

The marker commemorating the Second Prince William County Courthouse is located in the northwest corner of the U.S. Marine Corps Base, in Training Area 17, about 1/2 mile west of the "Concrete Road" leading from S.R. 646 to Soweego, and on the south side of Cedar Run.

The courthouse, moved to this site in 1742 from its earlier first location on the Occoquan River at Woodbridge, was so relocated when the county of Fairfax was created from Prince William. As a result of a dispute ~~among rival sections of the county~~ over exactly where the new ~~court~~ county seat would be located, ~~the~~ Governor Gooch ~~selected~~ appointed a board of arbitrators, -- Col. Henry Fitzhugh, Col. William Fairfax, and Col. John Colvil -- to recommend among the five suggested sites the ~~the~~ most convenient place for building the courthouse. The five places were Brent Town, Hoopes' land, Tacquets Ford, Watkins' land, and Waters' land. The three arbiters ~~arbiters~~ examined each of the proposed ~~locations~~ sites, ~~and finally~~ met at Neabsco Iron mines to hear others' opinions on where the courthouse should be, and finally chose to establish the



courthouse on ~~the land of~~ Philemon Waters' plantation. Philemon Waters was one of a group of Huguenot settlers who in the 18<sup>th</sup> century received land grants on the south side of Cedar Run, below the 30,000-acre Brent Town Tract. Philemon Waters' plantation was ~~included~~ part of a tract that had been patented in 1712 by Lewis Reno<sup>#</sup> and Philemon Waters. (which was built in 1743<sup>1/2</sup>)

<sup>#</sup> Allegedly, there were, besides the courthouse, a clerk's office and jail, taverns, stores, and residences. It is not known what the courthouse looked like; perhaps it resembled the King William County Courthouse, which is said to have been a Virginia prototype for court buildings. This courthouse, a one-story, brick, rectangular-plan ~~conv~~ building with a <sup>steeply-pitched</sup> hip<sup>#</sup> roof and an arcaded <sup>front</sup> facade, is located in Tidewater Virginia, where many of Prince William County's English founders originated. After the county seat was moved from Cedar Run to Dumfries in 1762, the courthouse at Cedar Run supposedly fell ~~away~~ <sup>into</sup> disuse. In 1911, the site was all-but-forgotten when George C. Round of Manassas identified the site on the Ashmore Farm,



The site was dedicated in the 1920s by teacher Florence Marshall and students of nearby Fayman School, a one-room schoolhouse which was demolished in 1942-43 when the Base was enlarged. (3)

northeast of the village of Orlando. In 1932, a plaque commemorating the ~~old~~ second Prince William Courthouse was ~~erected~~ affixed to a low stone monument said to have been built from the foundation stones of the original building. In ~~1974~~ 1974, this monument was rediscovered by the Marine Corps and the Prince William County Historical Commission. At that time, the marker was restored, the site was cleared of underbrush, and the monument was rededicated.

The Ashmore Cemetery containing many fieldstone-marked graves, is ~~on the way to~~ located near the courthouse site. ~~Among the~~ <sup>three tombstones in the graveyard</sup> ~~of the marked graves~~ in 1941, according to the W.P.A. guide, two were inscribed with only initials: "E.G. B." and "W.A. 1771;" and a third was erected for "Mary D. Lane, consort of George Lane and daughter of the late Major Wm. Ashmore. Born 8<sup>th</sup> of Feby, 1781...."



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W.P.A., Writer's Program Prince William, the Story of Its People and Its Places (c1941), p. 110.

Prince William County Historical Commission, "Gateway to Virginia's Unique Tradition: Historic Prince William County," brochure and tour map (1976).