

## **Richwood Hall**

Resource History

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1752 – 613-acre Patent to Lawrence Washington added to land previously purchased of Robert Worthington and others. (NN Grant Bk H/148)

In a 2001 interview, John Augustine Washington said: "...Lawrence died in 1752, and his four younger half-brothers George, Samuel, Charles, and John Augustine inherited his accumulated land." (Surkamp, *Jeff. Co. Hist. Soc. Mag*, Vol. 69, Dec. 2003) Samuel moved from Stafford County, Virginia in 1770 after his marriage and after he had constructed *Harewood*. Samuel continued to add to the *Harewood* estate, ending up with about 3,800 acres.

1781 – Col. Samuel Washington died and the estate was divided between his sons Thornton, who got *Cedar Lawn*; George Steptoe, who got *Harewood*; and Lawrence Augustine, who got *Richwood*. (Surkamp-JAW interview 2001)

Archie Franzen's (NPS historian) article on Richwood Hall (*Jeff. Co. Hist. Soc. Mag*, Vol. 36, Dec. 1970, p. 14) notes that "By Samuel Washington's will title passed in 1781 to his youngest son, John Perrin. John Perrin died in 1783. By a subsequent division among Samuel's sons (not recorded until 1806) the property came to Samuel's next eldest son, Lawrence Augustine."

The article continues: "Lawrence A. Washington married Winchester born Mary Dorcas Wood in 1797. In her volume, *Winchester and Its Beginnings*, Katherine G. Green mentions on page 287 that Lawrence in 1796 was living on his 'patrimonial estate.' On page 302 it is stated that the newlyweds lived at Hawthorne in Winchester which was presented as a wedding present by her father. They also seem to have lived some at Richwoods."

1798 – Berkeley County House and Slave Tax listed Lawrence Washington with two houses in the "country," one valued at 157.50 and the other, occupied by John Lock, valued at 262.50. By comparison, Abraham Vanmeter had a house valued at 157.50 in 1798, described in the 1786 Jonathon Clark survey as "framed, 30 x 16." Jacob Miller's house, valued at 262.50 in 1798, was described in the Clark survey as a "log house, 28 x 34."

When the next owner of "Rich Wood" (Smith Slaughter) had an insurance policy recorded on the house in 1804, it was described as a "wooden dwelling house," 1 story high, 22 x 16 feet, and was valued at \$250. (R.3/V.27/no.2325, MAS records, Library of Virginia)

1802 – Lawrence Augustine Washington sold the property of 354 acres to Smith Slaughter (JC DB 1/264; in Franzen 1970, p. 14). We have not seen this deed so we don't know the purchase

price, but a mortgage was released in 1811, the long payment period indicating a significant amount. (JC DB 6/489; in Franzen 1970, p. 14)

Smith Slaughter had the house on "Rich Wood" insured in 1804 (see above) and reevaluated in 1805. In the 1805 record it was described as a "wooden dwelling house," 1 story high, 18 x 16 feet, covered with wood, wooden shed 18 x 10 feet across the front, and a "stone closet" on the side, 6 x 6 feet. The new value was given as \$260. (R.4/V.38/no.887)

1810 – U.S. Population Census. Smith Slaughter was listed in Jefferson County over the age of 45, with two women (one 16-25, one 26-44) and a male 0-9 years. There were 24 slaves in Slaughter's household.

1820 – Land Tax records show Smith Slaughter with 354 acres adjoining William Cameron (*Caledonia*), and buildings valued at \$3,500.

This high value of buildings compared to Slaughter's 1805 valuation on his insurance record indicates that Smith Slaughter built the large brick mansion called *Richwood Hall* ca.1815, probably after the mortgage was paid in 1811.

Slaughter was listed on the 1820 census with just himself and two women living in his new palatial hall. He also listed 20 slaves. His immediate neighbor [John] Thornton [A.] Washington listed 37 slaves at *Cedar Lawn*.

1823 – Smith Slaughter wrote his will and died the following year (1824). In his will he freed his slaves: "Jack, Dick, Voll [Vaul], Lucy, John or Jack, Austin, Wm., Tyler, [Manawill?] Tylor, Agnes & all her increase [3 young children], James, Wm., Ester & a young one the name unknown to me, Jenny sometimes called Bett, with her two children Presley & Henry, also nancy & matilda Daughters of negroe Lucy who died this fall, also one hundred Dollars to be paid to them immediately so as to remove them to Scioto [County] Ohio state my wagon & four Horses also 200 acres of Land in that County to them their heirs for ever." He also indicated that his "land in Jefferson County to be sold unto Mr. John Yates who had purchased it at 50 dollars per acre...but he was to have 18 years to pay it..."

Note: Ohio has a really good program for African-American slave history and the communities that settled there. They would probably be very interested in this information.

Smith Slaughter's estate inventory indicated a very comfortable lifestyle similar to his neighbor William Cameron (d. 1823). He had dozens of chairs – Windsor and split-bottom, and 3 dining room tables – one Walnut and one Mahogany, several desks, a bookcase, gilded-frame looking glasses, a cupboard full of China, Queen's Ware, glass ware, and silver tea set, a sideboard, 8 beds, carpets, etc. He also had "750 peaces of Coopers Stuff," a large number (63) of "Hoggs," also cows and horses, wheat, corn, and rye. Of note, the inventory included 1,502 lbs of tobacco and 2,530 shingles. (JC WB 5/71)

1829 – Mr. John Yates did not end up with the land in question and it was later sold by a Chancery Court decree; the purchaser was Joseph Showalter (some say Shewalter; 1830 JC Land Tax).

The 1830 Jefferson Co. Land Tax record listed the 354 acres under the name of Joseph Showalter, adjoining William Cameron (Jr.), with buildings valued at \$3,500 and the notation, “From S. Slaughter, sold under a decree of Chy Court.” The building value on Showalter’s *Richwood* remained the same as late as 1835.

1846 – Showalter sold 261 acres of *Richwood* to John R. Flagg under whose name it appears on the 1852 S. Howell Brown map.

In 1864, as Pegram’s Confederate line crossed the farm toward Charles Town, the property owner appears on the Hotchkiss map as “Mrs. Flagg,” although John Flagg’s will was reportedly dated 1872. (Franzen 1970: 14)

“During the Battle of Cameron’s Depot, on August 21, 1864, General Early’s Confederate cannon located on the hill “around the house of John R. Flagg” fired at the forces of General Sheridan centered ‘around the house of John B. Packett.’ A missile presumably shot from the grounds of Richwood Hall can still be seen embedded in the brick wall of Locust Hill.” (Franzen 1970: 15)

In 1872, the farm passed to George H. Flagg who sold it to James L. Hooff, under whose name it appears on the 1883 S. Howell Brown map. (JC DB F/528; in Franzen)

Note: The 1970 Franzen article in the *Jefferson County Historical Society Magazine* includes a detailed architectural description, although he dates the house circa 1825-1830. A follow-up paragraph at the end of the article (it is not clear if Archie Franzen wrote this or not) noted: “The observation that the brickwork of the kitchen wing contains continuous vertical mortar lines near the east corners of its north and south walls suggests that the back or perhaps the front of an earlier one story structure was faced with brick at the time the main house was built. Subsequently the earlier building, presumably the wooden one mentioned in the Mutual Fire Assurance Society record, was torn down and the present two story brick wing completed. Masons left portions of the joining of the facing with the newer walls unspliced. At the southern end, stone blocks in the remains of a terrace, containing a cistern, may be remnants of the ‘stone closet.’”