

# The WASHINGTON HOMES

— OF —  
Jefferson County



**CLAYMONT COURT** was built for Bushrod Corbin Washington, great nephew of George Washington.



**CEDAR LAWN** was built for John Thornton Augustine Washington, great nephew of George Washington.



**HAPPY RETREAT**, circa 1930.

## CLAYMONT COURT

The most imposing of the county's Washington homes, Claymont Court was constructed from 1820 to 1822. The prominent siting of the house highlights the building's colossal scale. At 180 feet in length, the front elevation of Bushrod Corbin Washington's home was larger than the churches and government buildings of the time. In addition to its unusual size, the plan of the house was novel. Washington's home utilized a hall that crossed the front of the house, rather than cutting through the middle. In later decades, this transverse-hall plan would become favored by the Washingtons and other prominent families of the county.

An 1838 fire destroyed much of the interior, but Bushrod Corbin Washington rebuilt the house using the original walls. He also added the flanking buildings at each end, giving the house a classical five-part arrangement.

The quarters for the enslaved people of Claymont Court are also architecturally imposing. The structure presents a 3-bay front and serves as an example of building hierarchy within a property.

One of the few Washington family homes left open to the public (accessible by appointment only), this structure is now home to the Claymont Society for Continuous Education. Claymont Court was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.



Rear view of Claymont Court.

## CEDAR LAWN

Built in 1829, Cedar Lawn was home to John Thornton Augustine Washington, great nephew of George Washington. Cedar Lawn was originally part of the Harewood property inherited by Samuel Washington's son, Thornton Washington. Around 1780, he had a log house erected and named the property Berry Hill. After the original log house was destroyed by fire and Thornton's son, John T.A. Washington inherited the property, he had Cedar Lawn constructed. This brick house features a hipped slate roof and utilizes the transverse-hall plan. It also has an original attached kitchen and dining wing. The house's interior holds gracious open rooms and restrained Greek-Revival detailing. At the time of Cedar Lawn's construction, attached kitchens were becoming popular throughout Jefferson County. Though detached "summer kitchens" continued to be utilized at many local farms, the attached service wing provided greater convenience.

The home is a private residence and not open to the public. Cedar Lawn was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

### A NOTE ABOUT THE HOMES CHOSEN:

Though there are many homes with a connection to George Washington, the homes featured in this brochure were first constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries and remain standing today.

### The Jefferson County Historic Landmarks

**Commission (JCHLC)** is a branch of the

Jefferson County Government and

operates under authority granted to

landmarks commissions by the West

Virginia Legislature. The Landmarks Commission focuses on

heritage education and tourism, historic preservation, and

historic resource development.



**JCHLC's mission** is to preserve historic sites, structures,

and rural landscapes in the unincorporated areas of

Jefferson County and to educate the public about the

county's heritage.



VISIT US: [www.jeffersoncountyhlc.org](http://www.jeffersoncountyhlc.org)

REACH US: [landmarkscommission@jeffersoncountywv.org](mailto:landmarkscommission@jeffersoncountywv.org)

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THE HISTORIC HOMES INCLUDED IN THIS  
BROCHURE ALL BEAR A DIRECT CONNECTION  
TO THE WASHINGTON FAMILY.

These particular buildings also represent examples of Jefferson County's unusually rich architectural history. To modern visitors, the refined appearances of these homes hide some of the groundbreaking features they introduced to the area in the 18th and 19th centuries. From the creative Georgian detailing at Harewood to the use of novel plans like those at Claymont Court, Happy Retreat and Cedar Lawn, the Washington family changed the local vernacular by introducing new architectural ideas.

It is almost certain that the construction of these homes relied on the skilled work of enslaved people and that the owners of these properties were able to amass wealth affording them homes of this stature because of this exploitation. Without question, there is a high level of demonstrated workmanship and craftsmanship on all of the properties.





**HAREWOOD** was built for Samuel, brother of George Washington.



**HAPPY RETREAT** was built for Charles, brother of George Washington.



**BLAKELEY** was built for John Augustine Washington II, great nephew of George Washington.



**BEALLAIR** was built for Lewis William Washington, great-grand-nephew of George Washington.

## HAREWOOD

The oldest of the county's Washington homes, Harewood was completed in 1770. The design of the house was likely drafted by local architect, John Ariss, who was trained in Britain. Samuel Washington, George Washington's next younger brother, moved into his new home from the Virginia Tidewater. His home transplanted the local Georgian architecture of the Chesapeake to the Virginia backcountry. The unprecedented interior detailing of Harewood is the finest colonial work in the Shenandoah Valley.

The exterior of Harewood was erected with native limestone and with ceilings 12 feet tall. Harewood was constructed with a "summer bias," meaning the taller ceilings allowed for rooms to stay cooler year-round, designed for the most comfort during the warmer months.

In 1794, Dolley Payne Todd married James Madison in the drawing room of Harewood. Madison later became the 4th president of the United States.

Harewood has endured few major changes throughout the years, with the exception of porches added to the front (circa 1840) and back (1950) of the house. The north wing of Harewood was built in 1960. The home was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Harewood is a private residence and not open to visitors.



*The parlor where Dolley and James Madison were married.*  
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

## HAPPY RETREAT

In 1780, Charles Washington, the youngest of the Washington siblings, moved to Happy Retreat from Fredericksburg, Virginia. Exact construction dates of Happy Retreat are unknown, but are estimated to be circa 1780, just six years before Charles Washington established Charlestown, now known as Charles Town. The only portions of the current house that date to Charles's ownership are the first floors of the two wings. The west wing of Happy Retreat was likely used as a store or for other commercial use, while the east wing was residential.

In 1842, Circuit Court Judge Isaac Douglass built the Greek Revival style center portion of the house and added the second floors of the two wings, connecting them to form a single residence. The original configuration of the house when Charles lived there continues to be studied.

Happy Retreat also has several interesting out-buildings that remain on the property. A brick smokehouse was built in the late 18th century, and a kitchen was added ca. 1840. The octagonal office, which may have been used as a school, is the only early 8-sided building in the country that survives.

Today, Happy Retreat is owned and operated by the Friends of Happy Retreat. The property is not open to the public, but the Friends offer scheduled visits and tours, along with a regular calendar of events. The Jefferson County Historical Society is also headquartered there. Happy Retreat was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.



*Happy Retreat kitchen circa 1933.*  
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

## BLAKELEY

Blakeley was built in 1821 for John Augustine Washington II, great nephew of George Washington. Though he inherited Mt. Vernon in 1829, John Augustine continued to use Blakeley in the summers to escape the hot and buggy Potomac River property.

Fire struck Blakeley in 1864 leaving only the original walls still standing. The property was rebuilt, notably replacing the destroyed wooden roof with metal. The family continued to live in the home until 1875, when financial burden prompted Blakeley to be sold at auction. In 1943, Raymond J. Funkhouser began rehabilitating the house. In addition to several interior projects, Funkhouser's most dramatic changes were to the exterior of Blakeley. He removed the one story portico on the front facade of the house and replaced it with a two story portico. Funkhouser also extended the house from three to five bays wide.

Even though Blakeley has seen many changes, it has retained its historic fabric and character as a historic landmark. The home is a private residence and not open to the public. Blakeley was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.



*Image of Blakeley from the National Register nomination form.*

## BEALLAIR

When Lewis Washington inherited Beallair in 1827, the house was described as "an old stone house with walls literally three feet thick." The house was built for John Crow in the 1790's on land granted by Lord Thomas Fairfax. During 1850 to 1855, this stone house was incorporated as the rear portion of Beallair, when Washington had the taller, front portion added.

The addition features stepped gables and a shallow-pitched roof. At the time, it was one of the largest center-hall houses in the area.

Washington had the front foyer walls and doors painted to look like wood-grained panels using the "faux bois" technique. The Winchester & Potomac Railroad freight logs show he imported many of the building materials, including marble fireplace mantels.

The name "Beallair" comes from the family name of Lewis Washington's maternal grandfather, Thomas Beall of Georgetown.

Beallair is better known for its part in John Brown's Harpers Ferry Raid. On the night of October 16, 1859, Washington was kidnapped from Beallair and held hostage at Harpers Ferry. He later identified John Brown to the US Marine rescue party and was lead witness at Brown's trial.

In 1973, Beallair was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Today, the home is part of the Beallair residential community and is not open to the public.



*West-side view of Beallair.*