

Newington Plantation

The plantation generally known as Newington was settled by Daniel Axtell and his wife, Lady Rebecca Axtell, in the early or middle 1680s. Before a house could be constructed and the land farmed, Daniel Axtell died. His wife, Lady Rebecca Axtell took the property over and about 1690 built a plantation home. The Newington house was said to have been one of the largest brick houses built in lower South Carolina during that period. It was said to have double avenues of live oaks and wide gardens. At the time of the Revolutionary War, the Newington house was considered a show place. It is believed that Lady Rebecca Axtell passed away not long after 1711, but no records of her passing exist. Around 1711, Lady Axtell's daughter Elizabeth (Axtell) Blake inherited Newington. Elizabeth Blake was at that time the widow of the former Proprietary Governor of Charlestown, Joseph Blake. It is believed that she lived in the home with her son, Col. Joseph Blake, who worked the land.

The plantation home burned during the Yamasee War (1715). When Lady Blake died (1726), the land passed to her son, Col. Joseph Blake. He was one of the richest men in the Lowcountry at that time. He removed the burned house and built a mansion with 100 windows on the front so he could view his land. The Blake family lived on the property until 1837 when it was sold to Henry A. Middleton. That mansion burned in 1845. It remained in ruins until 1876 when Middleton leased the property to the US Government as an experimental tea farm.

The water flow of the Newington rice fields was controlled by a dam (built in the late 1600's) on the creek which was known to the Native Americans as Boshoe. Along with the dam there was constructed a small saw mill; the creek became known to the settlers as the Sawmill Branch. *[note painting]*.