

The Grove Plantation

A Brief History



The area now known as the Grove Plantation was originally a land grant to Robert Fenwick in 1694. It has had many owners through the years, unlike most plantations which belonged to the same family for numerous generations. From 1695 until 1825, the property changed hands nine times. In 1825, George Washington Morris purchased the land and named it Grove Plantation.

George Washington Morris, son of Ann Barnett Elliott and Col. Lewis Morris, was born in 1796 and married Maria Evans Whaley from Edisto. His parents owned large tracts of land, including a plantation directly across the river from what is now known as Grove Plantation. He built the Grove House about 1828. It is built in the late-Federal-period plantation style of architecture and has the unusual feature of polygonal rooms and projecting symmetrical polygonal bays. G.W. Morris died on August 22, 1834, leaving his wife, a son, and three daughters. After his death, his wife, Maria, kept control of the Grove, and later purchased a schooner, with which she transported freight for her neighbors. By 1837, she had not only paid off her husband's debts, but she had also had the house plastered. In 1839, she installed a threshing machine and by 1841, she had a housekeeper and a governess in her employ in addition to her overseer.

G. W. Morris' son, George Jr., was not a good business manager, and from the time his mother passed the management of the plantation to him until the time of his death, he built up huge debts. After his death, the plantation was sold to John Berkeley Grimball in 1857.

John Berkeley Grimball was married to Margaret Ann (Meta) Morris, G. W. Morris' niece, and owned the adjacent plantation, Pinebury. He combined Pinebury and the Grove into one large property and the family moved into the

Grove House early in 1858. During the War Between the States, John, Meta and the 5 younger children went to Spartanburg. The 5 oldest boys were fighting in the war and John made numerous trips to check on the plantation. Both Pinebury and the Grove were sites of military activity and the Grove House was at one time occupied by Confederate troops. By 1866, Meta had to sell clothes and ornaments just to get food. Since the Grove was considered abandoned, it was confiscated. On January 24, 1866, John Berkeley Grimball made application to the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands for restoration of his property. Because he took the amnesty oath of loyalty to the United States, he was able to regain ownership of the Grove and Pinebury. After the war, John was unable to make his mortgage payments on the Grove, therefore the land reverted back to G. W. Morris' heirs, Josephine M. Porter & Sabina Ann Morris in 1870.

After that, the property changed hands numerous times until it was purchased by Owen Winston in 1929. President of Brooks Brothers, Winston did a restoration of the house. He added 5 dormer windows on the roof, put in 2 bathrooms on the north porch (the back of the house), removed the polygonal walls in the hallway and put in straight ones. He put in the herringbone brickwork under both porches, installed wainscoting & doors (salvaged from the Bischoff house) and had outbuildings put in, including stables, an ice house, a 3 car garage, a barn, 2 residences, and a kitchen house.



After Winston, the plantation once again had several owners until Thompson Brown purchased it in 1930. The Brown family used the Grove as a winter vacation residence and hunted waterfowl & deer. The plantation was also a place where Mr. Brown's daughter, M. T. could recuperate from polio. Between 1934 - 1951, the Browns planted pecan, persimmon, cedar, palmetto, magnolia, and azaleas around the house. In 1947, the SC Power Company ran power lines to the house. The Browns sold the property in 1953.

R. Carter Henry purchased the Grove in 1964. The Henrys did an extensive renovation on the house. They changed the stairwell in the foyer to an open design. They also put the duck tiles around the fireplace in the conference room. In addition, they did extensive renovations to the outbuildings.



Mr. Henry sold the Grove to A. Leigh Baier in the early 1970s. During the Baier family's ownership, numerous rice field trunks (water control structures) were rebuilt or replaced and many of the dikes around the rice fields were repaired. Following Mr. Baier, Ralph (Tad) and Margaret B. Hendricks owned the Grove until The Nature Conservancy purchased it in 1991.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service purchased the Grove 1992 as part of the ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge. The Grove Plantation House is one of very few antebellum mansions in the ACE Basin area to survive the Civil War. Former owners ensured it would be preserved by placing it on the National Register of Historical Places. Another extensive renovation was done on the house in 1996 - 1997. Today it houses the offices of the US Fish and Wildlife Service's ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge.