Charleston preserves its past while keeping its charm

Charleston, South Carolina. It is stoeped in history, yet still maintains its Southern charm. Maybe it's the beauty of the magnolia trees or the eerie, yet wonderous stillness, of the swamps at the Magnolia Plantation.

tion.
Perhaps it's your own imaging

Porhaps it's your own imagination wondering what a guest at
the Edmonston-Alston house
thought and said to colleagues a
they watched the first shots of
the South Carolina soldiers of
the Confederacy firing on Union
soldiers at Fort Sumter.
Then again, maybe you'll experience an overall enjoyment and
appreciation of seeing history
preserved with homes built in
the 1700s restored and so wellkept, you'll marvel as you walk
several blocks near Battery Park
and venture to peek at gardens
and yards behind brick walls.

Preserving a past
Charleston mixes its history
well with its newness and
vibrancy, yet keeps a dogged
determination to preserve its
past. It features the South Carolina Aquarium, which just
opened in 2000. You'll enjoy cuisine from the packed luncheon

eatery at Just North of Broad to the posh, four-star Charleston Grill and its wonderful ambiance. Then there are the historical homes open to the public for tours.

For my wife, Cheryl, and I, it was the history we wanted, and and the start of the most oplient historical homes in nine days on a recent trip and viewed stark contracts of the most oplient historical homes in America at the Biltmore Born and the most oplient historical homes in Anheville, N.C., to the simple gravesites of slaves buried to the Magnolia Plantation just north of Charleston.

The plantation and the Mid-

Magnolia Plantation just north of Charleston.

The plantation and the Middleton Place were among the first English settlements in the United States, located on the Ashley River, about 14 miles northwest of Charleston. Homes on those sites were originally built in the 1740s. Middleton Place contains America's oldest landscaped gardens.

The Middleton family had an incredible line of witnesses to American history, including a president of the First Continental Congress (Henry Middleton), a signer of the Declaration of Independence (Arthur Middleton) and a signer of the Ordinance of Secssion (Williams Middleton), with its signer so strongly believing in the Confedence of the Confedence of the Confedence of the Confedence of Carbur Middleton) with its signer so strongly believing in the Confedence of Carbur Middleton).

orate cause, he signed, then underlined, his name. Few families had so many of such prominence.

Today's visitors to Middleton Place truly understand the family's place in history once they see a book on display at the home that features pictures with French writing on the funeral procession of Alexander the Great. Oh, and scenes from The Patriot' were filmed here, too.

The gardens at Middleton are incredible, and give you a wonderful, colorful walking our. The gardens were divided into "rooms," featuring an Azalee Hillside, a Sundial Garden, and the Middleton Oak, believed to be used by Indiane to mark a path before the Middletons set lied here.

More history highlighted

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Just a few miles away, the
Magnolia Plantation features a
self-guided walking tour as well.
Tour guides inside the home
reflect on the history of the
Drayton family, whose history
goes back to when the family
received property in England as
a result of the Norman Conquest
in 1066.
During the 1680s Thomas and
Anne Drayton completed the

Anne Drayton completed the first residence of Magnolia. The

home survived the nearby encampment of British troops, who used a nearby builf to endricle Charleston during the Revolutionary War, yet the residence burned down accidentally three decades also becades also built, only to be burned during General Sherman's infamous march to the sea. The owner during the Civil War period, the Rev. but the plantation's land to rebuilt the home, disassembling his summer house in nearby Summerville and moving it via a barge.

Today, the home's Greek Revival structure is preserved well. Inside Oriental rugs, fine porcelain and heirloums recall the elegance of an earlier era. The early American antiques are beautiful. An 1840 Plantation cabin still stands, depicting the harsh work and living conditions of slaves.

Drayton also developed the gardans. He hoped to create an "earthy paradise" for his wife Julia, so she would forget Philadelphia and her desire at the state of the second of the second with introducing the first are less to America and the first to utilize Camellie japonice in an outdoor setting. Today's garden contains an 18th century her barden, a 18th century her bar

oldest man-made tourist attraction.

The adjacent Audubon Swamp Garden is an ecological gem, containing great blue herons, wood ducks, snowy egreta and anhingas. Knobby cypress trees bump their way through the swamp to help contain soil. Wildflowers burst with color.

Alligators are known to sun themselves here, though we did-

everywhere.

Home tours also are offered in Charleston, including the Edmonston Alston house, the Calhoun Mansion and a host of others. At least two tour guides raved about the Fall Candleight tours, which were scheduled in late September and Cetober, presented by the Preservation Society of Charleston.

In December, visitors to Charleston can enjoy the following: Christmas in Charleston, Dec. 1-31; Plantation Christmas at Middleton Place, Dec. 3-31; Holiday Tour of Homes, Dec. 8; Holiday Festival of Lights, James Island County Park, Dec. 9-Jan.2, and Family Yuletide in the Stableyards at Middleton Place, Dec. 13.

Visit www.charlestongateway.com for information.



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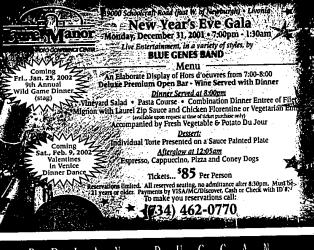
Nomination forms are available in all Farmington Middle and High Schools and must be submitted by Friday, December 12, 2001.

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