

# The Hammond House at Woodsdale



*"In England, the country was torn by a civil war (1642-46) pitting the supporters of the King against Parli-*

*ament. Fleeing the war, the first members of the Culpepper, Hammond, Honeyweed and Moryson families arrived in the colony. These cavaliers (as supporters of King Charles I during the English Civil War were called) found a ready home in Berkeley's Virginia."*

National Park Service

[www.nps.gov/history/NR/travel/jamesriver/text.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/travel/jamesriver/text.htm)

It would be some years before the Hammond family would work its way from the Tidewater to Brunswick County. Brunswick County was established in 1720. The first evidence we have found is a 1755 will that establishes William Hammond and his wife Elizabeth (believed to have been a Hightower) in St. Andrews Parish, Brunswick. Woodsdale was in that Parish. Elizabeth was executrix of William's will; however a neighbor, Charles Matthews was in charge of the will's accounts. Matthews had married William's widow Elizabeth. Charnel Hightower settled Elizabeth's estate in 1762, years after her death in 1756. Elizabeth left a daughter that is assumed to be a Hammond for whom schooling was ordered by Hightower. William had willed a "Negro man named Harry" to Job Hammond. Job lived across the Brunswick line in nearby Lunenburg. Job would return Harry to Charles Matthews in 1762. (see the inventory sidebar for confirmation of Harry)

William Hammond, Jr., lived for a time on the Lafoon Plantation in Lunenburg and it is said he was overseer

HAMMOND, WILLIAM Will  
ST. ANDREWS PARISH  
VA-13-Vol 3 (1751-1769) p. 138; p. 439  
Will proved 1755

*In the Name of God Amen I William Hammond of the County of Brunswick and Parish of Said Andrews being very sick and weak but in perfect sense both of mind and memory do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following viz. I bequeath unto God...*

*Partial Inventory:*

- 70 To a Case of Pistols to a parcel old Lumber
- 71 To 1 Saddle and two Bridles to a parcell of Books
- 72 To a Box Iron and Heaters, to one Gun
- 73 To a parcel of old lumber , 1 Piggon
- 74 To 1 Bed and furniture, one do. And funiture
- 75 To 1 Iron ... pr. Hooks
- 76 To 1 spice mortar and pestell, to old Hoe
- 77 To 1 Mare & Foal, to 1 do
- 78 To 1 Horse
- 79 To 1 Negro Man named Harry 10
- 80 To 1 Negro Boy named Sollomon 25
- 81 To 5 head of Cattle
- 82 To 6 head of hoggs
- 83 5 7 sides of Leather
- 84 to some shoemakers tools
- 85 to 2 plow hses.

*Signed Elizabeth (her mark) Hammond*

*Hugh Williams*

*James Tarpley*

*John Norton*

*Returned into Brunswick County Courth the 2d day of Jan. 1755 and ordered to be recorded.*

*Elizabeth Hammond, widow of William, married Charles Mathews (also seen written as Mathis) and died approximately one year later, leaving a daughter by Hammond.*

*Per: Audited by Hugh WILLIAMS, James HICKS. returned to Court 24 Aug 1756, where it is noted that Charles MATTHIS had married Elizabeth the widow & excrx of William HAMMOND dec'd. 214-(305) Account 1756 for Elizabeth HAMMOND dec'd by Charnel HIGHTOWER, Sr. Noted was '1 year schooling of your daughter.' Sworn to 25 Mar 1758 before Charles MATHEWS & Peter JONES.*

*Returned to Court 23 Aug 1762*



*Deer enjoying fall's white oak acorns at Woodsdale.*

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there. Lafoon deeded considerable land on Great Creek to William in 1778. This may well be when the second expansion of Woodsdale took place. The 20th century holdings of the Hammonds of Woodsdale



extended back to Great Creek — over 400 acres.



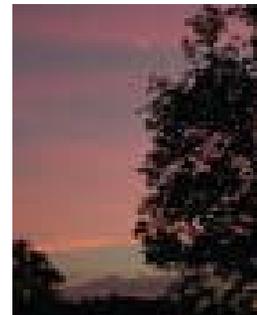
Woodsdale is just a short distance from the 1750s plantation of the Sturdivants. It may also be that William became overseer for that property — over 2,000 acres when patented — once he moved “into the neighborhood.” Today, one

can still see the roof of the restored plantation house from the windows of Woodsdale. There is sound evidence that a blacksmith shop, smokehouse, and other service buildings existed at Woodsdale. The smokehouse is still standing. Hand-forged horse racing shoes have been found on the property.

It appears from family lore and some records that the Woodsdale property has been continuously owned or occupied by Hammonds and, for a short period, by marriage a Hawthorne, again neighbors. Today, the family beginning with Benjamin Rawleigh Hammond (circa 1850, bricklayer), is at rest on the property in a small, perpetually maintained site (by the Hammond family).

## *The Neighborhood*

In various deeds, the road on which Woodsdale faces is named as Callahan’s or Callahum’s Road. In the map shown, courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society and the Town of Lawrenceville, Callahan’s Road is clearly marked. This map connects the dots on the various families that occur in the Hammond story — Matthews, Lafoon, Hawthorne,



*The Wonders of Woodsdale*

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Moore (Benjamin Hammond reported Moore's death in the Civil War), the post office at Edmund's store, and Great Creek. When this map was published the great Sturdivant Plantation had changed owners. It is not known why the



plantation is not shown. Note: The 1750s Plantation has been restored and its grounds updated. It is the home of the Richardson's from Richmond, Virginia. The Hammond House can be found easily on the map as B. Hammond, next door to and across the road from Matthews' properties.

## The Restoration

The Heywoods bought Wooddale in June of 2002 through



*There's  
Always  
Something  
Delicious  
Popping up  
at Wooddale*

Profuse displays of Iris and Daffodils make annual appearances. They're joined by delicate fragrances of various herbs left from olden days and more recent owners. The land is rich and takes easily to the production of vegetables and fruits. A small cherry orchard is on the property and produces prolifically every spring. The hay fields and pasture if left to grow produce two cuttings a year of what is said to be "good hay."

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the efforts of the descendants of the Hammond family. The property had been purchased with the entirety of the 300 acres that remained approximately ten years earlier in an Hammond estate sale. Maintenance over that period had been marginal at best. Land under the house had been set aside at roughly ten acres to remain with the house. It was summer when the Heywoods moved in and there was only 35 amps of power. No central heating system. No cooling system but fans. No stove. No refrigerator. Electric wires were strung across rooms to facilitate lighting. A combination of wood stoves and oil stoves were connected to pounds of concrete that filled the five fireplaces, hiding completely the interior of every fireplace. It was in fact camping under a roof in what people said was a Victorian house. The trained eye knew better.

The restoration has taken over seven years. We are going to let the photos tell the story of the findings of what became an archaeological dig in the grounds and through layers of obstructing materials on the exterior and interior walls, in the foundation and on the roofs. We have done our best to return a house that holds a place in history to very close to its original form. Some Victorian decorative touches in woodwork have been retained to keep the evolution of the building somewhat intact.

With the experts who have assisted we believe it is safe to say that the property was built in stages beginning pre-1800 with a two-level room-on-room cabin. Perhaps what we call the center room was even earlier. About 1800 the two-room house was expanded to a four-room house with central hall and stairway. What is not known is when the “center room” was connected to the expanded house; we think during the Victorian additions. The remains of the early outdoor stone 12' x 12' kitchen remain in the backyard. In approximately 1860 style overcame good sense and the house was expanded again with a Victorian porch across the front and a peak put in the roof. This peak has now been removed, a process necessary to protect the property from drainage it created. The process proved without doubt that the peak and porch were added — and not added well. We have required that materials that match the period be used for replaced sills,



Pegged sill section removed during east/front sill replacement. Note difference in style from rear pegged sill (above).



Pictograph found under house in sill replacement process.

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woodwork and stone repairs. In fact, the original stone in the foundation was removed and re-placed in the foundation stabilizing process. Running concrete footers were added to support the replaced stone foundation. The only modern materials are the windows, drywall and architectural roofing shingles.

The house is fully built of hand-hewn timbers and pegged throughout, as is the smokehouse. The only primary use of nails we have found was in application of the siding, the Victorian tin shingle roof and in later repairs. The removal of the old roof established that in fact the roof dimension had been changed since the earliest house by approximately one foot on each side. That removal also established that the house had indeed undergone an eastward expansion from the first house built on the west side of the property. Artifacts have been saved and photographed as each new event took place. Careful workmen often came out from under the house or out of the attic with buried treasure brought to light. They are to be commended. We have done yeoman service to Virginia's architectural history. Those who follow must hold the trust left to us all.



Left: East Chimney during restoration; Right: West Chimney during restoration.

Right Pictorial Column: Carved initials in mantel board of W H H E (Est) effort at date IV X VI (46?). Note similarity in IV connected as VI is on stud above. If this is 1746, William Hammond died approximately 1755.



Rare wood ceiling in current kitchen. Identification assistance from photos sent to Department of Historical Resources, Virginia and U.S. Department of Forestry. Preservation by both entities was suggested.



Forged pintle and hook removed from front opening (doorway area) in process of replacing front door.



Early hewn roof shingle found under house in dirt.



Numbered stud sections removed to level front wall to replacement sill. Colonial Williamsburg commented that the method of Roman numbering with the connected numerals was unusual. It occurs again on the fireplace wall.

