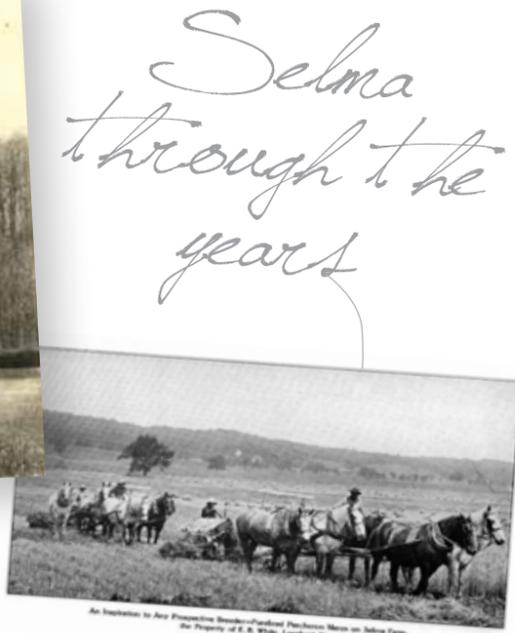


SAVING SELMA

The planned restoration of an abandoned and endangered Loudoun County historic plantation home



Selma during the White's ownership, photo circa 1920s. This is likely the earliest photo available of the home. Thomas Balch Library



EB White was a renowned breeder of Percherons, and was President of the Percheron Society of America. Source: A History of the Percheron Horse, Alvin H. Sanders, 1917.



A copy of EB White's original 1902 plans for the structure that stands today. Photo by Rick Martin

At right: This photo shows the only remaining section of the original circa 1810 home. It was incorporated into EB White's 1902 mansion as the kitchen wing. Photo circa 1970s. Thomas Balch Library



A brief history of Selma Plantation

The land upon which Selma is located was originally part of 10,000 acres purchased by Mrs. Ann Thomson Mason in 1741, and the original house on the property was built between 1800-1815. The property passed through several owners, including Beverly Family, who owned it during the Civil War. Early in the 1890s, the original house was almost completely destroyed by fire, leaving only a small portion standing. The property was purchased in 1896 by Elijah B. White.

White engaged the architectural firm of Nolan and Baskerville Bros. of Richmond and built the house which now stands, incorporating the small original section not destroyed in the fire as the kitchen wing. It was completed in 1902, a stunning example of Colonial Revival architecture. No expense was spared to bring the mansion to the height of opulence and comfort with all the modern conveniences available at the turn of the 20th century. These included "speaking tubes," (an intercome system which used the acoustics of heavy brass tubes running through the walls), and an ornate spigot in the gentlemen's smoking room which piped water directly from the springhouse, accomodating Mr. White's insistence on only natural spring water in his bourbon.

PHOTO BY RICK MARTIN

PHOTO BY SHERI KNAUER



Interior condition at the time of purchase by Virts and Miller.

The plantation was home to several generations of the White family, and then passed to the Epperson family in 1976. They made their home there as well as hosting weddings and events. The home was sold to Peter J. ter Maaten in 1999, and the home was abandoned in the early 2000s.

Vegetation, decay, and vandalism started reclaiming the structure. It was designated one of Virginia's endangered historic sites by Preservation Virginia in 2009, and, while abandoned, became a favorite destination of history buffs, photographers and architectural treasure hunters.

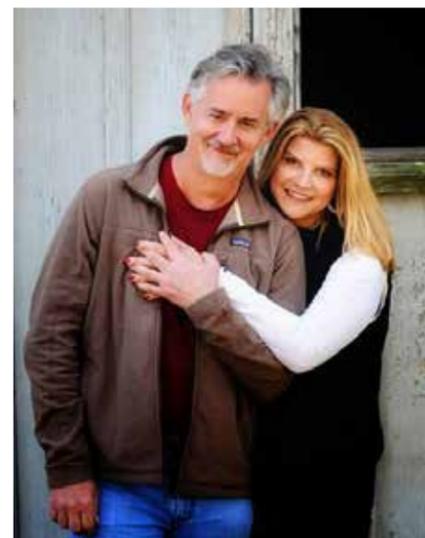


Selma almost engulfed by vegetation in 2013

Restoration

In March of 2016, the home and 50 acres (the rest of the property having been sold and subdivided over the years) was purchased by Sharon D. Virts and Scott F. Miller. To the relief of historical preservationists, renovations have begun to stabilize the structure and restore the home to its former glory. Great care is being given to historical accuracy in preservation, while also accomodating modern comfort and conveniences. Since the purchase, Virts and Miller have had one priority: closing and sealing the house against the elements. This entailed clearing the vegetation that had almost engulfed the home and was growing

PHOTO BY RICK MARTIN



through the walls and floors destabilizing the structure, window repair and restoration, chimney repair, and sealing and resurfacing the exterior.

Virts and Miller estimate the cost of restoration at \$2 million and will take about 24 months to complete. Once again, Selma will be a loved and treasured private home.

The purchase and restoration of the property has created significant interest in the area, and their active Facebook page has close to 25,000 likes.

Coming in our September/October issue: an interview with Virts and Miller and more on the restoration progress.