
MORVEN

Morven Tour Talking Points

MAIN HOUSE

Front Porch

Welcome to Morven, a Virginia and National Historic Landmark. Once home to Native American tribes, Morven has passed through the hands of many, including Thomas Jefferson, William Short, the Stone Family, and most recently, billionaire media mogul John. W. Kluge. Morven is currently owned by the University of Virginia Foundation, who received the property as a gift from Kluge in 2001 to be used for educational and charitable purposes while maintaining the character of a traditional Albemarle County estate.

Architecture:

- Known as the Main House
- Built in 1820 in the Federal Style by local architect Martin Thacker for then owner David Higginbotham
- Pulls from the late-Georgian architectural style with Roman Revival features
- The Stone family added attic dormers, a back terrace, and the attached kitchen onto the Main House when they purchased the property in 1926
 - Prior to the addition of the attached kitchen, all cooking was done in the separate, two room Old Kitchen

Stone Family:

- Owned Morven from 1926-1988
- Charles Stone was a founder of the prominent New York City engineering firm Stone & Webster in 1889, which later played a leading role in the Manhattan Project
- Used Morven for farming, raising cattle, and breeding thoroughbred horses, the property became known as Morven Stud
- Morven bred Hall of Fame mare, Shuvee, the 1969 winner of the Filly Triple Crown

Front Hall:

The Main House is now furnished for University use with particular respect paid to the Jeffersonian period, the Stone's history with horses, and the recent Kluge ownership.

Architecture, furniture, and design:

- Hallway features Reveillon (ray-vee-yon) French style wallpaper, c. 1820, based on classical revival designs from excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum
- Furnished with antique Sheraton mahogany Pier table with Marble top and antique American banjo clock, which depicts "Aurora" dawn
- Upstairs are 4 bedrooms and 3 baths furnished for special guests
- Recent overnight guests include CBS news anchor Katie Couric and Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and family, both UVA alumni

Study

When given to the UVA Foundation, the estate was unfurnished except for curtains and, in some places, carpets. During the renovation and refurnishing in early 2009, furniture, wall hangings, and even chandeliers and sconces had to be added to the Main House and other facilities. Furniture, unless antique, was largely purchased from Green Front Furniture in Farmville, Virginia and in regional antique markets. In this room, we inherited the curtains and textured wallpaper. Everything else from the chandelier to the rug was chosen by interior designer Helen Scott Reed of Richmond, Virginia, who also decorated the UVA President's house, Carr Hill

Architecture, furniture, and design:

- Against one wall is a large Hepplewhite bookcase
- To the left of the mantle is a near Eastern antique silk prayer rug
- Above the mantle is a painting of 19th century ships, note American flag
 - Paintings in the 18th and early 19th century of naval vessels are more valuable if the vessel portrayed is flying a flag because that will often help to indicate the painting's country of origin. Paintings during that time period of ships featuring American flags are the most valuable
- Hanging over the chessboard is the reprint of a large Frye-Jefferson Map of Virginia done in 1775
- The 4 horse prints were done by Henry Thomas Alken

John W. Kluge:

- Born in Germany in 1914 and immigrated to New York City as a young child
- Studied economics at Columbia University on scholarship
- President of Metromedia, parent company for some 70-200 corporations, including Steak and Ale and Orion Pictures
- Metromedia began by operating radio stations following World War II before branching out into cable television
- Mr. Kluge is widely known for his philanthropy. Columbia University, the Library of Congress, and the University of Virginia have all benefitted from his generosity
- Now Mr. Kluge splits his time between nearby Albemarle County farm, Featheridge, and his home in Palm Beach, Florida

Parlor

Originally, the Parlor was two distinct rooms separated by a closed arch. The North Parlor, once a sitting and dining area, was recently opened to accommodate larger events. To match the existing Parlor, the sitting and dining area had to be redesigned. The colorful Brussels carpet by David Easton in the South Parlor is 25 years old, but the carpet in the North Parlor is just one year old. When facing the terrace, the North Parlor is on your right and the South Parlor is on your left. The curtains from the original Parlor were cut diagonally and re-sewn to provide the new North Parlor with a matching set. The mantles are from the same Italian quarry and sculptor as the mantles in Monticello and the White House.

Architecture, furniture, and design:

- The pair of gilt Girandole convex bull's-eye mirrors contributes both aesthetically and functionally, reflecting light from the chandeliers and sconces
- The Federal style furnishings can easily be moved to the walls to accommodate groups for lectures, concerts, or dinners
- The western facing terrace, added by the Stones, overlooks Carter Mountain. Morven extends to the ridgeline

Jefferson and Short:

- In 1795, Thomas Jefferson purchased this tract of land for his “adoptive son,” Colonel William Short.
- After serving as Jefferson’s private secretary while he was in France, Short stayed in Paris to manage the United State’s European loans.
- Short became America’s first career diplomat, serving as the U.S. minister to Holland and to Spain during the 1790s
- During Short’s absence, Jefferson rented small plots to tenant farmers who used Jefferson’s methods of crop rotation to maintain soil quality and hedge against the detrimental effects of the tobacco and corn crops
- Currently, a UVA multidisciplinary program is studying these tenant farmers and how their use of Jefferson’s crop rotation methods apply to the ecology of sustainable agriculture today
- Despite Jefferson’s requests for Short to reside near Monticello and launch a domestic political career, Short stayed in Europe to pursue his love –affair with a French noblewoman, not to mention an active diplomatic career in western Europe
- After the French noblewoman refused his marriage proposals, Short returned to the U.S. and settled away from farm life in the cosmopolitan city of Philadelphia
- In 1813, Jefferson deeded the property to a leading merchant at the local port of Milton on the Rivanna River, David Higginbotham
- Higginbotham transported supplies and groceries from Richmond on flat-bottomed bateaux
- Higginbotham renamed the property “Morven,” from a 12th century Gaelic poem meaning “ridge of hills”

Dining Room

Architecture, furniture, and design:

- The Stone’s added the famous Zuber Wallpaper , “Views of America” (Vue de l’Amérique du Nord), depicting (clockwise from Mantle): West Point, New York Harbor, Natural Bridge, Niagara Falls, and Boston Harbor
- Over 2,000 carved blocks were used to stamp this paper in the early 19th century
- The wallpaper is also featured in the Greenbrier Hotel and the White House
- The chairs are replicas of those in Washington’s Mount Vernon
- The floorcloths were hand-painted in Williamsburg to resemble elegant marble. This design style was common during the 1880s

Programs at Morven:

- The UVA Foundation currently holds Morven for academic and charitable use
- Last year, Morven hosted over 90 programs and events, ranging from receptions and dinners to seminars and leadership initiatives
- Currently, the Foundation is working with UVA's Office for the Vice President of Research to conduct a multidisciplinary study of Morven's history, archaeology, and ecology
- A recent archaeological survey uncovered a variety of artifacts, ranging from millennium old Native American relics to evidence of the more recent tenant farmers of the 18th and early 19th centuries

FORMAL GARDENS

While gardens at Morven date back to the 1890s, the Formal Gardens seen today were designed and built from 1929 to the early 1930s. After the Stone Family purchased the property in 1926, they hired landscape architect Annette Hoyt Flanders to restore the gardens. Flanders contributed an entrance gate, brick detailing, and slate seats while respecting the previously established parallel flower beds. She also added the Rose Garden near the Smokehouse and created planting plans for both the Formal and Cutting Gardens. Flanders blended an assortment of complementary shrubs, perennials, and annuals to Morven's Gardens, providing a variety of sizes and colors. The Morven Gardens have been open to the public for Historic Garden Week since 1929. Incredibly, Morven's Grounds of close to 3,000 acres are maintained by a staff of five people.

Front Lawn of Main House:

Morven's front lawn faces east atop a ridge allowing for views over 20 miles.

Horticulture:

- The large tree to the right of the garden entrance is Morven's Chinese Chestnut (*Castanea mollissima*), a former State Champion Tree and still the largest of its kind in Virginia. 100+ years old, 186" circumference, 46' height, 81' crown spread
- *Davidia involucrate*, known more commonly as a "Dove Tree" or "Handkerchief Tree" is an unusual flowering tree, first showing bracts in early April
- The variegated tulip tree on the lower east lawn is known as "Majestic Beauty" (Tulip Poplar)
- Southern magnolias on the lawn were planted in the 1930s by Charles Stone
- Clone of UVA's famous "Pratt Ginkgo," which was planted in the northeastern region of grounds by the University's first superintendent, William Pratt in 1860. Ginkgos are among the last trees to turn color in the fall. When they have turned, they drop almost all their leaves at once, providing perceptive spectators with a warning of winter's approach.

Perennial Garden

Sculpture:

- At the height of John and Tussi Kluge's tenure at Morven, the property displayed 76 outdoor sculptures. Only a few remain
- Abstract untitled soapstone piece by David Breeden (on brick ledge of second staircase)
- Morven plaque – tribute to Mary Stone
- Stone Head Fountain

Horticulture:

- Large protruding roots of Osage Orange Tree, just to the right after entering. Note orange colored bark
 - Morven has two Osage Orange trees, both over 100 years old
 - One here, other on side of Main House beneath balcony, was probably a seedling while the Main House was built from 1813-1820
 - Osage Indians used wood for arrows

- The large American Tree Boxwood in the middle left of the garden dates from the early 19th century and was part of the original garden
- Japanese Pagoda tree (*Sophora japonica*) in upper left terrace is native to Japan, planted in the 1970s
- *Deutzia gracilis* (the white flowering shrubs at the corners of planting beds) is pruned each year after it blooms
- Flowering quince is located in front of the boxwood hedge to the right; it flowers orange-red
- There are approximately 3,500 tulips in the perennial and cutting gardens

Open Grassy Area Above Orchard and Conifer Garden

Horticulture:

- Japanese Wisteria at entrance
- Conifer Garden below, in the orchard, was installed in 1991, a few years after John. W. Kluge bought the property
- Orchard features Golden delicious apple trees on semi-dwarf root stock

Reflecting Pool

Installed after John Kluge purchased Morven

Horticulture:

- Tropical lotus bloom in the reflecting pool each summer
- The reflecting pool is home to over 100 goldfish
- Kwanzan cherry trees flank the pool
- Long stone table in pool once held a large, white marble statue owned by John W. Kluge

Cutting Garden

Horticulture:

- Two types of fragrant viburnums:
 - *Viburnum x burwoodii* (snowball viburnum) flank the path to the arbor
 - *Viburnum carlesii* (Koreanspice viburnum) beyond them
- The *Sedum* "John Creech" in front of the boxwood hedge at the far end of the garden provide excellent groundcover
- *Phlox divaricata* (Wild Blue Phlox) produce blue flowers along the edge of the beds
- *Spiraea vanhouttei* – white flowering shrubs near the arbor
- Yoshino Cherris and old climbing roses grow in the arbor
- Plaque commemorating head gardener, Thomas Oliver Thacker, in small boxwood "room" beneath the crabapples

“Parking Lot” Garden

Formed from the old parking lot around 1993 when a new parking area was added below

Horticulture:

- Hydrangea “Tardiva” border with small daylily arrangement in center

Old Rose Garden and Perennial Border

The Rose Gardens date from the 1930s, part of Annette Hoyt Flanders work at Morven

Sculpture:

- Plaque bearing inscription “Renovate animus” (“renew the spirit”) pay homage to former garden workers
 - Smokehouse was in use from early 19th century

Horticulture:

- Climbing hydrangea on south wall of kitchen
- Wisteria grows on the wall of the old smokehouse
- European Beech espaliered onto chimney of tenant house
- Cercis Canadensis (“Rubye Atkinson” or “Eastern Redbud”) – heat resistant cultivar of redbud in grass by smokehouse

Back Lawn of Main House

Sculpture:

- “God’s Head” (c. 1750) – stone head on side of cobbler’s shop
- “Cellini” Fountain (c. 1900) – bronze fountain with cherub in juniper triangle on drive
 - Done in the style of 16th century Italian sculptor Benvenuto Cellini
- “Sagacious Heads” by Polish artist Magdalena Abakanowicz – four large bronze heads right of the Meeting Barn

Horticulture:

- Two large white oaks in center of back lawn planted in 1950s
 - The larger was transplanted from nearby woods on Morven in the early 1950s
 - The smaller was planted by Van Yahres Tree Co. in the mid 1950s
- Spirea Vanhouttei and Nandina (by kitchen)
- Tulip Poplar on property when purchased by the Stones in 1926
- Osage Orange by side of house, dates c. 1820, when the Main House was built
- Pink Yellowwood (Cladrastis kentukea “Rosea” or “Perkin’s Pink”) is a rare pink flowered form of American Yellowwood – nearest drive
- Yellowwood (Cladrastis kentukea) – behind shrubbery
- Chinese Redbud (Cercis chinensis “Don Egolf”) – on lawn, in front of shrubbery

- *Parrotia persica* (“Persian Ironwood” or “Persian Parrotia”) – on lawn in front of shrubbery
- *Acer negundo* “Flamingo” – pink and white variegated version of the box elder beside Old Kitchen

Important Trees near the Main House

1. WHITE OAKS (*Quercus alba*)
Two white oaks on back lawn. The larger one was transplanted in the early 1950’s from the woods at Morven; the smaller oak was planted in the mid-1950’s by Van Yahres Tree Co.
2. TULIP POPLAR (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
The Tulip Poplar on the back lawn near the two white oaks was here when Charles Stone bought Morven in 1926.
3. WEEPING HIGAN CHERRY (*Prunus subhirtella var Pendula*)
One grafted weeping tree on left side of slate walkway to kitchen door, planted spring 1995. Higan Cherry is longest lived of ornamental cherries and very tolerant of heat and cold.
4. EASTERN RED CEDARS (*Juniperus virginiana*)
Cedars on short driveway to Main House existed in 1926; those on main drive planted in 1930’s.
5. SOUTHERN MAGNOLIAS (*Magnolia grandiflora*)
The Southern Magnolias on the front and back lawns were planted by Charles Stone in the 1930’s. Cut heavily for blooms for 2nd Stones.
6. AMERICAN HOLLY (*Ilex opaca*)
One large male holly in the front yard planted by Ollie Thacker in the late 1940’s.
7. WHITE ASH (*Fraxinus Americana*)
A large specimen White Ash is planted in the field below the Old Cobbler’s Shop behind the Main House.
8. CHINESE CHESTNUT (*Castanea mollissima*)
Probably 100+ years old (Chinese Chestnuts introduced to U. S. in 1853 and 1903); Former State Champion Tree – largest recorded in Virginia. 186” in circumference, 46’ ht. and 81’ crown spread.
9. OSAGE ORANGES (*Maclura pomifera*)
One in the perennial garden with exposed roots, one by side of Main House beneath balcony. Both trees over 100 years old. One by the house probably a seedling when house built in 1813 – 1820. Osage Indians used wood for arrows. These trees are male and do not fruit. Note the orange-colored bark.
10. LOEBNER MAGNOLIA (*Magnolia x loeberi* ‘Leonard Messel’)
A deciduous magnolia on the lower front lawn, one of the Loebner hybrids, among the most beautiful of the deciduous magnolias, a cross between two Japanese species. Fragrant blooms in the spring, earlier than the saucer Magnolias. Planted spring 1995, with other deciduous magnolias on front lawn.

11. LOEBNER MAGNOLIA (*Magnolia x loebneri* 'Merrill')
Another Loebner hybrid, planted near the double boxwood hedge near the entrance to the perennial garden.
12. SAUCER MAGNOLIA (*Magnolia x soulangiana* 'Alexandrina')
Deciduous magnolia, hybrid saucer type, planted on front lawn.
13. DOVE TREE OR HANDKERCHIEF TREE (*Davidia involucrata*)
Small tree near Chinese Chestnut to the right of entrance to perennial garden. Planted 1993; flowers around April with unusual large white bracts that resemble handkerchiefs.
14. JAPANESE PAGODA TREE (*Sophora japonica*)
Tree in area between cutting and perennial gardens, just outside garden room with plaque to Thomas Thacker. White flowers in summer followed by bead-like seed pods. Planted in 1970's.
15. Second Dove tree to replace dead pine.
16. "PRATT" GINKO from UVA clone.
17. PINK YELLOWWOOD (*Cladrastis kentuckia* 'Rosea')
18. CHINESE REDBUD – (*Cercis chinensis* 'Don Egolf')

JAPANESE GARDENS

- In 1992, John and Tussi Kluge hired a team of Japanese landscape architects along with Charlottesville landscape architect Will Reilly to create a Japanese garden in the ravine in front of Morven's Main House
- The four acres of Japanese Gardens feature a pond fed by three waterfalls
- The foliage blends plants indigenous to Japan and America with rocks quarried from Morven

Japanese House

- Designed by Tokyo architect, Makoto Watanabe, and built in 1995 by a sukiya construction company in Japan
- House serves as one of the best examples of sukiya style architecture in the United States
- The term sukiya refers to tea ceremony architecture
- The timber frame design of the pavilion relieves the infill walls of their load-bearing role and allows for a more open design with better views of the surrounding gardens

Genkan:

- Genkan is Japanese for entrance foyer
- The Genkan features a tokonoma, or small raised area where scrolls are displayed
 - The scroll here translates to "every day is a happy day"
- The woodblock print "A Rising Smoke" by 20th century artist Hiedo Hagiwara depicts one of the 36 views of Mount Fuji he produced while living at the base of the mountain

(Please have guests remove shoes before proceeding)

Main Seating Area:

- The sliding doors with translucent white paper mounted on the outer side of the wooden lattice are called shoji
- Shoji paper is made with the fibers from a Kozo tree and is also known as Paper Mulberry
- The shoji doors slide along tracks and can be stored in wooden pockets
- Opening the shoji doors allows for integration with the gardens
- The doors separating the interior spaces are known as fusuma and can be removed and stored
- While sometimes left their natural color, they can also be painted

Engawa:

- Engawa is the Japanese term for the veranda
- The heavy sliding doors separating the veranda from the shoji doors are called ama-do
 - Usually closed at night and during inclement weather
- The Sudare, or bamboo screens, are hung from the Engawa ceiling during summer months

Bathroom:

- Split into two rooms
- The banjo, or toire, houses the toilet
- The furo-ba, or yoku-shitsu, contains the shower and a wooden bathtub

OLD KITCHEN

In the early 1800s, the assemblage of outbuildings varied from farm to farm, depending on the needs and whims of the owner. However, a core group of predictable structures inevitably clustered about the main residence: a separate kitchen or “cookhouse,” a smokehouse, at least one well, privies or outhouses, stables and barns, the estate office, a blacksmith shop, and a cobbler shop. Typically, the separate kitchen stood directly behind or to the side of the main residence. Some kitchens, like the one at Monticello, were actually connected to the main house by a covered walkway. The Old Kitchen here at Morven is a two room structure with a central chimney. After the Stone’s added an attached kitchen onto the Main House, they covered the walls of the Old Kitchen with family pictures and photos of their racehorses. The Kluges used the Old Kitchen much like it is set up right now – as a large dining room and a cozy sitting room to entertain guests.

Architecture and Design:

- Built around same time as Main House, c. 1820
- Brick construction to reduce risk of fire
- Slate floor
- Brick walls two large wood burning fireplaces with a central chimney, still used today
- Plank doors
- Attic with access via interesting staircase (closed to public)
- Traditionally, one room served as a true kitchen and the other as living quarters for the cook
- As demonstrated here, it was common throughout the South for a framed smokehouse with a tall, pyramid shaped roof to accompany the kitchen