

Beverly, built ca.1800 by Beverly Whiting
Resource History
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1777 – October 1, John Bull of Philadelphia purchased a 170-acre parcel from Marquis Stephenson for £431. The tract, as surveyed by Thomas Rutherford in a division ca.1765, began “at a stake near a House, a corner to the division” which included “Meadow Branch.” (BC DB 5/49)

It was part of three tracts acquired by Stephenson’s father Richard Stephenson: 100 acres purchased from Jost Hite in 1740; 306 acres by Fairfax grant in October 1750; and 408 acres by Fairfax grant in November 1750. Richard Stephenson’s will of 1765 divided the land among his sons Richard (Jr.), John, Hugh, James, and Marquis. (ref in BC DB 5/49)

1778 – February 9, John Bull of Philadelphia purchased a 185-acre parcel from James Stephenson, “binding on the Meadow Branch,” for £586 (BC DB 5/102).

1795 – John and Mary Bull of Berkeley County sold the two Stephenson tracts, 170 acres and 185 acres for a total of 355 acres, to Beverly Whiting for £2,400 (BC DB 12/248).

Beverly Whiting was assessed in Berkeley County for personal property as early as 1784 with one white tithable, 8 horses, 7 cattle, and 13 slaves; and in 1785 with one white tithable aged 16-21 years along with 8 horses, 15 cattle, and 38 slaves. In 1786 he was assessed for two tithable white males over age 21, 13 horses, 15 cattle, and for 24 slaves over age 16 and 26 slaves under 16 years. Given the several white males in the household, it seems that Beverly Whiting – who apparently never married – likely had a male sibling in the household. Beverly Whiting died in 1817 at an unknown age.

In 1785, Beverly Whiting was assessed for 200 acres on the BC land tax. No doubt this was his lease land from George Washington that John Ariss had set his sights on. However, in 1789, Beverly Whiting was still assessed for just 200 acres. In 1795 Whiting was assessed for the 200 acres plus a 400-acre tract. By 1801 his land assessment included just the 400-acre tract and the 350 [sic] acres purchased from Bull.

1798 – Beverly Whiting was assessed for two houses in the country of District 1, both valued at \$525. There were two separate slave assessments for Beverly Whiting, both in District 1. One was an assessment for one slave and the other for 24 slaves.

1805 – Whiting’s mortgage on his 355 acres – entered with Ezekial Bull in 1795 – was released in February 1805 (JC DB 5/384). In September 1805 Whiting purchased a tract of 71 ½ acres adjoining his land “of John Bull” from his neighbor William Grubb. It was a parcel that Grubb had “laid off” for his daughter Lydia Wood. The purchase price was £750 (JC DB 3/181).

1809 – Beverly Whiting’s land tax included only the 350-acre and 71 ½-acre tracts that made up the “Bullskin Farm” (name used in 1870). Presumably that means that was where he was living.

1810 – On the census for this year Beverley [sic] Whiting was listed as the head of a very large household. In addition to 32 slaves and four free blacks, the household included one male and two females aged 45+, two males and one female aged 26–44, one male and one female aged 16–25, and one male and two females under age 9. Surely this represents several families.

Beverly Whiting’s will, written and probated in 1817 indicates that he was unmarried and had no children. It is likely that the people listed in his household were his sisters and their family members identified in the will. He left the land to his *sister Elizabeth Whiting* for the rest of her life (she also was apparently unmarried and lived until about 1849) and a room in the house to his *sister Ann Drew* (probably a widow, but without children), and all to go eventually to his *sister Frances Lowndes’* children (Beverly B. and Frances P., father Charles Lowndes).

Genealogies are unclear on who was Beverly Whiting’s father but judging by the sibling’s names it looks like Beverly, Ann, Frances, and Elizabeth were the children of Francis and Frances (Perrin) Whiting, who were married in 1747. The family also likely included older brothers Henry Whiting and Francis Whiting (Jr.) who also lived in Berkeley/Jefferson County at the same time as Beverly Whiting, but in their own households. Francis Whiting (Sr.) was the son of Col. Henry Whiting and Anne (Beverley) Whiting of Gloucester County Virginia.

1815 – Beverly Whiting was assessed on the Jefferson County special house tax for one house in the country valued at \$2,000 (plus the \$500 minimum).

Given the 1798 value of \$525, it appears the “Beverly” house was constructed between 1798 and 1815. With the brick water table, a date closer to 1800 is most likely.

[Not sure why the NR nomination is so sure that the stone outbuildings date to no later than 1760. It is more likely they were constructed after 1778 by John Bull or after 1795 by Beverly Whiting.]

1817 – Beverly Whiting wrote his will in June and died in July. He left all of his real estate to his sister Elizabeth Whiting for her life. After her death the land was to be divided between the children of his sister Frances and her husband Charles Lowndes – nephew Beverly Bladen Lowndes and niece Frances Perrin Lowndes (and their children, if any). Another sister, Ann Drew, was devised money and a room in the house for her lifetime. (JC WB 3/39)

In 1818, Elizabeth Whiting was assessed for 422 acres “from Beverly Whiting.”

1820 – Elizabeth Whiting was assessed on the JC land tax for 422 acres with a building value of \$4,000.

This included the house and other improvements, of course, but this is surprisingly higher than the 1815 house value.

This building value of \$4,000 remained unchanged until 1841 when it fell to \$3,000 without comment. Most assessments changed in 1841 for unknown reasons so it is hard to know what the change actually means.

1850 – Elizabeth Whiting died in 1849 and in 1850 the “Beverly Whiting Devises” were assessed on the land tax for the 422 acres and \$3,000 in buildings, with the notation “from Elizabeth Whiting now dec. who held a life estate by will.”

The division of the property went into Chancery Court in a suit between Francis Lowndes (cousin and heir of Beverly B. Lowndes) and Frances P. [Lowndes] Frame (wife of John James Frame). The court found “that equal partition and division of said tract of land, now in the possession and occupancy of the said Francis [sic] P. Frame be made...” (see attached plat – the dark areas denote woodlots – and annotated 1852 map). Francis Lowndes got Lot No. 1, 253 acres but with no building improvements, while Frances P. Frame got Lot No. 2, 200 acres with the house and outbuildings (DB 32/182).

Beverly B. Lowndes, brother of Frances P. Frame and originally a devisee of Beverly Whiting, died in 1835 at the age of 23 unmarried. He devised his share of the estate to his cousin Francis Lowndes as a life estate, intended to pass to the children of his brother Charles Lowndes and the children of his sisters Harriet Scollay and Elizabeth Anne Edmundson (WB 8/87).

In 1851, Mrs. Frances P. Frame was assessed for 200 acres with a building value of \$3,000.

1860 – On the census Frances P. Frame was apparently a widow at age 49, and was listed as a Farmer and the head of her household. Her real estate was valued at \$33,000 and her personal property at \$18,000. Living in her household was her 25-year old daughter (?) Elizabeth B. Ranson with her three small children. Immediately following was the tenant household of Overseer Oliver Milburn and his family. Another near neighbor and tenant farmer was Caleb Burns, age 30, with his young family and his younger brother John Burns, age 14.

Elizabeth Ranson’s presumed husband Ambrose, who was listed ten years later on the 1870 deed to John Burns, was nowhere to be found in the 1860 census.

1870 – Mrs. Frances P. Frame and Ambrose & Elizabeth Ranson sold the 450 ½-acre “Bullskin Farm” to John Burns for \$37,770. Excepted from the deed was a 3/24th interest in the 1-acre lot “known as the Parsonage lot” and 2/12th interest in the 253-acre west side of the Whiting division that went to Beverly B. Lowndes’ heirs (DB 5/27).

Clearly sometime between 1851 and 1870, Frances P. Frame came into possession of most of the interest in the west half (253 acres) of the Bullskin Farm. I only presume that Elizabeth Ranson was the daughter of Frances Frame. She could actually have been the child of one of Beverly B. Lowndes siblings (see above).

1895 – John Burns was deceased by 1890 and in 1895 his enormous estate was divided by a Chancery Court among his heirs. Lots No. 1 and 2, totaling 423 acres and known as the

"Beverly tract," was given to Marshall Burns and Cora Burns, both children of John Burns, in a joint ownership. The western boundary of the farm was now defined by the Shenandoah Valley Railroad (SVRR; see attached plat), called the Norfolk & Western Railroad in the text of the division (DB 81/18).

In another Chancery Suit in 1896, "Committee of Cora B. Burns vs. Cora B. Burns and other," the court ordered the sale of Cora Burns' interest in the farm called "Beverly" to Marshall Burns for \$7,624.68 (DB 82/214).

Marshall Burns was bankrupt by 1936 and forced to sell the farm in a private sale to Martha (Burns) Mason, Rebecca, Elizabeth, Agnes, Virginia, and Anna Lee Burns – presumably his daughters (DB 144/333). The "Beverly Home Farm" (433 acres) remains in the Burns family ownership today.