

THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF CLAYMONT COURT MANSION

CHARLES TOWN, WEST VIRGINIA

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WASHINGTON HOMES IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

Situated at the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley in Jefferson County West Virginia, are a number of homes built by the younger brothers of George Washington and their descendants.

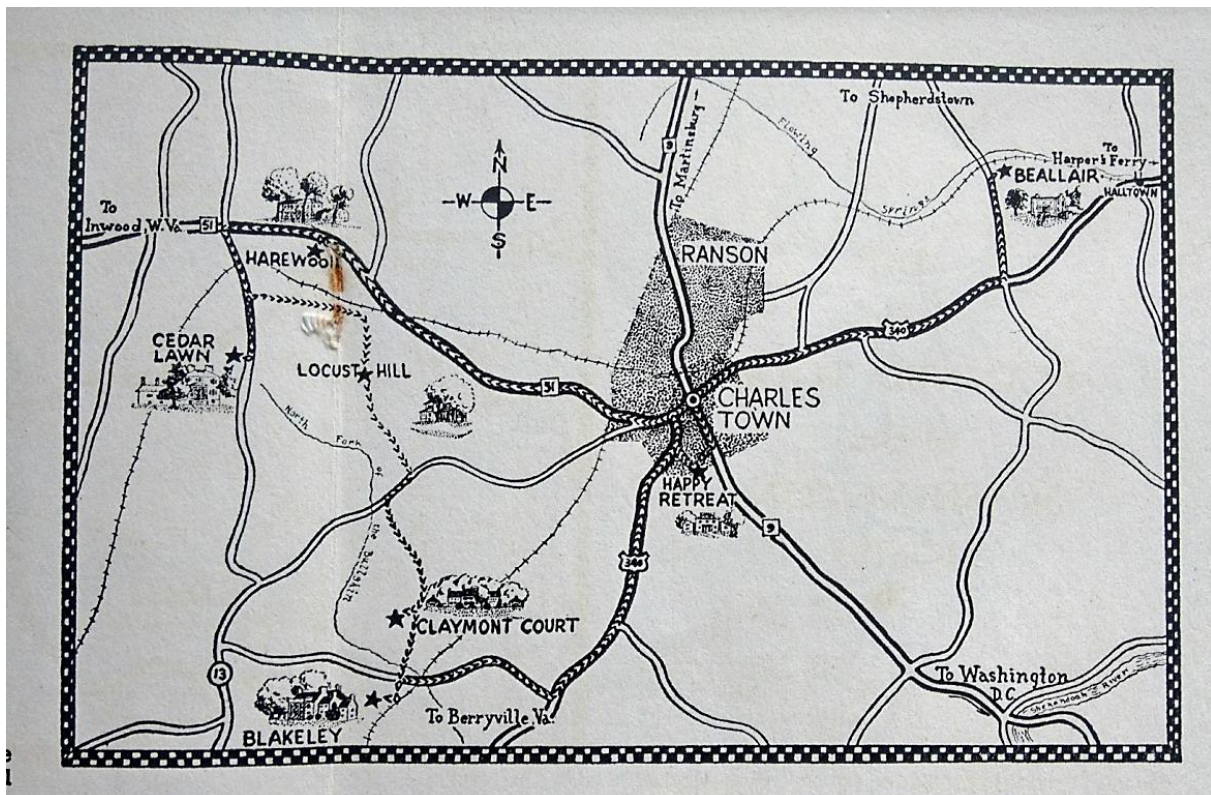
The first of the Washington homes to be built was Harewood. The construction of the Washington homes was completed on the following dates; Harewood (1770), Happy Retreat (1780), Beallair (Late 1700s; only the 1850 addition was built by a Washington), Blakeley (1821), Claymont Court (1822), Cedar Lawn (1829) and Locust Hill (1844).

Additional homes in Jefferson County with a Washington family connection or were built on land bought from the Washington family include Barleywood (1842), Shenstone, Altona and Richwood Hall (1831).

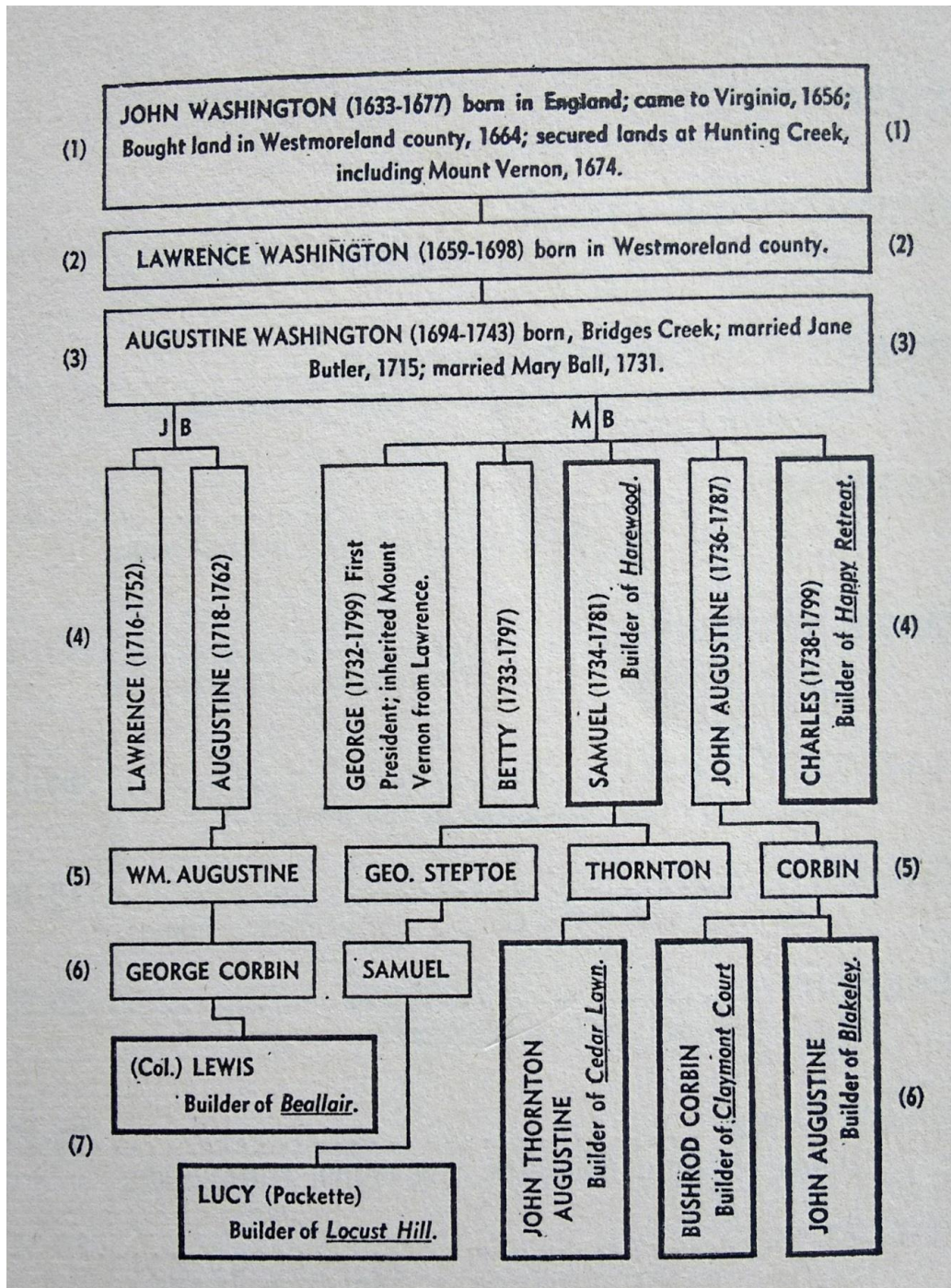
The history of these homes began in 1748, when George Washington, then a boy of sixteen, surveyed part of Lord Fairfax's Shenandoah Valley land. It is estimated that Fairfax owned 5.2 million acres, inherited from his mother through her father. Washington was so impressed with this fertile land that in 1750, with his first savings from surveying fees, he bought 550 acres along the south fork of the Bullskin Run. Over the next two years, he increased his holding to almost 2,300 acres.

George conveyed his enthusiasm for this land to his elder half-brother Lawrence, who purchased land mainly along the Bullskin and Evitts Runs. Lawrence began buying land and over the next five years he increased his holdings to about 5,000 acres, including the land on which Claymont Court was later built.

Lawrence Washington died in 1752. George Washington eventually inherited Mount Vernon and the present Harewood-Cedar Lawn area went to Samuel Washington, the Charles Town-Happy Retreat area to Charles Washington and the Claymont-Blakeley area to John Augustine Washington.



The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



From The Washington Homes of Jefferson County, West Virginia

(Generations shown in brackets. Claymont Court was built by a Sixth Generation Washington)

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

THE HISTORY OF CLAYMONT COURT

John Augustine Washington never lived on his land, for he managed and later inherited Mount Vernon from George Washington. His land was developed by his grandson, John Augustine II and Bushrod Corbin Washington, who both moved there after marrying two sisters from nearby Rippon Lodge. Bushrod married Anne Blackburn and John married Jane Blackburn.

The two couples decided to live close facing each other across the valley of the Bullskin Run. In 1820 Bushrod Corbin Washington started to build Claymont and John Augustine II started to build Blakeley.

In the biography of Frank R. Stockton by Martin I.J. Griffin, Griffin states that Claymont “was built by Bushrod Washington from plans drawn up by George Washington himself”. The accuracy of this statement is questionable. Caroline H. Spurry, the Architectural Historian at George Washington’s Mount Vernon states that there are only two known drawings of buildings by George Washington, one of the West elevation and the other of the cellar floor plan of Mount Vernon.

Based on a review of local property tax records by John C. Allen Jr., construction was completed on Blakeley in 1821 and Claymont in 1822.

Of all the Washington homes, Claymont is the grandest and most elaborate. When completed in 1822 it reportedly cost \$30,000. It was such a large and costly building that it was sometimes referred to as “Bushrod’s Folly.” The original mansion had thirty-four rooms and was built using ninety slaves. Some of the slaves were housed in the East and West Wings. The courtyard between the east wing and mansion was used as the summer kitchen, screened from the front of the mansion by the courtyard’s north wall.

In 1838 its interior was accidentally destroyed by fire to the brickwork while Bushrod Corbin Washington was away attending his first week of service in the Virginia General Assembly at Richmond. It is thought the fire started in the fireplace of the mansion basement kitchen.

A letter written by Mr. Bedinger, whom Bushrod had recently defeated at the General Assembly elections, tells of the fire at Claymont; “... *Some of the blacks were shelling some corn, of course threw the cobs into the fire, the day was quite windy and hot..., that probably the chimney caught fire and sparks fell on the dry roof... Thus, has been destroyed the Mansion which but a few years since cost more than thirty thousand dollars, I am sincerely sorry for the loss as he is an innocent good man... And I deplore his weakness and folly in erecting such and expensive building, but pride and ambition too often leads to great follies.*”

Bushrod Corbin Washington was a man of considerable wealth and he immediately rebuilt Claymont. The central section of the mansion was enlarged and rebuilt, and the remainder restored.

With his death in 1851, Claymont Court passed to his son and later to his grandson. After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 many of the Washington family members living in the area moved to Claymont Court to protect themselves during the War. The Civil War was devastating to the Washington family. During the war, two of the men of the house, Thomas Blackburn Washington and his son James Washington were captured at Claymont during the Christmas furlough by Union Army troops led by George Custer. As a punishment to the Claymont estate for “harboring guerrillas” all the estate’s cattle were driven off the land except for one milking cow, and every fence surrounding the farm was burned down.

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

When the Civil War ended, the Reconstructionist government demanded that the Washington family pay the Union the property taxes for the years the family lived at Claymont. In 1871 the family was forced to sell Claymont Mansion and its lands for the sum of \$10,000, a third of what it cost just to build the Mansion.

After the Washingtons vacated Claymont, the property changed hands a number of times. Claymont initially operated as a self-sustaining farm and produced almost everything the inhabitants used. The property was farmed and maintained by nearly a hundred slaves as well as a couple of dozen free workers. Because of Claymont's size it was expensive to operate and keep up, and later owners did not have the resources to keep the estate operating. The mansion and estate were uninhabited for a few years at a time and subsequently the property began to deteriorate, and the farming operations halted.

OWNERS

Claymont Court's owners, beginning with Bushrod Corbin Washington in 1820, include the following people and organizations: (*Owners Information from Wikipedia - Claymont Court*).

Bushrod Corbin Washington, heirs	1820
Clement March	March 24, 1871
Jan M. Van de Walker	June 2, 1886
Ida W. Dawson	August 4, 1886
George Baylor and Charles L. Dawson	December 24, 1889

Charles Dawson redesigned the mansion, enlarging it significantly. Dawson hired William A. Bates, an architect from New York City. Both the ballroom and dining room wings were enlarged to their current size of 32 feet by 36 feet and the south facing verandah was extended on each side. A third story was added above the ballroom and dining rooms, which included bedrooms and bathrooms.

Pauline Dawson	May 16, 1891
Frank. R. Stockton	June 24, 1899

Frank R. Stockton was a popular author at the time and wrote numerous books while living at Claymont, including the popular novel *Kate Bonnet*. He is best known for his short story *The Lady, or the Tiger?*

Otto U. Von Schrader, Mary H. Von Schrader	August 16, 1903
William H. Murphy, Elsie B. Murphy	December 14, 1906

Col. S. J. Murphy rebuilt and refined Claymont's old gardens and added a 235 foot pergola and large fountain.

Elsie B. Murphy	August 24, 1927
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Lorraine Annette Murphy (Fletcher by marriage); Yvonne D. Murphy (Duncan by marriage); Florence Van V. Murphy (Dickey by marriage); Temple Murphy

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

Raymond J. Funkhouser

March 10, 1943

Raymond J. Funkhouser was born in Cherry Run, West Virginia. As a young boy he worked as a railway station agent in Shenandoah Junction West Virginia, about 10 miles from Claymont. He moved on to make his way as a very successful businessman, agriculturist and publisher. He vowed that one day he would return to Jefferson County to live in retirement from the business world. He owned many companies, including the O'Sullivan Rubber Corporation, O'Sullivan Farms (established in 1939), and the Victor Products Corporation. He helped start the Blakeley Bank and Trust Company and donated generously to local organizations, including the construction of the local hospital.

Funkhouser was very active in purchasing, restoring and maintaining a number of the Washington homes in Jefferson County. He bought Cedar Lawn, Blakeley and Claymont and combined them into a 7,000-acre property with all the estates contiguous, and called the properties O'Sullivan Farms. He bought Happy Retreat and Cedar Lawn and was instrumental in preserving these historical Washington homes.

Funkhouser lived at Claymont and meticulously restored the mansion, grounds and gardens. He employed one hundred and twenty-five staff to restore the neglected and overgrown formal gardens, repair the washed-out roads, the tottering former slaves' quarters and restore the almost derelict thirty-four room mansion. He built a swimming pool, tennis courts and numerous farm buildings including a large finishing and show barn for his herd of prized Hereford cattle and thoroughbred racehorses.

Mower Lumber Company

June 3, 1952

Dorothy H. Mower

August 31, 1960

John R., Edna B. Curtler

December 21, 1962

Claymont Investment Corporation

June 23, 1969

Claymont Investment Corporation planned to turn the Claymont property into the Claymont Chase Hunt and Country Club. The proposed plans included a subdivision of hundreds of quarter and third of an acre building lots, an 18 hole golf course, with a full service clubhouse on 140 acres of land in the north forest, a Gun Club Lodge and hunting preserve, a large lake on the Bullskin Run with marina, beaches and boating activities, tennis courts, a swimming pool, changing facilities and Club House, an Equestrian Center in the great barn, for riding and hunting activities with horse stalls, tack shop, lounges and locker rooms. The property was subdivided into building lots, but the houses and other facilities were never built, and the land remained mainly agricultural. The Claymont Chase Hunt and County Club subdivision eventually become the present Spring Valley 1, 2 and 3 and the Claymont Chase subdivisions.

J. Glenn Brown, Marjorie C. Brown

April 1, 1972

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

The Claymont Society for Continuous Education - 1975 to Present

The Claymont Society property included the Claymont Court mansion, 418 acres of land and numerous buildings, including three houses, dairy barn and the large cattle and show barn.

The Claymont Society is a non-profit education organization. The aim of the Society in purchasing the property was to create, within three to five years, a fully integrated society largely self-sufficient in the production of food, shelter, clothing and the other necessities of life.

The Society's main areas of activity were to include:

- I. Food Production – the establishment of a balanced diet based mainly upon vegetable proteins, with a relatively small number of cows and sheep. It was hoped to apply new technologies such as Dr. Todd's "Culture of Algae" to supply a large fish farm. This activity, being labor intensive, was meant to occupy a large proportion of the population.
2. Intermediate Technology - devices for using alternative sources of energy for small scale production of furniture, fabrics and paper to be developed partly from research and partly from exchange with other societies.
3. Cottage Industries - such as spinning, weaving, furniture making and also fine crafts.
4. Printing And Publishing - especially the society's own literature.
5. Educational Courses and Seminars.

In addition to the seminars to be held in the Claymont mansion, the Society operated the Claymont School for Continuous Education, housed in the converted great barn. The School offered a Basic Course lasting nine months as well as a variety of educational seminars lasting from three to fourteen days.

Significant Dates

Claymont Court's historical importance was officially recognized on July 23, 1973, when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a US Government list of buildings and structure deemed worthy of preservation.

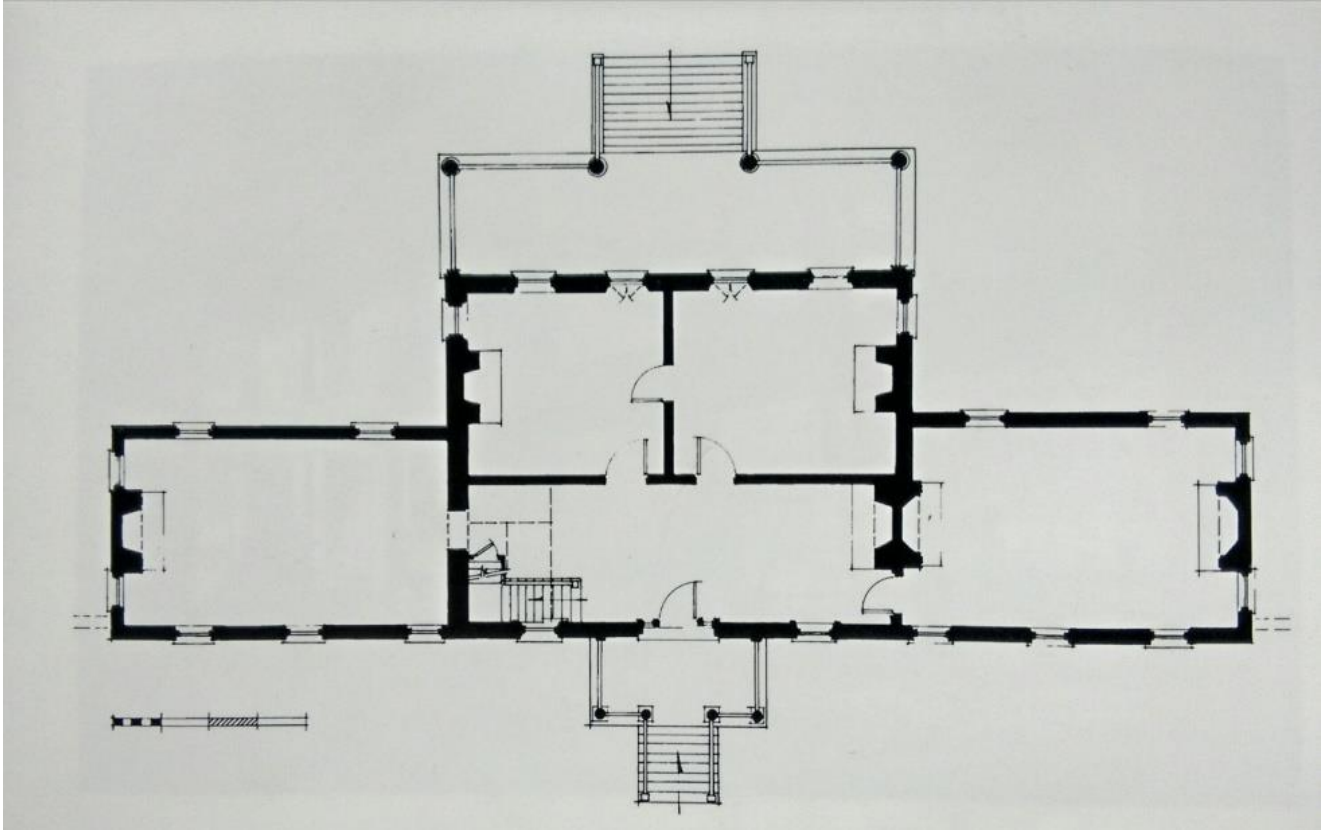
Claymont Court was recognized as a Jefferson County Historic Landmark in 1976.

The Claymont Society placed 264.32 acres of its property in a conservation easement on October 26, 2012, protecting the land from future development. The easement is co-held by the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board and the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

ORIGINAL FLOOR PLAN - 1822 to 1890

The mansion has undergone a number of major additions and alterations since it was completed in 1822. The first took place after the fire of 1838, when the mansion was burnt to its walls. It was rebuilt on the original floor plan and the rebuilding was completed in 1840.



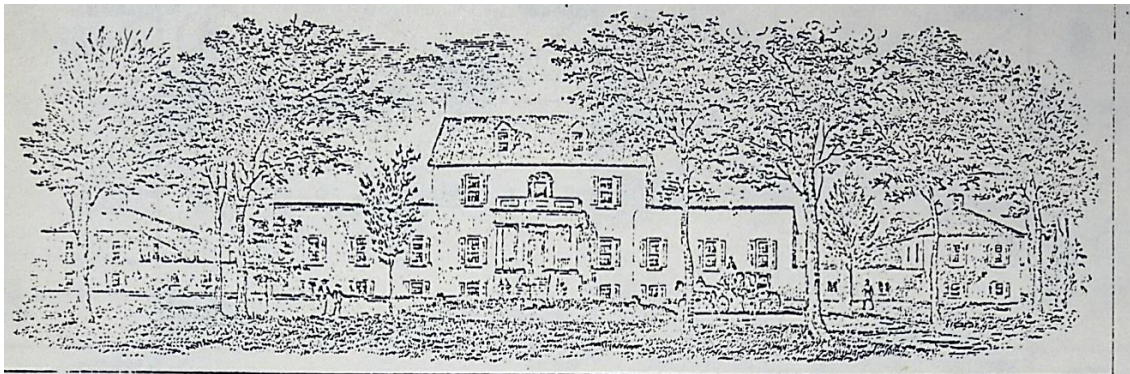
Second Floor Plan – 1822 to 1890



***Claymont Boarding School* Illustration from the 1860s.**

There is only one known illustration of what the mansion looked like in 1822. A pamphlet from the 1860's advertising the "*Claymont Boarding School*" shows a flat roof with balustrades above the north portico and fan lighted double doors leading onto the flat roof. The dining room and ballroom are also shown with flat roofs. The chimneys from dining room and ballroom are not shown.

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



CLAYMONT BOARDING SCHOOL, JEFFERSON COUNTY, VA

The next session of this School will commence on the 1st of September, 186 and will close on the 20th of June, 186 with an intermission of two weeks at Christmas.

This School is situated at Claymont, Jefferson County, in the Valley of Virginia, in a region of country remarkable for its health.

The location is easily accessible, being within two miles and a half of Charlestown, a station upon the Winchester and Potomac Rail Road.

The Course of Instruction in this School is such as thoroughly to prepare Youths for College or the practical business of life.

All the branches, necessary to a thorough English Education; also the Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and German Languages, are taught in this School—Instruction will also be given in Civil Engineering, and Book-Keeping, to those who desire it.

In the Senior Classes, the same Text-Books will be employed, as are used at the University of Virginia.

In regulating the School, a firm but not harsh discipline will be constantly exercised. The Students will be treated as gentlemen, and will be required to conduct themselves always as such.

There are churches of every denomination in Charlestown, and the Scholars will be required to attend church regularly.

Monthly reports will be sent to Parents and Guardians which will accurately show the progress made in the Studies.

Having had many years experience in teaching, the Principal feels enabled to promise a proper regulation of the Scholars, and a thorough instruction in every branch.

There will be comfortable accommodations for twenty-five Boarders, to which number the School will be limited. Pupils will be received at any time.

As a means of getting a disinterested opinion of this School, the following References are given, viz :

THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

JOHN E. DANGERFIELD, Esq., Alexandria, Va.
JOHN DAVIDSON, Esq., Georgetown, D. C.
J. W. H. POLLOCK, Esq., Cumberland, Md.
WM. B. STANARD, Esq., Dover Mills, Goochland Co., Va.
GEN. JOSEPH R. ANDERSON, Richmond, Va.
WM. R. SEEVERS, Esq., Baltimore, Md.
H. N. PENDLETON, Esq., Jefferson Co., Va.
R. B. WASHINGTON, Esq., Charlestown, Jefferson Co., Va.
R. W. BAYLOR, Esq., Charlestown, Jefferson Co., Va.
JAMES A. AMOSS, Esq., Jarrettsville, Harford Co., Md.

J. M. BUCKEY, Esq., Jefferson Co., Va.
JOHN T. ANDERSON, Esq., Buchanan, Botetourt Co., Va.
COL. F. W. M. HOLLIDAY, Winchester, Va.
REV. H. SUTER, Lynchburg, Va.
REV. JOSHUA PETERKIN, Richmond, Va.
W. W. MEADE, Esq., Clarke Co., Va.
REV. C. W. ANDREWS, Shepherdstown, Va.
GEN. W. H. PAYNE, Warrenton, Va.
GEN. L. L. LOMAX, Warrenton, Va.
JUDGE G. W. THOMPSON, Wheeling, W. Va.
JOHN A. THOMSON, Esq., Jefferson Co., Va.

TERMS.—\$300 Semi-annually in advance. **NO EXTRAS.** A Liberal Deduction will be made to Parents or Guardians who send more than One Boarder.

Address,

J. S. BLACKBURN,

Charlestown, Jefferson Co. Va.

An examination of the north portico in 2018 by John Edmondson, the restoration contractor for the Claymont Society and the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, indicate that the flat roof, granite sill and double door from the second floor foyer are original to the north façade and that the 1860s illustration is an accurate representation of the mansion in 1822.

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

MAJOR ADDITIONS – 1890s

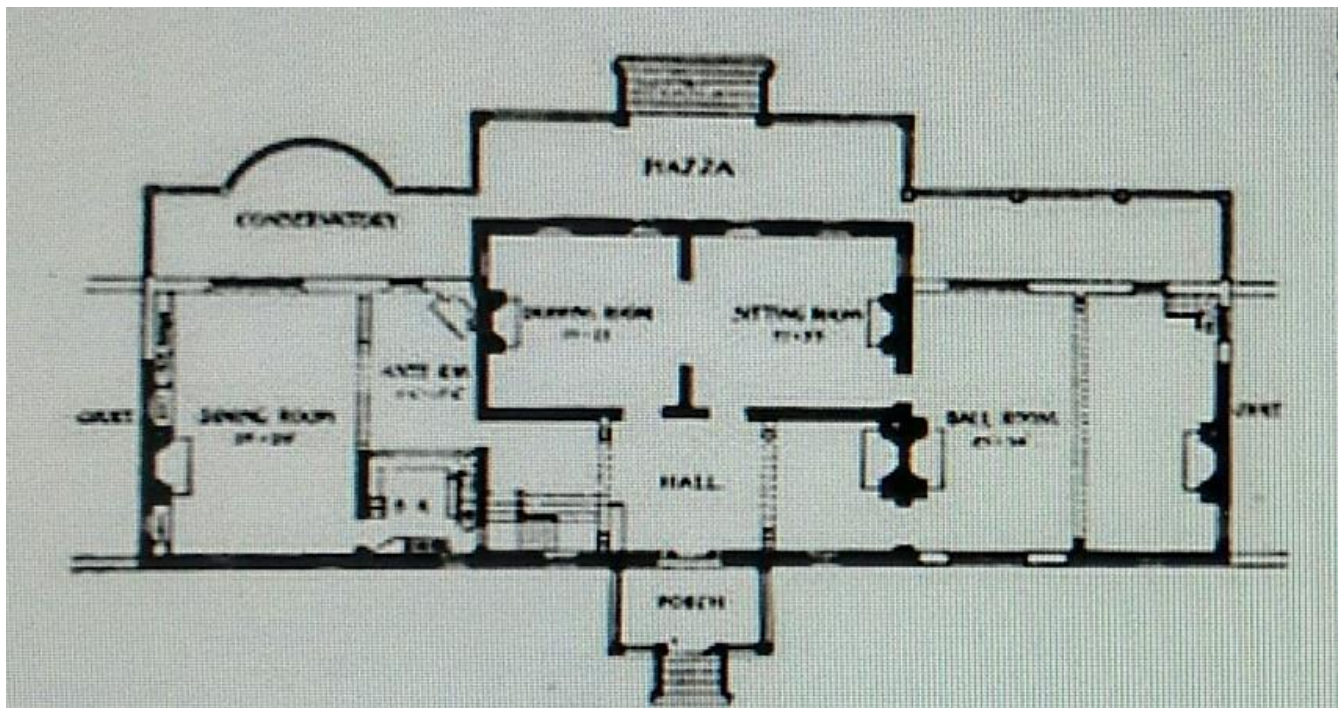
Major additions were made to the mansion in the 1890s during the ownership of Charles L. Dawson. The additions were designed by the New York City architect William A. Bates. The floor plans and illustration below are from a book by William Rotch Ware "*The Georgian Period, A Series of Measured Drawings of Colonial Work, Part 6*" The 1890 photographs below are from the *West Virginia and Regional History Center* and show the appearance of the south elevation after the 1890 additions were completed.

The additions included the following:

Both the ballroom and dining room wings were enlarged to their current size of 32 feet by 36 feet and the south facing verandah was extended on each side.

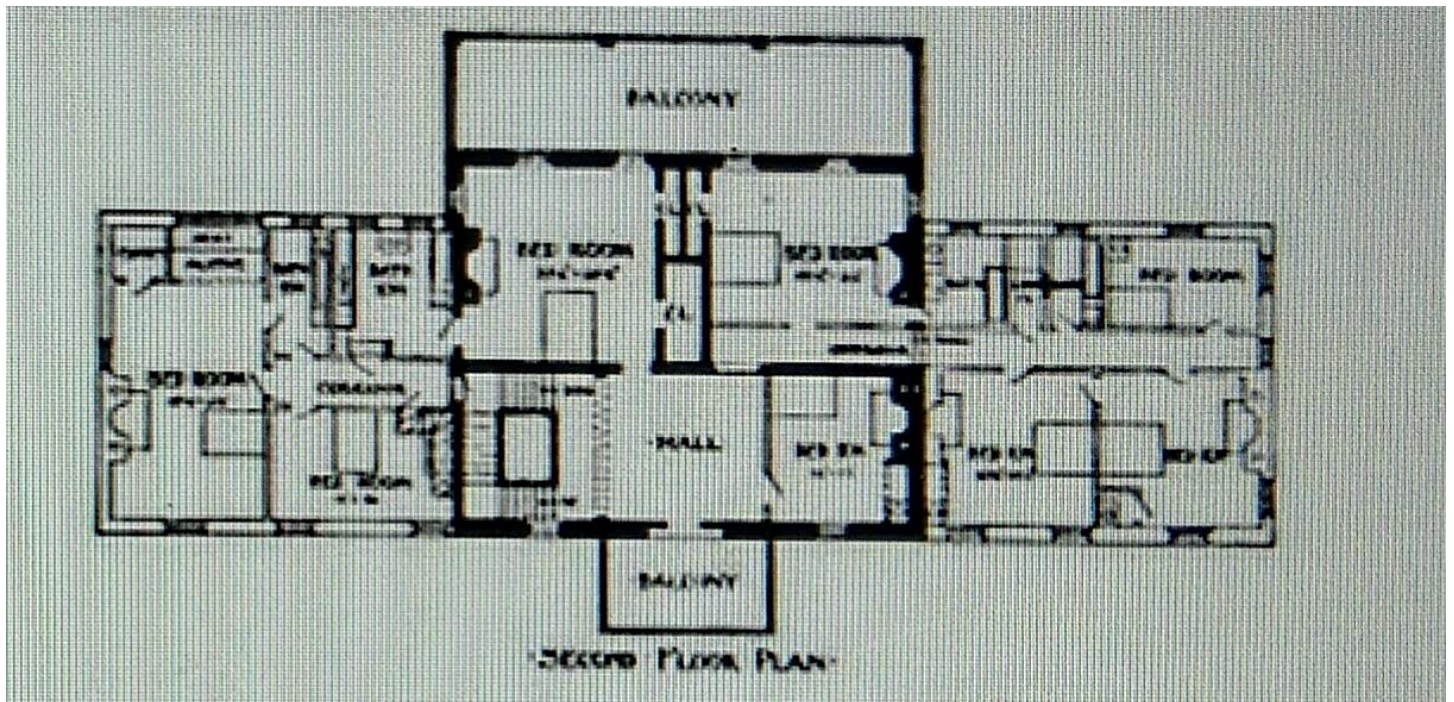
A Conservancy with a large bow-window was built at the east end of the verandah. Plans, a sketch and photos from the period show numerous columns consistent with the requirements for a bow-front window as well as abundant glazing required for a Conservancy.

A third story was added above the ballroom and dining rooms. The additions greatly increased the number of rooms. At the west end above the ballroom, three bedrooms and three bathrooms were added. At the east end above the dining room, two bedrooms and two bathrooms were added.



Second Floor Plan – 1890 to 1924

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



Third Floor Plan – 1890 to 1924



1890s

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

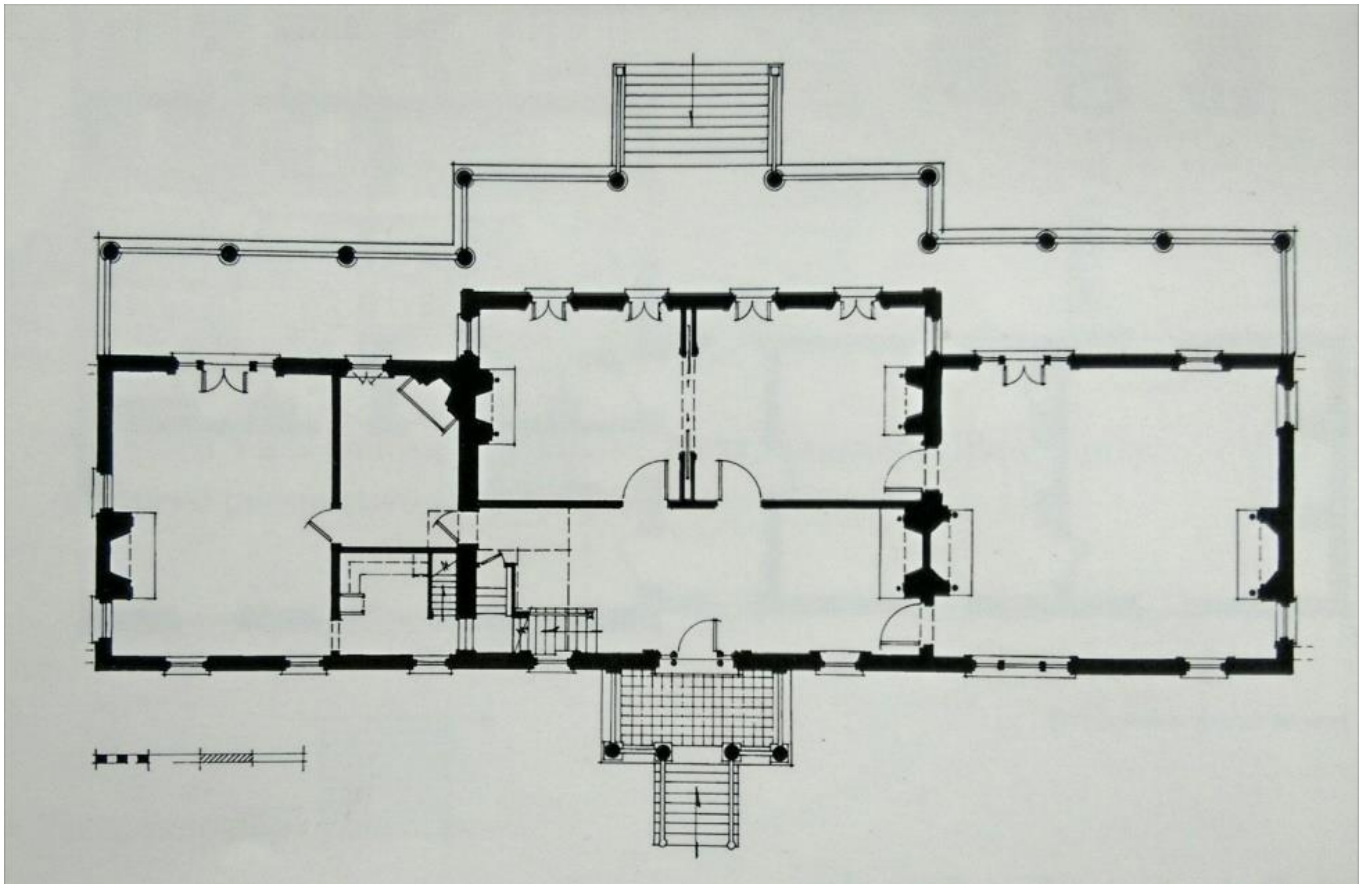


1890s

SOUTH ELEVATION CHANGES - 1924

In 1924 the Conservancy was changed from the large bow-window of the 1890s to the present glass windows and doors between the columns. The 1890 photographs above show the original bow-window and the 1924 photograph below shows the present Conservancy windows and doors.

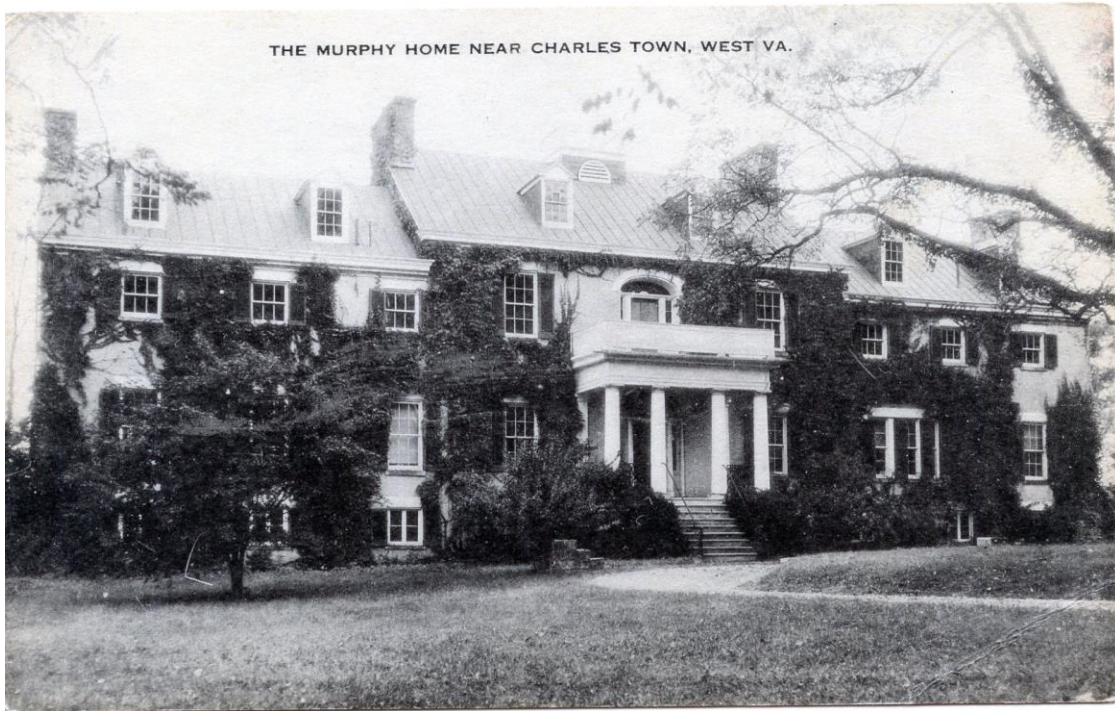
It is thought that when the bow window and doors were removed, a new roof and columns were added to match the existing verandah and floor to ceiling glass windows and doors were inserted between the columns. The current concrete floor was installed at this time.



Floor Plan – 1924

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

PHOTO GALLERY – 1920s



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The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

PHOTO GALLERY 1940s



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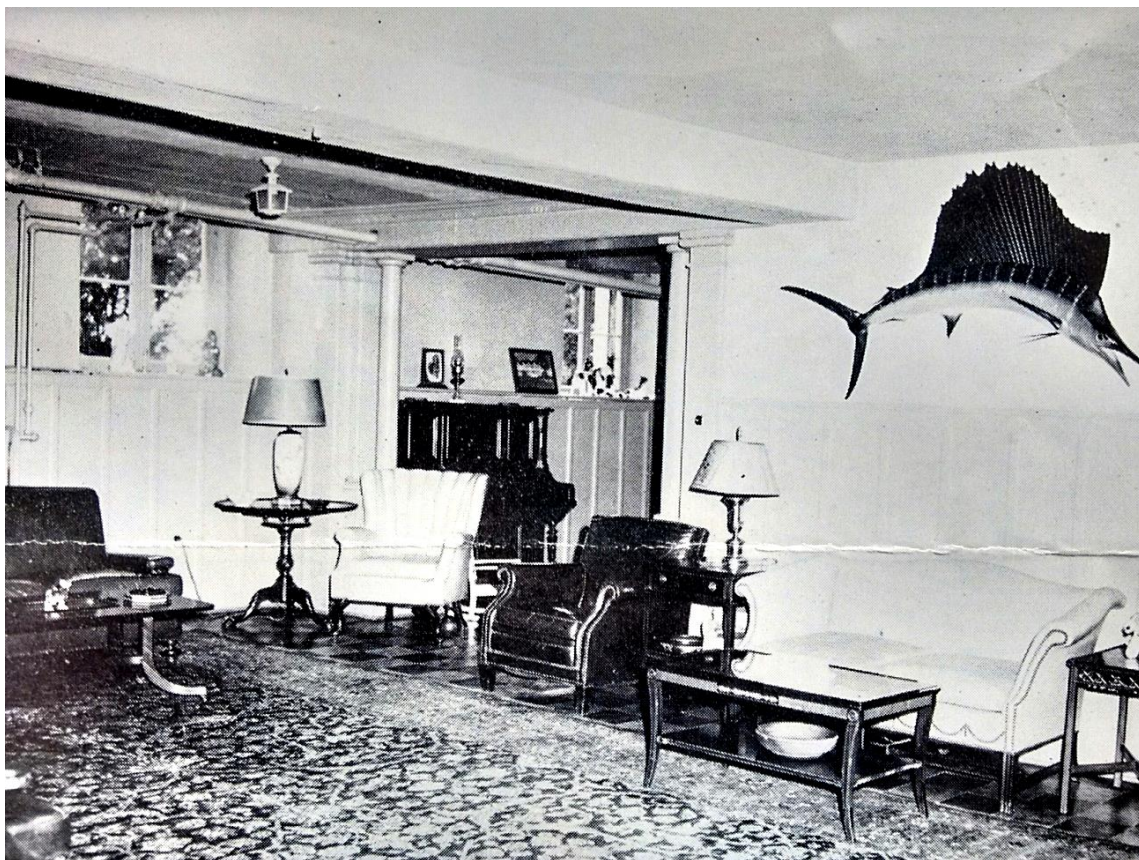
PHOTO GALLERY - 1943 to 1952



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The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



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FORMAL GARDENS - 1948



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The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

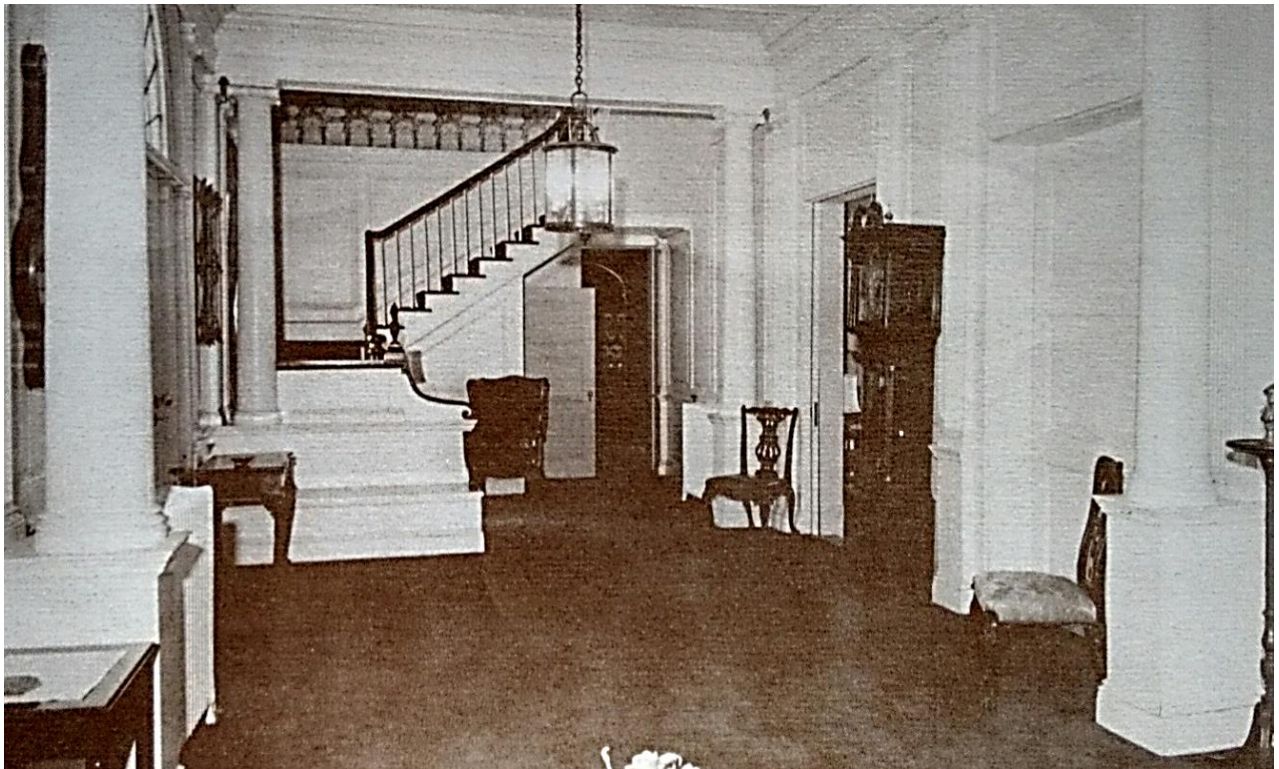
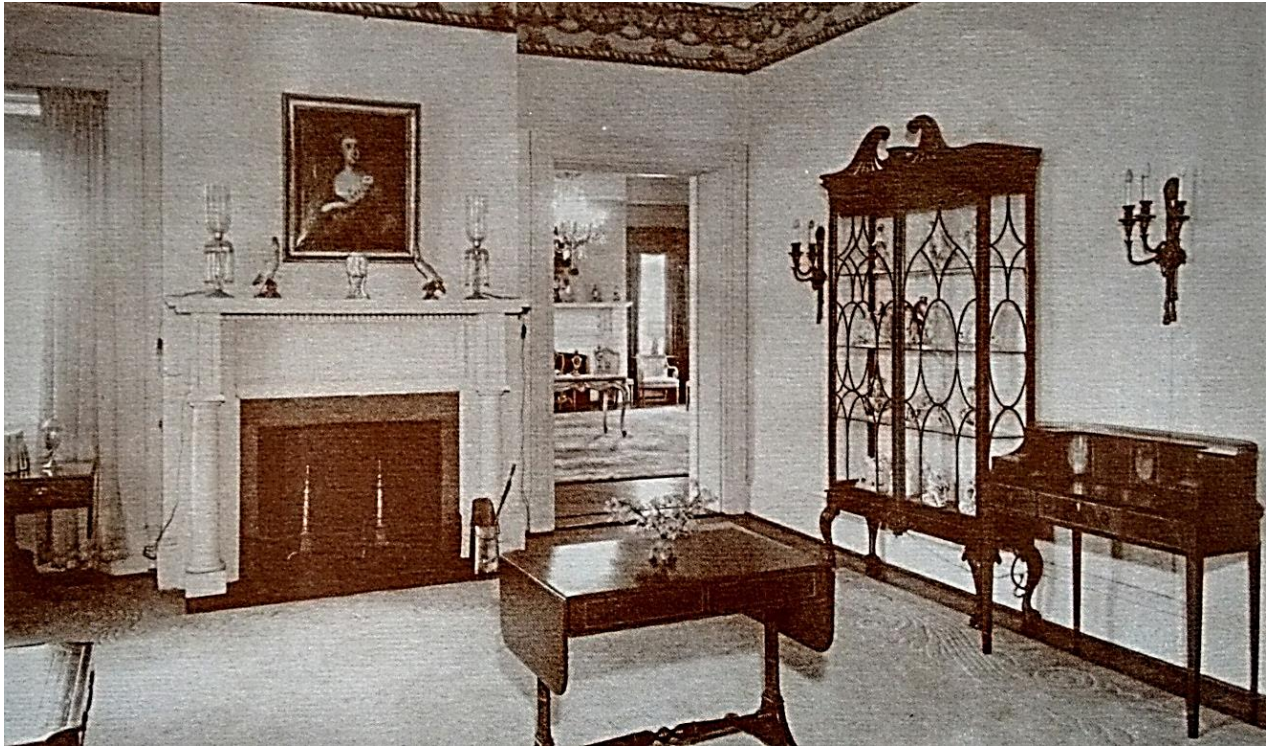
PHOTO GALLERY – 1960s



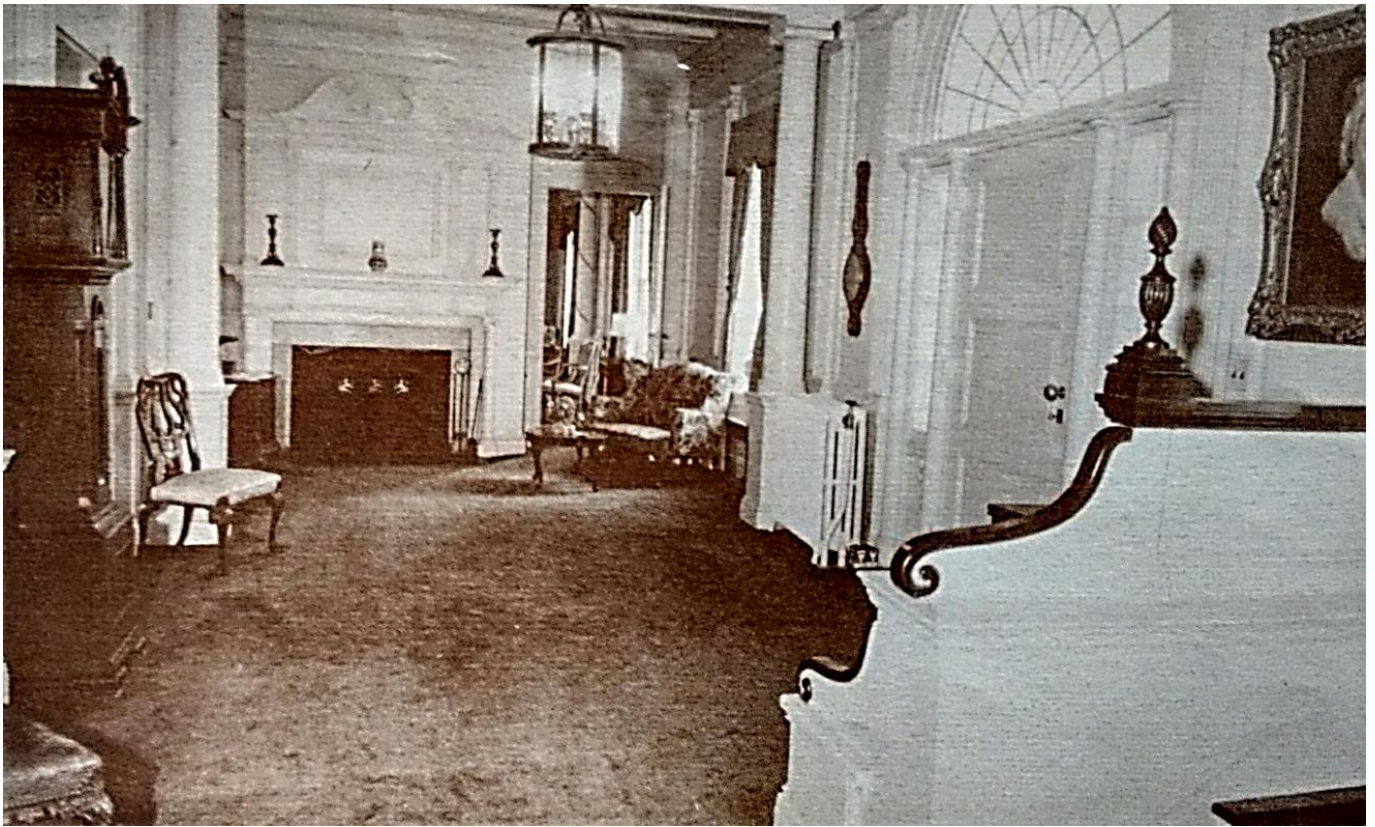
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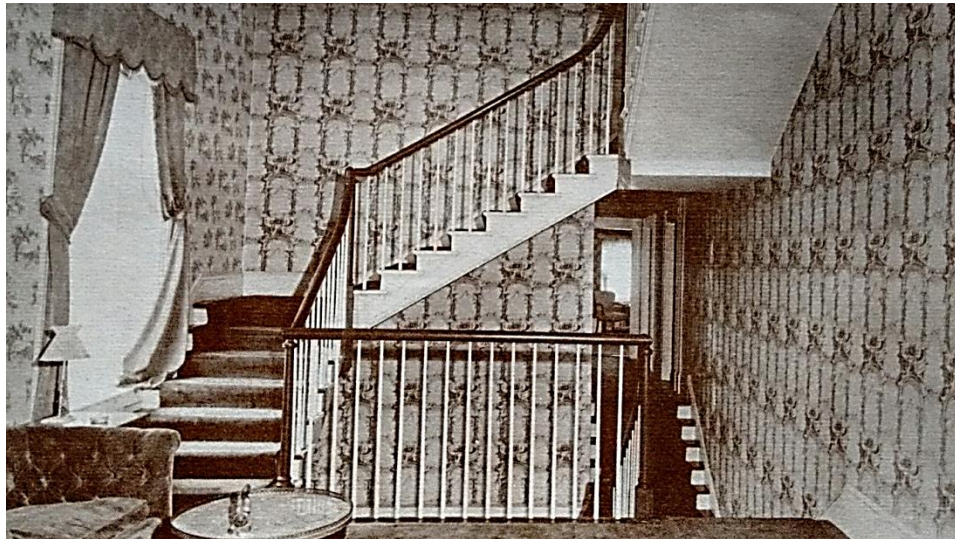
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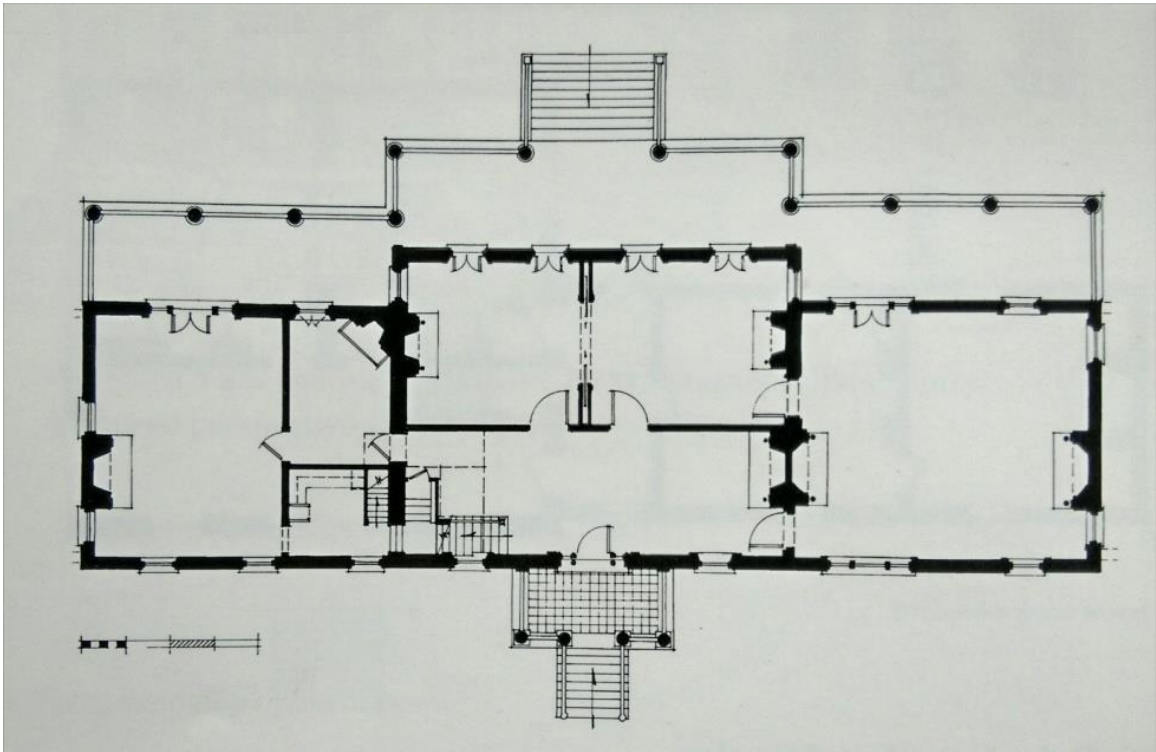


The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

PHOTO GALLERY – 1975



Floor Plan – 1975



The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



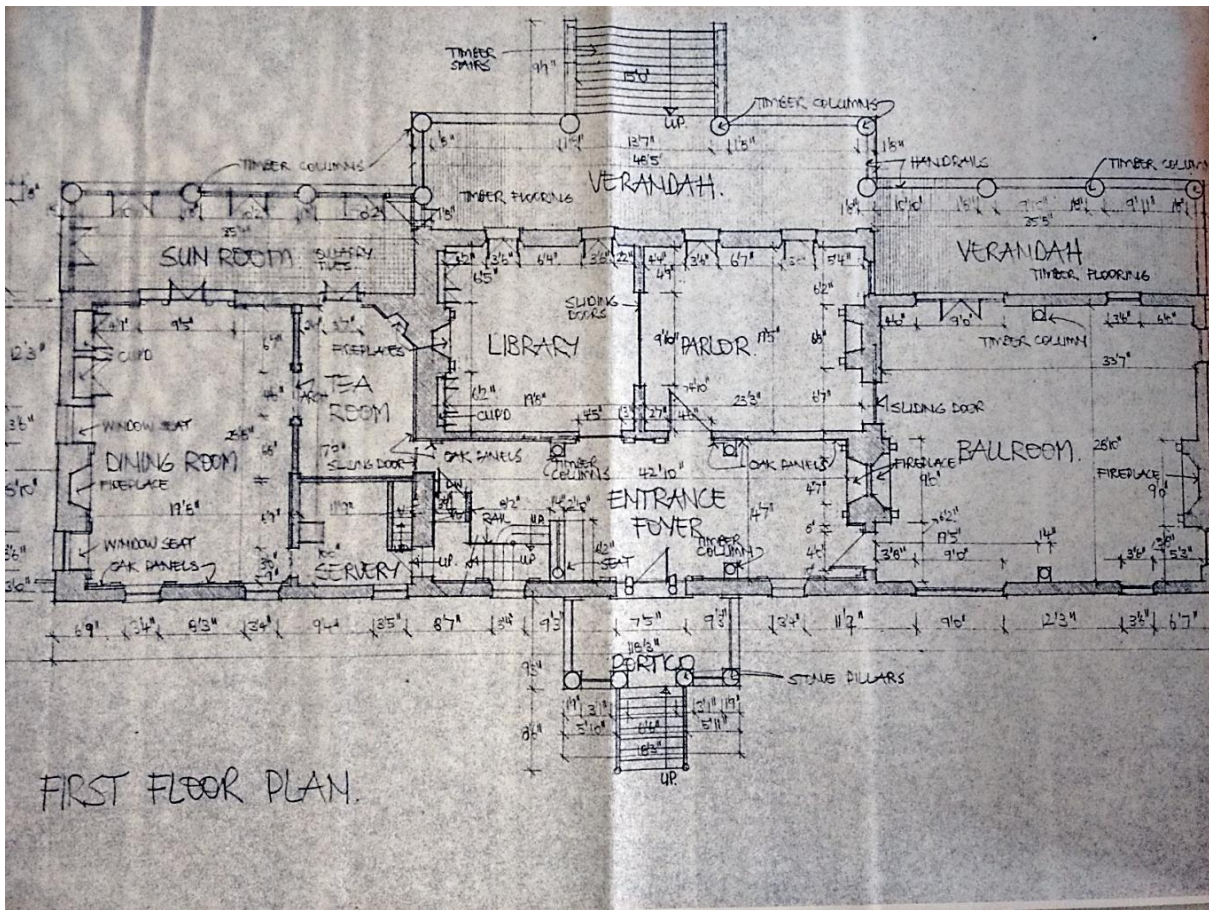
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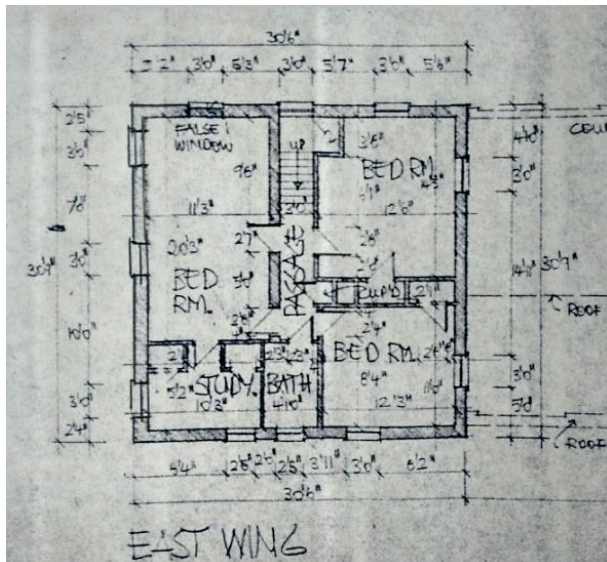
MEASURED DRAWINGS - 1977



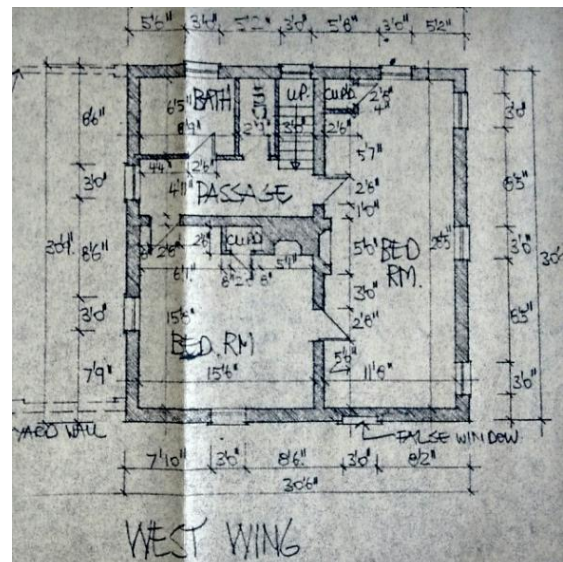
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Mansion Second Plan

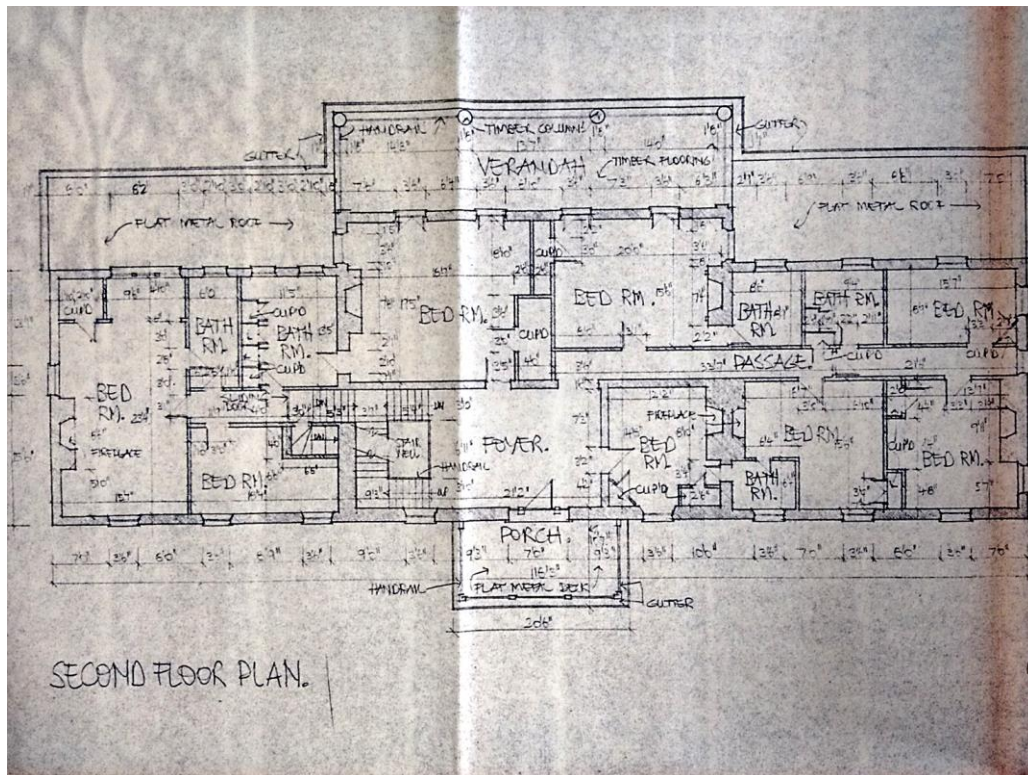


East Wing Second Floor Plan

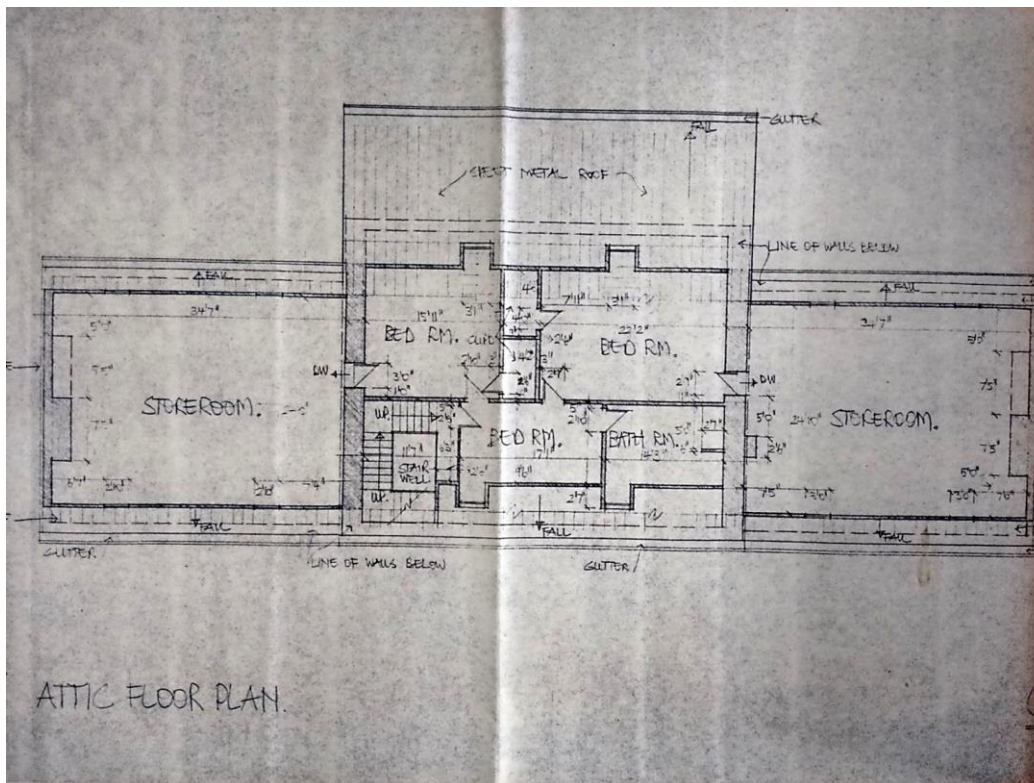


West Wing Second Floor Plan

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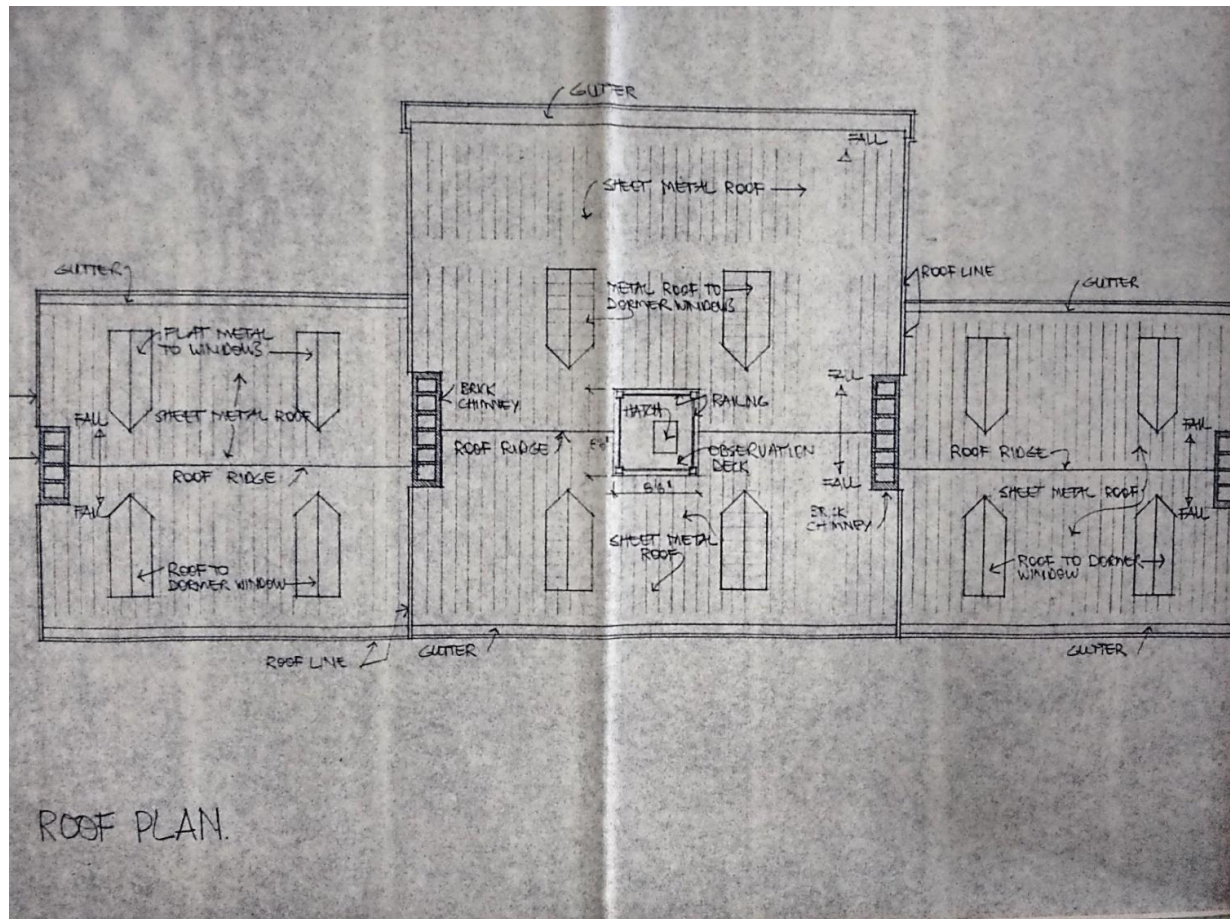


Mansion Third Floor Plan

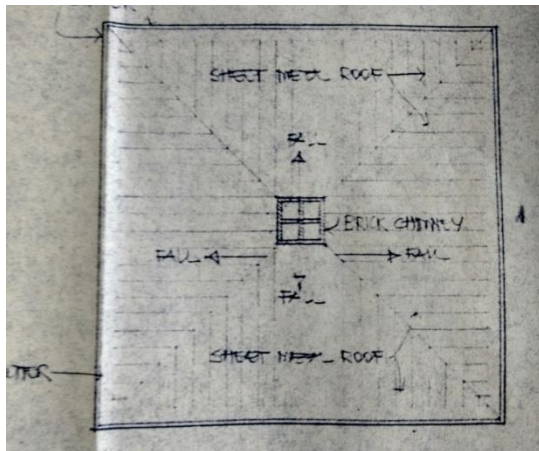


Mansion Attic Floor Plan

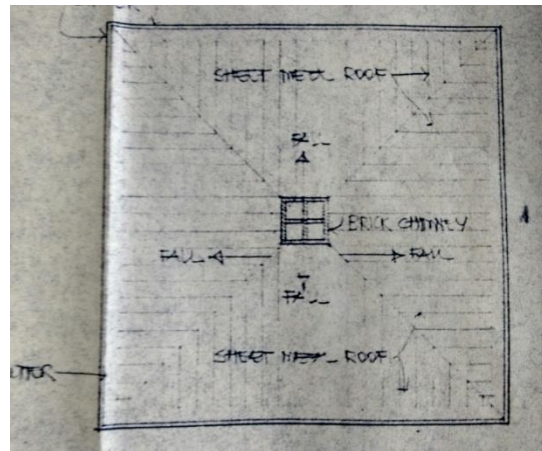
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Mansion Roof Plan



East Wing Roof Plan



West Wing Roof Plan

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

ALTERATIONS AND RESTORATION 1975 TO 2021

The original access to the mansion was from the north, by way of a three quarter of a mile drive through the north woodlands, from what is now Summit Point Road. The present access is from a driveway south of the mansion from what is now Huyett Road.

The original color of the exterior brickwork was white. It was painted yellow after 1840.

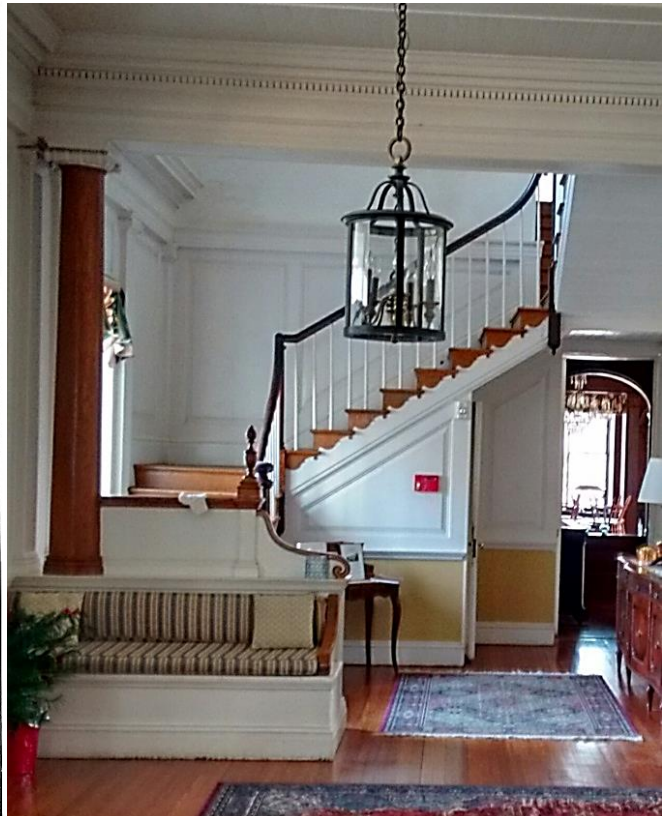
The original grounds included extensive lawns planted with an assortment of shrubs and trees, a seven-terraced garden and a pergola. There are now only two terraces and the gardens and pergola have fallen into disrepair. A swimming pool and tennis courts and sunshades were added in the 1950s.

Alterations to the first floor of the mansion included the addition of two bathrooms, a storeroom and adding glazing between the brick arches at the southwest corner of the building.

Originally the paneling in the entrance hall matched the-oak paneling in the dining room. It is thought that the current white painted paneling was added in the 1880s.



Original stained oak paneling



Current white painted oak paneling

A bathroom and toilet were added to the attic, and most of the staircase foyer was enclosed to provide an additional room.

Both the East and West Wings were altered to provide bathrooms. In the courtyard between the East Wing and the mansion, a storeroom was added, using the original courtyard wall as its back wall.

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

Since 1975 the Claymont Society has undertaken significant restoration and preservation projects on the Mansion. The work included major structural and building restoration, ongoing repair and the replacement and maintenance of the building elements and finishes.

Major restoration work included the following:

South Porch Ceiling and Roof

Restored the south verandah's roof, gutters, floor, handrails, balustrades and columns.

Replaced the standing seam metal roof over the south porches.

Installed interior structural columns and beams to support the ballroom floor and ceiling, restored the ballroom columns, chandeliers and refinished the hall mantel and columns.

Restored the East Wing entrance porch.

Removed the West Wing entrance porch and restored the outside door.

Restored the north portico stairs, columns, and roof.

Repaid and Paint Mansion Roof and Gutters

Repair and maintenance work included the following:

Repaired the drainage systems throughout the building.

Repaired the gutters and downspouts throughout the building.

Repaired, painted and flashed the exterior windows.

Repaired and painted wood window shutters, railings, and balustrades

Upgraded electrical distribution system.

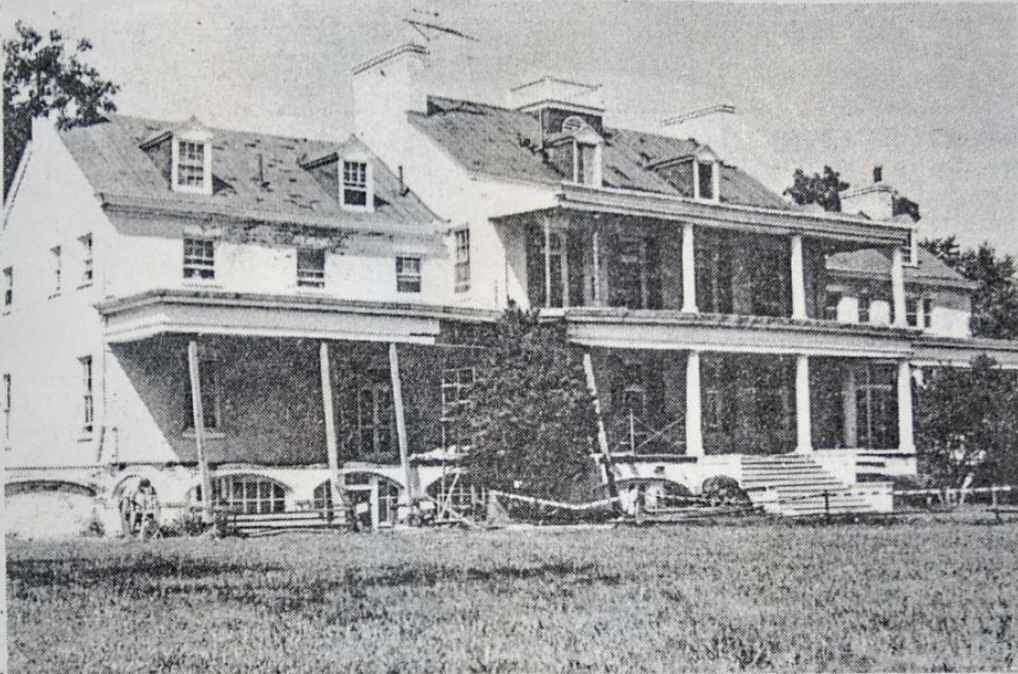
Installed smoke detection and alarm system.

Installed propane heating system in dining room, library and ballroom.

Installed handicap accessible bathrooms.

SOUTH VERANDAH ROOF, FLOOR AND COLUMNS RESTORED – 1978

Restoration Project At Claymont Court Underway



The major task of the Claymont School at present is the restoration of the mansion at Claymont Court. Dr. John Washington of the Jefferson County Historical Society considers the restoration of the mansion at Claymont a top priority, and with its dependencies one of our largest and most elaborate of our early 19th century homes.

The President of Claymont, Jerry Toporovsky, told us that the staff has been entirely moved out of the mansion. Only two caretakers are presently dwelling in the mansion house.

The Claymont school founded by the well known and internationally recognized Institute for the study of History, Science and Philosophy in 1946 has continued the tradition of teaching such intellectual disciplines as history,

psychology and philosophy, as well as practical undertakings like carpentry, organic farming, energy efficiency, blacksmithing, etc. Students for this years course have come from as far away as England, Australia, France and Denmark. Dr. Pierre Elliot is the director of the school.

Plans for the restoration of the historic Washington Home, one of some seven of them in the county, were initiated some time ago. The architect for the restoration work is Marc Velsey of Marc Velsey Associates, of Chevy Chase, Md., and since the grant of some \$35,000 in funds from the National Historic Preservation Trust to help do the work, Preservation Associates of Sharpsburg, Md., Doug Reed, manager, has been hired as the contractor.

The initial work on restoration

will involve the back porch of the mansion which is in most need of structural stabilization. The President stated that it is the intention of the Claymont people to restore the mansion and the formal gardens to their original splendor and open them to the public as soon as the restoration is completed. He said "a landmark house such as this should be enjoyed by the entire community not just a private organization." The money for the restoration comes from the society itself and from government funding on the one to one basis. That is for every dollar that is given by the government the Claymont Institute has to give a dollar. This is costing the Claymont school a considerable sum of money, but the President stated that he felt that it was more than worth it to see this house back in its former state.

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In 1975, the estate was purchased by the Claymont Society for Continuous Education, Inc. In 1977, this organization's resident architect, Mr. Gavin Perry (ARAIA), prepared a thirty-two-page Restoration Report in connection with a generous matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Attached to the report are blueprints of all four levels. Mr. Perry points out that the addition of another floor to each of the old wings provided increased accommodation on the bedroom level. Today the addition at the west contains three bedrooms and three bathrooms, while at the east there are two bedrooms and baths. The total number of bedrooms at this level is ten. There is also a large foyer at the top of the stairs. The restoration and maintenance of the fabric of the house now seems assured. From the Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society, December 1978



1977

2018

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



1977

2018

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SOUTH VERANDAH CORNICE, FASCIA AND STEPS RESTORED – 1991

Extensive restoration work on the south verandah was undertaken by Casey Pratt and Jeff Rosen. The work included reinstallation the main story and upper story cornice components, which were removed during the 1978 restoration, replacement of the missing sections of the frieze and the fascia and reconstruction of most of the abacuses of the column capitals.



1989



1991

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WEST WING PORCH RESTORED



1977



2018

BALLROOM FLOOR AND CEILING STRUCTURAL SUPPORTS INSTALLED – 1992



Installation of ballroom ceiling structural support beam

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Temporary support to ballroom ceiling during beam installation

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Finished ballroom after the installation of the structural steel beam and columns, wood trim and floor repairs.

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Structural beams supporting verandah and ballroom above



Finished room with wood trim covering the ceiling beam and columns

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SOUTH VERANDAH, THIRD FLOOR DECK RESTORED

The restoration work included the installation of new decking sleepers and flooring, railings, cornices, column wraps and ceiling.



LIBRARY CEILING RESTORATION - 2018

Over time, the plaster and lath pulled away from the timber ceiling joists, up the four inches in some places. The ceiling was jacked back up and re-attached to the timbers above, reinforced, plastered, and painted.



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Completed Restoration.

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NORTH PORTICO ROOF, GUTTERS, COLUMNS, STAIRS AND DOORS RESTORED - 2018



2017 - Before the start of restoration

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2018 – Restoration underway

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Completed Restoration

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SOUTH PORCH CEILING REPAIR AND ROOF REPLACEMENT - 2020



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MANSION CLEANING, REPAIRS, PRIMERING AND PAINTING ROOF - 2021

The restoration of the Mansion Roof was funded in part by a grant from the WV State Historical Preservation Office and the National Park Service. Construction supervision by J. Edmondson and construction contractor the American Paint Co. L.C.



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Exiting Roof Conditiona

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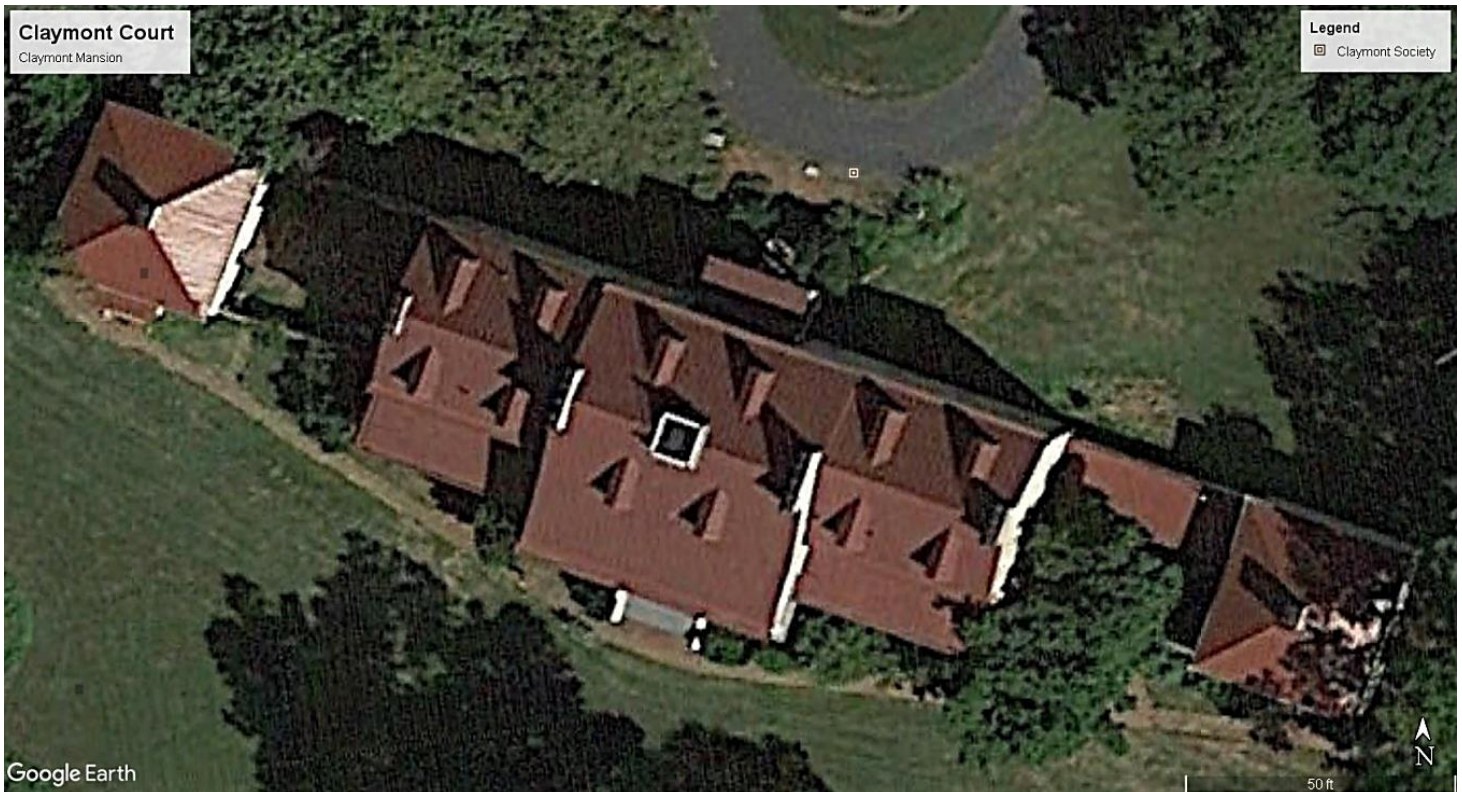
Cleaned, Repaired and Primed Roof

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



Completed Roof Restoration.

CLAYMONT COURT MANSION - 2021



The present mansion is a long rectangular brick building consisting of a central portion of three stories and an attic with two smaller two-story wings on the east and west ends, separated from the main building by enclosed courtyards thirty feet by thirty feet. The external brickwork of the mansion and two wings is painted yellow, and the metal roof is reddish brown in color. The exterior woodwork is painted white, except the handrails to the balustrades and the window shutters which are dark green.

A flight of marble stairs and portico located midway along the north face of the building leads to the entrance of the mansion. On the south face a broad wood verandah, supported by twelve wood columns extend a hundred and twenty feet on the first floor and forty feet on the second floor. A flight of wood stairs leads from the first-floor verandah on the south side onto an extensive lawn.

The ground floor of the mansion is mainly the service area with a kitchen, pantry, storerooms bathrooms, lounge areas and general storerooms.

The public area of the mansion is on the second floor with an entrance hall, main stairs, dining room, servery, library, parlor and large ballroom. From the front portico a wide doorway opens into the hall, a large area forty feet by twenty feet which runs parallel with the front of the house. Its walls are wainscoted with white painted oak carved panels and extend to the ceiling. At one end of the hall is a large fireplace, at the other end an oak staircase with walnut rails leading by right angled turns to the floors above. Through an arch under the staircase a passage leads into the spacious dining room and through a little anteroom or tearoom, both finished in oak paneling. The dining room opens onto a sunroom on the south verandah. The library and the parlor open into the hall opposite the main entrance as well as onto the wide verandah on the south side of the building. The rooms are brightly lighted by large south facing windows and glazed doors. Next to the library, on

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

the right, separated from it by pocket sliding doors is the ballroom. At each end of the ballroom is a large open fireplace. The room has doors or windows on four sides and covers the entire width of the house. The windows overlook the courtyard, the woods, lawns, and fields.

The central section of the third floor of the mansion includes a large foyer to the staircase, three bedrooms and three bathrooms. The two bedrooms on the south side have double doors opening onto the second-floor verandah, which provides a panoramic view over the Bullskin Run and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The other bedroom is located on the north side of the building, with its entrance door off the foyer. The second-floor rooms above the ballroom and dining room includes five bedrooms and five bathrooms.

The attic over the central section includes a foyer, two bedrooms, each with a dormer window and a single bathroom off the foyer. From the attic a staircase leads onto the roof and onto an observation deck located in the middle of the roof. The attics over the end sections are used for storage.

The East Wing has a kitchen, a parlor and one bedroom on the first floor. The second floor has three bedrooms, the largest of which has an attached dressing room or nursery, and one bathroom.

The West Wing includes a Kitchen, four bedrooms and a bathroom.

The formal gardens have been neglected over the years and fallen into disrepair due to a lack of resources and labour required to maintain such large garden areas. Most of the original garden walls and walks, pergola, and fountain and flower beds have been abandoned and boxwoods and weeds have taken over the garden.

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EXTERIOR



North Elevation

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South Elevation

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INTERIORS



Second Floor entrance hall

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Second Floor ballroom

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Second Floor parlor

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



Second Floor library

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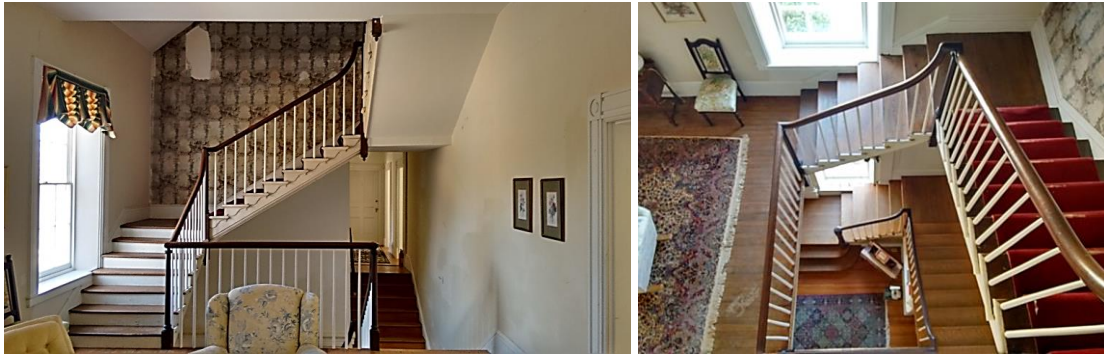
Second Floor dining room

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Third Floor lounge area

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Second and third floor staircase leading to the attic.



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Third Floor bedrooms

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First Floor sunroom



First Floor lounge



Second Floor solarium

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FORMAL GARDENS



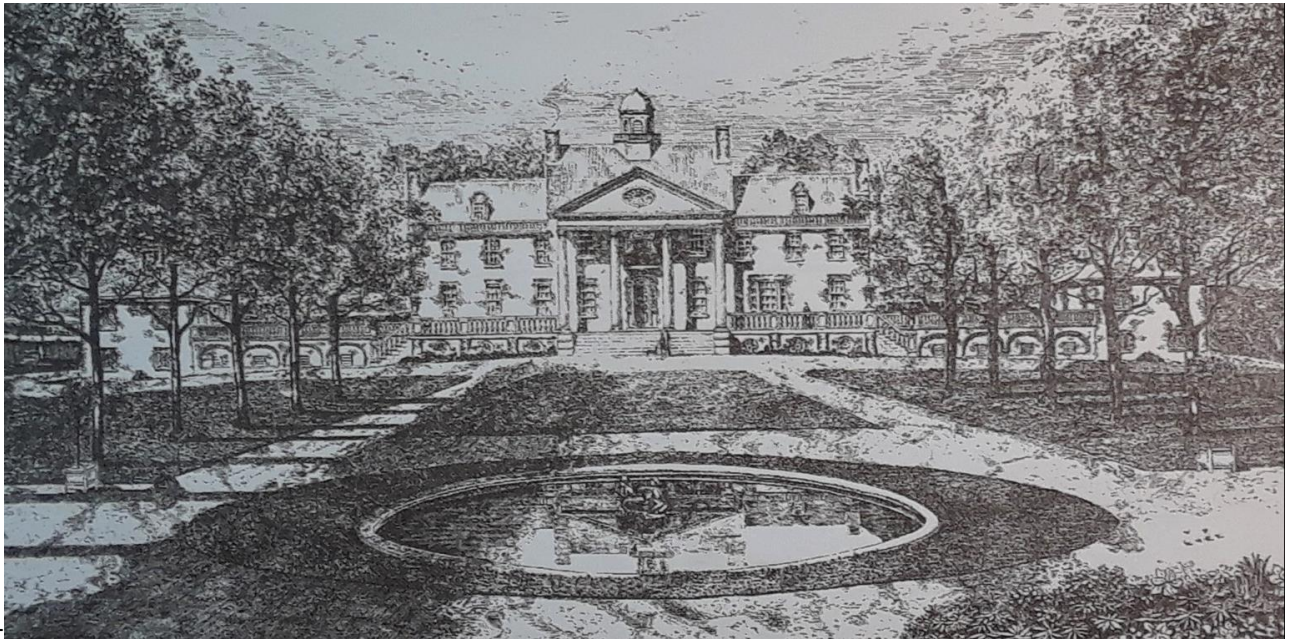
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ODDS AND ENDS

The Architect William A. Bates also suggested restoration of the North elevation and produced an illustration showing the restored North portico, front entrance, and the driveway. The illustration shows a two-story portico with a piazza and balustrades extending the length of the mansion, two tree lined drives, pond and fountain leading to the front entrance. The restoration work for the North portico was never carried out and the portico remains today as it was built in 1822. *The illustration below is from the book by William Rotch Ware "The Georgian Period, A Series of Measured Drawings of Colonial Work, Part 6"*



Master Plan for The Claymont Chase Hunt and Country Club, 1972

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion



House near dairy barn, the original stone section is thought to be the home of the overseer during the construction of the Claymont mansion from 1820 to 1822.



1950



2018

Garage/Coach House near Mansion

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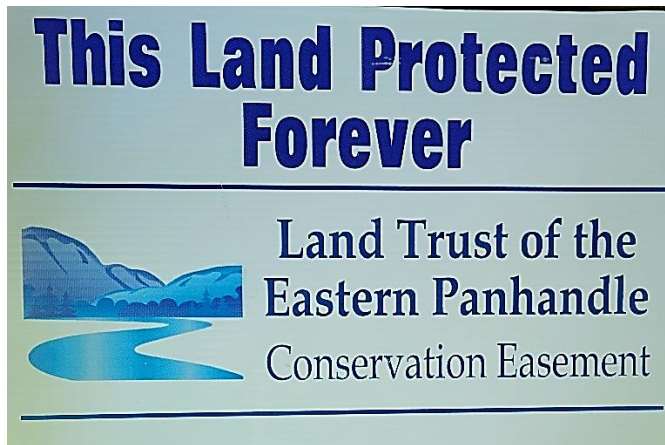
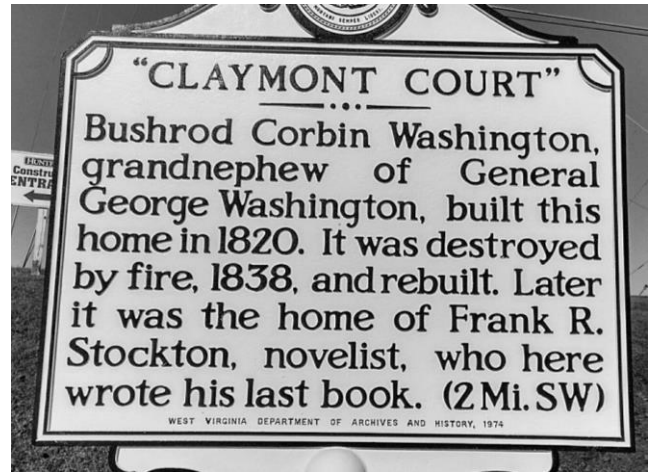
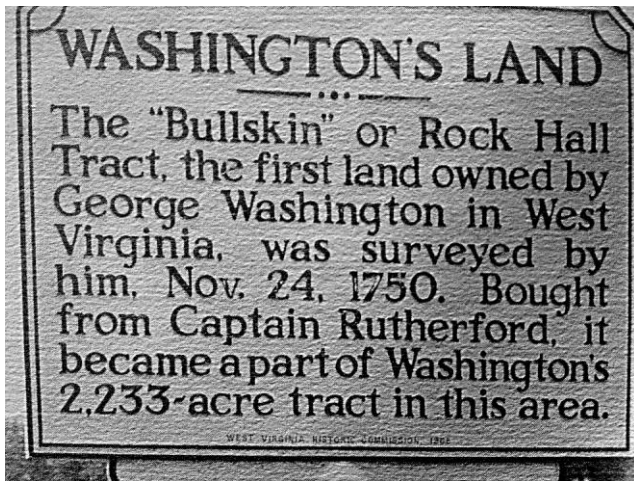


Original exterior window with shutters and hardware from 1890



"Secret Stair" from Second Floor servery to Third Floor bedrooms

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JCFPB

EXTRACTS FROM TALKS BY J.G. BENNETT

“A Call for a New Society” Sherborne House, London November 1974

“Announces the creation of a new society, sponsored by The Institute of Comparative Study of History, Philosophy and the Sciences, Ltd., of London, England. ..the Claymont Society for Continuous Education is being incorporated in the State of West Virginia... The task will be to create, within three to five years, a fully integrated society, the members of which will be committed to self-perfecting and to service to Nature and their fellow men. To meet the needs of the present crisis in human affairs, the Claymont Society will make itself largely self-sufficient in the provision of food, shelter, clothing and other necessities of life. It will do so partly by intensive food production and partly by the adoption of a system of diet that enables the requirements of the human organism to be satisfied with the minimum consumption of foodstuffs in short supply such as animal protein.

The property comprises 481 acres of land and buildings all of which can be used for the purposes of the society. It is situated in the fertile and picturesque Shenandoah Valley, Jefferson County, West Virginia within four miles of Charles Town and twelve miles from Harpers Ferry, one of the historical landmarks of the USA. It is readily accessible from Washington (58 miles), Baltimore (62 miles), Philadelphia, New York and Pittsburgh. Dulles International Airport is within forty minutes by car.

The mansion built in 1838 is a fine example of late colonial architecture with a very large ballroom, six reception rooms, eleven bedrooms and seven bathrooms. The house has two servants' wings capable of housing twenty to thirty people. There are also extensive outbuildings and three tenant houses in good repair.

An even more useful feature of the purposes of the society is a vast barn and auxiliary buildings 420 ft. in length and including an octagonal theatre 107 feet across that was erected for showing and selling cattle at auction. This is to be converted into living quarters, lecture rooms, studios and theatre for the Candidates' course.

The geological formation is a dense grey limestone that outcrops in many places. The land is partly arable and grazing and partly woodland. With ample labor available it can produce enough food for a community of 1,000 people. There are two springs on the property producing more than five hundred million gallons a year, enough to supply a town of 10,000 inhabitants. The water comes from the limestone formation and is hard, pure and suitable for all purposes. Very extensive vegetable production can be assured by irrigation. Forty-eight acres of land have been zoned and registered for fairly dense occupation to give over a hundred private dwellings.

There are, at present, no planning regulations in Jefferson County and we shall be free to undertake any kind of activity, educational, agricultural or small-scale engineering that is permitted by our own charter...”

The Architectural History of Claymont Court Mansion

“Gurdjieff’s Fourth Way”, Friend’s House London November 11, 1974.

“...And I am able to speak to you know about it because I only came back a couple days ago from America where we have just entered into an agreement to buy a large tract of land in West Virginias, fifty or sixty miles from Washington, D.C., over 400 acres with many facilities for development and the possibility of acquiring further land and we are now going to start, thanks to there being a lot of buildings on this property so we don’t have to waste time in building, we hope to be able to begin next October with a school like we have in England in Gloustershire and also to start work upon the producing a society that will be largely self-supporting, that’s aiming at arriving at a society of 800 or 1000 people because there is always a certain optimum or desirable size”

Extract from the PROPECTUS of the Claymont Society School for Continous Education - 1974

“...The property comprises 418 acres of land and buildings. It is situated in the fertile and picturesque Shenandoah Valley, Jefferson County, West Virginia within four miles of Charles Town and twelve miles from Harpers' Ferry, one of the historical landmarks of the U.S.A. It is readily accessible from Washington (58 miles), Baltimore (62 miles), Philadelphia, New York and Pittsburgh. Dulles International Airport is within forty minutes by car.

The mansion was originally built by Bushrod Corbin Washington, Great Nephew of George Washington, in 1820. It was later rebuilt along its present lines about 1838. It is a fine example of late colonial architecture with a very large ballroom, six reception rooms with extensive bed and bathrooms. The house has two wings to be used for dormitories. There are three additional houses together with very extensive outbuildings. One of these is a hexagonal show barn with 100 foot diameters, which is to be converted for gymnastic and theatrical purposes...”

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