



Prince William Reliquary

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REL-I-QUAR-Y: (noun) A receptacle for keeping or displaying relics.

MOOR GREEN

A Prince William Landmark Reveals Its Origin

Darlene L. Hunter¹, CGSM



Moor Green – March 2005
Photo courtesy of Glenn & Karen Callihan

Moor Green² is a survivor. It has been subject to a number of situations that could have caused its total destruction—fire, lengthy vacancies, vandalism, subdivision and the continuing change of the demographics of Prince William County from farmland to suburbia. It survived the Civil War intact, though several major battles were fought nearby. Because of the dedication of its resident owners, it remains a very impressive structure to this day.

Moor Green is located on a hill above Broad Run, north of Brentsville, in western Prince William County Virginia. The house and surrounding property, now containing 10.827 acres, was originally a part of a Northern Neck Grant of 968 acres to Clement Chevalle and Lewis Reno on 24 August 1711.³

While there has been some speculation that the house dated from 1756 and was built on the foundation of a 1711 blockhouse, no proof has been found to support those theories. The land where the house stands can be directly traced to a 1793 deed from Mrs. Maryann Bronaugh and William Bronaugh of Stafford County, Virginia, to Howson Hooe for 482 acres on the north side of Broad Run.⁴ William Bronaugh inherited the land from his father John Bronaugh and Maryann Bronaugh, the widow of John Bronaugh, had a life interest. In John Bronaugh's will, proven in 1778, the tract of land was described as "all the tract of land lying in Prince William on Broad Run where now lives John Delgarn, William Davis and Meredith Moss."⁵

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² There have been several spellings beside Moor Green for this property—More Green, Moore Green, Morr Green, Mo green. The first mention of the property by name was in the will of Howson Hooe in 1833, when he called the plantation where he lived "More Green". Moor Green is the more recent spelling with the name of the subdivision and later deeds.

³ Northern Neck Grants 4: 43, Library of Virginia microfilm reel 289; available online at <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/land/>.

This grant is identified with the property in Prince William County Virginia [PWC] Deed Book Y: 218—Bronaugh to Hooe and in PWC Deed Book 55: 423—Steele to Thornton.

⁴ PWC Deed Book Y: 218, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁵ Fauquier County Virginia Will Book 1: 327. The will was written on 1 July 1777 and proven on 25 May 1778.

Prince William Reliquary
is produced quarterly by the
Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center (RELIC)
for Genealogy & Local History
Prince William Public Library System
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Manassas, VA 20109
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Web site:

www.pwcgov.org/library (click on RELIC)

A file of back issues will be posted on this site.
All issues will be kept at RELIC.

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Submission Deadlines:

Mar. 15, June 15, Sep. 15, Dec. 15

Submission Guidelines:

We welcome articles of historical or genealogical interest regarding Prince William County, Manassas or Manassas Park. Publication is not guaranteed and we reserve the right to edit if appropriate. All work submitted must include citations.

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Though Maryann Bronaugh paid the tax on this land in Prince William through 1793,⁶ this was not her residence. She paid Personal Property Tax in Stafford County Virginia from 1782-1793.⁷ The location where personal property tax was paid usually indicated the person's residence. In addition, Mary A. Bronaugh was on a List of Inhabitants & Buildings for 1785 in Stafford County Virginia.⁸ Although there were tenants living somewhere on the tract, it is not likely that a tenant would build a home as substantial as Moor Green on rented land.

Members of the Hooe family owned the property from 1793 until 1909 when Redmon Foster, who married Jane L. Hooe, sold his life interest.⁹ The Hooe family played the major role in the early history of Moor Green. All evidence points to Howson Hooe as the builder of the house. He named the plantation where he lived as "More Green" in his will in 1833.¹⁰ However, the question still remains as to when the house was actually built. Documents will show that the house was complete by 1815.

Howson Hooe was the son of Howson and Mary (Dade) Hooe, as he was named in his father's will of 1796.¹¹ At the time he bought the tract in western Prince William from the Bronaughs in 1793, Howson Hooe, Junior was already a property owner in eastern Prince William.¹² A sale deed for land in eastern Prince William in 1795 is the only place where Jane, the wife of Howson Hooe of Moor Green, was identified. The deed showed that Howson Hooe Junior and Jane his wife sold 14 acres on Little Creek to Robert Cole.¹³

Howson Hooe, Junior first appeared on the 1794 Prince William County Land Tax for western Prince William with the 482 acres he had bought from the Bronaughs.¹⁴ He was assessed on this 482 acre tract on the western Prince William County Land Tax List from 1794 through 1807 and 1809 through 1815.¹⁵ There was no tax assessed in 1808.

⁶ PWC Land Tax 1783; PWC Land Tax 1787-1790, John Brown, Commissioner; PWC Land Tax 1791-1793, William Cundiff, Commissioner; all from Library of Virginia [LVA] microfilm reel 258 (PWC Land Tax Books 1782-1810A), LVA, Richmond, Va.

⁷ John Vogt & T. Wm. Kethley, Jr., *Stafford County Virginia Tithables 1723-1790* (Athens, Ga.: Iberian Publishing Company, 1990), 1: 218, 234, 251, 274; 2: 291, 357, 417; Stafford County Personal Property Tax Lists 1782-1791, 1792, 1793, William Mountjoy, Commissioner.

⁸ Vogt & Kethley, *Stafford County Virginia Tithables 1723-1790*, 1: 186.

⁹ PWC Deed Book 55: 423, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

¹⁰ PWC Will Book O: 63, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

¹¹ PWC Will Book H: 178; Horace Edwin Hayden, *Virginia Genealogies* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.: E. B. Yordy, 1891), 717.

¹² PWC Personal Property Tax List A, 1793, Yelverton Peyton, Commissioner; LVA microfilm reel 289 (PWC Personal Property Tax Lists 1782-1810).

¹³ PWC Deed Book Y: 612, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia; Howson Hooe's will showed several pieces of land in eastern Prince William going to his children—PWC Will Book O: 63.

¹⁴ PWC Land Tax List B, 1794, William Cundiff, Commissioner; LVA microfilm reel 258.

¹⁵ PWC Land Tax List B, 1795, William Cundiff, Commissioner; PWC Land Tax Lists B, 1796-1800, John King, Commissioner (above Cedar Run); PWC Land Tax Lists B, 1801-1807 and 1809-1815, John W. Wigginton, Commissioner (above Cedar Run); LVA microfilm reels 258 (1782-1810A) and 259 (1810B-1823). All lists are alphabetic by first letter of last name.

In 1815 and for this one year only, there were a number of additional items taxed on the Personal Property Tax List. The explanation given at the Library of Virginia was that this was to raise money to pay for the War of 1812. On 21 December 1814, the Virginia Assembly passed "An Act imposing Taxes for the Support of Government" which among other items established a tax "on each house in the country, exceeding in value five hundred dollars, one eighth of one per centum on the value thereof above five hundred dollars."¹⁶ In the 1815 Prince William County Virginia Personal Property Tax List for the western district, Howson Hooe was taxed on 1 house in the country exceeding \$500—value \$2500.¹⁷ The Prince William Personal Property Tax List showing Howson Hooe's country home was received by the tax assessor on 31 March 1815. This was the first of the tax lists where an assessment was made on a house.

There were only four entries in addition to the one for Howson Hooe on the 1815 Personal Property Tax List for the Upper [*western*] District of Prince William that show country homes valued at \$2500 or more.¹⁸

- Edmund Brooke, taxable value of country home listed as \$2500
- Edward Carter Estate, taxable value of country home listed as \$3000
- William Green, taxable value of country home listed as \$3500
- James H. Hooe, taxable value of country home listed as \$3500

Dr. Carl R. Lounsbury, after visiting Moor Green, stated the architectural characteristics of the dwelling, would indicate that the building was erected between 1810 and 1820. He found no evidence whatsoever that Moor Green was built upon any earlier structure. Everything that he saw suggested that the house was built in probably six months to a year, at most.¹⁹ The 1815 tax charge on the Personal Property tax list to Howson Hooe for one of the more substantial country homes in western Prince William suggests a completion date of Moor Green by early 1815.

Buildings were not assessed again until the land tax of 1820. In that year the land tax had for the first time a column entitled "Sum added to land on account of buildings". Howson Hooe was taxed in 1820 on buildings on three of his tracts in the Upper [*western*] District. On the 482 acre tract on Broad Run, the sum added to the value of the land for buildings--\$4000. Hooe's other two tracts that had buildings were 131 acres with \$150 added and 148 acres with \$500 added.²⁰

It is interesting to make a comparison of some of the more expensive country homes listed on the 1815 Personal Property Tax with the assessment records for buildings on the 1820 Land Tax.

<u>Charged with tax</u>	<u>1815 assessment</u>	<u>1820 assessment</u>	<u>Probable Plantation Name</u>
William Green	\$3500	\$3000 (Wm.Green's estate)	Effingham ²¹
James H. Hooe	\$3500	\$5000	Bradley ²²
Edmond Brooke	\$2500	\$4000	Snow Hill ²³
Howson Hooe	\$2500	\$4000	Moor Green

¹⁶ Acts Passed by A General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond on Monday the 10th of October... 1814... (Richmond: Thomas Richie, 1815), part 1, chap. 1, p. 4.

¹⁷ PWC Personal Property Tax List B, 1815, John W. Wigginton, Commissioner (Upper District): 6; LVA microfilm reel 289 (PWC Personal Property Tax Lists 1811-1832). The entry has the last name of Hooe and a first name that starts with H. There is an ink blot over part of the first name. When the portion of the tax list with this name is enlarged, it says Hooe, H[in]k blot] wson. There was no other Howson Hooe listed in this 1815 Prince William County Personal Property Tax List for the western district though he is listed in the western 1815 Prince William Land Tax as a resident.

¹⁸ PWC Personal Property Tax List B, 1815, John W. Wigginton, Commissioner (Upper District).

¹⁹ Dr. Carl R. Lounsbury is an Architectural Historian for Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and an authority on Southern architecture. He is the author of *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture & Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) and *Courthouses of Early Virginia: An Architectural History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2005). He visited Moor Green in March of 2005.

²⁰ PWC Land Tax List B, 1820, John Taylor, Commissioner, 5; LVA microfilm reel 259.

²¹ Effingham belonged to the Green family according to *WPA Records of Prince William County Virginia*, compiled by W. R. Hobbs, Teresa A. Kelley and Sallie C. Pusey (Westminster, Md.: Willow Bend Books, 2001), 216

²² This tract identified as on Winter Branch in the 1820 Land Tax List. See also Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey Form, Historic Sites File—Bradley, found at RELIC, Bull Run Regional Library, Manassas Virginia for further discussion.

²³ This tract was identified as Snow Hill in the 1820 Land Tax List. Also see Hobbs, Kelley & Pusey, *WPA Records of Prince William County Virginia*: 443 for further discussion.

Note that each property, with the exception of Effingham, was assessed for \$1500 more in 1820 than in 1815. This reinforces the idea that Moor Green was the country home assessed in the 1815 Personal Property Tax List.

The tract containing Moor Green continued to be the initial property listed on the land tax for western Prince William for Howson Hooe from 1816 until his death in 1833. In his will written in October 1833, Howson Hooe left his son James Hooe "the whole of the tract of land that I live on...called "More Green".²⁴ While the copy of the document in the will book was most likely written by a clerk of the Court and not Howson Hooe, it is interesting to note that the first mention of the property was spelled "More Green". Was the property "more green" than the nearby Bristoe tract that had been depleted of trees and vegetation?²⁵

The 1835 Prince William Land Tax List for western Prince William showed 505 acres of land on Broad Run for James Hooe and indicated that it was "by the will of Howson Hooe, Senior". A sum of \$4000 was added for buildings.²⁶ The ownership of Moor Green had then passed to James Hooe, Howson Hooe's son.

Unfortunately James Hooe's tenure at Moor Green was short. He wrote his will on 10 October 1838 and gave his sister Jane Hooe "Moorgreen". The will was proven on 3 December 1838.²⁷ The obituary of James Hooe in the *Alexandria Gazette* stated the following:

"Died, At his residence in Prince William County Virginia, on the 10th instant [November 10, 1838], JAMES HOOE, in the 37th year of his age, after a most painful and protracted illness ..."²⁸

Moor Green now belonged to Jane, sister of James Hooe and daughter of Howson Hooe. Jane Hooe married John F. Reid late in 1838 or early in 1839.²⁹ The 1840 Census enumerated John Reid with 1 white male of 30 and under 40, 1 white male under 5, 1 white female of 20 and under 30 and 10 slaves.³⁰

The 1841 to 1847 Prince William Land Tax showed John F. Reid with 505 acres on Broad Run. The 1841-1844 Land Tax identified the land as being in right of his wife. The 1845 to 1847 Land Tax records had dropped that designation.³¹ According to his obituary in the *Alexandria Gazette*, John F. Reid died 17 ult. [17 May 1847] at his residence near Brentsville, Prince William County Virginia. He died in the 37th year of his age, leaving a wife and two children surviving him.³²

Jane L. Reid, age 34, was living with her children, Richard I. Reid, 10, and John F. Reid, 3 in Prince William in 1850.³³ On her 400 acres of improved land, she was raising horses, cows, oxen, sheep and swine, with largest individual holding of livestock being 36 sheep and her farm produced 100 pounds of wool. Her most extensive crop was Indian corn at 650 bushels. She also raised wheat, oats, Irish and sweet potatoes.³⁴ Moor Green provided for Jane's family as a working farm.

²⁴ Will of Howson Hooe, PWC Will Book O: 63, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

²⁵ "This tract [Bristoe] ... has been ravaged of all its timber, and for the most part 'ploughed down to be barren,'" quote from Joseph Martin, *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia* (Westminster, Md.: Willow Bend Books, 2000, originally printed 1835 by Moseley & Tompkins, Charlottesville, Va.) 273; see "The Bristoe Tract—Rent Rolls, Map and History," by Darlene L. Hunter in *Prince William Reliquary*, vol. 3, no. 4 (October 2004): 81, for further discussion of the Bristoe Tract.

²⁶ PWC Land Tax Lists A & B, 1835, 1st part, alphabetic by first letter of last name; LVA microfilm reel 260 (PWC Land Tax Lists 1824-1838).

²⁷ Will of James Hooe, PWC Will Book O: 402, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

²⁸ Obituary of James Hooe, *Alexandria Gazette*, November 11, 1838, page 3, column 2.

²⁹ Jane Hooe was named in her brother's will in October 1838 and her first child, Richard I. Reid was born circa 1839 according to the 1850 census: Jane L. Reid household, 1850 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, population schedule, page 127, line 17, dwelling and household 440; National Archives micropublication M432, roll 970.

³⁰ John Reid household, 1840 U. S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, page 293, line 5; National Archives micropublication M704, roll 574.

³¹ PWC Land Tax Lists 1841-1845—District above Cedar Run and the Occoquan; PWC Land Tax Lists 1846 and 1847—District above Cedar Run and the Occoquan, Thomas J. Shaw, Commissioner; LVA microfilm reel 261 (PWC Land Tax Lists 1839-1850).

³² Obituary of John F. Reid from *Alexandria Gazette*, 5 June 1847, page 3, column 1.

³³ Jane L. Reid household, 1850 U. S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, population schedule, page 127.

³⁴ Jane Reid entry, 1850 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, agriculture schedule, pages 37-38, line 26; National Archives micropublication T1132, roll 3.

In 1851 and 1852, the estate of John F. Reid was taxed on 568 acres of land, called "Moor Green" [*Moore Green in 1852*] on Broad Run.³⁵ The Land Tax list now named the tract.

On 28 March 1853, Jane L. Reid entered into a trust agreement before her marriage to Redmon Foster. All of the real, personal and mixed estate that Jane L. Reid had at the time of the marriage was to be under her sole control. She deeded in trust to James H. Reid of Alexandria, for her sole use, her property in Prince William County called Moor Green. It was to be kept free of all liability of the debts of Redmon Foster.³⁶

From 1853 on, Jane L. Foster was taxed on the tract called Moor Green which was on Broad Run.³⁷ Jane, though married, was listed as the landholder and continued to be until her death in 1893. It was unusual in this time period for a woman, unless a widow, to be named as the property owner. Jane's 1853 "prenup" was in effect.

Redmon Foster, the husband of Jane L. Hooe Reid Foster, had changed his name from James Foster to Redmon Foster in compliance with a decree by his uncle, Redmon Foster, who lived at Fostern. In his will of 1848, Redmon Foster of Fostern left his plantation to his wife Margaret for her natural life. At the death of Margaret, "Fostern" was to go to James Foster, son of James Foster who was a brother of Redmon Foster of "Fostern". The condition of the will was that in order to inherit "Fostern", James Foster [*nephew of Redmon of Fostern and son of James*] must change his name to Redmon.³⁸ This had been accomplished by 1850 when Redmon Foster, age 24, was living with Margaret Foster.³⁹ Redmon Foster was his name when he married Jane Reid.

Though John F. Reid died intestate, he left several estate documents. In 1854, Philip D. Lipscomb was appointed guardian of Richard I. Reid and Redmond Foster was appointed the guardian of John F. Reid, both boys were sons of John F. Reid, deceased.⁴⁰ In 1856, the estate of John F. Reid was divided: Lot 1 of the slaves went to Redmond Foster in right of his wife; Lot 2 went to Redmond Foster, guardian for John F. Reid and Lot 3 went to Philip Lipscomb, guardian for Richard I. Reid.⁴¹

In 1860 the family at Moor Green consisted of Redmon Foster, 38, a farmer; Jane Foster, 44; Richard I. Reid, 19, a clerk in a store and John F. Reid, 13.⁴² On 400 acres of improved land, Redmon Foster had horses, cows, oxen, sheep and swine. Sheep were the most abundant livestock at 45. He raised wheat, Indian corn, oats and hay. His largest crops were 1000 bushels of oats and 25 tons of hay and he produced 150 pounds of wool.⁴³ Moor Green continued to provide for the descendants of Howson Hooe.

Jane's son, Richard I. Reid, left Moor Green and enlisted in the Confederate Army, 49th Virginia Infantry, Ewells Guards, at Brentsville on 1 July 1861.⁴⁴ He was wounded near Fredericksburg, Virginia on 13 December 1862 and spent 18 days at home on sick leave. He served as a 2nd Lieutenant and Acting Quartermaster for the 49th and was taken prisoner in May 1864 at Mechanicsville, Virginia. He was held at Fort Delaware near Point Lookout and after signing the Oath of Allegiance there, was released on 16 June 1865.⁴⁵

³⁵ PWC Land Tax List A, 1851, & Land Tax List B, 1852, both Jas. D. Tenmille, Commissioner; LVA microfilm reel 531 (PWC Land Tax Lists 1851-1859).

³⁶ Prince William County Loose Papers, box 6, bundle 6, folder title: Marriage Contract between Reid, Jane L. & Redmon Foster, March 28, 1853; Prince William County Virginia Courthouse Archives. Thanks to Robin Meyering for the copy of the document.

³⁷ PWC Land Tax List A, 1853, R. F. Brawner, Commissioner; LVA microfilm reel 531.

³⁸ Will of Redmon Foster, PWC Will Book P: 375, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

³⁹ Margaret Foster household, 1850 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, population schedule, page 127, line 15, dwelling and family number 438; National Archives micropublication M432, roll 970.

⁴⁰ PWC Bond Book 7, unpagged, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁴¹ PWC Will Book Q: 337, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁴² Redmon Foster household, 1860 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, population schedule, Post Office Brentsville, page 489, line 15, dwelling 435, family 413; National Archives micropublication M653, roll 137.

⁴³ Redmon Foster entry, 1860 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, agricultural schedule, page 523-524, line 4; National Archives micropublication T1132, roll 7.

⁴⁴ Richard B. Kleese, *49th Virginia Infantry* (Appomattox, Virginia: H. E. Howard, 2002): 2.

⁴⁵ Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Virginia, 49th Infantry, names O-Sm; National Archives micropublication M324, reel 920.

Moor Green survived the Civil War intact as there was no money deducted for loss of buildings when land tax resumed in 1865.⁴⁶ This was quite amazing in western Prince William so near several battlegrounds.

Richard I. Reid was no longer living at Moor Green in 1870. Only Redmon Foster, Jane Foster and John F. Reid were there.⁴⁷ Redmon was farming. He had twenty sheep and twenty swine, along with horses and cows. His largest crop was Indian corn, but he also raised wheat, rye, oats and Irish potatoes.⁴⁸

According to the 1874 land tax, the acreage of Moor Green was reduced by a deed to "R. Reede".⁴⁹ In 1874 and 1875, Richard Reid was taxed on 114 ½ acres, a part of "Moore Green" on Broad Run. The 1874 Tax List showed that the land was transferred by deed from J. L. Foster.⁵⁰ There were no buildings assessed on this land. In 1878, Carter Blanton gave a mortgage to R. I. Reid and Della Reid of Fulton County, Kentucky, to secure a loan on the 114 ¾ [sic] acre tract in Prince William County, Virginia. It was a portion of the tract known as "Moor Green".⁵¹

R. I. Reid was living in Fulton County Kentucky in 1880. He was 38, married, an express agent, born in Virginia. Also in the family were his wife Della Reid, age 29, born in Tennessee and a son Ernest Reid, age 2, born in Kentucky.⁵² What happened to R. I. Reid's family after 1880 is unknown at this time.

In 1880, Redmon Foster, Jane L. Foster and John F. Reid were at Moor Green.⁵³ Redmon continued farming. His largest crop was Indian corn, with 60 acres producing 1000 bushels. He also was shown with apple and pear trees.⁵⁴

1885 was a sad year at Moor Green. Both of Jane's sons died within a few months of each other. John F. Reid, age 38, died in July 1885 at "Moor Green". He was unmarried. He had been born at Moor Green.⁵⁵ Richard Reid, age 45, died in November 1885 at Manassas. He was born at "Moor Green". It appears that Richard may have been married as his death certificate named a consort as [blank] Reid.⁵⁶ Both were sons of John F. and Jane L. Reid. Apparently, if the R. I. Reid in Fulton County, Kentucky, was the son of Jane Reid Foster, he was back in Prince William County, Virginia, at his death.

In her will written on 27 November 1891, Jane L. Foster bequeathed to her husband during his natural life "Mooregreen" farm. After the death of her husband, Jane Foster gave Mooregreen farm to her niece Mary J. Steele of Kentucky. Jane's will was proven 5 June 1893.⁵⁷ The *Alexandria Gazette* noted that Mrs. Jane Foster, wife of Mr. Redmond Foster, died at "Morr Green", Prince William County on Monday last [15 May 1893].⁵⁸

⁴⁶ PWC Land Tax List A, 1865—William C. Merchant, Commissioner; LVA microfilm 532 (PWC Land Tax Lists 1860-1870).

⁴⁷ Redmond Foster household, 1870 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, population schedule, Manassas, page 436, line 26, dwelling 144, household 148; National Archives micropublication M593, roll 1673.

⁴⁸ Redmon Foster household, 1870 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, agricultural schedule, pages 3-4, National Archives micropublication T1132, roll 14.

⁴⁹ PWC Land Tax List, 1874, Manassas District—John H. Butler, Assessor; LVA microfilm reel 646 (Land Tax Lists, 1874, Prince William - Russell). Deed has not been found.

⁵⁰ PWC Land Tax Lists, 1874 and 1875, Manassas District—Jno. H. Butler, Assessor; LVA microfilm reels 646 and 660 (Land Tax Lists, 1875, Pittsylvania - Pulaski).

⁵¹ PWC Deed Book 31: 514, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁵² R. I. Reid household, 1880 U. S. census, Fulton County, Kentucky, population schedule, Hickman, District 3, ED 204, sheet 2, line 16, dwelling 14, family 16, Clinton Street; National Archives micropublication T9, roll 414.

⁵³ Redmon Foster household, 1880 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, population schedule, Manassas District, ED 124, sheet 13, line 27, dwelling 137, family 160; National Archives micropublication T9, roll 1386.

⁵⁴ Redmon Foster entry, 1880 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, agricultural schedule, ED 174, page 13, line 4; National Archives micropublication T1132, roll 28.

⁵⁵ Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics, PWC Register of Deaths, 1885, First District, line 35; LVA microfilm reel 24 (PWC Deaths 1853-1896).

⁵⁶ Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics, PWC Register of Deaths, 1885, First District, line 36.

⁵⁷ Will of Jane L. Foster, PWC Will Book U: 521; Will of Jane L. Foster from the Prince William County Virginia Wills & Estates, Loose Wills - F, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁵⁸ *Alexandria Gazette*, Saturday, May 20, 1893, page 3, column 3—Local Brevities, item 3.

Jane L. Hooe Reid Foster very likely lived at Moor Green her entire life. She was born about 1816 so probably was born at the house and lived there during her childhood. She was 17 or 18 when her father died and the house was inherited by her brother. As both of her parents were dead⁵⁹ and she was still single, she likely continued to live there with her brother. She then inherited the house in 1838, married and she and John F. Reid lived there. She and her second husband, Redmon Foster made their home there also. She died at Moor Green in 1893 and it seems logical that she would be buried in the cemetery behind her home.

There is no indication that Mary J. Steele lived at Moor Green or even moved to Prince William County.⁶⁰ Redmon Foster was taxed on his life estate in 452 ½ acres called Moore Green from 1895 through 1905.⁶¹ In 1906, the heirs of Mary J. Steele, deceased, sold Moor Green to J. B. T. Thornton. This sale was subject to the life estate of Redmon Foster.⁶²

The Moor Green ownership of J. B. T. Thornton was brief. In 1909, J. B. T. Thornton and Fannie B., his wife and R. Foster sold "More Green" to James B. Fletcher of Russell County, Virginia. The property now contained 375 acres.⁶³ Moor Green passed from the ownership of the Hooe family with this deed.

Members of the Fletcher family lived on the property for about 30 years. J. B. Fletcher wrote his will in 1933. He left his wife Belle V. Fletcher all of his property. If his wife did not survive him, the property was to go to



Moor Green – Front View

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

Grady Shoemaker and his five children, Marie, Daisy, Annie, James and Benjamin. The will was proven 2 February 1935.⁶⁴ Belle V. Fletcher survived her husband. James B. and Belle V. Fletcher had raised Belle's nephew, Grady B. Shoemaker.⁶⁵ Grady B. Shoemaker, son of Henry A. and Nannie C. Shoemaker, married Mary E. Armentrout 25 September 1912 in Prince William.⁶⁶ The 1930 census shows the children of Grady B. Shoemaker living with the Fletchers at Moor Green.⁶⁷

When the Works Progress Administration (WPA) conducted a survey of "More Green" in February 1937, the owner was Mrs. J. B. Fletcher. The house was shown as needing repairs. The smokehouse was the only outbuilding remaining.⁶⁸ In the Library of Congress Historic American

⁵⁹ Howson Hooe named no wife in his 1833 will in PWC Will Book O: 62.

⁶⁰ John Steele household, 1880 U.S. census, McCracken County, Kentucky, population schedule, Paducah, ED 124, Sheet 17, line 38, dwelling 154, household 155, National Archives micropublication T9, roll 430; *Jno. G. Gaines Paducah City Directory 1881-1882*, volume 1, page 194; Steve Birchfield, preparer, *Directory Paducah Kentucky, 1894-1895* by Olcott & Wilcox (Melber, Kentucky: Simmons Historical Publications, 2001), 174; R. L. Polk & Co., *Memphis City Directory*, 1900, page 171; Keith Blanton household, 1900 U.S. census, Shelby County, Tennessee, Memphis, 14th District, ED 74, sheet 9B, line 87, dwelling and household 237, address 221 Hernando Street, National Archives micropublication T623, roll 1598.

⁶¹ PWC Land Tax Lists 1895, 1899, 1901, 1902 and 1905, First District, R. H. Hooe, Assessor; PWC Courthouse, Manassas, Va.

⁶² PWC Deed Book 55: 423, named the heirs of Mary J. Steele, deceased, as E. N. Steele and Hattie S, his wife (signature notarized Weakley County, Tennessee, on 25 July 1906); Sophie C. Lay and Stuart P. Lay, her husband (signature notarized Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee, on 17 July 1906); John A. Steele (signature notarized Adams County, Mississippi, on 21 July 1906) and Hattie J. Blanton and K. [Keith] Blanton, husband. Hattie Blanton died before signing the deed and her interest was ordered by the court to be conveyed to J. B. T. Thornton – PWC Chancery Order Book No. 5 (1901-1905): 367; "More Green" was described as 401 acres and 27 poles on Broad Run in Manassas Magisterial District.

⁶³ PWC Deed Book 59: 253, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁶⁴ PWC Will Book 3: 264 and Loose Probate Files, James B. Fletcher, will proven 2 February 1935, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁶⁵ James B. Fletcher household, 1900 U.S. census, Russell County, Virginia, Honaker Precinct, ED 60, sheet 9A, line 20, dwelling and family 140, National Archives micropublication T623, roll 1727; James B. Fletcher household, 1910 Manassas Prince William County Virginia Census, ED 98, Sheet 8A, line 25, dwelling 143, family 147, National Archives micropublication T624, roll 1643.

⁶⁶ Ronald Ray Turner, *Prince William County Virginia Marriages 1854-1938* (Manassas, Va.: author, 2002), 334.

⁶⁷ James B. Fletcher household, 1930 U.S. census, Prince William County, Virginia, Manassas, ED 76-10, sheet 2B, line 52, dwelling 31, family 34; National Archives micropublication T626, roll 2456.

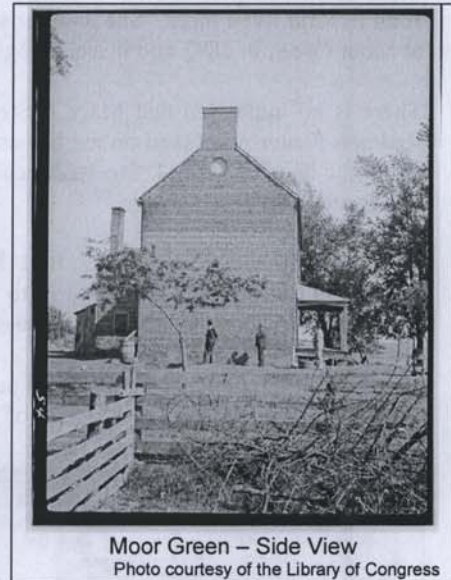
⁶⁸ Susan Rogers Morton, "More Green" from WPA Historical Inventory, Prince William County Virginia, February 27, 1937, Historic Sites File—Moor Green at RELIC, Bull Run Regional Library, Manassas Virginia; available online at www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/archrecs/, filed as "More Green".

Buildings Survey, there are two undated pictures of Moor Green—front and side.⁶⁹ Dr Lounsbury suggests that these photos are from the 1930's.⁷⁰ The clothes worn by the gentlemen in the picture coincide with this time period.

In 1940, Belle V. Fletcher, reserving a life interest, deeded Moor Green to Grady Shoemaker's children. The land was on Manassas-Lucasville-Brentsville road, containing about 316 acres.⁷¹ In 1941, Belle V. Fletcher and the Shoemakers sold Moor Green to John Watson Cox.⁷²

John W. Cox and his wife, Elizabeth, lived at Moor Green until his death in 1968.⁷³ In his will, he left everything to his wife who was by then living at Manassas Manor [*a nursing home*].⁷⁴ Elizabeth Wheelock Cox died on 15 November 1970.⁷⁵ As she and John Cox had no children, Richard Lincoln Wheelock, the brother of Elizabeth Cox, inherited Moor Green.⁷⁶

John and Elizabeth Cox renovated Moor Green during their tenure. An article in the *Journal Messenger* in 1953 describes the house. "The wide hospitable green door opens into a spacious hall which ends in a door opening onto the garden terrace. Off the hall to the left is the parlor, whose most striking feature is a handsome mantel." Several myths about the origin of the house may have started here. The 1756 building date was mentioned in this article. Also the idea that the house may have been built on the foundation of a 1711 blockhouse seems to have originated here.⁷⁷ Neither of these premises can be proven.



Moor Green – Side View
Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

On 17 December 1973, Richard L. and Germaine Wheelock sold Moor Green to the Moor Green Estates, Inc. The deed was delivered to Capitol Realty, Manassas, Virginia. In the deed there was an affidavit in which Richard Lincoln Wheelock stated that he was the heir of Elizabeth W. Cox, and that he had lived in Derby, [Orleans County] Vermont for 18 years. Attached to the deed were the Minutes of Board of Directors of Moor Green Estates, Inc. The directors present at the meeting were Edmond N. Howar, President, William D. Wood and Margot R. Howar.⁷⁸ Moor Green had had no resident owner between 1968 when John W. Cox died and the 1973 sale by the Wheelocks.

The lack of a resident owner continued for the next 19 years, as Moor Green was owned by a series of companies, banks and trustees. Extensive renovation of the house was planned but took years to materialize. The land surrounding the house was subdivided and house was empty. It was a very precarious time for this property. Moor Green was placed on the Virginia Historical Landmarks Register on 18 July 1978 and on the National Register of Historic Places⁷⁹ on 16 November 1978. The owner of the property at that time was

⁶⁹ "Moor Green, State Route 692, Brentsville vicinity, Prince William County VA", from American Memory, Built in America, Historic American Buildings Survey (Library of Congress), HABS, VA, 76-BRENT.V.3, Survey HABS VA-554 found at <http://memory.loc.gov/>

⁷⁰ Report "Moor Green, Prince William County, Virginia", Dr. Carl Lounsbury to Glenn and Karen Callihan dated 21 March 2005.

⁷¹ PWC Deed Book 106: 89, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁷² PWC Deed Book 106: 362, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁷³ Obituary of John Cox, *Journal Messenger*, Manassas, Virginia, September 5, 1968, page A-6.

⁷⁴ Probate of John Watson Cox, PWC Will Book 26: 247, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁷⁵ Final Account of John Watson Cox, PWC Will Book 31: 278, says Elizabeth W. Cox died 15 November 1970. An affidavit in PWC Deed Book 718: 498 by Richard L. Wheelock in 1973, says that Elizabeth W. Cox died 15 May 1969. The final account of Douglas S. Mackall, III, Committee of Elizabeth W. Cox was filed 28 November 1969 in PWC Will Book 28 page 273. However, it appears that the 15 November 1970 death date was probably correct. Social Security Death Index listing for Elizabeth Cox, Social Security Number 230-76-4571 says date of death November 1970, last residence – 05855, Newport, Orleans [County], Vermont.

⁷⁶ PWC Deed Book 718: 495, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁷⁷ Mary Anne Peters, "Moor Green, Mr. and Mrs. Cox' Home Believed to Have Been a Block House," part 2 of "Old Homes of Prince William" from *Journal Messenger*, December 10, 1953, page 4A; Historic Site File – Moor Green at RELIC, Bull Run Regional Library, Manassas, Va.

⁷⁸ PWC Deed Book 718: 495, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁷⁹ Moor Green, Virginia Landmarks Register, National Register of Historic Places, Virginia, Prince William County, Building #78003039.

Century 21-Capital Realty, Manassas, Virginia. In an update to the National Register application, there is a report by a surveyor from the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission who visited Moor Green in August 1979. He found that the house was open and apparently abandoned and the grounds very overgrown. The original approach to the house had been erased during the construction of single family dwellings that almost surrounded it. The smokehouse was still on the property but seriously neglected. There was evidence of some renovation as the floors had been sanded and the plaster on the ceilings in many of the rooms had been removed exposing joists of the floor above. There was a large hole in the floor at the entrance to the house.⁸⁰

A most devastating event happened on 4 March 1984 when Moor Green burned. The fire department suspected arson as piles of paper in the basement had been set on fire.⁸¹ Trespassing youths probably started the blaze. The fire charred the "great hall" and burned the basement. The beautiful mantel in the parlor was destroyed. Fortunately, because the vandals had pried off the boards to enter the house, the fire burned less intensely and did not completely gut the house. The owner, First Commercial Bank pledged to continue renovation.⁸²

After numerous changes of trustees, a foreclosure and several auctions of the property, a renovated Moor Green was sold to William E. S. Flory, Jr. and Diann S. Flory in 1992.⁸³ Finally Moor Green had resident owners again.

Also an integral part of Moor Green are the cemeteries associated with it. One is the family cemetery and the other is the slave cemetery. While neither cemetery has legible tombstones, there are shards of stones in each.

The family cemetery is located at the back of the house. The cemetery was identified in the 1909 deed between the J. B. T. Thornton and J. B. Fletcher as "the Hooe grave yard in the rear of the garden, which said grave yard as now enclosed contains about one-eight acre".⁸⁴ In 1953 an article in the *Journal Messenger* noted that the tombstones could not be read. "Away from the house but within the fence-stockade is the old family cemetery studded with sunken slabs, half-hidden by masses of myrtle, which time and weather have unfortunately rubbed bare of markings."⁸⁵

The only person that can be proven to date to have been buried there was Redmon Foster. His obituary stated that he died 25 December 1912 and the interment was at "Moregreen" farm, near Brentsville.⁸⁶ However, a guess can be made of the other family members who might also be there. A tentative list of persons, in addition to Redmon Foster, follows:

- Howson Hooe who died 1833/4.
- Jane Hooe, wife of Howson Hooe, who apparently died before her husband wrote his will in 1833.⁸⁷
- James Hooe who died 1838.
- John F. Reid, husband of Jane L. Hooe Reid Foster, who died in 1847.
- Elizabeth Foster, daughter of Redmon and Jane L. Foster, who died in 1857.⁸⁸
- John F. Reid, son of John F. Reid and Jane L. Hooe Reid Foster, who died in 1885.
- Richard Irvin Reid, son of John F. Reid and Jane L. Hooe Reid Foster, who died in 1885.

⁸⁰ Moor Green, Update of National Register Nomination Preparation from 6/78. Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission File no. 76-14, from Historic Sites File—Moor Green, found at RELIC, Bull Run Regional Library, Manassas Virginia.

⁸¹ "Fire Damages Moor Green", *Journal Messenger*, Manassas Virginia, March 5, 1984, from Historic Sites File—Moor Green, found at RELIC, Bull Run Regional Library, Manassas Virginia.

⁸² "Moor Green renovation to proceed despite fire", *Potomac News*, Woodbridge, Virginia, March 12, 1984, page A11, from Historic Sites File—Moor Green, found at RELIC, Bull Run Regional Library, Manassas Virginia.

⁸³ PWC Deed Book 1867: 1153, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas Virginia.

⁸⁴ PWC Deed Book 59: 253, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁸⁵ Peters, "Moor Green."

⁸⁶ Ronald Ray Turner, *Prince William County Virginia 1900-1930 Obituaries* (Manassas, Virginia: author, 1996), 115, from the *Manassas Journal*, 27 December 1912. The obituary stated that he would have been 89 years old the next month. He died at the home of Mr. S. C. Suthard, near Bristow.

⁸⁷ Will of Howson Hooe, PWC Will Book O: 63. The will names no wife, only his children.

⁸⁸ The only child of Redmon and Jane Foster found to date, Elizabeth Foster, was born 12 December 1855 at "Moore Green". She died there on 14 September 1857, of dysentery. Ronald Ray Turner, *Prince William County Virginia Birth Records, 1853-1896* (Manassas, Virginia: author, 1994), 42; death record of Elizabeth Foster, Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics, PWC Death Register, 1857, line 8; LVA microfilm reel 24.

- Jane L. Hooe Reid Foster, who died in 1893.



Moor Green Family Cemetery – May 2005

Photo by Darlene L. Hunter

The picture of the family cemetery shows the flags marking “46 stones or clusters of stones” placed by a team from the Smithsonian who examined the cemetery in September 2004.⁸⁹ Ron Turner said on his visit to the family cemetery that judging by the number of rows of graves, depressions, fieldstones and dimension of the cemetery, it was possible that the total burials might be as high as 60.⁹⁰ This would add to the theory that the house may have been used as a hospital during the Civil War and soldiers who died there were buried in the family cemetery.

The slave cemetery is down the hill from the house and no longer on Moor Green property. Here too are remnants of stones seeming to grow out of the trees. One person who was possibly buried there was the slave Manuel, son of Charlotte, who was

owned at his death by Jane L. Foster. He died 20 December 1856 of bronchitis at age 32. He was born in Prince William County.⁹¹

In the 1854 inventory of John F. Reid, there were slaves Charlotte, age 60 and Manuel, age 27. Manuel went to Jane L. Foster in the distribution of the estate and Charlotte to Jane’s son, John F. Reid.⁹² While the age of Manuel does not match exactly, it looks very possible that this is the same man. In addition, Jane Hooe had inherited slaves from her father, including Charlotte and Emanuel.⁹³ Howson Hooe’s 1834 inventory listed a Negro boy Manuel.⁹⁴ It appears that Manuel may have been a longtime resident of Moor Green like Jane L. Foster.

Moor Green was the home completed by Howson Hooe by 1815 to house his growing family. It must have been one of the impressive plantation houses in 1815 in western Prince William County, ranking with Effingham, Bradley and Snow Hill. Descendants of Howson Hooe continued to live in and maintain the house until Jane L. Foster’s death in 1893. It was then cared for by several families, the Fletchers, Shoemakers and Coxes in the early 20th century. But it fell on hard times after John W. Cox’s death in 1968 and it is a miracle that that it stands today. The current owners, Glenn and Karen Callihan⁹⁵, who commissioned this house history, are dedicated to the continued restoration and maintenance of this lovely almost two century old home.



Moor Green Slave Cemetery – May 2005

Photo by Darlene L. Hunter

⁸⁹ Report by William F. Hanna to Glenn Callihan dated 21 September 2004.

⁹⁰ Ronald Ray Turner is a well known abstractor of Prince William County records and expert on Prince William County cemeteries. He visited this cemetery in March 2005.

⁹¹ Death record of slave Manuel, Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics, PWC Death Register, 1856, LVA microfilm reel 24. There is a narrow window from 1853 when the death records started until Emancipation during which time Virginia vital records include names of slaves and their owners. [Note: Death records for Prince William County are missing for the years 1860-63.]

⁹² PWC Will Book Q: 337, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁹³ Will of Howson Hooe, PWC Will Book O: 62, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia.

⁹⁴ PWC Will Book O: 94, Prince William County Courthouse, Manassas, Virginia

⁹⁵ This author’s thanks to the Callihans for their continuing interest, support and help in preparing this history.