

White House, built ca.1768? by John McCormick, 1807? addition by John Locke
Resource History
Paula S. Reed & Associates
March 2009

1740 – Doctor John McCormick purchased 395 acres from Jost Hite (Orange Co. DB 4/11, in O'Dell, p. 163).

The tract was part of the 40,000 acres Hite purchased from the Vanmeter brothers and was described in Hite's 1734 colonial grant as adjoining the Borden (Burden), Hampton, and Griffith grant land, crossing a "Waggon road" and "the head of Bulskin Spring" (Va. Patent Book 15/322). (see attached Map 4 from O'Dell)

In later references (after 1740) to this first McCormick tract, it is always referred to as his "Old Patent land," including in the 1750 Fairfax grant to George Johnston (NN GB G/458).

Frederick County Road Orders, 17 July 1744 O. S., FOB 1, pp. 153-154:

"Thomas Rutherford Gent & W^m. Davis having Viewed the Road from John Sheppards to the head of Bulskin according to an Order of this Court made their report in these words In Obediance to the within Order we have layed off & Marked the said Road from Potomack River the Nearest & best way from Sheppards fferry Thro' the Land of Thomas Rutherford & so over Walkers Mill Dam & so by the head of Pitts'es Marsh & so to the Head of Bulskin thro' the Lands of Mr. John McCormack Whereupon its Ordered that the said Road be from hence forth Established a public Road & W^m Davis is hereby Appointed Overseer of the same And its further Ordered that he Cause the said Road to be Cleared & when Cleared that he Keep the same in Repair according to the Law And that the Tithables living within three Miles on Each side the Road Work on the same."

[Note the reference to "Sheppards fferry" in 1744! Boy does this open a can of worms.]

7 May 1746 O. S., FOB 2, p. 88

"**Ordered that John McCormack View Mark & lay off a Road the Nearest & best Way from his house to Opceken Creek [emphasis mine] & that Hugh Perrill William Albin & Simeon Taylor View Mark & lay of a Road from that part the said Creek were the said McCormack Ends the Nearest & best Way to the Courthouse & that they make report thereof to the next Court.**" In 1750 he was fined 15 shillings for failing to keep this road clear (14 May 1750 O. S., FOB 3, p. 273)

[Clearly there was a house on McCormick's land as early as 1746, but whether it was the house was the stone house now standing is another question. The Frederick County Road Orders do not include any reference to this house as the "White House" (there was another house elsewhere in the county by that name at the time), nor was there any reference to a tavern or ordinary.]

1760 – July, Doctor John McCormick got a Fairfax grant for 157 acres at “the Head of the So. Fork of Bulskin” (NN GB K/126). This immediately adjoined his 395 acres as a narrow triangular parcel. Dr. McCormick sold the 157-acre grant land to his son John McCormick Jr. in 1765 for £500 (FC DB 10/323). The land was described as adjoining his other patent land as well as that of Capt. George Johnston and McCracken (by then GW but not mentioned), Maj. Calmes (later Throckmorton), Maj. Lawrence Worthington, and Robert Worthington. This eventually became part of the John Davenport farm (see Mt. Ellen).

1768 – Dr. John McCormick (Sr.) wrote his will and died (FC WB 3/182). He listed his wife Ann, sons James, John Jr., Francis, William, George, and Andrew, and daughters Mary (wife of Magnus Tate) and Jane (wife of James Byrne). Francis and John Jr. already had land they purchased from their father. The remaining land – the 395-acre “Old Patent” – was to be divided between William, George, and Andrew.

William was given 140 acres which he sold to Samuel Washington for £146 in 1779 (BC DB 6/53, O’Dell:165) (this may be where Shenston is located)

George got 115 acres, which he sold to John Dawkins £500 in 1771 (FC DB 14/394, O’Dell, p.165). Dawkins sold the tract to George Cloak in 1772 (BC DB 1/384, in Rice, p. 57) and Cloak sold it to John Davenport before 1790 (ref. in JC DB 3/283; also in BC DB 10/322 – showing as 114 a. on Davenport’s 1790 tax; he also purchased John Jr.’s 157+ acres in 1787 [BC 7/244, O’Dell] – showing as 195 a. on Davenport’s 1790 tax – both making up the Mt. Ellen farm).

Andrew was given approximately 140 acres “with my dwelling house” (White House).

1774 – William Rice, in his reconstruction of the John Aress [sic] list of tithables for 1774, noted a March 16 1774 Court Order for Andrew McCormick to “view the road from his place to the County Line” (Order Book 2, p. 203, in Rice, The 1774 List of Tithables and Wheel Carriages for Berkeley County, p. 56).

1784 – On the Berkeley County personal property tax Andrew McCormick was assessed for one “White tithable,” six horses, and thirteen cattle, and one “Ordinary License.”

1785 – Andrew McCormick was assessed in Berkeley County for 146 acres.

Oddly, there is no sign of Andrew in the BC personal property tax records of 1785 however in 1786 he was assessed for two white tithables, one slave under age 16, six horses, ten cattle, and an ordinary license. In 1791, Andrew McCormick was assessed for 141 acres.

In 1802, in the Jefferson County land tax Andrew was again assessed for 141 acres and by 1806 it was 136 acres.

1798 – Andrew McCormick was assessed for a house at the “head of Bulskin” valued at \$525.

1807 – Andrew McCormick sold to John Locke two tracts, described as “the residue of a larger tract containing 395 acres bequeathed to the said Andrew McCormick by his Father John McCormick (not quite true). The first parcel was 166 ½ acres adjoining George Washington and excepting “the old graveyard” of ¼ acre. The second tract was 8 ¾ acres, adjoining Andrew Parks (Shenston) and John Davenport (Mt. Ellen). The price paid was \$4,376.80 (JC DB 4/194).

The sale price seems to indicate that the new stone addition was not yet there and the old house was considered of relatively low value.

Locke’s assessment in 1809 was for 175 ½ acres “of McCormick” as well as one town lot and another 100-acre parcel (this is near Wheatland).

On the 1809 Varle map, “White House” was shown as a tavern. Varle shows a “Meeting House” or church immediately across the road. [Note: In all honesty, this is a very strange place to have a tavern, off the main road and very close to the Quaker Meeting House.]

1810 – On the census John Lock Sr. was listed near Benjamin Davenport (Mt. Ellen) and Thomas Griggs. Lock’s household included himself at 45+ years, one male and two females ages 16-25, and one male and five females under the age of 9. There was one free black and ten slaves in the household.

Elijah Cleveland was also listed near John Lock Sr., noted as “B. Washington’s O.S. [overseer]” (I think this may be Rock Hall). There were 88 slaves there.

Next after Cleveland was Daniel Collett who lived just east of Rock Hall.

1815 – Lock’s stone house was not listed on the special house tax for 1815 although it seems highly unlikely that it would have been valued at less than \$500. It is possible the house was leased and the tax was listed under the tenant’s name, however the censuses of 1810 and 1820 do not seem to indicate such an arrangement.

1820 – John Lock Sr. was assessed for 175 acres with a building value of \$750.

John Lock Sr. was again listed on the census with numerous very young children and other adults as well as slaves (bottom of page too hard to read).

1835 – By 1831 John Lock Sr. was deceased and his estate headed into Chancery Court in 1832. His real estate was divided in 1835, including the White House farm (JC DB 20/533; see plat):

His widow Rachel Lock got the 66 ½-acre dower lot, “the piece in the white house farm” with the house (see plat). The rest of the farm was divided into seven smaller lots of approximately 13 acres each and distributed among the children, Eleanor (Lock) Morrow, Randolph, Elijah, Elisha, Rebecca, Hamilton, and N.G. Goran.

The widow Rachel also got the slaves Kitty, Adaline, Amanda, John, Ralph, and Sarah.

The division appeared on the tax record beginning in 1836, with Rachel Lock assessed for the \$750 building value.

1845 – Rachel Lock was deceased by 1844. In 1845 Joseph Morrow, probably the husband of Eleanor (Lock) Morrow, was assessed for five of the White House lots, including 32 ½ acres adjoining Elisha Lock (part of the dower probably) and a 3 ½-acre lot with a building value of \$450 “transferred from Rachel Lock heirs.” Elisha Lock was assessed for a 1 1/3-acre lot with \$200 in building value. It appears that the White House Farm was divided between Morrow and Elisha Lock.

Joseph Morrow had begun purchasing the Lock heirs lots back in 1840 when he bought Rebecca (Lock) Williams’ Lot No. 6 plus the woodlot (DB 24/356). Then in 1841 he purchased Hamilton Lock’s Lot No. 3 plus the woodlot (DB 25/92).

1849 – Joseph Morrow’s assessment was still divided into the various small lots with the 3 ½-acre lot having the building value of \$450. One lot of 16 acres had a new building value of \$200 “for improvements.”

1851 – Morrow’s “White House” farm was now 87 acres with a \$650 building value, having acquired 31 acres from Elisha Lock’s heirs. There was still one 17 ½-acre lot listed separately with no building value.

The 1852 S. Howell Brown map shows the Joseph Morrow tract with two buildings at the house location, one labeled “Shop.”

In 1860, Joseph Morrow was a 52-year old “Farmer.” His wife was listed as Mary A., age 46 – apparently first wife Eleanor (Lock) had died. Their oldest child Ruthven was just 7 years old, Mary was 5, and Emma was 4 years old. Morrow’s real estate was valued at \$6,000 and his personal property at \$2,350.

Living in the next household was Sarah A. Lock, apparently the widow of Elisha Lock, with no real estate.

1886 – By 1884 Joseph Morrow was deceased and his estate was in Chancery. The White House farm, now described at 142 ½ acres, was sold to Ruthven W. Morrow for \$40 per acre in 1886 (DB P/137).

Much of the new acreage is located on the south end of the farm, coming out of the Rock Hall Lot No. 2 (1803 plat). This may be where the Hillbrook log house is located. (see attached plat)

From 1905, when it was sold to J.W. Hunsicker, through 1998, when it was sold to Curtis Mason & Suzette Kimball (60 acres; DB 921/325), the White House tract passed through six other owners, being reduced to 70 acres in 1928 and then 60 acres in 1940.