



VIRGINIA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

File no. 76-263
Negative no(s). 5176

SURVEY FORM

Historic name Prince William County Court- Common name First Prince William County Courthouse
 County/Town/City Prince William Co. house Site [First] Site
 Street address or route number vic. RF&P R.R. trestle, c150 yd. east of U.S. 1, in Woodbridge

USGS Quad Occoquan	Date or period
Original owner Mason family	Architect/builder/craftsmen
Original use plantation	Source of name
Present owner unknown	Source of date
Present owner address	Stories N/A
Present use unknown	Foundation and wall const'n N/A
Acreage unknown	Roof type N/A

State condition of structure and environs If the courthouse site was not destroyed by bridge construction, it may still be intact. The marker is in a precarious position.
 State potential threats to structure
 Note any archaeological interest This is an archeological site.

Should be investigated for possible register potential? yes ___ no ___

Architectural description (Note significant features of plan, structural system and interior and exterior decoration, taking care to point out aspects not visible or clear from photographs. Explain nature and period of all alterations and additions. List any outbuildings and their approximate ages, cemeteries, etc.)

A square, brick historical marker for the County's first courthouse was erected by the Bicentennial Committee of Prince William County in 1931. The monument sits on the west side of the U. S. 1 highway bridge (former RF&P railroad bridge) which was partly dismantled in March 1981. The monument has affixed to it a metal plaque with the following inscription: "One hundred and fifty yards east/ of this spot stood/ the First Courthouse/ of Prince William County/ organized in 1731." If the marker is to be moved, and it seems likely now that the bridge here is being rebuilt, the inscription will probably have to be changed.

Interior inspected? N/A

Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)

Before 1731, the territory that is now Prince William, Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Fauquier Counties was part of upper Stafford County. Population increases along the Potomac shores of present Northern Virginia caused a new county, Prince William, to be carved from Stafford in 1731. The southern boundary was to be a line drawn between the heads of the Chopawamic Creek and Deep Run of the Rappahannock River. The new county would be bounded on the north and east by the Potomac River; on the southwest by the Rappahannock River; and on the west by the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The first Prince William County courthouse was to have been built on the north side of the Occoquan River, near the long-established Mason's ferry crossing, and in the center of the most populous part of the region. The courthouse would have sat near Occoquan Church, established in 1730 in newly-created Hamilton parish. It was around this settlement that the town of Colchester was established in 1742. This area, a few miles up the mouth of the Occoquan from the Potomac, was becoming a settlement by 1737. A tobacco inspection warehouse had been built there in 1734. The ferry across the Occoquan had officially existed since 1684. Operated by generations of the Mason family, the ferry was an important link on the Potomac Path, the principal north-south land route which later became known as the King's Highway.

(continued next page)

Sources and bibliography

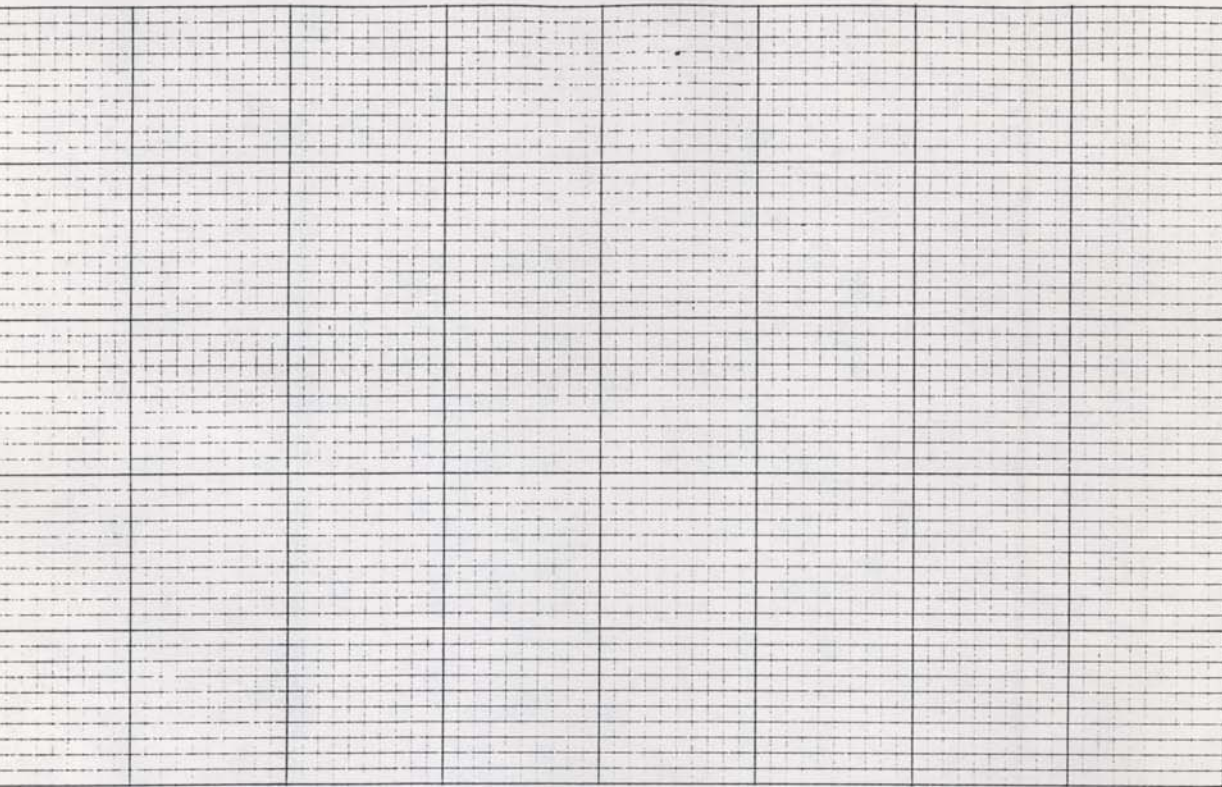
Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.)

W.P.A., Writers' Project, Prince William, The Story of Its People and Its Places (c1941, 1961), pp. 28-29, 76-77; Tommye S. Burton, "Courthouses of Prince William County," (continued next page)

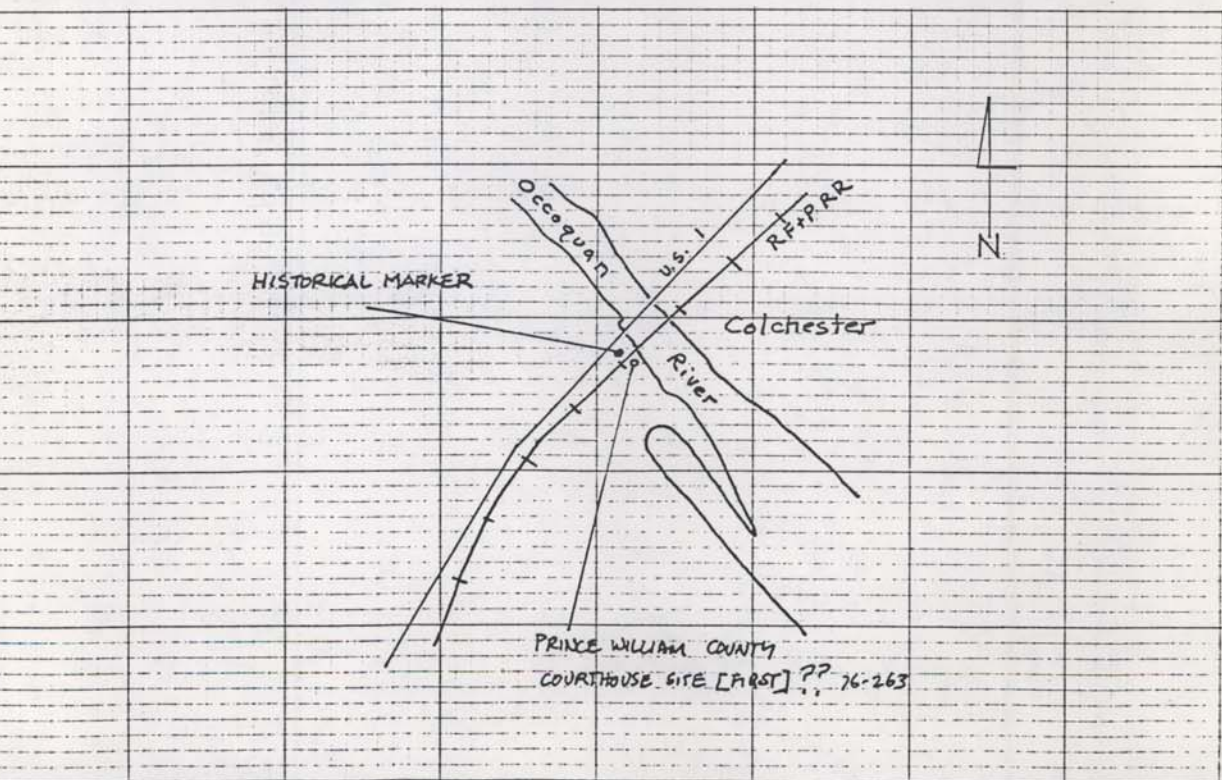
Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.)
John Warner's map of the Northern Neck, 1737, copy printed p. 10 Colchester Book.

Names and addresses of persons interviewed

Plan (Indicate locations of rooms, doorways, windows, alterations, etc.)



Site plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies and significant topographical features.)



Name, address and title of recorder Frances Jones, Architectural Historian - Surveyor, NVPDC

Date APR 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE SITE [First]

Primary Sources (continued)

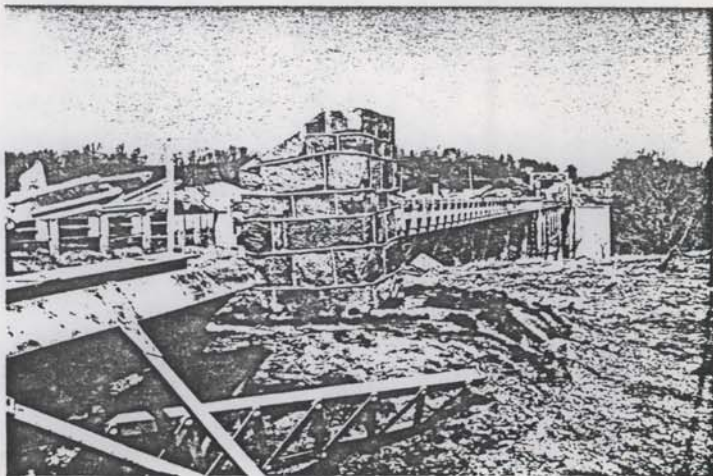
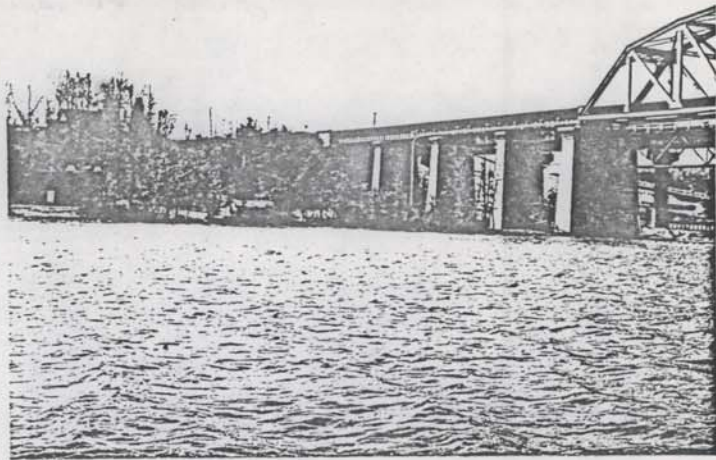
- in Virginia Cavalcade (Summer 1978), pp. 34-47;
- Fairfax Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William (c1924, 1964), pp. 314-315;
- R. J. Ratcliffe, This Was Prince William (c1976), p. 10;
- Edith Moore Sprouse, Colchester, Colonial Port on the Potomac (1975, 1977), pp. 11, 156.
- Nan Netherton et al., Fairfax County, Virginia: A History (1978), pp. 15, 17.

Historical Significance (continued)

Instead of erecting the courthouse on the north side of the Occoquan, the justices caused the courthouse, jail, pillory, and stocks to be erected on the south side of the Occoquan, on George Mason II's plantation which was later known as Woodbridge. Thomas Harrison was appointed County Lieutenant and Catesby Cocke was appointed Clerk. The courthouse was probably constructed of brick, according to the style popularly used for tidewater public architecture in the early 1700s.

In 1742, Fairfax County was created from Prince William County, and the county seat was removed to a location on Cedar Run. The site of the second Prince William courthouse is marked by a stone memorial and is located on the U. S. Marine Corps Base.

In 1970, Fairfax County commissioned some infrared aerial photographs to be taken of the Colchester area to try to identify archeological remains of that 18th century colonial tidewater tobacco port. The archeologist who interpreted the aerial photographs reported having found, in addition to many potentially yielding sites in Colchester, two potential sites on the opposite shore of the Occoquan, one of which was tentatively identified as the Mason ferry house. Though it is not stated, the other site could have been the ruins of the first courthouse.

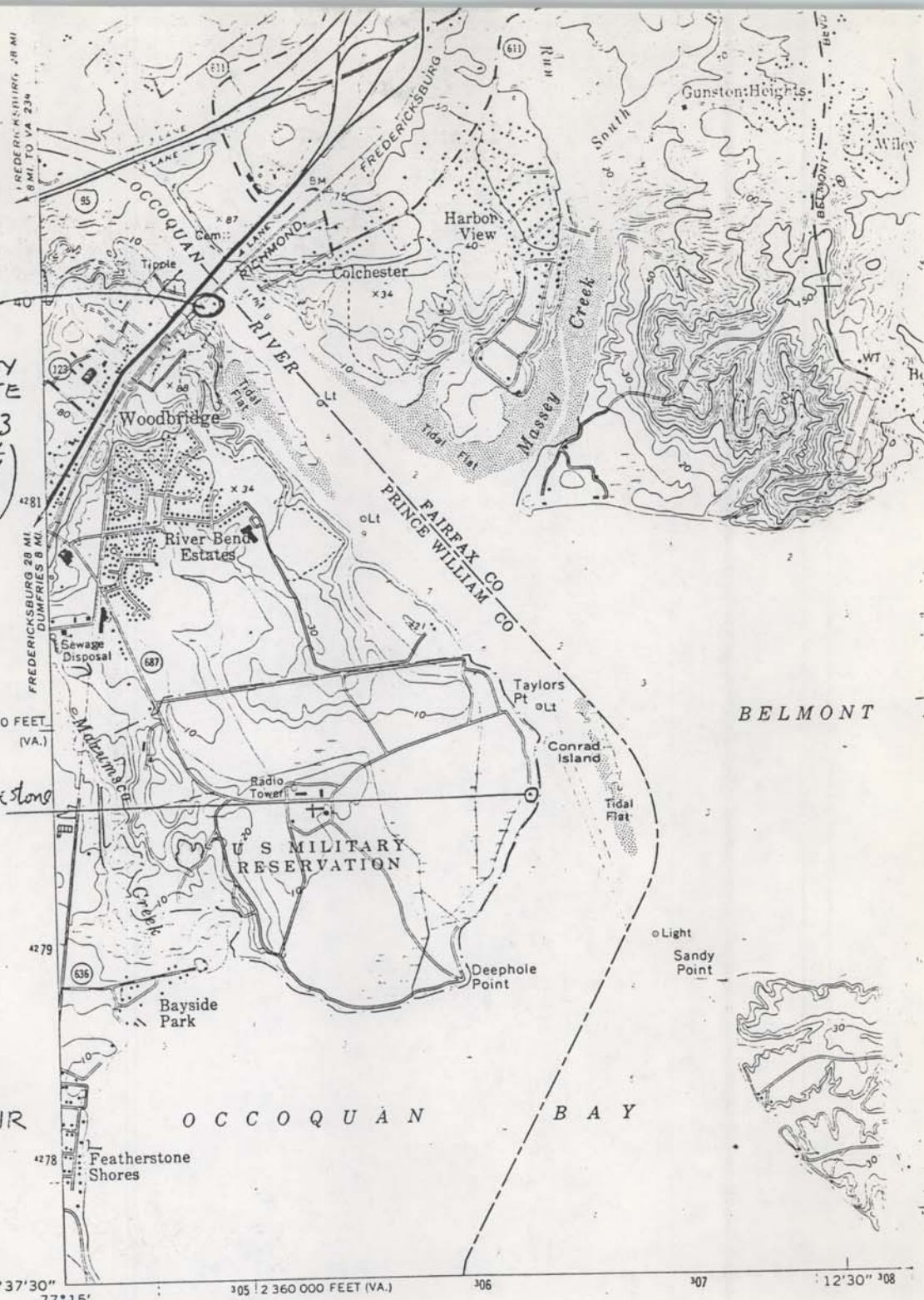


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D FOTIAC
AIR-AD

ST PRINCE
LIAM COUNTY
NORTH-SE SITE
76-263
proximate
location

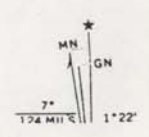
Scarlet Greenstone
76-26

RT BELVOIR
QUAD.



QUANTICO
5567 1/2 SE

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE
Topography by photogrammetric methods from
aerial photographs taken 1950. Field checked 1956



Massie, Jr., for Supervisor of Aquia District, and C. T. Heflin for supervisor of Rock Hill District. Up a few weeks ago Dan M. Chicester, G. K. Massie, Jr., and C. T. Heflin had opposition within the party, but N. N. Berry, W. A. Franklin, and W. F. Powers who were opposing them have withdrawn and announced themselves as independent candidates in the November election, leaving them unopposed for the Democratic nomination.

Excuse to Support Republican Ticket.

out their alleged policy of rule or ruin regardless of right and justice, and in spite of the order of the 8th District Committee directing them to declare all unopposed candidates nominees of the party. Mr. James Ashby, Clerk of the Court and member of the committee, introduced the resolution refusing to declare nominees. Those voting for the resolution were: Reamy, Ashby, Cato, Smith, Stern and Brooks. Those opposing it were: Lee, Harris, Peyton, Wallace and Grinnan.

Otis Thomasson, J. C. Weaver, Robert Jackson journeyed to Eriicksburg on Tuesday, the 22nd, to attend a school of instruction in the operation of the Oil-O-Matic and while there enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. Geo. E. Heflin, who is in the plumbing and heating business. A number of other dealers from other towns were also present. A. Powell of Richmond, district manager for Oil-O-Matic, was in charge of the meeting. Much valuable information was imparted to those present and everyone expressed themselves very much pleased at the look for the sale of Oil-O-Matic the coming season.

BOY PREACHER MAKING JUBILEE JOURNEY

Rounding out fifty years of service, brother Beahm, the "Boy Preacher" of the Brethren Church, is delivering a series of twenty sermons in Virginia, on Sunday, July 28. About 200 miles will be covered during the day. The Shumake Brethren have been invited to arrange luncheon at Louisa and Brethren Hottle and Thomason at Manassas.

The 17th sermon will be preached at 5 p. m. at Warrenton, the 18th at 6:30 in Manassas on the Court House lawn. The 19th will be on the lawn of W. F. Hale at 7:30 and the 20th will be in Valley Church at 8:30. W. Via will keep record of time, offerings, attendance and other information can be secured by addressing Box 17, Nokesville, Va.

POTOMAC ASSOCIATION

Potoamc Baptist Association, including churches in the city of Alexandria, and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William and Stafford will convene in the Bush Meeting Tabernacle in Purcellville, August 5 and 6, 1931.

Hamilton, Ketocin, Purcellville and Round Hill churches will unite in entertainment on the limited plan adopted by the Association last year.

The first day, lunch will be served to OFFICIAL VISITORS only. All others provide their own lunches. Ice and water will be provided for all.

WILL MEET AT MANASSAS

Mrs. Annie Cline, chairman of the special subcommittee which will handle the Bi-centennial celebration at Woodbridge in September, has called a meeting of the committee as a whole at the Manassas High School next Wednesday evening at 7:30 p. m.

On Saturday evening, Messrs. Shumate, Davies and Wharton, accompanied by M. J. Hottle, who is expected to be the designer of the monument, journeyed to Woodbridge to locate the old court house put into use in 1731 and to select a location for the picnic which will be held on that occasion.

It is thought now that a survey will be necessary to locate the old foundations. The State Conservation Commission will also be asked to place a metal marker just south of the highway bridge calling attention to the location of the court house.

ECONOMY STORE AT MANASSAS

Well-Known Business Men Unite in Project to Supply Economical Food.

On Monday of this week the Economy Store opened in Manassas in the location previously occupied by the well-known and extensively advertised firm of W. Atlee Wood and Company on Center street, Manassas.

Mr. W. C. Sadd heads the new organization. Mr. Ben Wood, formerly associated with the Company of W. Atlee Wood, will be vice president,

MARRIAGE RECORD

- July 17—Roland Malcolm Lynn, Mass., and Constance Waters, Dumfries.
- July 20—Augus Cameron York, and Lucy Marie Jasper Manassas.
- July 22—Estler Slingerland and Florence Patton, both of Joplin.

AN APPRECIATION

Resolutions adopted by the Aid Society of Grace M. E. Church, South.

Our hearts were made sad by the passing away of Mrs. Bessie Lewis on June 16, 1931.

Mrs. Lewis was a woman cheerful and christian character, faithful to the church and the School of which she was an active member.

After a brief illness God saw fit to take her from labor to rest. Therefore, be it resolved,

First, that we, her associates and co-workers, feel keenly our loss by the passing of this good woman. We miss the contact of her presence and her cheery disposition.

Second, that we humbly bow our heads in submission to the will of God and pray that His blessings may be vouchsafed to the bereaved family.

Third, that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family.