

The Historian

*Bulletin of the
Richmond County Museum*



VOLUME 11. ISSUE 1

2019

Woodford

A Colonial Gem Preserved and Polished



The land front of Woodford in 2019

Early Years of Woodford

In 1650, Colonel Moore Fauntleroy received from Sir William Berkeley, the royal governor of Virginia, a patent for 5,350 acres on Farnham Creek, in what was then Lancaster County. Fauntleroy's land grant was given in exchange for transporting 107 English settlers to the Colony. Originally called Farnham Plantation, after a town near Fauntleroy's home in southern England, this is probably the oldest plantation site in Richmond County. It included the considerably smaller tract on a scenic peninsula in the creek that ultimately became known as Woodford.

In 1661, Luke Billington purchased 110 acres of the Farnham grant from Moore Fauntleroy. When Billington died in 1672, his son, Luke Billington, Jr. inherited the property. After Luke, Jr.'s death in 1686 without an heir, his sister Elizabeth, who had become the wife of Dennis McCarty about 1677, became heir. Thus began nearly two centuries of McCarty family ownership of Woodford.

The present house was built for Dennis McCarty's great-grandson, Billington McCarty, Jr. between about 1756 and 1771.

The McCarty Family

Although the name McCarty is of Irish origin, Dennis McCarty, progenitor of this family in the Northern Neck, probably was born in England about 1655 and had settled in Old Rappahannock County by 1675 when his name appears on a deed for 250 acres in Princess Anne County, which are conveyed to "Dennis MacCartee of Rappahannock County." Like Moore Fauntleroy, though on a smaller scale, Dennis McCarty also received land patents from the governor of Virginia for importing settlers into the colony. His name can be seen today, the first on a marble plaque in the Richmond County Courthouse, described as "Attorney for their Majesties (William and Mary) 1692-1693. Thus he was the county's first prosecuting attorney. Dennis McCarty also practiced law in Westmoreland County as early as 1679.



Looking down Farnham Creek toward the Rappahannock from Woodford

Captain Daniel McCarty

Dennis McCarty, the immigrant, was only about forty when he died in Richmond County in 1694. He and Elizabeth Billington McCarty had four children: Daniel, Elizabeth, Katherine and Ellen. Daniel McCarty (1679-1724) moved to Westmoreland County and became a prominent lawyer, legislator and large landowner in the Northern Neck. Practicing law by age 21, he was appointed, like his father, “Attorney for our Sovereign the Queen” (with George Eskridge) in both Richmond and Westmoreland Counties in 1704. He entered the House of Burgesses in 1705 and was elected to the powerful position of Speaker in 1715. He also was captain of the Westmoreland county militia, sheriff, collector of customs and surveyor of roads. Captain Daniel McCarty married Elizabeth Pope Payne and later Ann Lee Fitzhugh and his Westmoreland plantation, Pope’s Creek, adjoined Stratford, the Lee plantation and relied on a labor force of both indentured servants and African slaves. Captain Daniel imported British thoroughbred racehorses and made Pope’s Creek one of the most celebrated horse-breeding stables in Virginia. Daniel McCarty acquired additional property from the Farnham Grant from the widow of Col. Moore Fauntleroy, Mary Lloid, in 1719.

Billington McCarty (1709-1745) the third son among Captain Daniel McCarty’s eight children, inherited the land on Farnham Creek, estimated to be 1,642 acres. His son, Billington, Jr. (1736-1771) was the builder of Woodford. The colonial house with its surrounding land of about 333



Luttrell family members on the wooden bridge at Ivondale Road, adjacent to Woodford, about 1924

Courtesy of Vanelia Gallagher and Betty McGee



Luttrell Family at a whitewashed Woodford, early 1900s

Courtesy of Vanelia Gallagher and Betty McGee

acres remained in the McCarty family until sold at auction in 1873.

The word “Woodford” describes a place in a forest near a river crossing. The name first appears in Richmond County records in the will of William McCarty, Jr. in 1845. Indeed, near this house a wooden bridge across Farnham Creek once connected Ivondale Road with Laurel Grove Road until it collapsed beneath the weight of an oil truck in 1936, and despite public protest, was never rebuilt. When a bridge was first built here is not presently known. Laurel Grove was a large neighboring plantation across Farnham Creek to the east.

20th Century Owners

The bridge had become vital to the community when in 1909, a young William (Willie) R. Luttrell bought Woodford from J. Milton Lyell. Many people came across the bridge enroute to the nearby village of Sharps to use the bank, steamboat wharf and stores. Mr. Luttrell finished the two rooms upstairs to serve as bedrooms; one was shared by his three daughters. Unfortunately, he never secured the title to Woodford after the bank in Sharps closed during the Great Depression. Mrs. Vanelia Luttrell Oakley of Warsaw, who was born at Woodford in 1912, remembered a sort of crypt with wooden doors near the edge of a field where the children were forbidden to go for fear they would fall in.

In 1936, the property was acquired by Major and Mrs. Charles Gilchrist who engaged Philip N. Stern, a Fredericksburg architect to restore the house and add a kitchen wing. Stern was an accomplished practitioner of the Colonial Revival style who was appointed to the Advisory Committee for the Restoration of Colonial

Williamsburg in 1931.

Architectural Features



In Woodford's center passage is an open-well stair with square newels, molded handrail and turned balusters. The balusters, unique to a Virginia house, use a profile nearly identical to those on the stair of Chevening, a stylish 17th century country home in Kent, England.

The story-and-a-half brick dwelling with massive exterior chimneys on either end was built in the Virginia vernacular idiom, with walls laid in Flemish bond with scattered glazed headers. It reflects a transitional style between a simple cottage and the more symmetrical Georgian style. Three identical dormer windows on both water and land facades reinforce the formal plan. The clipped gable roof, a standard 18th century vernacular form, serves to add character to an otherwise simple dwelling.

Woodford's hall is a generously proportioned room occupying the west end. The paneling covering the fireplace wall is a feature of the 1936 Stern restoration, as are the pedimented hoods above the north and south entrances and the stone steps of these entrances.

Further improvements were made after Woodford was purchased in 1953 by Joseph William Chinn, a Warsaw native, descendant of William Downman McCarty of Woodford and grandson of Virginia Supreme Court Justice Joseph William Chinn.

Residents of Wilmington, Delaware, the Chinn family enjoyed Woodford as a holiday and vacation home for nearly fifty years. On the east wing, they added a porch



Gardens adjoining the east wing were refurbished by Gardens Unlimited recently .

with spreading hip roof designed by Walter Macomber, another noted advocate of the Colonial Revival style.

In 2001, Ann and Clyde Clayton Hurt, Jr. purchased Woodford from Chinn descendants. During their ownership, the house was first opened for Virginia Historic Garden Week in 2002. In 2006, they sold the property to John and Brenda Boidock. Mr. Boidock, an engineer with Texas Instruments, extended the basement under the kitchen for use as a work space.



In the 1930s, the Gilchrists built a cabin on the creek, their home during Stern's renovations and now a guest-house.



The 1936 Colonial Revival east wing which houses kitchen, dining room, bedrooms and porch extension (1950s) overlooks the garden with its "Boxwood Room."

Woodford Today

Since 2015, Woodford and its 46 surrounding acres have been home to Lynn and Ed Elliott. The Elliotts, formerly of Chester Springs, Chester County, Pennsylvania, lived for 42 years in a 1793 fieldstone house there. They have recently retired from their business as suppliers of surgical equipment for hospitals. The two fields at Woodford are currently being farmed by Danny Marks. The Elliotts will continue to preserve Woodford, its architecture, gardens and grounds as a lovely residence and a historical legacy for the future.

David Jett

Sources

Interviews with Ed and Lynn Elliott, Mary Douglas Lawton, Vanelia Gallagher and Betty McGee, 2019

The McCartys of the Northern Neck by William M. McCarty, M.D. and Kathleen Much, Gateway Press, 2005

National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 1983

Photos by David Jett unless otherwise noted



The Mission of the Richmond County Museum is to Preserve, Protect, and Interpret the Artifacts and Heritage of the County through its Exhibits, Programs, and Research. Consider sustaining the museum's mission through a gift in your Will or Trust. Call 804-333-3607 for more information.

Richmond County Museum

Richmond County Museum
and Visitor Center
5874 Richmond Road
P.O. Box 884
Warsaw, VA 22572

PO Box 884
Warsaw, VA 22572

Phone: 804-333-3607

Fax: 804 -333-3408

Email:

museum@co.richmond.va.us

Visit our

Museum Gift Shop

For great Gifts

Books, toys, Northern Neck items

Wednesday -Saturday 11-3

Like us on



Board of Directors

Michele Brumfield

Mary Beth Bryant

Samantha Cain

Mary Lou Dawson

Rosa Forrester

Jay Garner

David Griffith

Frank Johnson

Charlene Jones

Nancy Jones

Mercer O'Hara

Gregory Packett

Brenda Pemberton

The Honorable Harry Taliaferro, III

Ex Officio:

R. Morgan Quicke

Helen Schools

Curator - Bulletin Editor

David Jett

Please join us for our

Historic House Party at Woodford



Saturday September 21, 5-8 pm

Tours of the House and Gardens, Music

Catered Low Country Boil Dinner

For Reservations Call 804-333-3607 or 804-394-3606

All proceeds will benefit the museum