

Summary of Morven Park Ownership 1800 – 1903

1800 – THOMAS SWANN STARTS BUILDING HIS ESTATE:

September 15, 1800 – Thomas Swann purchases land from Wilson Cary Seldon. This is believed to be the first tract of Morven purchased by Swann. Over the following twenty years he purchases additional properties to add to the tract.

1837 – SWANN, SR. SELLS LANDS TO SON SWANN, JR. (AND DISTRIBUTES PORTIONS TO OTHER CHILDREN):

September 6, 1837 – Thomas Swann, Sr. sells the estate north of the south “gable end of the Stone house now occupied by his slaves John Fitzhugh and his wife and others near to the spring...” to his son, Thomas Swann, Jr. on the condition that Sr. can live on the estate for the rest of his life. This includes 600 – 700 acres. *[Corbell may be the stone house]*

1840 – SWANN, SR. DIES

1842 – THOMAS SWANN, JR. PURCHASES REMAINDER OF ESTATE FROM SIBLINGS:

July 11, 1842 – Thomas Swann, Jr. purchases the land south of the south gable end of the stone house that were inherited by his siblings. This land includes roughly 600 acres plus 67 acres of a tract called “the Wedge”.

In this deed the land that Thomas Swann, Jr. purchased from his father is referred to as “Morven”. This is the first time the estate is named in the deeds. *[Note: “Morven” is mentioned in Swann, Sr.’s 1840 obituary notice and is also used in Samuel Chase’s 1830 diary entry recording his visit to the site.]*

Swann, Jr. renovates the mansion between 1858 – 1861.

1878 – MARY MERCER CARTER & DR. SHIRLEY CARTER, ET AL, BECOME LEGAL TRUSTEES FOR MORVEN PARK

1880 – MARY M. CARTER & DR. SHIRLEY CARTER ARE RESIDING AT MORVEN PARK

Personal property taxes do not survive for the years of 1869 – 1879. In 1880 Mary Mercer Carter and Dr. C. Shirley Carter appear on the personal property tax register as agent for Thomas Swann, Jr. They are most likely in residence at this time and may have been living at Morven for some time prior.

1883 – THOMAS SWANN, JR. DIES

1888 – TRUSTEES TRANSFER MORVEN PARK TO MARY M. CARTER & DR. SHIRLEY CARTER

December 4, 1888 – Morven transfers from the trustees to Mary M. Carter and her husband who appear to have been living on site for at least the past eight years.

Mary Mercer Carter is believed to have renovated the mansion between 1883 – 1886. *[One of the baseboards in Governor Davis’ bedroom was signed by two carpenters and dated October 1886.]*

1898 – CARTERS SELL TO HOWELLS

A February 3, 1898 article published in Washington, D.C.’s *The Times* noted the sale from the Carters to Rev. R.L. Howell rector of St. Margaret’s Episcopal Mission Church who planned to use it as a summer residence. It also refers to improvements completed by the Carters.

1901 – HOWELLS SELL TO ELIZABETH H. SCOTT

The Scotts begin extensive renovations and building projects soon after their May 1901 purchase. A January 26, 1902 article, titled “Morven Park Handsomely Improved by its New Owners” in *The Times*, Richmond, VA details the work completed.

SEPTEMBER 23, 1903 – DAVIS PURCHASES MORVEN PARK