manifested in a far different manner in the colonies. Historians have noted the interaction between England and America in contributing to English gardens, but they have failed to recognize the reality of gardening in America. Remarkably, these simple gardens were derived from the same ideas as the elegant landscape designs dotting the countryside of contemporary England.

In the words of its author, Richard Drayton, *Nature’s Government* “is an attempt to make sense of the origins of the modern world [through] the interactions of science and imperial expansion,” by focusing on ‘improvement’ to the devastated English landscape and public health.⁴⁵ For Drayton, the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew testified to the imperialism and new scientific ideas to tell the story of the English empire. The gardens were a collection of plants from across the English empire and reflections of a time when the botanical discoveries of Linnaeus and Miller were changing ideas about the world.⁴⁶ Drayton emphasizes agricultural origins of English wealth and empire and astutely shows how religious assumptions and the history of science played an important role in shaping the British Empire. Unfortunately, by focusing on such a limited case study, Drayton is unable to grasp what gardening meant to the colonies themselves. He claims that “the same process was at work at the imperial centre as at

⁴¹ Wulf, 67.

⁴² Mason, 126.

⁴³ Mason, 152.

⁴⁴ Wulf, 69.

⁴⁵ Drayton, Richard, *Nature’s Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the ‘Improvement’ of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), xi. See note 20.

⁴⁶ Linnaeus (1707-1778), born Carl von Linné, created the scientific system of naming plants in his ground-breaking work *Systema Naturae* (Leyden, 1735). His method of classifying with a binomial nomenclature was based on subdividing into orders, families, genera and species. See Drayton, 18 and Wulf, 3. Philip Miller (1691-1771) was an English botanist whose *Garden Dictionary* (1731) was the first compendium of practical gardening, offering advice and scientific treatises on plant-related topics. His work at the Chelsea Physic Garden paved the way as one of the first botanical gardens of Great Britain. See Wulf, 34-47.

the frontier,” but this is not true in even the broadest sense possible.⁴⁷ The experiences of those in England were completely different from contemporary experiences in the colonies. The Nelson family of Yorktown clearly demonstrated that, though Britons themselves, their colonial garden was far different from those developing in England contemporarily.

Interestingly enough, the reasons are basically the same as those Drayton delineates in his book. Colonial gardening exemplified the idea of ‘improvement’ to one’s property and lifestyle. It reflected the scientific discoveries accompanying imperial expansion in the eighteenth century, and it was strongly rooted in agriculture. All of these ideas are highlighted by Drayton as central to the development of the botanical gardens at Kew, the royal gardens of Great Britain.

Drayton emphasizes that these botanical gardens were a form of ornamental display, testifying to the political and social implications of colonization. New places provided new plant life with the ability, in Drayton’s words, “to cure disease” or, at the very least, “to glorify the nation.”⁴⁸ Eighteenth century European medicinal practices were premised on the theory that diseases were specific to certain regions and the cure for a particular disease could be found in native plant life. Thus, the cure to new diseases supposedly contracted through contact with new regions lie in the plants of those regions. Exotic plants could, therefore, be the antidote to exotic disease. When there was no medicinal practicality, plants were at least ornamental demonstrations of the power of the British Empire. Botanical gardens boasted the flora of regions newly explored with imperial expansion, and the British monarch used them as a show of authority. The British used botanical gardens and landscape design as a means of political and social expression. In a more reduced manner, the Nelsons demonstrated this same reasoning for their simple kitchen garden.

The Nelson garden was a physical improvement to the house through its plant content and its affect on property value in Virginia. The Nelsons grew primarily vegetables and herbs in the garden, providing nourishment and medicine to the family. During the eighteenth century, medicinal practice was based on the use of different herbs for healing. When someone fell ill, herbs from their own garden could be prescribed to help, rather than having to go to the apothecary. The Nelsons obviously used their garden as an extension of the kitchen; their plants produced food to be used in day-to-day meal preparation. Individual herbs could provide exotic seasonings, but most of the plant content consisted of standard vegetable crop like carrots, peas, and turnips greens. In addition to medicinal and nutritional value, gardens enhanced property value. This was particularly true when the garden was fenced in (to keep vermin out and ensure a rewarding harvest). Between 1752 and 1773, The *Virginia Gazette* listed numerous houses for sale, which promoted their advertisements with the addition of kitchen gardens alongside outbuildings like wash-houses, storehouses, stables, dairies, wells, and the kitchen itself.⁴⁹ Prominent Yorktown citizens including Dudley Digges, George Riddell, and Jacquelin Ambler all advertised properties in the *Gazette* under such terms. The garden was an important addition to any property. A plot could be described in terms of being ‘well pailed in’ or well-cultivated, but even just having a garden on the property made it an important selling point.⁵⁰ In Yorktown, a garden like the Nelson’s affected the monetary value of the home, but the improvement of the owners was also witnessed.

⁴⁷ Drayton, xvi-xviii.

⁴⁸ Drayton, 41.

⁴⁹ See William Hunter, ed, *Virginia Gazette*, July 3, 1752, 3; William Rind, ed. *Virginia Gazette*, March 29, 1770, 3; Alexander Purdie and John Dixon, eds, *Virginia Gazette*, December 9, 1773, 2.

⁵⁰ See notes 13 and 46.

The Nelson garden provided a means of psychological convalescence for the family. Though not intended to be a pleasure garden, it became a place of healing for the Nelsons. In a personal letter, William Nelson described “an ugly Fall from her Horse” his wife Elizabeth had when riding one day, after which she was confined to bed for a month.⁵¹ Once she became able, she and her husband experienced great joy in her ability to walk around the house and garden. Nature as a healing force has been a common theme throughout world history, and in this case, even a simple kitchen garden gave Mrs. Nelson a feeling of accomplishment and happiness.⁵² Thus, though the garden was not intended as a means of social ‘improvement,’ it became a place of psychological and physical development.

In eighteenth century Europe, landscape theorist Abbé Vallemont proposed that nature, as humans had interaction with, existed in three parts: agricultural land, formal gardens, and idyllic wilderness.⁵³ Beginning in Vallemont’s time, England became renowned for creating landscapes that mimicked this third nature: wilderness. Wealthy landowners used new plants from the colonies to create this image. In America, on the other hand, settlers continued to focus on the first: agriculture. Colonists used new plants from other British colonies to enhance production in this arena. Though they differed in result, both American colonists and English residents used their gardens as a space for discovering interesting new species. The Nelsons became a part of the larger picture of a British empire of exchange and development in mid-1738.

The ‘account of a cucumber’ provides a depth of insight into the Nelsons’ fascination with and integration into this system.⁵⁴ During the summer of 1737, John Custis of Williamsburg received some seeds of a “long Cucumber” from his friend and correspondent Peter Collinson of London.⁵⁵ Custis failed to grow the seed himself, but gave some to his son, who was successful in growing three cucumber plants. In observing his son’s accomplishment, Custis realized that the plants were able to grow despite excessive drought that season. These long cucumbers of the “Morocco” or “Turkey” type grew well under desert-like conditions. The cucumbers grew as large three feet long. As word spread with an article in the *Virginia Gazette*, people came from miles around to see the astonishing vegetable. The Nelsons were among those who took an interest in the unique gourd. ‘Scotch Tom’ secured some seed for himself, and the following year, *The Virginia Gazette* reported giant cucumbers, measuring up to 40 inches in length, growing in ‘Scotch Tom’ Nelson’s garden.⁵⁶ Undoubtedly, the large creatures created a stir in the town and caused more visitors to flock to the Nelson’s garden to see the unique plants. According to the *Virginia Gazette*, there were two species of cucumbers, one green and one white, and “both of ‘em eat well.”⁵⁷

In displaying this plant in their garden, the Nelsons were demonstrating the discovery of a new species. The exotic plant they grew was the byproduct of English exploration and

⁵¹ Mason, 77.

⁵² Various interactions have been linked to causal effects in healing after physical or mental injury. See Susan S. Scott, *Healing with Nature* (Allworth Communications, 2003); Oliver Sacks, *A Leg to Stand On* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998); Bill Moyers, *Healing and the Mind* (New York: Broadway Books: 1995); and Jane Maitland, “Review of The Healing Fields; Working with Psychotherapy and Nature to Rebuild Shattered Lives,” *Psychodynamic Practice: Individuals, Groups and Organisations* (Vol. 9, Issue 3).

⁵³ Abbé Vallemont, *Curiositez de la nature et de l’art* (Paris, 1705). See Appendix C for Vallemont’s frontispiece.

⁵⁴ William Parks, ed, *Virginia Gazette*, September 1, 1738, 4.

⁵⁵ Zuppan, Josephine Little, ed, *The Letterbook of John Custis IV of Williamsburg, 1717-1742* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc), 28 August 1737.

⁵⁶ William Parks, ed, *Virginia Gazette*, September 1, 1738, 4.

⁵⁷ William Parks, ed, *Virginia Gazette*, September 1, 1738, 4.

colonization. As English soldiers were sent to various locations around the world, new botanical scientists, akin to Sir Joseph Banks, instructed them to bring back examples of exotic plants. Nelson's large cucumbers were the product of such an endeavor. They were first taken to England, where Collinson turned them out to the New World via his associations with men like John Custis. Custis, in turn, distributed the seeds within his local community. A distribution from the periphery to the center and back to the periphery was possible through the economic trade relationships established by various British citizens.

The cucumbers growing in the Nelson garden, furthermore, became ornamental displays, quite like those of botanical gardens in England. The *Virginia Gazette* advertisement of their plants undoubtedly brought interested folk to their house, provided them with new contacts, and served as an advertisement for their imports business. The great many people who came to Custis' house to view his seeds showed the interest of the Virginia community in new agricultural finds that were a part of English expansion. The result was the creation of a small-scale botanical garden, right in the colonists' backyards.

After William Nelson's death in 1773, the garden of the Nelson House quite literally plunged downhill. Following his father's death, Thomas Nelson, Jr. did not maintain the garden seed correspondence with John Norton in London. He was thereby either no longer concerned with the seeds or he was purchasing the seeds from a local source. Being an adamant patriot, Thomas Jr. was far more likely to pursue such measures than to continue correspondence over garden seeds in the midst of broader political conflict. Regardless of the specifics, the letters drop off just previous to the beginnings of the Revolutionary War. Nothing else is known of the garden for the next five years, until a visit from Nicholas Cresswell, recorded in his April 29, 1777 journal.⁵⁸ Cresswell describes the beautiful houses and gardens which once dominated the landscape at Yorktown, but had lately been destroyed. According to Cresswell, these gardens, "laid out with the greatest taste of any . . . seen in America," were now being overrun with soldiers, who were using them as means of defense and supply.⁵⁹ At the time, however, Cresswell found these gardens "thrown into the street, everything in disorder and confusion."⁶⁰ Indeed, upon the siege of Yorktown some four years later, Thomas Nelson, Jr. himself ordered the destruction of his own home. He even proposed a monetary reward for the first soldier to strike (as Cornwallis was attempting to set up his headquarters in the Nelson House). Though the house only suffered minor abrasions, the Nelsons' economics fared quite worse. By the end of the war, Nelson found himself severely in debt. The family name dwindled over time, but the house remained in the family.⁶¹ The home was finally sold in 1914 to George P. Blow, who in collaboration with the great Virginia landscape architect Charles Gillette, created a condensed "colonial revival" interpretation of the gardens at the Blow house in England.⁶²

The garden of the Nelson family was relatively short-lived, but as such it appropriately represents only the era and locale in which it was conceived: colonial Virginia. The historian M. Kent Brinkley has pointed out that in terms of colonial gardens, "then, as today, gardens were as

⁵⁸ Nicholas Cresswell, *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777* (New York: L. MacVeagh, 1924), quoted in William B. O'Neale, *Architecture in Virginia: An Official Guide to Four Centuries of Building in the Old Dominion* (New York: The Virginia Museum, 1968).

⁵⁹ O'Neale, 61.

⁶⁰ O'Neale, 63.

⁶¹ Mary Marshall Brewer, ed, *York County, Virginia Land Records: 1729-1763* (Delaware: Colonial Roots, 2005).

⁶² See Charles F. Gillette, *Papers, ca. 1880-1985* (Accession 34472, Business records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia), accessed 21 Nov 2008; and Longest, George C, *Genius in the Garden: Charles F. Gillette and Landscape Architecture in Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia State Library and Archives, 1992), 61-65.

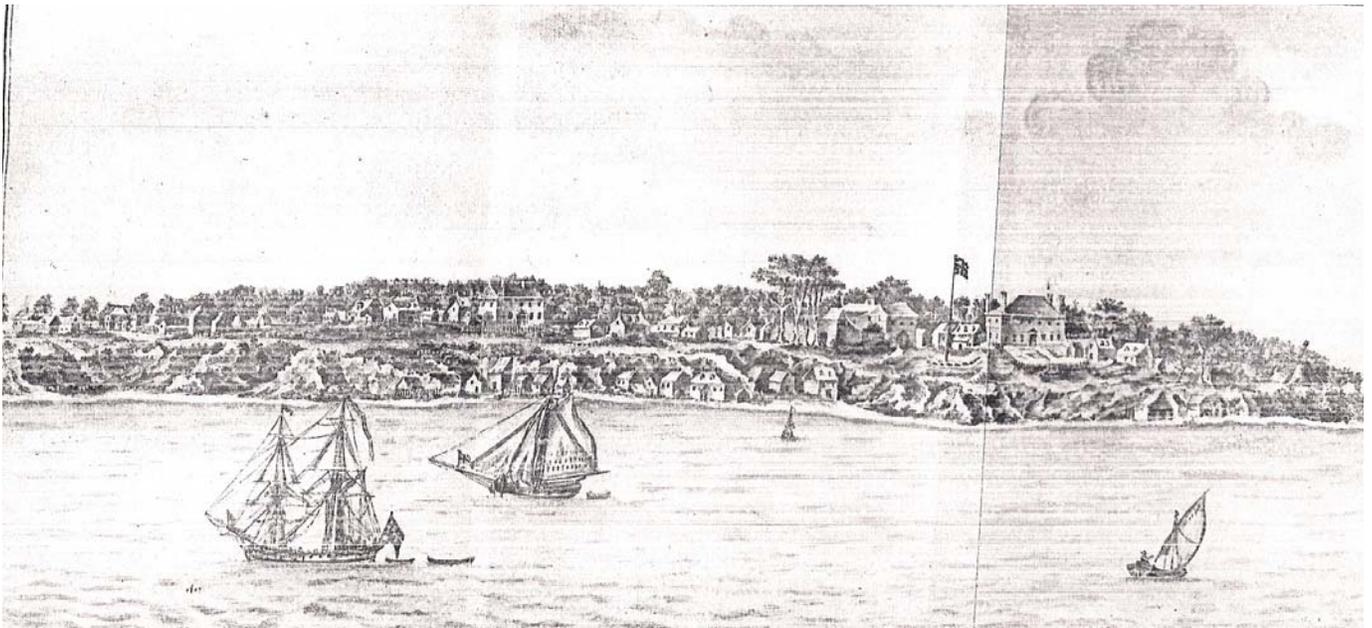
varied as the people who created and tended them.”⁶³ Indeed, in order to fully understand the importance of these gardens, one must first understand the people who created them. The Nelsons were an affluent family: wealthy, socially accepted, and well-connected to England. In their education, dress, and art, they represented the typical English gentlemen and ladies. But their garden told a wholly different story. The Nelson’s had but a simple kitchen garden, meant to nourish and supplement their diets. There was nothing ostentatious or commanding about it, as there was in Europe at the time among citizens of comparable status to the Nelsons. Despite all these facts, the Nelson garden was derived from the same reasons as the new landscapes dotting the countryside in England and the botanical gardens of the royal family. All spoke of rationality, improvement, scientific discovery, and imperial expansion. The Nelson garden tells a complicated story of rational simplicity and practical improvement, resulting from British exploration and conquest in the eighteenth century.

⁶³ M. Kent Brinkley and Gordon W. Chapell, “A Williamsburg Perspective on Colonial Gardens,” *Colonial Williamsburg*, <http://www.history.org/almanack/life/garden/garintro.cfm>.

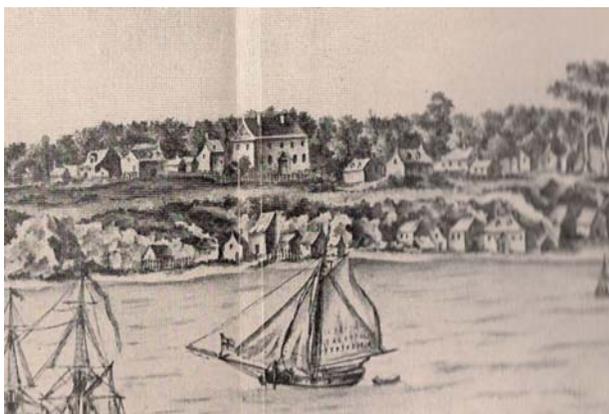
Appendix A.

“A View of Yorktown, Virginia”

The Nelson House is the largest house in the left half of this sketch. The buildings under the bluffs served as warehouses and houses for the working-class who toiled in them. On the hill, a prominent flag and battery is evident. Other prominent houses include Secretary Nelson’s on the far left, the Lightfoot’s two blocks down from the Nelson House, and William Buckner’s property near Windmill Point (in the far left of the sketch).



Unknown, “A View of York, Virginia from the River” from ¹ E.G. Swem, ed, *Views of Yorktown and Gloucester Town, 1755* (Newport News: The Mariners’ Museum, 1946), insert.

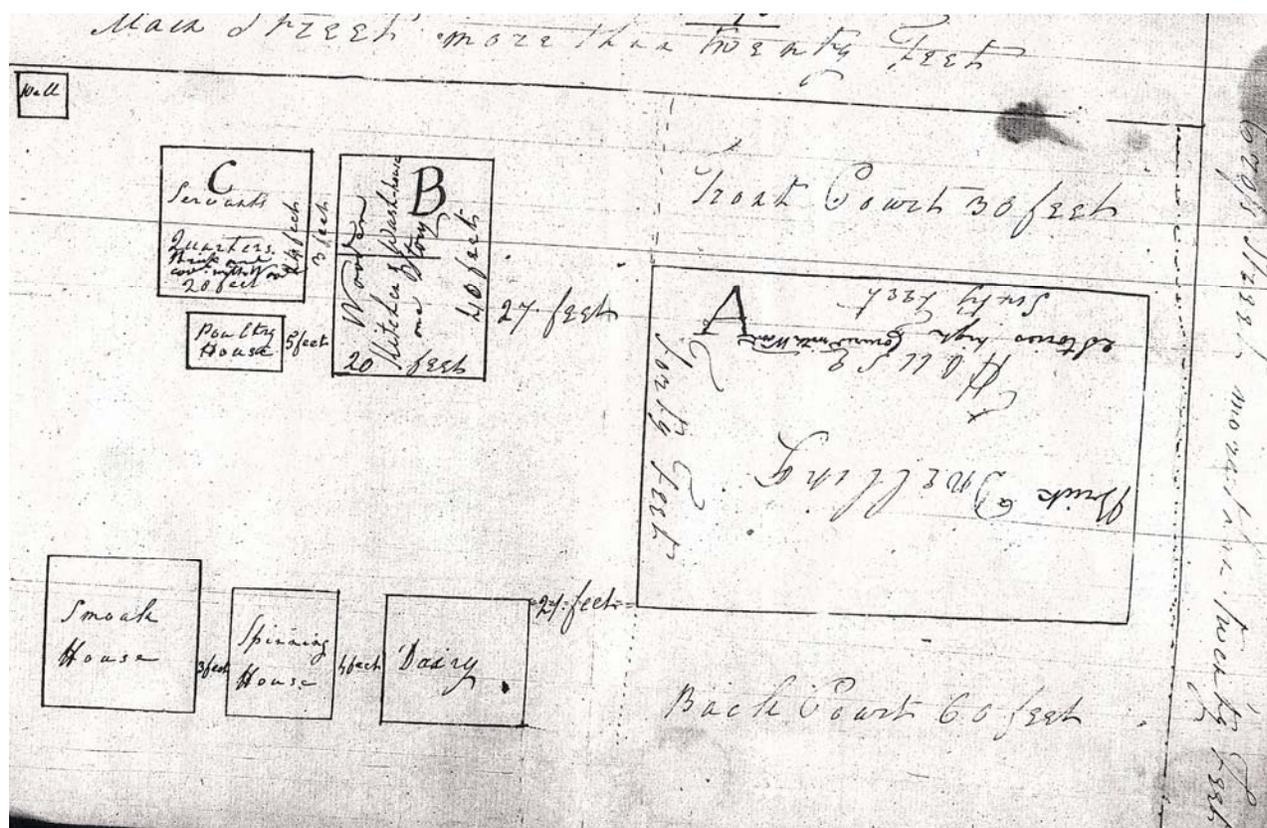


The Nelson house is located in the center of the sketch. Note the trees in the front yard and the simple rail fence surrounding the lots.

Appendix B.

Mutual Assurance Policy #98

The first policies for the Mutual Assurance Society were written in 1796. William Nelson purchased a policy in April of that same year to insure his property on lots 48 and 52 of Yorktown for \$4600. The policy, shown below, does not indicate where the garden was located, but does illustrate their large kitchen, the structure labeled B, which measured 800 square feet. The garden provided vegetables and herbs as an extension of this dependency.

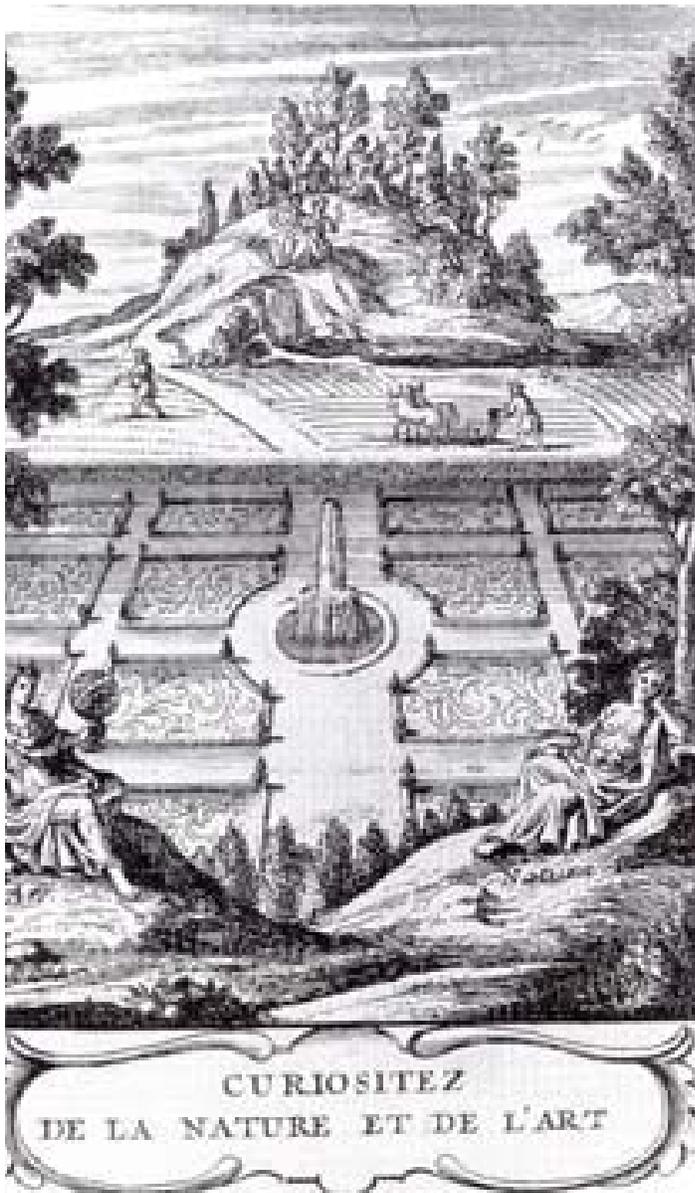


Mutual Assurance Society, *Mutual Assurance Society Declarations and Revaluations of Policies, 1796-1867* (Architectural Drawings and Plans collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia), accessed 6 Nov 2008, Policy 98.

Appendix C.

Three Natures

During the Renaissance, landscape theorists emphasized the idea of “three natures,” consisting of wilderness, agriculture, and the formal garden. In the eighteenth century, Abbé Vallemont’s *Curiositez de la nature et de l’art* further explored this topic, and his frontispiece provides the classic depiction of the three natures theory. Note that in his contemporary depiction, the idyllic wilderness is brought to the foreground, indicating its growing importance.



Abbé Vallemont, *Curiositez de la nature et de l’art* (Paris, 1705).

Works Cited

- A Handbook for the Exhibition Buildings of Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated.* Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1941.
- Brewer, Mary Marshall, ed. *York County, Virginia Land Record: 1694-1713.* Delaware: Colonial Roots, 2006.
- Brewer, Mary Marshall, ed. *York County, Virginia Land Records: 1729-1763.* Delaware: Colonial Roots, 2005.
- Brinkley, M. Kent and Gordon W. Chapell. "A Williamsburg Perspective on Colonial Gardens." *Colonial Williamsburg*. <http://www.history.org/almanack/life/garden/garintro.cfm>.
- "Building Yorke's Port Town." *York County History*. York County Historical Committee, York History Series #A-7, 1992.
- Clayton, John, John Bartram, Peter Collinson, William Byrd, and Isham Randolph. "Letters of John Clayton, John Bartram, Peter Collinson, William Byrd, and Isham Randolph". *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Second Series, Vol. 6, No. 4 (October 1926). 303-325.
- Cresswell, Nicholas. *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777.* New York, L. MacVeagh, 1924.
- Drayton, Richard. *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Evans, Emory G. *Thomas Nelson of Yorktown: Revolutionary Virginian.* Charlottesville: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1975.
- Fisher, George. "Narrative of George Fisher: Commencing with a Voyage from London, May 1750, for Yorktown in Virginia and Ending in August, 1755, on his Return from Philadelphia to Williamsburg". *The William and Mary Quarterly* (1908) vol. 17 (2) pp. 100-139.
- Gillette, Charles F. *Papers, ca. 1880-1985 (bulk 1918-1969).* Accession 34472 , Business records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Accessed 21 November 2008.
- Hatch, Charles E. *The Edmund Smith House: A History.* Colonial National Historic Park, August 1969.
- "Historic Echoes at King's Creek." *York County History*. York County Historical Committee. York History Series #A3.2. July 2003.

- Hunt, John Dixon. *Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination: 1600-1750*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1986.
- William Hunter, ed. *Virginia Gazette*. July 3, 1752.
- Kocher, A. Lawrence and Howard Dearstyne. *Colonial Williamsburg: Its Buildings and Gardens*. Williamsburg, Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1949.
- Longest, George C. *Genius in the Garden: Charles F. Gillette and Landscape Architecture in Virginia*. Richmond: Virginia State Library and Archives, 1992.
- Lounsbury, Carl R., ed. *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994.
- Lounsbury, Carl R., ed. "Nelson House." *Early American Architecture in New England, the Delaware Valley, and the Chesapeake*. Colonial Williamsburg Vernacular Architecture Group, 2004.
- Maitland, Jane. "Review of The Healing Fields; Working with Psychotherapy and Nature to Rebuild Shattered Lives." *Psychodynamic Practice: Individuals, Groups and Organisations*. Vol. 9, Issue 3, 2003.
- Mason, Frances Norton, ed. *John Norton & Sons: Merchants of London and Virginia, Being the Papers from the Counting House for the Years 1750 to 1795*. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1937.
- Massie, Susanne W. and Frances A. Christian, eds. *Homes and Gardens in Old Virginia*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1931.
- Moyers, Bill. *Healing and the Mind*. New York: Broadway Books, 1995.
- Mutual Assurance Society. *Mutual Assurance Society Declarations and Revaluations of Policies, 1796-1867*. Architectural Drawings and Plans collection. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Accessed 6 November 2008.
- Nelson Family. *Papers, 1743-1880*. Personal Papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Accessed 6 November 2008.
- Nelson, William. *Papers, 1785-1790*. Accession 29474. Personal papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Accessed 6 November 2008.
- O'Neale, William B. *Architecture in Virginia: An Official Guide to Four Centuries of Building in the Old Dominion*. New York: The Virginia Museum, 1968.
- William Parks, ed. *Virginia Gazette*. September 1, 1738.

- Peale, Charles Willson. *Washington and his Generals at Yorktown*. Maryland Historical Society, 1784.
- Purdie, Alexander, and Dixon, John, eds. *Virginia Gazette*. December 9, 1773.
- Quaintance, Richard. "Walpole's Whig Interpretation of Landscaping History." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*. 1979.
- Repton, Humphrey. "Observations on the Theory and Practice of Modern Gardening." *The Art of Landscape Gardening*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1907, 65-69.
- Riley, Edward M. "Suburban Development of Yorktown, Virginia, during the Colonial Period." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Vol. 60, No. 4 (October 1952). 522-536.
- Rind, William, ed. *Virginia Gazette*. March 29, 1770.
- Rogers, Elizabeth Barlow. *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.
- Sachs, Oliver. *A Leg to Stand On*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Scott, Susan. *Healing with Nature*. Allworth Communications, 2003.
- Snyder, William C. "Wildlife Neighbors of the Williamsburg Area: Jamestown, Williamsburg, Yorktown." http://www.baylink.org/wpc/3fr_wpc.html.
- Stevens, Lillian K. "The Bodleian Plate." *College of William & Mary*. September 1, 2007. <http://www.wm.edu/news/ideation/fall2007/fall-2007-sidebars/the-bodleian-plate.php>.
- Swem, E.G., ed. *Views of Yorktown and Gloucester Town, 1755*. Newport News: The Mariners' Museum, 1946.
- The National Park Service. "Yorktown Battlefield." <http://www.nps.gov/york/index.htm>.
- Trudell, Clyde F. *Colonial Yorktown: Being a brief History of the Place; together with Something of its Houses and Publick Buildings*. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1938.
- Vallemont, Abbé. *Curiositez de la nature et de l'art*. Paris, 1705.
- Walpole, Horace. "The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening." 1770. from: Chase, I.W.U., ed. *Horace Walpole, Gardener*. Princeton University Press, 1943.
- Waterman, Thomas T. *The Mansions of Virginia: 1706-1776*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946.

Whately, Thomas. *Observations on Modern Gardening, Illustrated by Descriptions*. London: Printed for T. Payne, 1770.

“Who was Thomas Nelson?” Thomas Nelson Community College, 2008. 25 November 2008.
Wulf, Andrea. *The Brother Gardeners*.

Zuppan, Josephine Little, ed. *The Letterbook of John Custis IV of Williamsburg, 1717-1742*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.