

CULTURAL RESOURCES

AT ELLANOR C. LAWRENCE PARK

PREHISTORIC

The land that became Walney has been occupied by humans for over 13,000 years. Clovis spear points found near Dulles Airport were used by ancient paleo-Indians to hunt medium to large game toward the end of the last ice age. Prey species included woodland caribou and possibly mastodon. A smaller spear point found here at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park dates from 9,000 years ago. By that time larger groups of archaic Indians moved around smaller geographic areas taking advantage of more plant foods and hunting deer, elk and bison. Many prehistoric people probably used this land over the next 8,000 years

18th TO 20th CENTURY FARMING

The story of Ellanor C. Lawrence Park is the story of three families, the Brown/Lewis family, the Machens, and the Lawrences.

Like most area farms, tobacco was the main crop, yet depleted the soils of its nutrients, causing the area's farmers to diversify their crops and introduce livestock, such as dairy production. Industrialization and new farming practices changed the landscape. Studying the activities at Walney, Middlegate, and Cabell's Mill help us to understand this period of change in our nation's history.

THE CIVIL WAR

The years 1861-1865 were a time of conflict. Outside of Washington, DC, northern and southern armies found some of the most intense activity in Northern Virginia. Centreville became a focus due to its strategic importance. Ellanor C. Lawrence Park contains many cultural and archaeological resources from this pivotal time.

Walney suffered extensive damage during the Civil War, as troops from both sides crossed back and forth across the property. In 1861-62, over 40,000 troops camped in and around Centreville, and cut most of the available trees for firewood, shelter and fortifications. The result of this deforestation was extensive erosion, evidence of which is still visible on the property today.

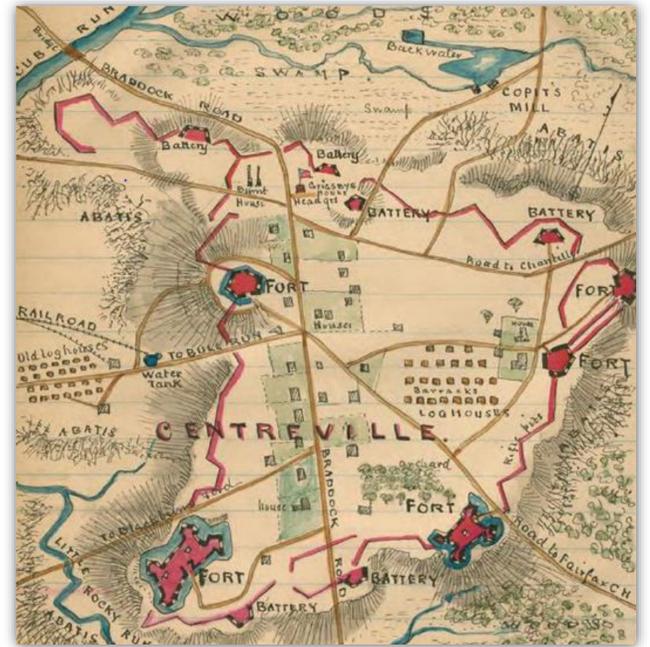
ELLANOR C. LAWRENCE

Ellanor Campbell Lawrence grew up in South Carolina. She moved to Washington, D.C. in about 1916, where she met and married David Lawrence. David was a syndicated columnist and author as well as the founder and publisher of U.S. News and World Report. The Lawrences used Walney as a country estate and a retreat from the hectic professional and social life of Washington, D.C. The Lawrences did not live in the stone house when at Walney.

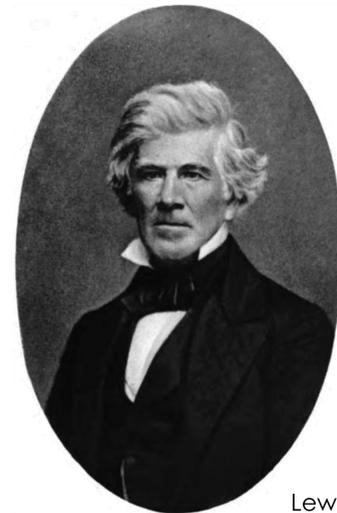
Ellanor increased her landholding here in 1942 with the purchase of Cabell's Mill, Middlegate house and the surrounding 20 acres. This land had remained under separate ownership since the time of Willoughby Newton in 1739. Ellanor and David lived at Middlegate when visiting. They entertained many guests there, and family members often gathered at Middlegate for Christmas.

Under Ellanor's direction, some of the old farm buildings and tenant structures were torn down. At the same time, the stone structures at Middlegate and Walney were renovated. Ellanor was an avid gardener, and landscape features and extensive flower plantings were added. Pasture and crop fields were left to revert to old field and forest.

Ellanor was very interested in the human and natural history of the property. Upon her death in 1969, she left the property to her husband David with the intent that it be given to a public agency, and its cultural and natural features be preserved. David Lawrence deeded 640 acres of Walney and Middlegate to the Fairfax County Park Authority in 1971 in memory of Ellanor.



Centreville, 1862



Lewis H. Machen, 1916

