

Woodstock  
Upper Marlboro, Md.

Prince Georges Co.

VICINITY

HABS No. MD-646

HABS  
MD.

17-Resviv

3.

Change No

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Washington, D.C.

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Delos H. Smith, District Officer  
1707 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

REVISIONS  
FOLLOWS...

AW

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WOODSTOCK

HABS NO. MD-646

HABS  
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Location: 8706 S.E. Crain Highway, Upper Marlboro, <sup>Prince George's County, Maryland</sup>  
Present Owner: Eugene and Mary Sue Couser (also present occupant)  
Present Use: private residence  
Significance: Woodstock is an excellent example of a mid 19th-century plantation dwelling executed in the side-hall-and-double-parlor plan, popular in the county during the 1820s to 1850s. Although less ornate than those built by more wealthy planters on larger plantations, the Greek Revival detailing of Woodstock is elegantly understated, and its architectural integrity well maintained. It is a somewhat later, more vernacular adaption of a popular building form. The ca. 1850s main block is joined by an addition to an earlier kitchen structure.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: Ca. 1850s and earlier. The main block of the house was most likely built in the 1850s for Washington Custis Calvert who purchased the farm of Edward Scott in November of 1853. The construction of the current 1-1/2-story wing indicates that it was built in two parts, and that the section to the end predates the main block, with the center section added to connect this early structure with the main block. Evidence of this is seen in the second floor where the exterior siding of the east gable end of the older section is still visible, indicating that it was once free-standing.

2. Original and subsequent owners: (Taken from the National Register Nomination prepared by Susan G. Pearl).

1853 Deed ON 1:467, 10 November 1853  
Horatio C. & Henrietta M. Scott  
To  
Washington C. Calvert  
\$11,028.63; 220 acres of Timberly, beginning on the road at Benjamin Duvall's, north to the

entrance of P.E. Scott's land, southeast to the Southwest Branch, then southeast, then west of Liver's Branch to the beginning.

- 1860 Deed CSM 3:366, 16 February 1860  
Washington C. Calvert  
To  
James B. Belt  
\$10,000.00; 220 acres of Timberly and 100 acres of Mount Airy contiguous of Timberly, which Calvert acquired in January of 1860 from Cecilus B., Eleanor A. and John Calvert.
- 1882 Will WAJ 1:257, 18 July 1882  
James B. Belt, testor  
To  
John W. Belt & his wife, Mary D. Belt, for their lives, in trust for grandson, James B. Belt.  
"the farm on which I now reside called Woodstock, together with all the stock, crops, utensils, machinery, etc., all lots in Upper Marlboro, all interest in the mercantile business carried on under the name of James B. Belt & Son."
- 1890 Deed JWB 12:742, 9 January 1890  
Joseph S. Wilson, trustee in Equity #1794  
To  
John W. Belt  
At public sale (December 1889) where John W. Belt was high bidder at \$6,000 (Wilson appointed to sell land after default in mortgage from James B. Belt to William Bowie), parsonage lot and storehouse in Marlboro, land at Rosaryville; and farm near Rosaryville upon which James B. Belt resided at the time of his death and where John W. Belt now resides, 200 acres of timberly and 100 acres of Mount Airy.
- 1897 Estate file 1633  
John W. Belt died intestate, leaving property  
To  
Mary D. Belt, widow and James B. Belt, son
- 1898 Deed JB 1:393, 18 March 1898  
John A. Barker, attorney, of Baltimore  
To  
James B. Belt  
At public sale, February 1898, Barker,

attorney in mortgage (JWB 12:744), sold land of John W. Belt after default in payment, to James B. Belt, high bidder at \$6,150. Lands include 320-1/2 acres on the road from Upper Marlboro to Brandywine, the farm on which John W. Belt resided at the time of his death, and upon which James B. Belt, the grantee, now resides (also store lot of James B. Belt & Son in Marlboro, and parsonage property).

- 1924 Will WTD 1:35, 26 June 1924  
Mary D. Belt, testor; and C.C. Magruder, Jr., executor  
To  
Bettie R. Magruder, sister; Mildred W.N. Bowling, niece and Caleb C. Magruder, Jr., nephew.  
"The farm which I now reside on, Woodstock, with entire contents of the dwelling house there," also farm implements, horses, cattle, crops, etc.
- 1941 Deed 620:323, 30 September 1941  
Caleb C. Magruder  
To  
Mary Belt Magruder (niece of grantor and daughter of M. Hampton Magruder)  
For natural affection, the land which the grantor acquired by Mary D. Belt's Will.
- 1949 Will 1147:491, 15 August 1949  
Mary Belt Magruder, unmarried testor  
To  
M. Hampton Magruder  
200 acres of Timberly and 100 acres of Mount Airy adjoining.
- 1962 Will WDA 11:169, 15 October 1962  
Mercer Hampton Magruder, testor  
To  
Mittie Hall Magruder, wife (and executrix), daughters, Florence Hall Magruder and Mary Belt Magruder Vickery, sons, Alexander Clarke Magruder and Mercer Hampton Magruder, Jr., Woodstock farm, 310 acres
- 1973 Deed 4245:414, 5 July 1973  
Mittie H. Magruder, widow  
To  
Eugene and Mary Sue Couser

5.001 acres (with 60 foot right-of-way) of  
land in Melwood district

3. Original plans and construction: Structural evidence and what is known of an early building inventory indicate that the original or oldest section of the house was the separate kitchen building of Edward Scott's farm. This 1-1/2 story, two-bay-wide section rests on unhewn log sills with brick nogging between the framing of the walls. It consisted of a kitchen with a boxed stairway to a loft above. The house or current main block of 2-1/2 stories with a side-hall-and-double-parlor plan was then built, and the original kitchen building continued to be utilized.

4. Alterations and additions: An addition was later made connecting the main house with the kitchen building, thus creating a service wing. Evidence that this was, in fact, a later addition is seen in the second or 1/2 story where the exterior weatherboard siding of the gable end of the kitchen building is still visible. Later, a shed kitchen addition was made to the rear of the house. This deteriorating section was removed by the current owners, the connecting section was converted into a kitchen, and the original kitchen, into a den. Otherwise, only minor alterations have been made to the house. The original kitchen now has beaded-board paneled walls, the fireplace has a new brick surround and has been closed over, and the stairway has been newly enclosed. A half bath was added under the main stairway.

B. Historical Context:

Woodstock was built as the residence for a small tobacco plantation in the 1850s--the peak years of wealth and tobacco production in Prince George's County, just prior to the Civil War. Although larger plantations were generally the custom for tobacco production prior to the Civil War, a number of small farms existed. After the war, large plantations were broken up and farms such as Woodstock became the standard. The Woodstock residence was built for Washington Custis Calvert, one of seven sons of Edward H. Calvert of Mount Airy, an adjoining plantation. Washington Calvert married in 1851 and received 100 acres in trust from his father's Mount Airy plantation. He added to this the 220 acres of Timberly that adjoined his property to the east.

This had formerly been the farm of Edward Scott who owned this and the "Croom tract" adjoining it to the east side. Scott's dwelling was on the adjoining Croom tract, and a number of outbuildings, including the kitchen, stood on the Timberly tract (according to assessment records). After Scott's death in 1851, his property passed to his son, Horatio C. Scott, an Upper Marlboro merchant. He sold his father's farm to Calvert in November of 1853. It was at this point that the Woodstock residence was constructed for Washington C. Calvert and his wife (Pearl).

The Calverts did not live at Woodstock long. Mrs. Calvert passed away in 1857, and in 1860, Washington Calvert sold the entire farm to James Beall Belt. Mr. Belt had recently retired from his position as Clerk of the County Court, a position he held from 1838 to 1851. Mr. Belt was also in the mercantile business, operating a store in Upper Marlboro under the name of James B. Belt and Son. Belt continued to operate the store along with a granary in Upper Marlboro after moving to the farm which he had named "Woodstock." James B. Belt is listed in G.M. Hopkins' Atlas of 1878 as a farmer (Pearl & Hopkins).

James Belt died in 1882, leaving to his son John W. Belt "the farm on which I now reside called Woodstock, together with all stock, crops, utensils, machinery then upon it, also all lots in Upper Marlboro, and all interest in the mercantile business carried on under the name of James B. Belt and Son" (Will WAJ Jr. 1:257). Unfortunately, hard economic times following the Civil War had forced James Belt to mortgage his property. The property was offered for sale in 1889 under equity proceedings. It was then described as "320 acres, the land now occupied by John W. Belt, improved by a large and comfortable dwelling house and all necessary barns and outbuildings" (Equity #1794). John Belt, who had since moved his family to the Woodstock farm, was able to buy the property himself at the foreclosure sale. John, like his father, served as Clerk of the Court (Pearl).

John W. Belt died in 1896, without a will (although his father's will stated that the property be left in trust to his grandson following the death of his son and his wife). The property was conveyed to the son, James B. Belt. The son, however, predeceased his mother, Mary D. Belt. Mary Belt passed away in 1924 and the Woodstock farm was conveyed, as directed by her will, to her nephew, Caleb C. Magruder, Jr. (Will WTD 1:35). Caleb

Magruder never married. He lived here at Woodstock where he raised Black Angus cattle (Pearl & Couser).

Caleb Magruder willed the property to his niece, Mary Belt Magruder. She never married either, and upon her death in 1949, Woodstock was conveyed to her father as directed by her will (Will 1147:491). Woodstock remained in the Magruder family, although it was rented for approximately ten years, and later abandoned (for five more). Thus, the house was in a state of disrepair when the current owners convinced the heirs to sell the house (on 5 acres) to them in 1973. Eugene and Mary Sue Couser and family have spent many years restoring the Woodstock house which is now in excellent condition (Couser).

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Woodstock is an excellent, intact example of a mid 19th-century, small plantation dwelling. This popular Tidewater house type, consisting of a side-hall-and-double-parlor plan, was prevalent in the Upper Marlboro vicinity during the 1820s to 1850s. It was generally employed, on a grander scale, by the wealthier planter and merchant classes. (Generally these dwellings included a service wing built contemporary with the main block, whereas at Woodstock, an addition was made to connect the existing kitchen to the main block to form a service wing.) Many of the later, simpler versions of this house form, as seen at Woodstock, are now gone (a number of them were photographed by HABS in the 1930s). Although much more humble in portions and detailing, Woodstock is finely appointed with understated yet elegant Greek Revival detailing. The open well stair, mantels and window and doorway surrounds are all clean and understated. The applied ornament, as seen in the painted detailing on the stairway, doors and baseboards, is an interesting, noteworthy attempt to upgrade this less formal home (see Decorative Elements below). Woodstock's more vernacular styling reflects its status as a smaller tobacco "plantation" dwelling.

2. Condition of fabric: Woodstock is in excellent condition, with its original architectural plan and detailing intact.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Woodstock has a 2-1/2-story, rectangular main block, measuring approximately 30' x 36', with a side-gabled roof, and a porch that runs the length of the south (-southwest) front facade. To the west end is a long, rectangular, 1-1/2-story service wing, measuring approximately 32' x 18'. It is set back from the front of the main block and has a side-gabled roof which kicks out to form the roof of the front porch.

2. Foundations: All sections rest on a brick foundation.

3. Walls: The walls are of lapped-board siding, with narrow corner boards.

4. Structural system, framing: The original kitchen section is of frame construction with brick nogging, and rests on unhewn log sills. The main block has large hand-hewn sill beams, joined with mortise and tenon. The roof is supported with mortise-and-tenon-joined principal rafters.

5. Porches, stoops: A porch runs the length of the facades of both the main block and the earlier wing. The porch along the main block is supported by four large squared posts with flat scroll brackets with a cyma reversa molding on the post at the base of the brackets. It has a low-hipped roof and a concrete floor with steps in front of the doorway, and at the far end. In the older section, the roof kicks out to form the roof of the porch which is supported by four plain square posts. It too has a concrete floor. At the rear entry of the older section is a wooden stoop with concrete steps to one side.

6. Chimneys: There are three chimneys, two at the westerly end of the main block and one at the westerly end of the older section. The chimneys on the main block are rectangular, brick exterior chimneys, one to either side of the gable peak. The chimney to the front has been added to, to accommodate modern heating systems. The chimney of the older section is an exterior brick chimney at the gable end. It has a large chimney block, which has been buttressed with concrete, and a free standing stack with a corbelled top. It is leaning and is in need of repointing in areas.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doorways are the same in both sections of the house. There is a plain narrow wooden surround with an inner bead. The door in the main block is an eight-panel wooden door (three small panels to each side, above the lock rail, and one long panel to either side below). There are full-length louvered shutters to either side of the main entry. There are two doorways to the front of the 1-1/2 story section. The door closest to the main block is a modern door with a large glass pane in the top portion. The far door has a four-light transom across the top and four panels. There is also a doorway to the rear of the older wing.

b. Windows: The front of the main block is three bays wide, with the four westerly bays spaced together, and the single bays (doorway down and window up), spaced further. The typical window of the main block is a six-over-six-light-sash window with the same narrow beaded surround as the doorways, and narrow muntins. The first-story windows are slightly longer than those on the second story. All have louvered shutters. In the easterly gable end are two narrow, four-over-four-light-sash windows with a single, large louvered shutter hung to the outside. In the westerly gable end is a single four-over-four-light-sash window, with shutter. The windows of the older, 1-1/2-story section are more square in shape but are also six-over-six-light-sash windows with louvered shutters. In the dormers are slightly longer six-over-six-light-sash windows.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The main block has a side-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. The roof of the 1-1/2-story section also has a side-gabled roof but with a front extension that kicks out to form the roof of the front porch. It is covered with wooden shingles.

b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves of the main block flare slightly to the front and rear, but otherwise there is no cornice ornament or box return. A simple, narrow architrave trim lines the gable ends. In the 1-1/2-story section, there is no cornice. Instead, the roof in front extends to form the porch. At the gable end, the same, simple

trim lines the gable end, flaring slightly at the ends.

c. Dormers: There are two dormers, symmetrically placed, on the roof the 1-1/2-story section. They are gable dormers with a simple trim which flares slightly at the ends. The windows are six-over-six-light sash.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: The main block has a side-hall-and-double-parlor plan. There is a wide side hall with entryways to the front and rear. The rear entry is under the landing of the stairway which rises along the east wall, beginning about mid-hall. A half bath has been added directly under the stair. Along the west wall of the hall are two doorways into the front and rear adjoining parlors. The front room is currently the living room and the rear, the dining room. They are joined by a large doorway with double paneled doors. There is a fireplace to the center of the west wall in both rooms. To the west wall of the dining room, north of the fireplace, is the doorway into the current kitchen (wing). The kitchen shares the chimney block of the dining room and thus has a working fireplace. There is an exterior entry to the front. Adjoining the current kitchen is the original kitchen, entered through a doorway on the west wall, northwest corner. This room contains a partially boxed, winder stair which runs along the east wall. There is a large fireplace, now closed over, to the center of the west wall. There is an entry onto the front porch, and one onto the rear stoop.

b. Second floor: The second floor follows the same basic plan, with bedrooms over the double parlors, and a wide stairhall with a bath in the small chamber over the front entry. Again, there are fireplaces in both the bedrooms over the parlors. The second or half story of the 1-1/2-story wing is entered from the stairway in the original kitchen only. There is a chamber over each of the two first-story rooms, which adjoin.

c. Third floor: In the main block, the stairway

continues up to the third floor where there is one large chamber over the second floor chambers, and a small room over the hall chamber.

d. Basement: There is a basement under the front parlor and the front part of the side hall only. A cement floor has been added. There is access to the basement from an exterior, bulkhead entry to the west side between the chimneys.

2. Stairways: The stairway in the side hall of the main block is a two-flight, open-well, open-string stair. It begins mid-hall, and rises along the east wall to a landing. The stair then turns and continues along the west wall to the second floor. From the second floor it continues to the third in the same manner. The stairway is simple and unornamented, with the exception of two colors of paint applied to the risers (the treads are solid) to simulate a runner. There is a rounded handrail pegged to a plain square newel post. There are plain square balusters, two per step. There are paneled spandrels along the wall of the stairway.

The 1-1/2 story section has its own stairway (it adjoins the main block on the first story only). It is a partially boxed, winder stair which rises along the east wall of the original kitchen section, winds along the southeast corner and continues along the south wall to the second floor.

3. Flooring: The main block has old, random-width wooden floors. The flooring in the side hall is laid north-south while the flooring in the double parlors is laid east-west. There is new, narrow board flooring in the kitchen, and new flooring in the adjoining den (original kitchen). The two rooms above the kitchen and den have rough wooden floors.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: There is no wall or ceiling ornament of any kind. There is only a simple baseboard with a large beaded edge, made decorative by the use of black and gold paint colors. The upper 1/2-story of the 1-1/2-story section is finished with lath and plaster, and the walls slope in from either side. The walls in the original kitchen have paneling added.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doorways are surrounded with stepped architrave trim. There are six-panel,

cross-and-open-bible wooden doors. Between the two parlors (current living and dining rooms) are large, double doors. These are eight panel doors, (with three sets of small raised panels above the lock rail, and a set of large vertical raised panels below). This is the same pattern found on the front entryway. The rear entry off the side hall has a six-panel door. A batten door joins the chambers in the upper 1/2-story of the 1-1/2-story section.

b. Windows: The windows have the same stepped architrave trim as the doorways, with a simple stepped molding with beaded lower edge beneath the sill. A window in the stairway, broken by the third floor landing, lights both the second and third floor landings.

6. Decorative features and trim: Woodstock has six fireplaces. There are four in the main block--one in each of the two parlors and the chambers above. They have the same understated, Federal-style mantel, consisting of flanking pilasters with half-round projections, and a frieze with a single large convex project, under a molded mantel shelf. As mentioned, paint has been used to ornament the stairway and baseboards. This pattern was present in the house at the time the current owners purchased it, and they simply repeated it (The wood panel doors of the main block had also been painted in black and gold).

7. Hardware: There are box locks on the two entries to the main block, front and rear. The lock on the south front door is marked "I Walker VR." All interior doors in the main block hang on mid-19th century "Baldwin" hinges. The double doors joining the two parlors have strap bolts in the floor. There is a crane in the fireplace of the original kitchen.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Woodstock sits atop a knoll of rolling farm land, facing south. It is clearly visible from Rt. 301 which borders it to the west. The yard to the south and north of the house slopes downward, and is surrounded by split rail fencing. It is used as pasture for sheep. The driveway approach is from Rt. 301 to the west and it passes in front of Woodstock and forms a circle just past it.

2. Historical landscape design: Roadway access to Woodstock was originally from Trumps Hill Road or the "old road"--prior to the construction of Rt. 301--which lies to the east. A road bed from Woodstock to Trumps Hill Road is still visible. The construction of Rt. 301 divided the original farm property so that one of the old barns, now gone, was located to the other side of Rt. 301. Woodstock has a number of large old trees, including one of the oldest holly trees in the county, located just east of the house.

3. Outbuildings: The only existing outbuilding is a 20th-century smokehouse, located in the pasture to the northwest of the house. The largest of the barns was located on the west side of Rt. 301, and the others, along Rt. 301 to the east. The foundations for the original smokehouse and an ice house are to the northwest of the house. The foundation for the ice house now encloses the herb garden. There was also a tenant house on the property, presumably to the north and slightly east of the main house (as indicated by the Hopkins Atlas of 1878).

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views: On April 21, 1936, a single view of the front from the southwest was taken by HABS photographer John O. Brostrup. The photo shows no obvious difference from Woodstock as it appears today other than the improvement in maintenance. Brostrup also photographed a number of other structures in 1936 that were similar in style to Woodstock (such as Glenway, Independence, Forest Hill and Largo), now gone.

B. Interviews: Interview with current owner Mary Sue Couser, conducted by HABS historian Catherine C. Lavoie, concerning the Cousers' restoration of the house following their purchase in 1973.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Pearl, Susan G. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, Woodstock, prepared September 1986.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Hopkins, G.M. Hopkins Atlas of Prince George's  
County, Maryland, Washington, D.C.: G.M.  
Hopkins, publisher, 1878.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of Woodstock was undertaken as part of a cooperative project between the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert J. Kapsch, chief, and the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission on behalf of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). A memorandum of agreement was signed in August of 1988, and the project, to span one year, was begun in January of 1989. The site selection was made by Gail Rothrock, director and Susan G. Pearl, research historian (HPC) who also provided access to their research and information on file with the HPC, as well as their extensive knowledge of county history. The Large format photography was undertaken by HABS photographer, Jack E. Boucher. Catherine C. Lavoie, HABS historian, prepared the historical report and accompanied Boucher into the field for on site investigation and architectural description.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127