

VLR 6/16/4
NRHP 7/10/5

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Millbank
other names/site number DHR # 048-0013

2. Location

street & number 15615 Millbank Road (Route 631) not for publication
city or town Port Conway vicinity
state Virginia code VA county King George code 099 zip code 22485

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official
VIRGINIA DEPT. OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
State or Federal agency and bureau

6/24/05
Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria (See continuation sheet for additional comments)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: buildings (1, 2), sites (8, 0), structures (1, 0), objects (0, 0), Total (10, 2).

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC, DOMESTIC, AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE, AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE, AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE, INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION, FUNERARY

Sub: Single dwelling, Secondary structure: kitchen, Storage: warehouse, Processing: smokehouse and distillery, Agricultural fields, Manufacturing facilities: mill and kiln, Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC, DOMESTIC, AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE, FUNERARY

Sub: Work in Progress: single dwelling, Secondary structure: garage and greenhouse, Agricultural fields, Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: I-house

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, walls WOOD: Weatherboard, roof ASPHALT: Shingle, other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Archaeology: Historic – Non-Aboriginal
 Agriculture: Historic and Present

Significant Dates

ca. 1669, ca. 1725, ca. 1800, ca. 1900

Cultural Affiliations

Euro-American

Period of Significance

ca. 1669 to ca. 1900

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 110.0134**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	307762	4230253	3	18	307640	4228937
2	18	307940	4230202	4	18	307157	4229262

 See continuation sheet.**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bryan L. Townes, Architectural Historianorganization Commonwealth Architectsdate March 30, 2004revised May 2005 with Jean McRae of VDHRstreet & number 101 Shockoe Slip, Third Floortelephone (804) 648-5040, ext. 102city or town Richmondstate Virginiazip code 23219

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Drs. L. Andrew Ball and Gail T.W. Wertzstreet & number 2845 Argyle Roadtelephone (205) 934-0864city or town Birminghamstate ALzip code 35213

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Millbank
King George County, Virginia**

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Summary Description

The 110-acre property known as Millbank is located in King George County, Virginia, west of Port Conway on the north bank of the Rappahannock River overlooking the confluence of the Rappahannock River and Millbank Creek. Composed of pastures, fields, woodland, and landscaped grounds, Millbank encompasses a number of historic resources, including six archaeological sites identified in a 1990 survey report. The ca. 1900 I-house is approached by a long, level entrance drive and is fronted on the north by broad fields. Constructed on the site of at least two previous dwellings, the house is situated at the head of a series of steep terraces that descend south to the river's edge. Portions of the house's basement and one of its tall chimneys date from the 18th century. The sites of two dependencies are located on the east side of the house. A single brick chimney marks the site of a kitchen or laundry building, and a square of bricks indicates the location of an earlier smokehouse. Mid-twentieth-century structures on the property include a concrete block garage and a brick and glass greenhouse, both located to the northwest of the main house. A family cemetery, associated with past owners of Millbank, is located at the southeastern corner of the property overlooking the river. The six identified archaeological sites yielded a variety of artifacts illustrating historic domestic occupation of Millbank from the third quarter of the 17th century through the 20th century. Also evidence of 18th-century commercial warehouses and surviving remnants of a historic millrace illustrate the various activities that have characterized the property throughout its long history.

Archaeological Survey Summary

In 1990, the firm of Harrison & Associates conducted a reconnaissance-level archaeological survey of the Millbank property. The Society of the Descendants of Immigrant William Strother of King George, Virginia, commissioned the survey in an effort to locate the first New World residence of William Strother (I). A copy of the survey report titled The Reconnaissance-Level Archaeological Survey of Millbank, completed in 1991, is located in the archives of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia.¹ At the time of the survey, approximately 190 acres were included in the Millbank tract. Ten archaeological sites were examined at that time, six of which are within the remaining 110-acre Millbank tract. Dwelling sites, including possible locations for the dwelling of William Strother (I), the site(s) of a warehouse or warehouses associated with Benjamin Deverell, Samuel Skinker (I), and/or Charles Burgess, and probable early distillery sites were identified as the following: the A. Fitzhugh Plantation Site; the Ballentine Site; the Brick Rubble Site; the Nail Field Site; the Old House Swamp Pointe Site; and a probable Mill Site. These sites recorded periods of occupation dating from prehistoric times through the twentieth century, and yielded artifacts that included projectile points, ceramic sherds, clay pipestems, wrought nails, window glass fragments, and bricks. The archaeological survey was conducted through shovel testing, "ground truthing", and surface collection. A total of two hundred and five shovel test pits were excavated, and over three thousand artifacts were collected. The 1990 survey indicates that the initial scope of work centering on the first home site of William Strother (I) and budget issues limited investigations to areas along Millbank Creek and the Rappahannock River. Further investigations throughout the 110-acre tract, especially the area not previously tested to the north, could produce more archaeological artifacts and possibly identify additional sites on the present Millbank estate.

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Inventory:

-
1. **A. Fitzhugh Plantation Archaeological Site, #44KG64 (Contributing)**
 2. **Smokehouse Site within the Fitzhugh Site (Contributing)**
 3. **Chimney/Kitchen Site within the Fitzhugh Site (Contributing)**
 4. **Ballentine Archaeological Site, #44KG76 (Contributing)**
 5. **Brick Rubble Archaeological Site, #44KG89 (Contributing)**
 6. **Nail Field Archaeological Site, #44KG90 (Contributing)**
 7. **Old House Swamp Pointe Archaeological Site, #44KG96 (Contributing)**
 8. **Probable Mill Archaeological Site (Contributing)**
 9. **Main House within the Fitzhugh Site (Contributing)**
 10. **Garage (Non- contributing)**
 11. **Greenhouse (Non-contributing)**
 12. **Cemetery (Contributing)**
-

The A. Fitzhugh Plantation Archaeological Site, includes Smokehouse and Chimney/Kitchen Sites

The A. Fitzhugh Plantation Site is located on a high terrace overlooking the Rappahannock River and encompasses an area approximately 500 feet by 350 feet that includes the existing Millbank house and the identified locations of two historic outbuildings. The site revealed evidence of a fourth quarter 17th-century to 20th-century historic domestic occupation, relating to the series of dwellings that have stood on or near the existing Millbank house site. The formal siting of the house at the edge of a high bluff and the broad landscape terraces that descend from the house to the riverbank provide indications of the significance of the house and its occupants. A brick chimney that survives from an earlier kitchen or laundry building, and the site of a historic smokehouse are reminders of the full complement of the many outbuildings that would have been required for the day-to-day operation of a typical plantation. Additional landscape features and the possible locations of formally-placed outbuildings could be determined through further archaeological investigations. Additional archaeological investigation is required to provide an illustration of the plantation settlement patterns. An understanding of the location, number, and variety of the plantation's service buildings will help to provide a full picture of Millbank at its most prosperous and populated in the 18th and 19th centuries. The wills of Millbank's owners provide the names of certain slaves; the presence of a slave population would have been typical in the operation of a plantation in 18th- and 19th-century Virginia. Further archaeological investigation could provide information on the location, size, and number of slave quarters that would have been present on the Millbank property. This investigation could also provide information on the daily lives of the slaves themselves, through investigation of the slave quarters. The location of a slave cemetery could also be revealed, providing another glimpse into the slave community that would have existed at Millbank. The comparison of artifacts recovered from areas associated with the plantation's owners, overseers, and slaves could provide an understanding of Millbank's plantation society and illustrate the contrasting yet connected status of the plantation's inhabitants.

The Ballentine Archaeological Site

Situated on a broad, level point of land overlooking the confluence of Millbank Creek and the Rappahannock River, the Ballentine Site encompasses a level area approximately 300 feet by 300 feet. Investigations into the site revealed evidence of a third quarter 17th-century to late 19th-century historic occupation, a first quarter 18th-century site of a commercial warehouse or warehouses, and evidence of continued domestic occupation through the 19th century.

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The Brick Rubble Archaeological Site

The Brick Rubble Site is positioned on a high point of land overlooking the confluence of Millbank Creek and a branch of the creek known as Old House Swamp. Investigations at the Brick Rubble Site revealed evidence of a third quarter 17th-century to late- 19th-century historic occupation, a first quarter 18th-century site of a commercial warehouse or warehouses, the site of what is possibly a late 18th-century distillery, and evidence of a third quarter 17th-century to mid- or late- 19th-century brick kiln site. The site is approximately 50 feet by 25 feet and had been recently timbered when the survey was conducted.

The Nail Field Archaeological Site

The Nail Field Site encompasses an area approximately 100 feet by 200 feet and lies on a level terrace overlooking the Rappahannock River, which is situated approximately 200 feet to the southwest of the site. The plantation cemetery that has served the owners of Millbank is located nearby. Investigations at the Nail Field Site revealed evidence of a first quarter 18th-century site of a commercial warehouse or warehouses. The Old House Swamp Pointe Site is positioned on a peninsula overlooking the east branch of Millbank Creek. This branch has been traditionally known as Old House Swamp. The site encompasses an area approximately 130 feet by 40 feet.

The Old House Swamp Pointe Archaeological Site

Situated above the branch of Millbank Creek known as Old House Swamp, the Old House Swamp Pointe Site yielded a variety of artifacts in the course of the archaeological study. Although the fragments recovered from the site could not be assigned to a specific period or use, historic data and the location of the site suggests that the area may have been the site of a domestic occupation related to William Strother (I), the site of commercial warehouses, or the location of an 18th-century distillery.

Probable Mill Archaeological Site

The Mill Site is situated along the southern bank of Millbank Creek and contains remnants of a millrace, including an intact headrace and tailrace. Due to the scope of the study, an archaeological survey of the mill site was not conducted. Archaeological investigation of the Mill Site could determine its age, function, and configuration, possibly establishing whether or not the mill was constructed as part of the plantation enterprises by William Strother (I). Further study could also determine if the mill was constructed during the tenancy of Benjamin Deverell or Samuel Skinker (I) as part of the commercial enterprises on the property. Research has determined that Yellow Hill, the plantation owned by Augustine Washington Fitzhugh adjacent to Millbank, contained a mill, and it is possible that Fitzhugh also constructed the one at Millbank during his ownership.¹³

Main House

The ca. 1900 Millbank wood frame house was built on the brick foundations of two previous dwellings dating from circa 1725 and circa 1800; both of these previous houses were destroyed by fire.² The house was expanded in the 1950s by unsympathetic one-story wings of unequal size that were added to the east and west sides of the original structure. These additions were removed in December 2003.

The two-story main block of Millbank is constructed in the form of an I-house with two rooms located on each floor divided by a central hall. The placement of the house on a high basement increases the apparent scale of what is a relatively small house; the structure is 40'-6" long and 17'-6" wide. The brick walls of the raised basement incorporate the foundation of the original circa 1725 dwelling and the subsequent dwelling that was constructed on the site circa 1800. The brick foundations and both the north and south cellar walls below grade are laid in English bond. A segment of the north foundation wall in the west room of the cellar is

constructed of stone with an oyster shell mortar. A variant of English bond is visible in the foundation wall behind the south porch, and the west wall of the cellar is laid in stretcher bond with only an occasional header.

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A three-room brick basement is accessible through what was initially an exterior doorway located at the northeast corner of the house. The brick and stone walls, some of which predate the existing circa 1900 house, are exposed throughout the basement.

The house is accented by tall exterior brick chimneys on the east and west elevations. The tall chimneys are detailed by sloped shoulders and corbelled caps. The east chimney is believed to date from the original circa 1725 dwelling and is constructed in Flemish bond. The west chimney is believed to date from the circa 1900 construction of the house and matches the east chimney in its basic form; however, a second flue was added on the north side of the chimney, most likely as part of the 1950s renovation. The later flue was removed in March 2004. When the modern flue was removed, it was discovered that the west chimney was remarkably intact; the modern flue was tied into the historic chimney in only two places.

The main portion of the house presents five bays on the south façade, or river side, and three bays on the north, or land side. An original one-story wood porch is centered on the south elevation. The low hipped roof is original, evidenced in historic photographs, and imparts a formal quality to the simple I-house form. The south elevation of the original structure is clad with beveled wood siding, accented by plain cornerboards. Windows on the circa 1900 house utilize wood double-hung sash with a two-over-two sash configuration. Three-over-three double-hung windows are placed to light the basement on the north and south elevations.

Typical of a rural, turn-of-the-century I-house, Millbank utilizes minimal architectural adornment with the predominant ornamentation on the main entrance. This entrance is centered on the five-bay south elevation situated beneath a small carefully detailed porch. Overlooking a series of sloped terraces leading down to the Rappahannock River, the porch is approached by a flight of brick steps and is capped by a low, sloped roof. The roof is supported by four chamfered wood posts with plain bases and caps; wood pilasters are placed at the connection between the house and the porch, and the composition is bound by simple wood railings with square balusters. The south entrance is defined by a simple arrangement of sidelights and a rectangular transom light. The entrance is composed of a single four-panel door, and its enframing consists of trim with bull's-eye corner blocks. The north entrance is similarly located in the center of the north elevation. A modern one-story porch was located at the north entrance and has been removed. The entrance consists of a six-panel door with a narrow two-light rectangular transom. Window surrounds on the first and second floors of the circa 1900 house are accentuated by wide bands of plain trim. Original, louvered wood shutters flank the two-over-two windows on the south elevation, and three sets of wood shutters remain on the north elevation.

Garage and Greenhouse

Located to the northwest of the main house, outside the Fitzhugh site area, are two mid-twentieth-century resources; a concrete block garage and a brick and glass greenhouse.

Cemetery

A family cemetery, associated with past owners of Millbank, is located at the southeastern corner of the property, adjacent to the Nail Field Site, and retains a number of historic stone grave markers.

Endnotes

¹ Harrison, James G. III. The Reconnaissance-Level Archaeological Survey of Millbank. Report for the Society of the Descendants of Immigrant William Strother of King George, Virginia: 1991.

² Skinker, Thomas Keith. Samuel Skinker and His Descendants. St. Louis, MO: Published by the Author, 1923.

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Statement of Significance

The plantation historically known as Millbank is the site of one of the earliest settlements on the north bank of the Rappahannock River. Located in King George County, Virginia, the property originally consisted of approximately 500 acres and covered a substantial area. The plantation was initially settled in 1669; the land has been the site of residential occupation and agricultural endeavors since that time. The size of the plantation has been reduced over the years, through the division of property and the gradual selling off of land, so that the tract that currently comprises the Millbank estate consists of 110 acres. Bordered on the west by Millbank Creek, the land is composed of pastures, agricultural fields, woodlands, and landscaped lawns dotted with mature shade trees that surround the dwelling house. In addition to the main house, the Millbank property encompasses a variety of historic resources, including remnants of historic outbuildings, sites of previous dwellings and commercial structures, and a family cemetery. The fields and pastures of Millbank remain in active use, thus providing its significance under National Register Criteria A as an important agricultural property from the 17th century through the 19th century. Millbank is also significant under Criteria D providing important archaeological resources that have yielded and have the potential to yield valuable information regarding the history of King George County and the Northern Neck Region of Tidewater Virginia. Further investigation of the identified 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century archaeological sites could provide additional information concerning the commerce, milling, and farming operations that have occurred on the Millbank property. The study of identified 18th- or 19th-century warehouse sites and an identified mill site will provide additional information concerning the type and scope of trade that was conducted on the property, and how the property developed over time through the various commercial and agricultural ventures. Additional investigation could also provide information concerning the families that owned and worked the land, the locations of their dwellings, and the scale of their agricultural operations.

Historic and Present Landscape

The property is approached by a long, winding gravel drive that travels south from the public road. Once the public road is left behind, the historic character of the property is readily apparent. The historic agrarian character of the property is conveyed by the rolling fields that border the drive to the east, with views of the woodlands and more distant fields beyond. The fields are free from modern intrusions; the twenty-first century is evident only in the presence of the electric line that extends along the far edge of the fields to the dwelling beyond. The main house is clearly visible at the end of the entrance drive and provides a focal point to terminate the vista.

Built ca. 1900, the house is at least the second dwelling to occupy the prominent site since 1725, and incorporates portions of the foundations and a chimney from the previous structures. The tall wood frame house stands in a grove of trees and is fronted by the north lawn. A long avenue of boxwood bisects the lawn and is accompanied by additional boxwood plantings. A significant portion of the formal landscaping dates from the mid-twentieth century, but is in keeping with the historic character of the property. The house site is further defined by a pair of large copper beech trees that flank the north lawn on the east and west. A grove of regularly-spaced pecan trees accents the level lawn to the west of the house, and a modern garage and greenhouse are located to the north of the grove. The modern structures are placed at a discreet distance from the main house and do not detract from the historic character of the property. The east portion of the house site is defined by several large trees and a solitary brick chimney. The chimney is thought to have served the vanished kitchen or laundry building. The site of the historic smokehouse is located nearby, and

together with the surviving chimney recalls the complex of multiple support structures that would have been essential for the day-to-day functioning of a Virginia plantation.

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The lawn on the south side of the dwelling descends to the river in a series of level terraces. The placement of the plantation on the banks of a major river is typical of many of Virginia's early plantations. The river location was a deliberate decision that had a substantial impact on the profitability of the estate. The river was a primary means of transportation and trade in the 18th and 19th centuries, and goods would have been shipped and received from the plantation's wharf. The dramatic placement of the house at the head of a series of terraces, set high above the river and framed by tall trees, accentuates the dwelling and conveyed the importance of the plantation and its owners.

Not far from the house, situated to the east and placed at the top of the riverbank, stands the family cemetery. Although overgrown with a variety of small trees, honeysuckle, and periwinkle vines, the cemetery retains a number of stone grave markers. Some of the markers have been broken or dislodged, but most remain legible. The placement of the cemetery at the river's edge, overlooking the fields, lends it a tranquil and peaceful atmosphere that is typical of many rural family cemeteries on Virginia plantations.

The identified archaeological sites, which include the A. Fitzhugh Plantation Site, the Ballentine Site, the Brick Rubble Site, the Nail Field Site, and the Old House Swamp Pointe Site are located in various portions of the Millbank property. The A. Fitzhugh Plantation Site encompasses the site of the existing Millbank dwelling house. The other five sites are located in areas to the north, west, and east of the main house. The sites are characterized by stands of mature trees and cultivated fields.

The atmosphere of Millbank remains reminiscent of its historic character as well-established early plantation on the north bank of the Rappahannock River. The dwelling house on its historic site continues to command an expansive, unspoiled view of the Rappahannock River and the opposite bank. The cultivated fields that surround the formal landscaping of the house maintain the property's rural character, while the woodlands that enclose the gullies, banks, and the winding path of Millbank Creek contribute to the property's historic natural qualities.

Historical Background

The present dwelling at Millbank was constructed circa 1900; the history of the property, however, has been documented as far back as the late 17th century. William Strother (I), an immigrant from Northumberland, England, originally settled the property now known as Millbank in 1669. At that time, the property consisted of 500 acres.¹ Records indicate that Strother was engaged in the growing of tobacco and corn; his 1700 will notes that his wife was to be left with his personal goods, servants, and crops of corn and tobacco.² The remains of a millrace on Millbank Creek suggest that Strother may have built at least one gristmill on the property, and that perhaps this is how the property came to be known as Millbank; however, the property is not referred to by that name until 1828.³ To supplement the income from his corn and tobacco crops, Strother also raised livestock and cultivated gardens and orchards. Records indicate that Strother registered the mark of his cattle,⁴ and his will refers to "the plantation I now live upon, with all Edifices building Gardens Orchards Whatsoever".⁵ According to oral history, the current Millbank house may be on or near the site of the first residence constructed by William Strother (I) circa 1669.

Strother died in 1702, at which time his eldest son, William Strother (II), began leasing some of the property to Benjamin Deverell. Deverell worked as an agent for a company headquartered in Bristol, England, and established a large mercantile business on the property.⁶ This mercantile business sold a number of

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necessities including paper, pipes, textiles, salt, nails, rum, and spices. Benjamin Deverell died in 1717 and Samuel Skinker (I) was selected as his replacement.⁷ Consequently, Skinker acquired a portion of the original 500-acre Strother tract. Skinker may have constructed his home on the property as early as 1717; however, a cast-iron fireback from the existing Millbank house bears the date of 1725. This 1725 date has been traditionally attributed to the construction date of the historic Skinker dwelling, but has not been documented. The inscription on the fireback has been questioned, as it may relate to the date of its casting rather than to the construction date of the early house. No known illustrations or drawings of this house have been identified, with the exception of a number of map references showing the location of the Skinker dwelling. The depictions of the house place it at, or near the present location of the Millbank house. Skinker ended his associations with the Bristol company in 1719, and gave power of attorney to Charles Burgess, in order for Burgess to complete the financial obligations begun by Deverell.⁸ Later, Samuel Skinker (I) purchased the remaining portion of the Strother property.

Throughout the 18th and most of the 19th centuries, the property remained in the possession of the Skinker descendants. In 1828, Millbank and the adjoining plantation of Yellow Hill were divided among the heirs of John Skinker, who was the grandson of Samuel Skinker (I). The Millbank property became the possession of Augustine Washington Fitzhugh and his wife, Mary Skinker Fitzhugh.⁹

Sometime around 1800, the circa 1725 house that is thought to have been built by Samuel Skinker burned and was replaced by a second dwelling, constructed by Samuel's son, George Skinker.¹⁰ An 1872 pencil sketch by Louisa Grey Lewis, granddaughter of Augustine Washington Fitzhugh, depicted the second house as a one-and-a-half story "T" or "L" shaped structure with gambrel roofs and exterior end chimneys. The five-bay portion of the structure faced the Rappahannock River and was detailed by a one story, pedimented entrance porch. A range of five dormers extended across the south elevation, and additional dormers are pictured on the wing that extended to the north.

The house and the surrounding lands remained in the possession of the Fitzhugh family until it was sold to Allen Smith in 1883.¹¹ The property again changed hands when it passed out of the Smith family ownership and was purchased by Francis T. Redwood in 1899. On February 22, 1900, nearly 100 years after its construction, the second dwelling burned and was replaced with the present two-story house.¹² Visual evidence indicates that this circa 1900 dwelling incorporates foundations and at least one chimney from the previous structures.

The existing wood frame house was constructed in the traditional I-house form, where a two story structure utilizes two rooms and a central hall on each floor. Square, chamfered wood posts on the south porch, louvered wood shutters at the windows, and a low hipped roof add to the rather formal architectural quality of the exterior. The early character of the house is evident in historic photographs that record the house painted with a light body that contrasted with dark trim, dark shutters, and two-tone wood posts on the porch. Millbank illustrates the continued popularity of traditional house forms into the twentieth century in rural areas of Virginia.

The sites that were investigated as part of the archaeological survey yielded a broad range of artifacts, illustrating a variety of activities and uses. Artifacts recovered from the sites included clay tobacco pipe stems,

dark green bottle fragments, brick fragments, mortar fragments, window glass fragments, wrought nails, pottery sherds, and a 1782 Spanish silver coin. Further study of the sites could reveal additional information concerning the commercial activity that was inherent on the property during the 18th century, including marketing networks along the Rappahannock River and commercial involvement with neighboring communities and plantations.

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Although the survey did not specifically locate the dwelling site of William Strother (I) it was successful in recovering evidence of potential sites relating to the period of domestic occupation associated with William Strother (I) and his family. At the conclusion of the survey, Harrison & Associates recommended that the six archaeological sites on the current Millbank property, warranted further Phase II archaeological testing.

The 1990 survey by Harrison & Associates is notable because it was the first archaeological documentation of one of the earliest historic settlements on the north bank of the Rappahannock River. Through the findings of the survey, it was established that the Millbank property has been the site of agricultural enterprises, commercial activity, and residential occupation since the 17th century. The survey demonstrated that the Millbank property could provide important historic archaeological data related to the 17th-century settlement patterns along the upper Rappahannock River, much like the more studied colonial sites located along the James, York, and Potomac Rivers. Further investigation of the identified archaeological sites could also provide a definitive location for the dwelling of William Strother (I) and his family.

Endnotes

- ¹ (Old) Rappahannock County Deed Book 4. p.134. Copy located at Essex County Courthouse, Tappahannock, Virginia.
- ² Richmond County Will Book. p. 54. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ³ King George County Deed Book 12, 1825 – 1828. p.469. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ⁴ (Old) Rappahannock County Court Order Book, 1671-76. p. 119. Copy located at Essex County Courthouse, Tappahannock, Virginia.
- ⁵ Richmond County Will Book. p. 54. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ⁶ Richmond County Deed Book 6. p. 150. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ⁷ Richmond County Miscellaneous Documents. p. 109. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ⁸ Richmond County Miscellaneous Documents. p. 109. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ⁹ King George County Deed Book 12. p. 472. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ¹⁰ Skinker, Thomas Keith. Samuel Skinker and His Descendants. St. Louis, MO: Published by the Author, 1923. p. 20.
- ¹¹ King George County Deed Book 24. p. 530-532. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
- ¹² Skinker, Thomas Keith. Samuel Skinker and His Descendants. St. Louis, MO: Published by the Author, 1923. p. 20.
- ¹³ King George County Deed Book 12. p. 471. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

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Harrison, James G. III. The Reconnaissance-Level Archaeological Survey of Millbank. Report for the Society of the Descendents of Immigrant William Strother of King George, Virginia: Harrison & Associates, 1991.

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Morton, Woolridge Brown, III. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory. Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, Blank.

(Old) Rappahannock County Court Order Book Volume 1, 1671-76. Copy located at Essex County Courthouse, Tappahannock, Virginia.

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Richmond County Miscellaneous Documents. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Richmond County Will Book. Copy located at The Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Sherman, Virginia W.. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory. Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1969.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point at the confluence of Millbank Creek and the Rappahannock River, at the north bank of the river and the east bank of the creek, proceed east 1,740 feet along the north bank of the Rappahannock River to the East property line. From that point, proceed north 4,031 feet along the east property line to the North property line. From that point proceed west 613 feet along the north property line to the West property line. From that point proceed south 665 feet along the west property line to a point adjacent with the east bank of Millbank Creek. Follow the east bank of Millbank Creek along the west property line for approximately 4,000 feet to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The noted boundary encompasses the 110 remaining acres of the historic Millbank tract. The boundary includes the main house and its surrounding landscape, the historic plantation cemetery, agricultural fields and wooded areas, and the six archaeological sites that have been identified on the present Millbank property.

MILBANK
KING GEORGE 10
UTMS
ZONE 18

1. 307762
4230253
2. 307940
4230202
3. 307640
4228937
4. 307157
4229262

PORT ROYAL QUAD



5560 11 NE (RAPPAHANNOCK ACADEMY)
RICKSBURG 18 MI.
HANNOCK ACADEMY 2 MI.