Form 10-300 (July 1969)

1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

| STATE: | |
|-----------------|---|
| Virginia | |
| COUNTY: | |
| Prince William | |
| FOR NPS USE ONL | Y |

| | (Type all entrie | 10: 2.45.0024 | | 2 | DATE 126/70 | 0 | | | | |
|----|--|--|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | NAME | 10.0.10 00001 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| - | COMMON: | | | | 60/11/11/ | 75 | | | | |
| | Bel Air | | | | | | | | | |
| | AND/OR HISTORIC: | | | | | | | | | |
| | Bel Air | | T 55 E | | | | | | | |
| 2. | LOCATION | | | | | | | | | |
| | STREET AND NUMBER: | | | | | | | | | |
| | .9 mi. W of Rt. 640, .6 mi. N of intersection with Rt. 610. | | | | | | | | | |
| | (Minnieville vic.) | | | | | | | | | |
| | erire | | | | | | | - | | |
| | Virginia | | | | 153 | | | | | |
| 3. | CLASSIFICATION | | 45 | | | | | | | |
| | CATEGORY | | | | | ACCE | SSIBLE | *** | | |
| | (Check One) | | OWNERSHIP | | 1 STATUS | | PUBLI | C | | |
| | ☐ District ☒ Building | ☐ Public | Public Acquisiti | on: | X Occupied | Yes: | | | | |
| | ☐ Site ☐ Structure | X Private | ☐ In Proc | | Unoccupied | ☐ Restricted | | | | |
| | □ Object | ☐ Both | ☐ Being (| Considered | Preservation work | ☐ Unre | Inrestricted | | | |
| | The state of the s | | in progress | ™ No | | | | | | |
| | PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | overnment | Park | | Transportation | Comme | ents | | | |
| | | ndustrial X | | | Other (Specify) | | | | | |
| | | ilitary | Religious | | ("""") | | | | | |
| | ☐ Entertainment ☐ M | useum | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Scientific | | | _ | | | | |
| 4 | OWNER OF PROPERTY | |) ocieminic | - | | | | | | |
| 4. | OWNER OF PROPERTY | | Scientific | | | | - 1 | | | |
| 4. | | | Jeremme | | | | | | | |
| 4. | OWNER'S NAME: | | , determine | | | | | NTI VII | | |
| 4. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 | | , scientific | | | | | IL SITA | | |
| 4. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: | | , scientific | STATE: | | c | ODE | Virginia | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge | | , scientific | STATE: Virgi | nia | - | ODE 45 | Virginia | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC | CRIPTION | , scientific | | nia | - | 45 | | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | | nia | - | 45 | | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | | nia | - | 45 | FIL | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | | nia | - | 45 | FIL | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | | nia | | 45 | Frince | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF E Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | Virgi | nia | | 45 ODE | Frince Wil | | |
| | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF E Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | Virgi | | C | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | Virgi | | C | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: Route 1 Box 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: | | Virgi | | C | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: ROUTE 1 BOX 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas REPRESENTATION IN EXIST TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American B | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: Lty Court Hous | se | Virgi | | C | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: ROUTE 1 BOX 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas REPRESENTATION IN EXIST TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American B DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: Lty Court Hous TING SURVEYS | se | Virgi | inia | C | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: ROUTE 1 BOX 862 CITY OR TOWN: WOODDRINGE LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas REPRESENTATION IN EXIST TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American B DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RE | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: Aty Court House TING SURVEYS Buildings Surveys CORDS: | eey, File 7 | Virgi STATE Virg 6-1 | inia | c | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: ROUTE 1 BOX 862 CITY OR TOWN: WOODDRINGE LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas REPRESENTATION IN EXIST TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American B DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RE Library of Congress | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: Aty Court House TING SURVEYS Buildings Surveys CORDS: | eey, File 7 | Virgi STATE Virg 6-1 | inia | c | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: ROUTE 1 BOX 862 CITY OR TOWN: WOODDRINGE LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas REPRESENTATION IN EXIST TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American B DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RE | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: Aty Court House TING SURVEYS Buildings Surveys CORDS: | eey, File 7 | Virgi STATE Virg 6-1 | inia | c | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: ROUTE 1 BOX 862 CITY OR TOWN: Woodbridge LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas REPRESENTATION IN EXIST TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American B DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RE Library of Congress STREET AND NUMBER: | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: Aty Court House TING SURVEYS Buildings Surveys CORDS: | eey, File 7 | Virgi STATE Virg 6-1 | inia | Local | ODE 45 | Virginia Frince William | | |
| 5. | OWNER'S NAME: William E. S. Flory STREET AND NUMBER: ROUTE 1 BOX 862 CITY OR TOWN: WOODDRINGE LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF IT Prince William Coun STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: Manassas REPRESENTATION IN EXIST TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American B DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RE Library of Congress | CRIPTION DEEDS, ETC: Aty Court House TING SURVEYS Buildings Surveys CORDS: | eey, File 7 | STATE Virg 6-1 State | inia | Local | 45 ODE | Frince Will | | |

| L | 0 |
|-----|----|
| | |
| П | П |
| П | n |
| | " |
| | |
| - | - |
| _ | |
| Z | - |
| U | - |
| - | |
| - | 4 |
| | • |
| 7 | J |
| | |
| C | = |
| 100 | 20 |
| - |) |
| | |
| - | 1 |
| _ | |
| | |
| C |) |
| | |
| Z | 5 |
| U | |
| 0 | 3 |
| | |

| | | (Check One) | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|---------|---------------|--|--|--|
| CONDITION | X Excellent | ☐ Good | ☐ Fair | ☐ Deteriorated | Ruins | ☐ Unexposed | | | |
| | | (Check On | e) | | (Che | ck One) | | | |
| | ☐ Altere | ed | ☑ Unaltered | | ☐ Moved | Original Site | | | |

Supposedly built in 1740 on the basement of an earlier house, Bel Air is a brick, one-and-one-half story structure set on a high stone foundation with minute: dormers and an enormous exterior end chimney on the western end which contrasts with the small interior end chimney on the east end. The brickwork is laid for the most part in Flemish bond. However, on the north facade, considerable rebuilding is obvious and on the east end the bond lapses, at times, into five-course American bond. The south facade has four bays with two of the windows to the west of the central doorway and opeto the east. These windows are of the narrow eighteenth-century shape and, although the nine-over-nine sash is correct in theme, it is a replacement. The north front is a symmetrical five-bays wide, but the openings approach a square in shape and, along with obvious rebuilding of much of the wall, do not date from the eighteenth century. Photographs published in 1931 show the tiny dormers, certainly a standard feature in early structures, to be present only on the south front, but these awkward creatures appear today on both broad slopes. Both porches have been changed since 1931, the most notable replacement being the removal of a classical entrance porch in lieu of an unsheltered stone one with side stairs on the south front. Large windows in the stone basement have been partially let into the wall above and topped by brick segmental arches.

The central hall plan features a small open stair hall at the north end and to the west of the entranceway, and, although the robust rail seems quite right for the period, the balusters are a bit slender for a 1740 date. This stair area is separated from the rest of the hall by an archway whose reeded supports might date from the same period as the balusters. The northeast room has been altered in the mid-nineteenth century, but the other rooms have mid-eighteenth century paneling. The most notable feature in the house is the wooden partition between the southwest room and the hall which is supposedly removeable to create a larger area. Complete with paneling above and below the chair rail and two glazed casement windows in the wall, this design is extraordinary.



| PERIOD (Check One or More as A) | ppropriate) . | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☑ 18th Century | 20th Century |
| ☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☐ 19th Century. | |
| SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable | and Known) | | |
| AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check | | | |
| Abor iginal | Education | Political | Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | | Religion/Phi- | |
| ☐ Historic ···· | Industry 1922 12 | losophy " (1.) | History |
| Agriculture | Invention 1. | Science | P(293) 25 30 / 64 |
| Architecture | Landscape | Sculpture' | Person ambig |
| | | | |
| ∐ Art | Architecture | Social/Human- | |
| ☐ Art ☐ Commerce | Architecture X Literature | Social/Human- | 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1 |
| | | Social/Human- itarian | |

Bel Air is thought to have been built by Captain Charles Ewell (1713-?) who married Sarah Ball, daughter of Major James and Mary (Conway Dangerfield) Ball of Bewdley, Lancaster County, in 1736. Thus the Ewells were closely related to the family of George Washington's mother, Mary (Ball) Washington, Colonel Jesse Ewell (1743-1805), eldest son of Captain Charles Ewell, inherited the property, and in 1795 his daughter Frances (1775-1843) married Mason Locke Weems (1759-1825), the first biographer of George Washington. In 1808 or 1809 Weems and his family moved from their home near Dumfries to Bel Air, taking over the house partly to satisfy loans Weems had made to Mrs. Ewell. Weems purchased the remainder of the property upon her death in 1823. After Weems's death the house passed through the Ewell family to Weems's cousins who soon left it, and the house has stood empty for long periods of time.

Born at Marshes Seat near Herring Bay, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, on October 11, 1759, Mason Locke Weems was admitted to the Episcopal priesthood in 1784, serving two parishes in Maryland from 1784 to 1792. By 1793 he had given up a settled rectorship and had become active as a book agent for Matthew Carey of Philadelphia. Although Bel Air was officially his home for the last fifteen years of his life, he spent most of his time traveling up and down the eastern seaboard peddling his books. He is best remembered as the author of The Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington, first published anonymously circa 1800. This work has gone through more than seventy accredited and varying editions, including five in German, from 1800 to 1927. In the fifth edition (1806), the famous story of the cherry tree made its debut. The fact that "Parson" Weems had preached in several Virginia parishes for a short time, including Pohick Church (after Washington had ceased to attend there) was the basis for his claim, in the 1809 edition, that the author was "Formerly Rector of Mt. Vernon Parish."

In addition to his moralistic tracts and pamphlets, Weems is remembered for his biography of General Francis Marion (1809), loosely based on material provided by Peter Horry, one of Marion's lieutenants. Weems died in Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1825, and his remains were later brought back to Bel Air where he was laid to rest in the family cemetery.

Architecturally, Bel Air is a fascinating study of structural evolution within the confines of a house measuring 38' x 51'. It is quite possible that the stone foundations date from an earlier period than

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

| STATE | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Virginia | |
| COUNTY | The Marie State |
| Prince William | |
| FOR NPS USE ON | NLY |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| 20,2,46,0000 | 12/24/20 |

(Number all entries)

- 8. 1740, as is traditionally held, and it seems obvious that the nineteenth century played freely with the changes in the masonry walls and some interior detailing. Fortunately, Bel Air has not been greatly hurt by these efforts and, in fact, gains a certain dignity and stature for having retained its architectural composure.
- 6. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
 1959 Federal
 Library of Congress
 Washington, D. C. Code: 08

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #76-1 1969 State Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building Richmond, Virginia Code: 45



DIIN CEI

| 9. MAJOR | BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RI | EFERENCES | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------|--|--|-------|
| Dic | tionary of Americ | can Biograp | hv. Vo | 01. 19 (1 | 943), pp. 60 | 4-605. | | A 6 |
| Ewe | 11, Alice Maude, | A Virginia | Scene | e. or Life | e in Old Pri | nce William. | | - |
| L | ynchburg, Va.: | J. P. Bell | Compar | y. Inc. | 1931. | william. | | 2 4 |
| | den, Rev. Horace | | | | | ore: Southe | rn Book | 0 |
| | 0., 1959. | | 521124 | - Concarog | Dareini | ore. boathe. | III DOOK | 50 00 |
| 100 | lock, Harold, Par | rson Weems | of the | Cherry ' | Tree New V | ork: The Cen | turn | |
| | 0., 1928. | TOOL WEELD | OI CIT | onerry . | ilee. New I | ork. The cer | ituly | 0 0 |
| The Paris of the P | nce William; The | Story of T | to Por | nlo and | Tto Diagon | Committed in | 10/1 | 010 |
| | | | | | | | | 0 3 |
| | y the Writers Pro | | | | | | isorea | 142 |
| | y The Bethlehem (| Jood Houseke | eeping | g Club. | Kichmond, va | .: 1961. | | 12 |
| | RAPHICAL DATA | | | ı — ; — — — — | | | | 7 |
| | NING A RECTANGLE LOCA | | | 0 DEFI | NING THE CENTER OF LESS TH | | | 52 |
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUE | ETTI | R | ATITUDE " | LONGITUE | E . I. | JU 0 |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes | Seconds | 0 |
| NW | 38 ° 38 · 52 • | | | 0 | | 0 | 31 /4 | |
| NE | 38 ° 38 · 52 * | 77 ° 21 · | 07 " | | (1) | The second | | |
| SEFF | 38° 38' 02" | 17.7: 19/ 21-171 | 07 - | | 100 | 4 -1782 | ci :: | ~ |
| SW | 38 ° 38 ' 02 ° | 77 0 22 . | 05 . | | 1 1 | TO THE NEW | | 0 |
| APPROX | IMATE ACREAGE OF NOM | INATED PROPER | RTY: | 225 acres | 3 10 10 7 | 11 00 11 | | S |
| LIST AL | L STATES AND COUNTIES | FOR PROPERTIE | ESOVER | LAPPING STA | TE OR COUNTY BO | DUNDARIES | | γ ш |
| STATE: | | | CODE | COUNTY | 1 | 1 10 17 64 | CODE | 1 |
| | | | | | 101 10 | | | 8 m |
| STATE: | | | CODE | COUNTY: | 13. | - 47 | CODE | 0 |
| | 6 | | | | XA | | | W - |
| STATE: | | | CODE | COUNTY: | | | CODE | 0 2 |
| | | | | | | | | 00 |
| STATE: | | | CODE | COUNTY: | | | CODE | /- |
| | | | | 1 | | | | Z |
| I. FORM | PREPARED BY | | | | | | | 0 - |
| NAME AN | ID TITLE: | | | | | | | 9 - 9 |
| Staff, | Virginia Histor | ic Landmark | s Com | mission, | James W. Moo | dy, Jr., Dir | | .0 |
| ORGANIZ | ATION | | | | | DATE | | O - C |
| Virgini | a Historic Landm | arks Commis | sion | | | November 1 | 4, 1969 | 0 - , |
| STREET | AND NUMBER: | | | | | | | 0 |
| Room 1 | .116, Ninth Stree | t State Off | ice B | uilding | | 174 | | z |
| CITY OR | | | | STATE | | | CODE | |
| Richmo | ond | | | Virgini | а | | 45 | S |
| | LIAISON OFFICER CE | RTIFICATION | | | TIONAL REGISTI | R VERIFICATIO | AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTY OF | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | designated State Liaiso | | | I hereby | certify that this pr | operty is included | in the | |
| 1 | Historic Preservation Ac | | | National | | -porty to meruded | III the | |
| 89-665 |), I hereby nominate this | property for inc | lusion | National | Register. | 1 | | |
| in the | National Register and co | ertify that it has | been | 60 | 1-64 | (1) | | |
| evalua | ted according to the crite | eria and procedu | res set | (MIII) | 1 (100m 1 | 10000011 | 11 | |
| forth b | y the National Park Serv | ice. The recomm | mended | Chief Of | fice of Archeology | and Historic Pro | Avation | |
| level o | of significance of this no | mination is: | | Jinet, Of | of Archeology | and misione ries | 7.4.0 | |
| Na Na | ational 🛛 State | ☐ Local | | | | | | |
| | | | | | FEB 2 | | | |
| | 0 DN. | 0 1 1 | | Date | FEB 21 | 1970 | | |
| Name (| ran 1: Mickens | he & tel. | n | ATTEST: | | | | |
| 1 | | 33 | | ATTEST: | 110 | | | |
| Dr | . Edward P. Alex | ander, Chai | rman | | 111- | 1 -1 | 1 | |
| TitleV | irginia Historic | Landmarks | Commi | ssion / | Millian | hustoit | 0 | |
| 18 - 1 | | | | | Keeper of The N | ational Registry | 4 | |
| 1 | | | 2 | | recper of Themy | attonal Register | | |
| | | | | II . | | ALCOHOL TO THE PARTY OF THE PAR | | |
| Date I | December 2, 1969 | | | Date | FEB 7 2 79 | 170 | | |