



*The Families at
“Magnolia Grange”
A Brief History
(1822-1984)*



www.chesterfieldhistory.com

Winfree Family (1822-1845)

The connection between *Magnolia Grange* and the Winfree family began in 1749 with the formation of Chesterfield County and the construction of its first courthouse. Nearby, the land known as Cold Water Run was patented by Valentine Winfree during the 1750s. Upon his death in 1795, Valentine’s estate of over 1,000 acres was inherited by his son Henry Winfree who owned a small mill on Swift Creek. He apparently inhabited a rather large single story frame house on the property. When Henry died in 1803, he left his 1,400 acre plantation equally to his sons William and Valentine.

In 1822, William Winfree, his wife Lucy Bass Winfree and four children named William, Henry, Martha and Mary moved into their newly constructed Federal Period home which would eventually acquire the name *Magnolia Grange* around the time of the Civil War. A fifth child, Rosalie, was born in 1830.

The cost of building the house was \$6,000, and it appears that Lucy’s inheritance may have been the source of funds for its construction. William Winfree is known to have operated three businesses on the property. He raised various crops on the 635 acre plantation, including tobacco and cotton. There was also a grist mill for grinding wheat and corn. In addition, he operated a tavern on the property which was conveniently located across the road from the county courthouse. For those who needed to attend to court business, his tavern provided meals, accommodation and stables.

An office on the first floor of the mansion, with its own entrance, provided a separate space that allowed William Winfree to attend to the daily operations of the farm, and to meet with buyers of his tobacco crop or with farmers wishing to have their corn or wheat ground in his grist mill. This gentleman was recognized by his contemporaries as an astute businessman. Home to the many people who lived and worked there, the property included numerous outbuildings (the foundations of some were discovered during archeological surveys conducted in the 1980s).

Today, much of *Magnolia Grange* is furnished in the period of 1822-1845, the Winfree years. Since its construction, the mansion has seen half a dozen families live there with numerous marriage links between them.

Shortly after William Winfree died in 1844, the estate went up for sale. It was purchased by Jeremiah Hobbs, a man who would later serve as the presiding officer at a county wide meeting in the courthouse which demanded Virginia’s secession from the Union. Jeremiah Hobbs ran into financial problems only nine years after purchasing *Magnolia Grange*, forcing him to sell.



DuVal Family (1854-1879)

Ownership of *Magnolia Grange* changed hands several times following its sale by Jeremiah Hobbs in 1854 until Stephen Obediah DuVal purchased the property in 1861 for \$15,000. Descended from a French Huguenot family who settled on the James River in the early 1700s, Stephen DuVal's family home was *Cedar Grove* plantation near Boshers' Dam in what became Bon Air.

Stephen DuVal and his wife Anne Elizabeth Anderson DuVal had nine children: six sons named William Stephen, Hilary Eugene, Emmett Turner, Frank Nelson, Harold Lee and Julian Fay; and three daughters whom they named Zulieme Clifton, Annie Claire and Lucy Florence. This large family furnished six of the eight rooms in *Magnolia Grange* as bedrooms, leaving the parlor and the dining room on the first floor as living and entertaining space. During the Civil War years, legend has it that the plantation's trademark circle of magnolia trees and the remainder of the gardens were cut down to make room for additional farmland. As the Union army approached Chesterfield Courthouse, the DuVal family was forced to leave *Magnolia Grange* temporarily. Stephen DuVal hid the family silver in a table with a secret drawer before their departure. Much to his surprise, the silver was still there when the family returned home. Stephen O. DuVal died in 1872. His wife remained in *Magnolia Grange* until 1879 when she sold the mansion and surrounding tract of 25 acres to Emma V. Cogbill.

Cogbill Family (1879-1964)

Four generations of the Cogbill family lived at *Magnolia Grange* over a span of 100 years! When Emma Perdue Cogbill purchased the mansion and surrounding land for \$2,500 in 1879, she and her husband Marcus A. Cogbill, a Confederate veteran, were the first. He served as clerk of the county court (1873-1875), she acted as hostess to visiting judges and court personnel. The couple had no children, but Emma had a daughter named May (Moody) from a previous marriage who lived in the house. In addition, the couple welcomed into their home Marcus' niece and nephew Molly and Nathan Cogbill, when their father died. It is interesting to note that, when the children grew up, May married Joseph P. Winfree and Molly Cogbill married a DuVal - thereby connecting three well-known *Magnolia Grange* families. Widowed by 1900, Emma sold the home to her husband's cousin Philip Valentine Cogbill and his wife Julia Trueheart Cogbill. Philip V. Cogbill succeeded his cousin as clerk of the court (1904-1940). Known as "Mr. Phil," he served as commonwealth's attorney (1887-1903) and as a state senator (1899-1904). Mr. Phil died in 1942 and in the next decade Miss Julia passed on. Their son Marcus Aurelius Cogbill, Jr., also a commonwealth's attorney (1924-1955), lived at *Magnolia Grange* until his death in 1964. The home stood empty until 1969 when Philip V. Daffron and his wife Julianne Roman Daffron, Cogbill descendants, purchased *Magnolia Grange* and meticulously renovated it to its original condition.

Daffron Family (1969-1984)

Philip Valentine Daffron and his wife Julianne Roman Daffron began work immediately on the restoration of *Magnolia Grange* in 1969. A great-grandson of Philip Valentine Cogbill, Mr. Daffron enlisted the help of family and friends to paint and strip wallpaper. The restoration grew to include significant projects such as the removal of an attached wooden kitchen on the rear of the home, and the installation of central heating and air conditioning. The roof and shutters were repaired and many cracked window panes were replaced, using handblown panes from a dismantled house on the Eastern Shore. All eight fireplaces were rebuilt, and decorative ceiling medallions were recast in plaster and replaced. The home was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. Mr. Daffron started his law practice in 1971 in the small parlor on the west side of the home. In 1975, the Daffrons built a law office on the east side of the property, where Mr. Daffron practiced law until his appointment in 1988 as a judge of the Chesterfield General District Court, serving until his retirement in 2013. Mrs. Daffron was a schoolteacher and taught private piano lessons for over thirty years. She was also a charter member of the Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia. Philip Valentine Daffron, Jr. was born in 1977, becoming the last direct descendant of the Winfree family to call *Magnolia Grange* home.