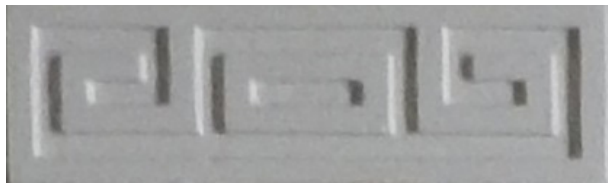
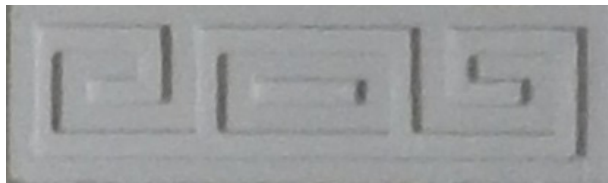


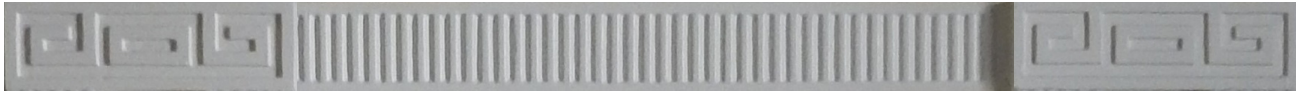


CHELSEA



CHELSEA





Even though he also had Sandy Hill, Tickton Hall, Rose Hill, and Pickpocket plantations from which to choose, John Heyward opted for Chelsea as the site of his family home after his marriage to Constantia Smith Pritchard in 1829. Their two story white clapboard house sat atop a raised basement. Five bays wide with a single story porch across the front and a hip roof and pediment above, the house was similar to a number of plantation houses of the period such as Coffin Point and Marshlands, the latter of which was floated down the Cooper River to James Island in 1961 for restoration.

Destined for a charmed life, the young Heyward died in a hunting accident, by some accounts on his thirtieth birthday in 1839. He had named his younger brother Daniel to act as trustee for his wife, Constantia, and their three children. His brother-in-law, William Richard Pritchard, Jr., was named to manage the plantations because of his knowledge of rice planting. Daniel apparently spent most of his time in Europe and Pritchard kept his sister on a short financial leash, causing her to borrow money from her mother on a regular basis. The story goes that Constantia repaid these loans on an equally regular basis when the rice crop came in but that her mother never destroyed the paid notes.



Constantia died in 1859 and her mother died in 1863. When her mother's affairs were being settled, Constantia's notes were discovered and the Pritchard family, apparently without any filial compunction, foreclosed on the notes. Having obtained title to the property, they sold it to the Fripps family of St. Helena and the nearby plantation, The Bluff. It appears that John Edwin Fripps managed a hunting club at the property beginning in the late 1880s. Chelsea was sold when club members began acquiring property in the area in 1902. Fripps continued to manage the property for the club until his death in 1906. A quick look at his account books for the club in the archive of the University of North Carolina would indicate that one of his principal activities was paying anyone who would shoot a hawk, a practice which is verboten today.

By 1931, the club had expanded to encompass 20,000 acres. Its members included Frederick Gaston, a New York insurance executive; William Crawford, a New York contractor; George Howard, utilities investor; George Slade, a railroad magnate; William Kissam and Harold Stanley, New York bankers, and A. H. Swain, a vice president of General Motors. Chlotilde Martin, a columnist for the *Charleston News and Courier* in the early 1930s, described at considerable length the interior of the club noting that, "All the rooms are papered in the most exquisite designs, the furnishings seeming to catch the very essence of their beings from the colors, now gay, now subdued, of these designs. The papering was designed by the New York artist Theban, authority on interior decoration."

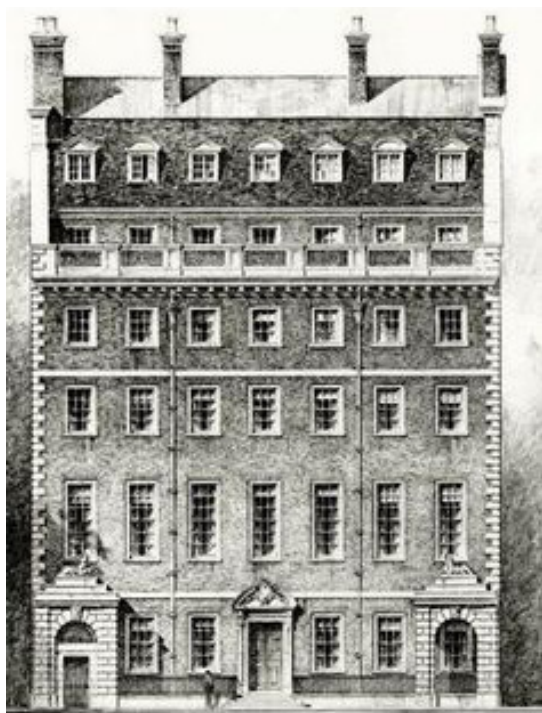




The Chelsea hunting club came to a fiery end in 1936 when the house burned to the ground. After this loss, the members decided to sell rather than rebuild and the plantation was bought by Marshall Field, III, (1893-1956) in early 1937. Field was the grandson, namesake, and heir of the founder of the Chicago department store empire, his father having died in 1905 and his brother in 1917. It seems likely that his interest in Chelsea was piqued by club member Harold Stanley with whom he served on the board of Guaranty Trust.

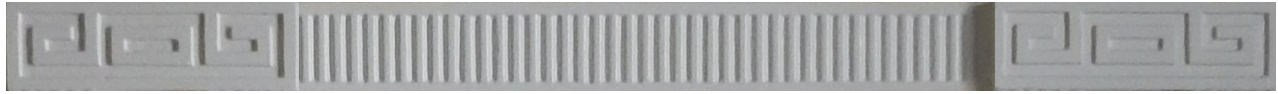
After his father's death in 1905, his mother moved to England where she married London banker, Maldwin Drummond. Thereafter, Field was educated at Eton and Cambridge and had many other English connections. His aunt, Ethel, was the wife of Arthur Magie Tree, a Chicagoan who lived many

years in Warwickshire pursuing the real estate business. Their son, Ronald, a long-time member of Parliament, was married for a number of years to the legendary decorator, Nancy Lancaster, who was the widow of Field's brother Henry. His sister married the Sixth Baronet, Sir Archibald Charles Edmonstone, of Scotland's iconic Duntreath Castle.



By 1937, Field had been trained in investments in Chicago and had moved to New York where he founded his own firm. His business interests later led to the founding of the *Chicago Sun* and the ownership of Simon & Schuster. His other interests were broad and included polo and breeding racehorses in England and America, including Assigation, a great-great-grand sire of Secretariat. He was a benefactor of the Chicago Art Institute and the New York Philharmonic and served as president of the Child Welfare League. Somewhere along the way, Field acquired the building bug.

When Field decided to build, he had the means, contacts with the leading architects of the day, and an affinity for English precedents. Shortly after moving to New York, he undertook construction of major town and country houses. The town house was designed by Chicago architect, David Adler (1882-1949), and built at 4 East

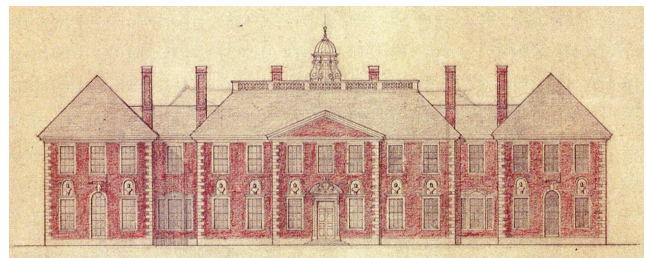


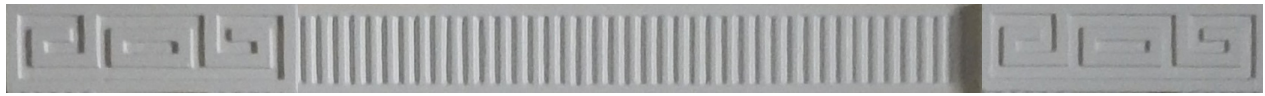
70th Street in 1925. Field and Adler were both involved with the Chicago Art Institute, having worked together to acquire Grinling Gibbons carvings for the museum in 1922. Adler provided a massive building, six stories high and seven bays wide, employing the red brick and stone dressings typical of the period. For all its grandeur, the building stood for only ten years.

For his country estate, Field did not choose Adler but instead retained John Russell Pope (1874-1937), today best known as the designer of the National Gallery, National Archives, and Jefferson Memorial, all in Washington. Why he did not continue with Adler is unknown. It may have been that Adler was employed by the Crane family of Chicago in the massive project of designing a country house in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and could not handle two similar projects at the same time. It may have been that the closer connection was between Adler and Field's first wife for whom he designed another Long Island estate, Easton, after the couple parted ways. Regardless, both Adler and Pope were products of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and, for their Chicago clients, both based their work on a noted English precedent, Belton House, the seat of the Brownlow family in Lincolnshire, England, built in the 1680s.

Ever since its publication in Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Belton has inspired country house architects on both sides of the Atlantic. For the Cranes, Adler took liberties with the massing but retained the cupola and balustrade over his central section. For Field, Pope followed the massing almost exactly, including the placement of the chimneys but left the cupola for the stables, one of over twenty buildings or groups of buildings he designed for the 1750 acre estate on Long Island's Gold Coast. Although missing one of its wings, Caumsett is now a New York State Historic Park. The Cranes' Castle Hill, now owned by The Trustees of Reservations, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998.

Reference to these houses likely explains the basic form of Chelsea and perhaps, by comparison to them, how Field could refer to it as his "Quail Lodge" without apparent irony. With its projecting end wings, emphatically placed chimneys, and cupola, it clearly makes reference to Belton. However, Chelsea was not the product of a Chicago or New York architect. For his quail lodge, Field





turned to the noted Charleston firm of Simons & Lapham and the result is a remarkable blending of Stuart England, historic South Carolina, with just a hint of Hollywood Regency thrown in for good measure.

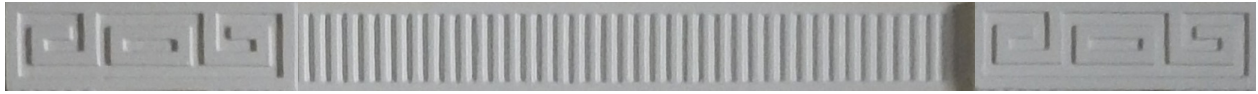


The firm of Simons & Lapham was formed in July 1920 by two Charleston natives who had graduated from the College of Charleston and gone north for their architectural studies, Simons to the University of Pennsylvania and Lapham to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They shared a deep affection and understanding of South Carolina architecture, especially that of Charleston and its surrounding plantations. Both were involved with the Historic American Buildings Survey in the 1920s and 30s. Their survey work in Charleston led to the publication of *The Octagon Library of Early American Architecture, Vol. 1, Charleston, S. C.*, in 1927. As its title suggests, this was to be the first volume of a series covering the entire country. However, the Great Depression ended the publication project after the first volume. Simons was instrumental in the formation of Charleston's original historic district and his many years as a lecturer at the College of Charleston were honored when the College named its Center for the Arts in his honor in 1981.

By 1937, the firm had already designed houses for or were overseeing renovation and restoration of plantations up and down the Carolina coast including Hope Plantation, Seabrook, The Grove, The Wedge, Fenwick Hall, Windsor Plantation, and Lowndes Grove. Simons was the leading force in the design of Chelsea. His exquisite drawings for the project are preserved at the South Carolina Historical Society and most date from June of 1937.

At Chelsea, Simons had a wonderful site with which to work. While the original house was gone, the four rows of live oaks which framed it survived. The original house had faced





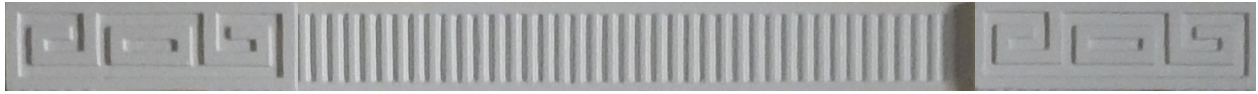
south but the best view was to the east, down toward the Harbor River. Simons solved this problem while placing the house on the original site. The central block contains a hall and dining room to its left which run the depth of the house. On the right of the hall is a smaller paneled gun room and behind it a cross hall runs to the living room in the east pavilion. Two pairs of high French doors and a large central window on the east wall of this room take full advantage of the view and allow access to a brick terrace. A door from the dining room opens into a butler's pantry and kitchen which occupy the west pavilion. Further service areas fill a one story wing to the rear and two bedrooms and baths are located in a similar wing on the east.



On the exterior, Simons employed whitewashed brick below a slate hip roof with flared eaves and tile ridges above a brick cornice, all elements reminiscent of early Charleston houses. The effect of this combination is particularly apparent on the east of the house. Simons mixed in a bit of Federal architecture with the elliptical fan and sidelights at the entry and the triple-hung windows in the principal rooms. The Greek Revival makes a brief appearance in the octagonal columns copied from those at Dr. Joseph Johnson's 1859 home in Beaufort, which support the one story front porch.

The porch frieze sports one of the most interesting architectural features of the house and a hint to the source of many of the details inside. The Greek canon has no octagonal columns and therefore no "correct" frieze for them. Simons took advantage of the lack and created a frieze of his own. Essentially Doric, it takes the classic triglyph with metopes and gives it a new spin. The triglyph consists of three cylinders separated by concave elements. The metopes are supplanted by balls. One can hear Simons chuckling at his drawing board.





On the rear, north elevation, the cupola becomes a much more dominant feature as the massive oaks do not come so near to the house. It also emphasizes the semi-octagonal central bay which houses the stair and rear door. The arched window which lights the stair links the cupola to the similarly sized, copper-roofed porch above slight iron supports which shelter the rear door.

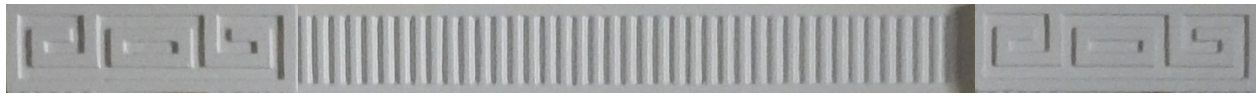


The lawn which extends from within the court formed by the east and west wings runs on to the marsh at the north of the house. Simons prepared two different plans for walls and gates to enclose the area in 1940 and 1942 but neither was executed. Similarly detailed plans were prepared for the service court on the west which was added in 1947. Mrs. Field was requesting and Simons was providing plans for proposed additions as late as 1968 when drawings for a servant's dining room to be located in the service court were provided.

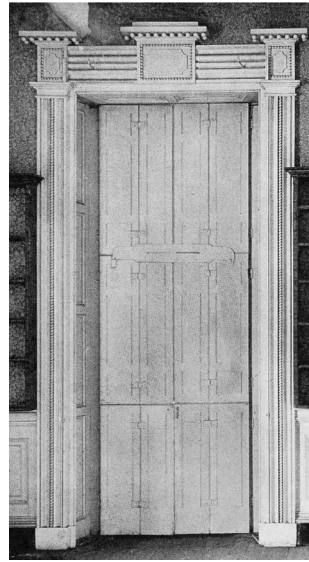
The interior's layout is straightforward as might be expected of a quail lodge, even if a grand one. However, the detailing seems to have been derived, along with the triglyphs, from the woodwork at the Edmonston-Alston house at 21 East Battery in Charleston, which was featured in Simons and Lapham's 1927 book. This late Federal house features very unusual woodwork in its drawing room. It is similar to other high-style Federal woodwork in the city but where modillions would normally appear, balls are found, a decorative treatment rarely seen except on convex Regency mirrors and Federal mirrors in the architectural style where the balls sometimes appear as acorns.

Simons was obviously taken with this woodwork. He used the theme in the living room cornice, the living room mantel, and in the circular top of the door to the cross hall, and the corresponding bookcase to the right of the mantel. A version focusing on the three panels rather than the balls was used in one of the bedrooms.





In the entry and rear cross halls, he continued his experimentation with classical forms. The pilasters supporting the recessed arches above the doors are detailed with indentions rather than applied decoration. The stair itself is a beautifully simple rendition of the classic spiral. Its mahogany bannister wraps around the newel where Simons inserted a round silver plaque engraved with Field's and his names and the date of construction of the house. Simons was obviously proud of his creation where, as with most fine houses of the era, full scale drawings were made for the details. Most of these survive at the South Carolina Historical Society.



For all its architectural heritage, the house was in fact built as a quail lodge and comfort for the Fields and their guests was the tantamount consideration. This was a place to prepare for a day in the field and to return, after covering up to a thousand acres on horseback, for a fine meal and a relaxing evening among friends. From the private bath for each of the six bedrooms in the house to the kitchen wing which could cater for half of Jasper County, Simons left no detail undressed. Nor was Field uninvolved in the process. While the design of the house seems to have gone forward with few changes, the garage went through at least three iterations before the final six bay version was chosen. That Chelsea stands today, virtually unchanged from the date of its construction, testifies to the care taken with its design, the craftsmanship of its builders, and the care which the family has bestowed upon it for almost eighty years.

Marshall Field, III, died in 1956 but his widow, Ruth Pruyn Field, continued to enjoy and manage Chelsea, dividing her time between the quail lodge and her home in Southport, Connecticut, until her death in 1994. In addition to her role with the Field Foundation, she was associ-





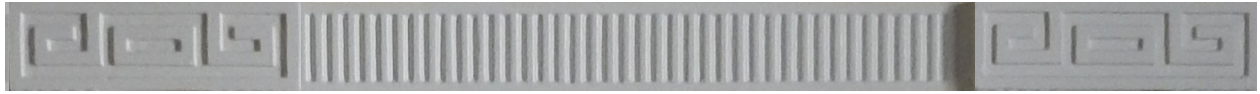
ated with the United Nations Association, U.S.A., the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation, Sarah Lawrence College, and the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.

With the passing of Ruth Field, the Field family remained committed to Chelsea but sold an interest in the plantation, now almost 6,000 acres, to Nelson Doubleday, Jr. (1933-2015). Grandson of Frank Nelson Doubleday who founded the publishing house, Doubleday & Company, and a great-great-grandnephew of Abner Doubleday, he was perhaps best known as the man who bought the then last place Mets baseball team in 1980 and won the World Series in 1986. He was an avid hunter, making annual trips to Somerset, England, to hunt pheasant.



At Chelsea, Doubleday's legacy is the guest house constructed in 2004 to the west of the rear lawn. The single story building was designed by Eric J. Smith, a New York architect long associated with the classically minded designer, David Easton. Smith has been responsible for such projects as the renovation of a Howard Van Doren Shaw estate in Lake Forest and meticulously detailed new residences in Montreal and Colorado, his work regularly





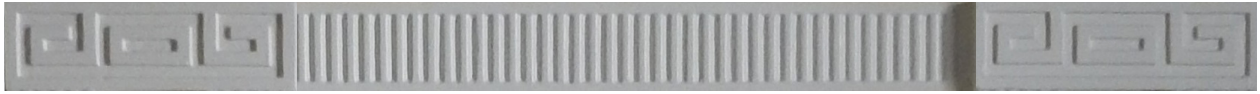
appearing in *Architectural Digest* and other national publications. The guest house he designed is diminutive only by comparison to its older neighbor. In every other way, it withstands comparison to Simons' original.



Using the same whitewashed brick, hipped slate roof, and projecting wings as the main house, Smith provided three bedrooms with baths and a small kitchen on either side of the great room with paneled walls and a fireplace at the north end. In addition to four pairs of French doors, two of which open to a porch facing down river, the room has two large central windows and six small dormers flooding it with light. The open ceiling is supported by trusses of old wood. Smith left no detail unaddressed, down to the semi-octagonal copper scuppers which match those on the main house. While the porch opens to the expansive lawn, the rear of the great room opens to an allee of camellias running from white to scarlet and all shades in between.

All of this is located near the ACE Basin, a remarkable million acre area formed by the Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto Rivers. Over 217,000 acres of the basin are covered by some form of protection, ensuring that this magical area will remain a magnet for lovers of the great outdoors for generations to come. With almost 6,000 acres of its own, Marshall Field's quail lodge exemplifies the legendary Carolina hunting plantation at its best.





This report was commissioned by
Chip Hall, Plantation Services,
Charleston, South Carolina

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CHELSEA was researched, written, and designed by John David Myles, principal of Wild Holly Studio. An attorney, former circuit judge, and preservationist, he has written and lectured for the Filson Historical Society in his native Kentucky and is the author of a soon to be published comprehensive study of historic architecture in Shelby County, Kentucky. Myles has also consulted on various restoration projects. He and his wife, Mary Helen, received awards from The Ida Lee Willis Memorial Foundation and Preservation Kentucky for their restoration of the 1839 John Dale house in Simpsonville, Kentucky, where they live with their Scottish terrier and stray cat.

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