



How Medium Laine Crosby helped solve the historic plantation's mystery of lost love, while Menokin helped find Laine's place in history.

Investigative Medium's Visit to Menokin Plantation

By Laine Crosby

The sun shone indiscriminately, making the trees greener and their shadows darker. The azure sky contrasted the landscape, a startling change to the heat-bloated shade of grey I had noticed only seconds before. Silence swallowed me briefly before the staccato of the cicadas grew clearly audible in the distance, then ceased as I approached. The clicking wheels of the buggy lazily lulled their beckoning back into the distance as I passed.

The bumpy road ahead was the creamy color of rich topsoil, and the air was suddenly crisp. A shallow breeze barely ruffled the majestic oak trees. We turned a corner into the drive, and I noticed a dark skinned man standing in the trimmed grass to the left of the road.

The unobtrusive man let out a strained sigh and wiped his brow with his long striped sleeve. At his feet lay a piece of metal equipment, unrecognizable to me. He was clearly tired of working or frustrated that the outcome of his endeavor was not as he had intended. When he heard the buggy, he looked up and our eyes met. He smiled and nodded and went back to work. For some reason, I blushed with the direct contact, and my eyes fell quickly to my lap, where I briefly glimpsed my long, light-blue cotton dress, beautiful in its plain classic couture.

As I approach Menokin Plantation, I am startled by a voice saying, "There it is; there is the house", and I glance ahead



and see a stately Georgian manor home, impressive in its size, architecture, and tidiness. A fleeting moment later, my eyes focus back into the twenty-first century, where I see a large roof, and a portion of the house I had just perceived. I feel there is a man named Frank who lives here, along with a lady, and there is another man associated with this address. There is a brotherly connection between two of these three.

My eighteenth century excursion seemed to last minutes, when in reality, it had been only seconds. I found myself still sitting in the dog-haired backseat of historian Mark Nesbitt's Volkswagen in my shorts and t-shirt, listening to the now-embodied voice of his wife Carol, as we pulled into the parking space in front of the Menokin Visitor's Center. I had taken care not to learn about the bygone days of these beautiful acres, until I could experience Menokin in my own way.



As an Investigative Medium, I work with historians, authors, archaeologists, and detectives to find out what history has not revealed. And as a remote viewer, I do not always know what era I glimpse or through whose eyes I connect. Finding out is part of my fun. My interest does not qualify me to discuss what historians have documented, but nonetheless, I wear this gift as my key to antiquity.

History is easier to experience in this century, with the advent of new media and non-profits such as the Menokin Foundation, who dedicate their time and money to preserve the past for all to experience. Sarah Dillard Pope, Menokin Foundation Executive Director, welcomed us to the Visitor's Center, and explained, "At the foundation, we want people to experience history however it speaks to them. Some walk for exercise and recreation, to experience Menokin through nature. Others experience Menokin through the architecture of the house, the fragments, and how they fit together. Others enjoy



their experience through reading displays of letters and personal accounts from those who lived here.” She presented me with a locket, which had recently been found by archaeologists who were working in a small space between the vaulted cellar and the exterior wall of the house. The small, oval locket, which stylistically dates to c. 1790, has a porcelain inset with an image of a classical woman’s bust facing left on one. The reverse of the object has a glass window that is hinged at the top and has a small clasp at the bottom. In the locket’s interior there is a small cavity that contains pieces of light brown hair. The locket is one of the most exquisite and mysterious artifacts found at the site, and Sarah asked if I had insight into who owned it. As I took the locket in my hands, I was delighted to tell her the story which suddenly filled my thoughts:



The locket belonged to a girl named Sally who either lived here or visited here for a long time with Elizabeth, who I believe was her sister. I do not see a father figure; only an uncle. The year 1794 comes to mind. The locket also came from this time period, and Sally was given the locket when she was about sixteen years old by Michael, a young man she loved and wanted to marry. It is Michael’s brown hair in the locket. Michael was kind and very handsome, with broad shoulders, brown hair, and a bold, enticing grin. He consumed all her thoughts. Sally loved him and would marry him, but he did not have the birthright to deserve her, or so her family thought. Her uncle was most upset about their flirtation, and he refused to let them be together.

Somehow, her family had connections with his employer, and they asked that he be sent out of town on business, in hopes that Sally’s love would cool off. Michael gave Sally the locket before he left, promising to return and marry her. He set off to the northeast and traveled alone. Two men, traveling in the opposite direction, beat him to death for his horse, and no one ever saw or heard from him again. Not knowing what happened to Michael was Sally’s worst fate, and she blamed her uncle. She never recovered from the loss and she never married. I don’t know what happened to her after this.

Sarah and I walked the acres of Menokin that afternoon, and I traveled back in time to see the terraced gardens overflowing with guests, as music played and they danced. Could Sally and Michael have fallen in love on this terrace? Or, did she feel compelled to smile at neighbor boys and meet Michael in secret? As I look back to a lost era, I hear the sounds of laughter and feel the camaraderie of the neighboring families, the genteel Virginian aristocracy who admired architecture and art, and had the ardent, educated minds to enjoy conversations about politics, farming, and business ventures.

It is no wonder these families wanted their offspring to partner and continue to propagate healthy family trees, with ensured financial success. It wasn't an easy life in early Virginia, and money and education were highly valued as the formula to their endowed legacy. As I watch from my perch of 2010, I realize Sally and Michael's love was contrary to the precedence of generations. It was a reviled attack on who they were. I felt such compassion for Sally that day; we don't always get to choose who we love.

A few days passed, and I received an email from Sarah Pope:

Laine,

I thought you would be interested in some research I did this morning to see if we could determine who the "Sally" and "Elizabeth" are associated with the locket and how the year 1794 may also be associated with the object. Laine, you spoke of the brother's sister or the brother's sister-in-law coming out too.

When Frank and Becky Tayloe Lee died in 1797, Menokin came under the ownership of Becky Tayloe Lee's brother, John Tayloe III. John Tayloe III rented the house and plantation to his nephew, John Tayloe Lomax. John Tayloe Lomax's mother was Anne, sister to Becky and John Tayloe III. John T Lomax lived at Menokin with his wife and children from 1809 to 1819. During this time, his mother Anne was widowed. His mother and some of his sisters came to live with John T Lomax at Menokin.

John T Lomax had a sister named Elizabeth b. 1785 (who married Taliaferro Hunter) and a sister named Sarah (Sally?) born in 1794. Sarah (Sally?) died at the age of 18 in 1812 unmarried.

Perhaps this is our Sally?!

- Sarah.

I now had more questions such as; did Sally die of a broken heart? Did she blame Uncle John for Michael's probable murder or did she think Michael lost interest? The ease, at which history is lost, is more apparent with each of my experiences. And, why had I connected so quickly to both the locket, and through the lady in the blue dress? This last riddle was not solved until the writing of this article, when I pulled out my own genealogical charts and compared them with Menokin's history.

The marriages between the families of the Lees, Jennings, Grymes, Ludwells, Warners and Tayloes look like a complex flow chart of binary code, each generation more complex than the next. My twelfth great grandfather was Lawrence Townely, and his great grandson, John Grymes, settled and named Menokin in 1685, creating a gentleman's estate. I found a familial relation to Sally in a number of ways, through the descendants of Lawrence Townely, and these Virginia families. Could it have been through Sally's eyes I glimpsed, as she rode to Menokin with her sister and her mother, after her father died? I may never know for sure, but I long to experience Menokin again and find more unanswered questions.

Laine Crosby is a mom, wife, sister, professor, writer, investigative medium, and proud Southerner. She moved to a haunted plantation in Maryland in 2004, and life has never since been the same. For more information about Laine Crosby, her lectures and events, or to read an excerpt of her, *Investigative Medium - the Awakening*, visit LaineCrosby.com.