

The Washington Post

Historic estate on Maryland's Eastern Shore was once home to a DuPont president

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August 4, 2017

One of the grand estates on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Clifton was once home to a president and chairman of DuPont. The Georgian-style brick home is the southernmost property in the Manokin Historic District.

Located on the banks of the Manokin River in Somerset County, Clifton began as a turn-of-the-19th-century brick farm house. According to documents filed with the National Register of Historic Places, its architectural significance derives from the alteration of the structure in the 20th century to fit a Colonial ideal.

The land was granted to Randall Revell, an immigrant to Maryland from England, in 1666. Revell, along with two other men, established a government, church and permanent settlement in the lower Eastern Shore.

During this time, Anthony and Mary Johnson crossed the Chesapeake Bay from Virginia to settle at Double Purchase, as Revell's property was known. The Johnsons were the first free black family to live in Maryland.

Double Purchase remained in the Revell family until 1783, when Ballard Bozman acquired 607 acres for his daughter, Nelly Bozman Elzey. The plantation had a house, barn, 34 slaves, 11 horses and 45 beef cattle.

From the architectural details of the manor house, it is believed that James Elzey built the two-story brick house during the early 1800s. Sometime in the late 19th century the name was changed to Clifton.

Clifton went through several owners before Mary Carpenter purchased 18 acres and the house in 1938. Carpenter, a descendant of Revell, was the wife of [Walter S. Carpenter Jr.](#), only the second man not named DuPont to be elected president of the DuPont company. Carpenter, who worked there for more than 65 years, oversaw DuPont's involvement in the Manhattan Project.

Mary Carpenter undertook an extensive renovation of the house and grounds. The original center block was enlarged into a five-part dwelling with flanking hyphens and service wings. Rooms on the first floor were refitted with Georgian- and Federal-style woodwork.

“Under the direction of the late Mrs. Walter Carpenter, of Wilmington, who fully appreciated its history and its beauty, Clifton became one of the finest and most impressive restorations on the entire Eastern Shore,” the Salisbury Daily Times reported on Oct. 4, 1962.

Kathryn Washburn, the former director of international affairs at the Department of the Interior, and her husband, [William A. Niskanen Jr.](#), an economist and longtime chairman at the Cato Institute, bought Clifton from the Carpenter family in 1979.

The seven-bedroom, six-bathroom, 7,386-square-foot house has eight fireplaces, a dining room that seats 20, a billiards room and wine cellar.

The 68-acre property includes nearly a quarter-mile of waterfront along the Manokin River, a swimming pool, two guesthouses, two large barns and additional outbuildings. Clifton is on the market for \$2.2 million.