



**VIRGINIA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

File no. 76-59
Negative no(s). —

SURVEY FORM

Historic name Prince William County Court- Common name A.K.A. Second Prince William County
County/Town/City Prince William Co. house Site Courthouse Site; Cedar Run Courth. Site
Street address or route number c $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of the "Concrete Rd." leading from S.R.646 to Sowego, on

USGS Quad Nokesville Quad Date or period U.S. Marine Base

Original owner Philemon Waters? Architect/builder/craftsmen

Original use Farmland

Present owner U.S. Government?* Source of name

Present owner address U.S. Marine Corps, Source of date

Quantico, Va. Stories N/A

Present use Marker site Foundation and wall const'n N/A

Acreage c10-foot-square possibly included

in 50,000+ acres of Marine Corps Base Roof type N/A

State condition of structure and environs

State potential threats to structure

Note any archaeological interest This is an archeological site, the location of the Prince William County seat from 1742 to 1760.

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.)

Interior inspected? N/A

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

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 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of the "Concrete Road" leading from S.R. 646 to Sowego, and on the south side of Cedar Run.

The courthouse, moved to this site in 1742 from its 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 over exactly where the new county seat would be located, Governor Gooch appointed a board of arbitrators--Col. Henry Fitzhugh, Col. William Fairfax, and Col. John Colvil--to recommend among the five suggested sites the most convenient place for building the courthouse. The five places were Brent Town, Hoomes' land, Tacquets Ford, Watkins' land, and Waters' land. The three arbiters examined each of the proposed sites, met at Neabsco iron mines to hear others' opinions on where the courthouse should be, and finally chose to establish the courthouse on Philemon Waters' plantation. Philemon Waters was one of a group of Huguenot settlers who in the 18th century received land grants on the south side of Cedar Run, below the 30,000-acre Brent Town Tract. Philemon Waters' plantation was part of a tract that had been patented in 1712 by Lewis Reno and Philemon Waters.

(continued next page)

*According to one source, the monument sits on a 10-foot-square plot of land that was not deeded to the Marine Corps.

Sources and bibliography

Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.) R.J. Ratcliffe, This Was Prince William (c1976), p. 11; Tommye S. Burton, "Courthouses of Prince William County," in Virginia Cavalcade, Summer 1978, pp. 34-47, Fairfax Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William (c1924, repr.1964), p. 34-46.

Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.) (continued next page)

Included in Naval Reservation Master Plan for U.S. Marine Corps Base at Quantico.

Names and addresses of persons interviewed E.R. Conner, III, Manassas Museum.

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

SEP

1981



**VIRGINIA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

File no. 76-59
Negative no(s). —

SURVEY FORM

Historic name Prince William County Court- County/Town/City Prince William Co. house Site	Common name A.K.A. Second Prince William County Courthouse Site; Cedar Run Courth. Site
Street address or route number $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of the "Concrete Rd." leading from S.R.646 to Sowego, on	
USGS Quad Nokesville Quad	Date or period U.S. Marine Base
Original owner Philemon Waters?	Architect/builder/craftsmen
Original use Farmland	
Present owner U.S. Government?*	Source of name
Present owner address U.S. Marine Corps, Quantico, Va.	Source of date
Present use Marker site	Stories N/A
Acreage c10-foot-square possibly included in 50,000+ acres of Marine Corps Base	Foundation and wall const'n N/A
	Roof type N/A

State condition of structure and environs

State potential threats to structure

Note any archaeological interest This is an archeological site, the location of the Prince William County seat from 1742 to 1760.

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.)

Interior inspected? N/A

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

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 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of the "Concrete Road" leading from S.R. 646 to Sowego, and on the south side of Cedar Run.

The courthouse, moved to this site in 1742 from its 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 over exactly where the new county seat would be located, Governor Gooch appointed a board of arbitrators--Col. Henry Fitzhugh, Col. William Fairfax, and Col. John Colvil--to recommend among the five suggested sites the most convenient place for building the courthouse. The five places were Brent Town, Hoomes' land, Tacquets Ford, Watkins' land, and Waters' land. The three arbiters examined each of the proposed sites, met at Neabsco iron mines to hear others' opinions on where the courthouse should be, and finally chose to establish the courthouse on Philemon Waters' plantation. Philemon Waters was one of a group of Huguenot settlers who in the 18th century received land grants on the south side of Cedar Run, below the 30,000-acre Brent Town Tract. Philemon Waters' plantation was part of a tract that had been patented in 1712 by Lewis Reno and Philemon Waters.

(continued next page)

*According to one source, the monument sits on a 10-foot-square plot of land that was not deeded to the Marine Corps.

CONTINUATION SHEET
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE SITE

Published Sources (continued)

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).

Historical Significance (continued)

Allegedly, there were, besides the courthouse (which was built in 1743), 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 building with a steeply-pitched hip roof and an arcaded front 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 into disuse. In 1911, the site was all-but-forgotten when George C. Round of Manassas identified the site on the Ashmore Farm, northeast of the village of Orlando. 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. In 1932, a plaque commemorating the Second Prince William Courthouse was affixed to a low stone monument said to have been built from the foundation stones of the original building. In 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 located near the courthouse site. Of the three tombstones in the graveyard 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 8th of Feby. 1781...."