

World War II Quantico Takeover Stafford Homes Confiscated

War came unexpectedly to all Americans on December 7, 1941. It came to Stafford in October 1942, when the Marine Corps Base at Quantico required expansion of its training facilities and maneuver areas. On October 6, 1942, the U.S. Government formally notified those living in the northernmost one-fifth of Stafford that their lands were to be confiscated within two weeks and to vacate their properties. Some of those families had sent sons to fight in the Civil War, endured Union occupation, and sent sons to Cuba in 1898 and France in 1917-1918. Now they were being dispossessed of their homes and livelihoods.

Among those who were evicted was William Weedon Cloe, a farmer, veteran of the First World War and a member of the Stafford School Board. *The Washington Post* of October 8th contained an article entitled “The War Comes Home to Farmers in Nearby Virginia.” Describing Cloe as “solid and substantial,” it quoted him:

I went through the last war, volunteered as a matter of fact the day after the war was declared [it was actually the same day], and if they need my farm to get through this war, then they can have it...I'm classified 3-A now and if they need me for this one, I'm ready.

Cloe probably did not speak for all of his neighbors, but the effect of their sacrifice was the same. They gave up their homes for their country. The farm, about 160 acres in 1942, now lies mostly under Lunga Reservoir. Another Cloe home, “Laurel Spring,” which had been purchased by William S. Cloe from the Burroughs family in 1863, had burned in 1942, prior to the Quantico expansion.



Artist's depiction of “Laurel View” by Jerrilynn Eby MacGregor.

To understand Cloe's loss, we may want to delve into the specific history of his farm. “Laurel View,” associated with the Stark and Cloe families, was built about 1840. It had been taken over by Union troops during the Civil War. Stafford author, Jerrilynn Eby MacGregor, writes:

In 1923 William Weedon Cloe purchased the property from the Starke heirs. He and his wife effected many repairs, replaced dilapidated outbuildings, and improved and modernized the house. They opened a dairy which later became a Grade A Retail Permit operation. Some of the modernizations included the installation of running water (courtesy of a gasoline-powered pump), a carbide gas lighting system, and a battery-operated telephone system carried on the barbed wire fence between and the adjoining farm.



Artist's depiction of "Bloomington" by Jerrilynn Eby MacGregor.

Philadelphian named The sacrifice of the families losing their homes should be appreciated as part of the human story of World War II. A number of the lost homes were historically significant, and that history was also lost. They included some of northern Stafford's oldest home sites. Some were "Chopawamsic Farm," "Dipple," "Clermont," "Somerset," "Rectory," "Chelsea," "Providence," and "Bloomington." Also lost were "Stafford Springs," "Locust Grove," "Marble Hill," "Mount Olive," "Spring Dale," and "Springfield." Six churches and many smaller farms were also lost. "Chopawamsic Farm" and "Dipple" were associated with the youth of founding father George Mason (IV). George Mason (II) had lived at "Chopawamsic Farm" after 1709; the property ran from current Boswell's Corner on the west to "Clermont" on its east. The main house, constructed using local sandstone, was inherited by George Mason (III), who lived with his family on Aquia Creek until his accidental drowning. Mason's widow then moved her family to "Chopawamsic Farm." Remnants are along George Mason Road.

Another lost home, associated with Aquia Church, was "Dipple," a glebe farm (i.e. owned by the parish). Rev. Alexander Scott also tutored George Mason (IV). Scott, born in Dipple Parish in Scotland, purchased the property in 1724. Owing to a diversion of the Chopawamsic Creek to build an airfield, much of "Dipple" was submerged. "St. Mary's" was believed to be a part of "Dipple." "Clermont" was acquired by Rev. John Moncure, a Scottish immigrant, in 1727. He built a house which passed to John Moncure II in 1786 and to John Moncure III in 1796. "Clermont" remained in the Moncure family until about 1886 when it was sold to a George Middleton. In 1920 it was purchased by Frank Hill. The house burned in 1940 and was rebuilt in 1941 only to be confiscated in 1942.

was owned by the Downmans and Tolsons until the expansion; and “Springfield.”

The churches lost in 1942 were: Bellehaven Missionary Baptist Church; Church of the United Brethren in Christ; Massadonia Baptist Church; Mount Zion Baptist Church; Providence Church; and Stafford Store Baptist Church.

Missouri Mills, a Stafford mill which had operated for 150 years, and Belfair Mills, which operated until the original establishment of the Quantico Base in 1917, were in the area. Other mills on the current Quantico base were Stone’s Mill, “Somerset,” originally part of “Clermont,” apparently remained in the Moncure family until it was confiscated in 1942. “Rectory,” associated with Rev. Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, was owned by Moncures at the time of the 1942 expansion. “Chelsea,” built in 1819, is another Widewater home associated with John Moncure and George V. Moncure; it was also included in the Quantico expansion. “Providence,” adjoining “Bloomington,” was associated with the Wallers and Fords and, after the Civil War, with Rev. Jaquelin Meredith. Also lost was “Stafford Springs,” once a Stafford resort and Confederate spy center. It was associated with the Blackburn, Fitzhugh, Dickinson, Cannon, Brawner, and King families prior to 1942. “Locust Grove,” home to the Gaines and Alexander families, was located near Bellfair Mills overlooking Stafford Run.

Less is known of some other homes lost in Quantico’s expansion: “Marble Hill” was on the north bank of Beaverdam Run; “Mount Olive,” an 1859 farm owned by Hannah Stone’s heirs; “Spring Dale,” named for the numerous springs on it, Tolson’s Mills (2), Master’s Mill (Wigginton Mill), Purcell’s Mill, and Dr. Wheat’s Mill “to name a few.”