Woodlawn was a gift from George Washington to his step-granddaughter, Eleanor “Nelly” Custis, on her marriage to his nephew Lawrence Lewis. Washington selected the home site himself, carving nearly 2,000 acres from his Mount Vernon Estate. It included Washington’s Gristmill & Distillery (below), the largest producer of whiskey in America at the time.

Completed in 1805, the Woodlawn Home soon became a cultural center. The Lewises hosted many notable guests, including John Adams, Robert E. Lee and the Marquis de Lafayette.

In 1846, a group of northern Quakers purchased the estate. Their aim was to create a farming community of free African Americans and white settlers to prove that small farms could succeed with free labor in this slave-holding state. The Quakers lived and worshipped in the Woodlawn home until their more modest farmhouses and meetinghouse (below) were built. Over forty families from Quaker, Baptist, and Methodist faiths joined this diverse, “free-labor” settlement that flourished into the early 20th century.

Woodlawn became the first property of The National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1951. This private non-profit is dedicated to working with communities to save historic places.

When construction of Route 66 threatened the nearby Pope-Leighey House (below), designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the National Trust relocated this historic home to Woodlawn.

Today, the Woodlawn property hosts another non-profit, The Arcadia Center Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture. In a collaboration that honors the site’s agrarian heritage, the Center teaches sustainable farming, offers children’s programs, and delivers fresh, affordable food to local communities.
Visiting Woodlawn Historic District

The Woodlawn Historic District offers a step back in time to Northern Virginia’s rural, agrarian roots, and a chance to explore historic homes and gardens. All sites are within walking distance and can be reached on foot and by bicycle from Fort Belvoir gates and from hotels on Route 1.

Getting Here

The Woodlawn Historic District is approximately 15 miles south of Washington, DC and 8 miles south of Alexandria, VA near the junction of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and Route 1.

Parking

is available from 11am-4pm at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House and at the Gristmill during daylight hours.

Bus stops for Fairfax County DASH are on Route 1 and on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway across from the Gristmill. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association runs a bus between Mt. Vernon Estates & Gardens parking and on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway.

Exploring the Sites

The Woodlawn Historic District offers a step back in time to Northern Virginia’s rural, agrarian roots, and a chance to explore historic homes and gardens. All sites are within walking distance and can be reached on foot and by bicycle from Fort Belvoir gates and from hotels on Route 1.

Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House

is open seasonally April-December, Fridays-Mondays 11am-4pm. Visit woodlawnfriends.org for more information including on-line ticketing and special events. Arcadia Farm may be visited by appointment only. For information visit arcadialfood.org.

Woodlawn Quaker Meetinghouse

is open to all for worship on Sundays, 11am-12pm. For information or to access, contact the faith community Alexandria Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends at (571) 409-1761 or visit woodlawnfriends.org.

Know before you go

The trail is open dawn to dusk weather permitting. Check Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (planned) Potomac Heritage Trail (existing) Potomac Heritage Trail (future) and the National Park Service for information. washingtonmemorialparkway.org

• Dogs are welcome on a leash.
• No climbing trees.
• Carry out all trash.

Explore at your own risk. Monitor weather conditions and be prepared to leave the loop trail in case of storms. In severe weather, there is a risk of lightning strikes and of falling branches and trees.

MORE INFORMATION

National Trust for Historic Preservation
http://dhr.virginia.gov/
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
National Park Service
www.nps.gov/pohe

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, a corridor of history and outdoor adventure, links the Potomac and upper Ohio river basins, following paths explored by George Washington.