## VLR-7/6/71 NRHP-12/16/71

Form 10-300 (July 1969)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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COUNTY	
Goochland	
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This imposing late-eighteenth century house has long been a familiar landmark along the old Three Chopt Highway and later U. S. Route 250. The two-story, five-bay brick structure stands in an informally planted yard at an angle to the highway. To the west of the house is a modern geometric boxwood garden. The chimneys and all four walls of the house are laid in even-colored Flemish bond with thin mortar joints. Repointing in various places has marred the consistency of some of the brickwork, however. Prominent features of the house are the two-story pent closets that are structurally incorporated into the pairs of external end chimneys. Both cornices and end boards of the broad gable roof are ornamented with dentils and drilled work. All the windows on both the front and rear elevations are topped with whitewashed stuccoed jack arches; those on the ends are plainly treated. Most of the windows retain their early sash and louvred shutters. The front entrance is sheltered by a small porch supported on four evenly-spaced square columns with Ionic capitals. This part is thought to have been added around 1810. The only recent exterior additions are the one-story frame kitchen on the east end, and a long frame porch on the rear, both added in 1937.

The first floor plan of the house consists of a wide central hall with two rooms on each side. An enclosed stair ascends along the west side of the hall and a very narrow secondary or "secret" stair ascends from the dining room through the western pent. The second floor contains six rooms along an irregular transverse hall. In the large unfinished garret the interesting original roof structure is quite evident.

Woodlawn's interior retains nearly all of its original woodwork which is well proportioned but not elaborate. The principal rooms are outfitted with chair rails, baseboards, raised panel doors, but no cornices. The rooms also have simple Federal-style mantels that vary in form. The mantel in the first floor northeast room is decorated with three carved mill stones, demonstrating the builder's interest in milling. The doors in the hall and the two first floor east rooms have "dog-eared" architrave surrounds. The rooms throughout the house are much enhanced by the present owners' fine collection of antique furniture.

The house stands in excellent condition having been expertly restored in 1937 under the direction of the late owner, Mrs. Flora Newby Billet.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The construction date of Woodlawn is uncertain, but it is probable that the house was built by Elisha Leake (1739-1806) in the years following the Revolutionary War. Leake had apparently owned the land on which the house stands since the early 1770's, but, since he served as a Captain in the Revolution, it seems unlikely that he would have built the house until he returned from the War. The Federalist style of the house further attests to a late-eighteenth century construction date.

Both Elisha Leake and his brother Josiah were prominent millers in the area. Elisha owned two grist mills: one a short distance from Woodlawn, and another on Big Tuckahoe Creek. The Leake interest in milling is demonstrated by a mantel in the house which has three mill stones carved in it as decorations. Following Leake's death the house and 284 acres of land were claimed as dower rights by his widowed daughter, Kitty Leake Owen The widow soon leased the house to John Trevillian, who operated it as a tavern. The house is shown as "Trevillian's Tavern" on the Goochland County map of 1820.

Woodlawn eventually reverted to the ownership of Richard Leake, who sold it with 675 acres to Wilson Bracket of Richmond in 1832. In 1834 Bracket sold Woodlawn to Colonel Thomas Taylor of Goochland, famed for his part in placing the flag of the United States on the ramparts of Chapultepec Castle during the Mexican War. Colonel Taylor's son, Americus Vespucius Taylor was the next owner-occupant of Woodlawn. Americus Taylor served with distinction in Guy's Battery of the Confederate Army, and his grave is marked in the old Leake graveyard near the house. Woodlawn remained the Taylor family home until 1937 when the house, with a few acres around it, was sold to Mrs. Flora Newby Billet who immediately began its restoration.

In addition to its association to prominent families and individuals of the region, Woodlawn stands as an impressive example of rural Federalist architecture. The house is made visually distinctive by the use of the two-story pent closets on either end. These closets are an unusual feature and give the house a picturesque aspect. The architectural interest of the house is heightened by the survival of nearly all of the structure's original fabric. The visual quality of the house, along with its close proximity to a main highway have contributed to making Woodlawn one of the most familiar landmarks in Goochland County.

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9. MAJOR	BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RE	FERENCES	· · · · ·			
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