

THE HOUSE MARINA BUILT

CHERRY HILL

A Plantation House and its Family

Catherine W. Bishir | Photography by Elizabeth Matheson

Cherry Hill Historical Foundation, Inc. Warrenton, North Carolina

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Design and production by BW&A Books, Inc., Durham, N.C.
Printed in Canada by Friesens Corp.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2004112653

5 4 3 2 1

Without the support of the following patrons and businesses, this book would not have been possible.

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A SPRING SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT AT CHERRY HILL



Edgar Thorne's faithful companion, "Smooch," welcomes guests to Cherry Hill.



Pianists Jason Rodgers of Philadelphia and Kendria Perry of Raleigh talk with concertgoers. Behind the performers is a portrait of Major William Williams, father of Marina Alston, builder of Cherry Hill.



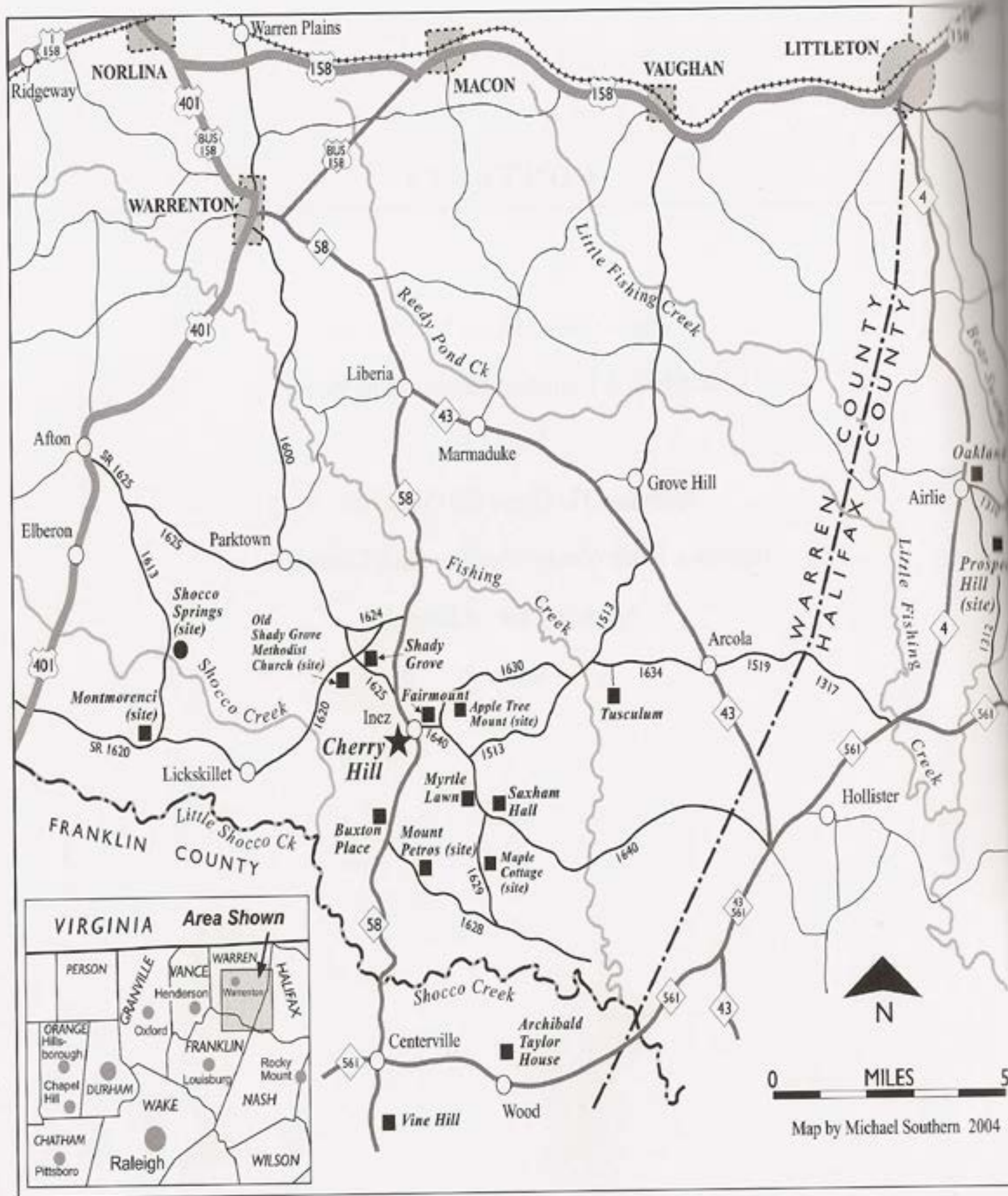
Classical music devotees sit on the front staircase to hear Beethoven piano sonatas performed by young artists from the N.C. School of the Arts.



Skye Gao prepares to play on the Steinway grand piano.

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Cherry Hill and Environs, in Warren, Franklin, and Halifax Counties

CHERRY HILL

A Plantation House and its Family

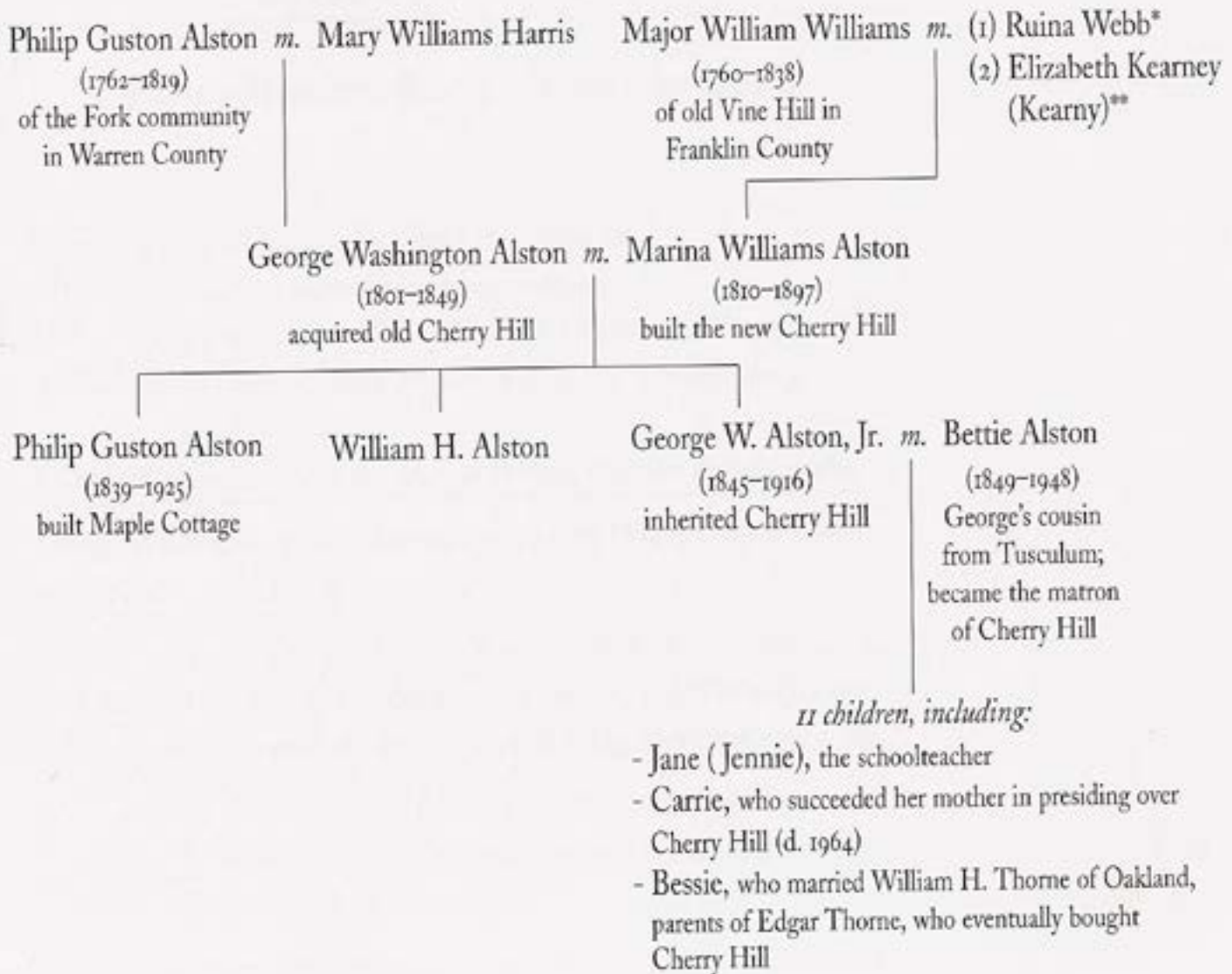
But what will surprise you most will be to hear that your
Aunt Marina has [a house] on hand. The Carpenter says he
will have it done by Christmas. I shal build on the hill
in front of the big gate. I wish yu ware here
to help me arrange my yard & garden.

—*Marina P. Alston, Cherry Hill,*
to Octavia Jones Polk, May 15, 1858

On the eve of the Civil War, Marina Priscilla Williams Alston undertook construction of a large plantation house in the style made fashionable by local builders Jacob W. Holt and John A. Waddell. A widow of nearly fifty with three sons, she was part of an unusually large and close-knit network of planters, many of whom already resided in large houses suited to their sociable life in southern Warren County. Cherry Hill was one of the last and most beautiful of a related group of fine plantation houses. Having descended in the family, today it is among the best-preserved examples of the distinctive Greek Revival-Italianate mode of the Holt workshop.

APPENDIX I

The Cherry Hill Connection



* One of the children of this first marriage was Temperance, who is frequently mentioned in the text and who married Calvin Jones of Wake Forest Plantation and Tennessee.

** Among the children of this second marriage were:

- Robert Williams, one of whose sons, Robert Edgar, remodeled Myrtle Lawn and another of whose sons, Archibald, rebuilt Vine Hill
- Martha Williams, who married Nathaniel Macon Alston of Chatham County
- Adeline Williams, who married John Alston of the Alston DeGraffenreid House in Chatham County
- Marina, eleventh of the twelve children of the two marriages

APPENDIX 2

Family Members Associated with Cherry Hill

* Denotes individuals who lived at Cherry Hill Plantation

† Denotes individuals prominently mentioned in the text

Note: Spelling of some names, including Elizabeth (Elisabeth) and Kearney (Kearny) vary in old records, but the modern spelling is used for consistency.

I. George Washington Alston and Marina Priscilla Williams Alston (m. 1829).

*George Washington Alston (1801–1849) was a son of Philip Guston Alston (1762–1819) and Mary Williams Harris.

His siblings included Temperance, Winifred, Sarah, Mary, Elizabeth N., Charity D., Martha J., Eveline, Eleanor, Ann M., and †Philip Guston. Philip died unmarried and left his property to George's three sons in 1852.

*Marina Priscilla Williams Alston (1810–1897) was a daughter of Major William Williams (1760–1838) and his second wife Elizabeth (Elisabeth) Kinchen Kearney (Kearny) (1769–1863).

From her father's first marriage, Marina's siblings included †Temperance (1786–1873) and Ruina (1788–1809), daughters of William Williams and Ruina (or Eliza) Webb).

†Temperance Williams (1786–1873), who married first Thomas C. Jones in 1810, who died before their son Thomas was born in the same year. Temperance then married Calvin Jones (1775–1846) in 1819 and they had five

children: Columbus, Montezuma, William Calvin, †Octavia Rowena, and Paul Tudor.

From her father's second marriage to Elizabeth Kinchen Kearney in 1790, Marina's siblings included †Robert Webb, Elizabeth, Mary Kearney (Polly), Joseph John (who married Martha James Alston), †Margaret, †Martha, †Adeline, †William H., and †Solomon

Among these:

†Robert Webb Williams (1792–1822), who married Hartwell Hodges Davis (1795–1870). Their children were Robert Edgar Williams, who remodeled Myrtle Lawn, and Archibald D. Williams, who remodeled Vine Hill.

†Margaret (born in 1800), who married Horace Burton of Granville County.

†Martha Kearney (1803–1862), who married Nathaniel Macon Alston of Chatham County.

†Adeline (born in 1805), who married John Alston of Chatham County, son of "Chatham Jack" Alston.

†Solomon (1813–1871), who married Maria Alston Kearney (1818–1897) and lived as near neighbor to Cherry Hill.

II. Nearby Cousins of George W. and Marina P. Alston

†John Buxton Williams (1815–1887), who married Mary Temperance Hilliard (1816–1866). He was Marina's cousin (son of her uncle Henry Guston Williams). The couple built and lived in Buxton Place, just south of Cherry Hill.

†John Allen Williams (1796–1882), who married Charity Dawson Alston

APPENDIX 3

Lists of Slaves

These slaves were owned by Marina and George W. Alston and their children. Some of these people lived at Cherry Hill, while others lived and worked at other plantations.

A. Slaves listed in the estates of George W. Alston and Philip G. Alston, enumerated in 1860 when Philip G. Alston (son of George) came to his majority

ESTATE OF GEORGE W. ALSTON

Nathan, 25	Joe, 28	William, 12
Mary, 32	Polly, 28	Eaton, 12
Harriet, 8	Enoch, 6	Nelson, 11
Trim, 21	Ned, 2	Allan, 10
Harry, 20	Henry, 19	Henderson, 9
Oliver, 21	Pitsy, 17	Joe (blind), 20
Aleck, 22	Hilliard, 26	Allan, little, 35
Eliza, 19	Norfleet, 21	Delia, 35
Robert, 21	Rhoda, 21	Bet, 10
John, 19	Melissa, 2 mos.	Brister, 5
Mariah, 14	Eaton, 26	Elbert, albino, 28
Dick, 24	Rodin, 14	Harry, 43
Molly, 18	Wiley, 14	George, 35
Martha, 1	George, 12	Panda, 15