## Historic Westglow Elliott Daingerfield House

### Location
- **Street & Number**: East side of US 221, 1.7 miles north of junction with SR 1563
- **City, Town**: Blowing Rock
- **State**: North Carolina
- **Code**: 37
- **County**: Watauga
- **Code**: 189

### Classification
- **Category**: District
- **District**: X
- **Structure**: Public
- **Ownership**: Private
- **Object**: Public Acquisition
- **Status**: Work in Progress
- **Present Use**: Accessible

### Owner of Property
- **Name**: Mr. Robert McPheters
- **Street & Number**: P. O. Box 64745
- **City, Town**: Fayetteville
- **State**: North Carolina
- **Vicinity of**: North Carolina, 28306

### Representation in Existing Surveys
- **Title**:
- **Date**:
- **Federal**: 
- **State**: 
- **County**: 
- **Local**: 
- **Depository for Survey Records**:
- **City, Town**: 
- **State**: 
- **City, Town**:
- **State**: 

---

*For NPS Use Only*

- **Received**
- **Date Entered**
**DESCRIPTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_EXCELLENT</td>
<td>_ALTERED</td>
<td>_MOVED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XGOOD</td>
<td>XUNALTED</td>
<td>_DATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_FAIR</td>
<td>_RUINS</td>
<td>_UNEXPOSED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Westglow, the early twentieth century summer house of the artist Elliott Daingerfield, is sited on the crest of the Blue Ridge about two miles west of the resort community of Blowing Rock in southern Watauga County. The house commands a magnificent view into a broad mountain valley to the west; hence the name given by Daingerfield. It sits near the highest point of an eighteen acre tract of land which contains, in addition to the house, the studio of the artist and a small caretaker's cottage, and is landscaped with spacious lawns, the remnants of formal gardens, and stands of evergreens and hardwoods.

The house is a fully developed example of the Colonial Revival style, and is one of the finest of its type ever constructed in northwestern North Carolina. The main body of the house is rectangular in plan, with the narrower ends facing west and east. It stands two-and-one-half stories under a hip roof, and is covered in plain white weatherboards. The principal (west) elevation, which is visible to passersby on the highway below, presents a monumental tetrastyle portico supported by columns with Ionic capitals. An elliptical fanlight is set into the tympanum of the portico. Modillion blocks range under the eaves and continue on all elevations of the main block. The facade behind the portico is a symmetrical three bay arrangement, with a double French door surrounded by an eight light transom and sidelights and flanked by large eight-over-eight sash windows; these are set in plain surrounds with molded trim under pedimented heads. The second floor door, which is identical to the first but is without a transom, enters onto a narrow balcony with a simple balustrade composed of square-in-section members. The balcony is flanked by six-over-six sash windows without pediments and smaller than those of the first floor.

The primary access to the house is not through the western portico, but rather through an entrance placed at the center of the five-bay south elevation which is approached by a circular drive from the south. The entrance is sheltered by a gable roof porch supported by circular-in-section posts with Ionic capitals. The six-panel door is surmounted by an elliptical fanlight and flanked by sidelights with panes cut in geometric patterns. The first floor windows on this elevation are identical to those of the west side. The three-part central window on the second floor is of six-over-six sash and flanked by four-over-four sash sidelights. The windows of the end bays are also six-over-six, with small four-over-four sash windows marking the bays on either side of the central window.

The four-bay rear (east) elevation is fronted by a deep two-story flat roof porch that shelters the two central bays, both of which are occupied on both levels by double French doors. The square-in-section posts of the porch are connected by a simple balustrade on both floors.

A two-story hip roof extension is set on the northeast corner of the north elevation. If not original, it was added at an early date. This frame addition measures two bays wide on each side, and is simply executed with six-over-six sash windows in plain surrounds.
Pairs of pedimented dormer windows are set on the south and east slopes of the hip roof. The tall brick stacks of the two interior chimneys pierce the east slope and the flat crown of the roof, and a balustrade circumvents the crown.

The spacious interior follows a center-hall plan, though the hall is laid out on north-south axis rather than east-west as might be suggested by the placement of the portico on the west elevation. The hall is fully paneled and ceiling beams are exposed. A fine open-stringer stair with a paneled spandrel rises along the west wall to a landing on the north wall and then continues the climb to the second floor in the opposite direction on the east wall. The molded handrail is supported by thin square-in section balusters.

A double door in the west wall of the hall at the base of the stair opens into a large room that extends the full width of the west end of the house. This room is also fully paneled, and has exposed ceiling beams. The mantel at the massive fireplace on the east wall is composed of a wide frieze supported by free-standing fluted columns with Ionic capitals and is capped with a molded shelf. The French doors in the west wall of this room give out under the portico and open to the splendid view to the west.

The east half of the first floor of the main block is occupied by a library on the south and a dining room on the north. The dining room is fully paneled and is heated by a fireplace with a simple post and lintel mantel with paneled frieze and pilasters. The mantel in the library is identical, and the walls are lined with built-in bookcases. The doors here, as throughout the first floor, are of six panels and set in plain surrounds with molded and mitred trim.

The kitchen occupies the entire first floor of the extension on the north side of the house, and has been completed modernized in recent years.

The second floor follows a complex plan with a virtual maze of small bedrooms, hallways, closets, and bathrooms. The finish throughout is of standard early twentieth century character, with sheathed or plastered walls, sheathed ceilings, and simple molded baseboards. All doors are composed of five horizontal panels. The master bedroom occupies the central section of the southern half of the second floor, and is heated by a fireplace with a mantel identical to those of the library and dining room below.

The artists studio is a small frame building, now somewhat derelict, located about one hundred yards south of the house. It rests on fieldstone piers and is covered by a hip roof. A shed roof extension is set on the west end. It is covered in weatherboard, though the east and south walls have been covered in an imitation brick paper siding. The interior is one large, tall room finished with narrow tongue-and-groove sheathing and lighted by a pair of thirty-light windows set high in the north wall.
The caretaker's cottage, which dates from the 1920s, is a simple gable roof bungalow located west of the house across the highway and down the slope of the mountain. The two-room frame structure has a gable front entrance sheltered by a gable roof, and has been expanded with various rear additions. The only other structure on the property is a small board-and-batten utility shed located in a grove of trees on the north side of the house.
Westglow is significant as the mountain summer home and studio of artist Elliott Daingerfield (1859-1932). Completed in 1917, the structure was unusually pretentious for the mountains of North Carolina, and its columned facade is dramatized by its striking setting which commands an unobstructed view into a broad mountain valley to the west. Daingerfield, for whom the house was built, was a noted landscape painter who grew up in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and maintained connections with the state while working in New York. Daingerfield is considered by many to be the most outstanding painter the state has produced. After his death in 1932, the property passed to his wife, and in 1939, to his two daughters, who continued to use the property as a summer home until 1972. Since 1972 the property has changed hands three times.

Criteria Assessment:

B. The house is associated with the life and work of Elliott Daingerfield, one of North Carolina's most noted painters.

C. The large Colonial Revival style house with its monumental tetrastyle portico is one of the most prominent early twentieth century residences of northwestern North Carolina. Its magnificent setting is a dramatic example of romantic site planning for the summer houses of wealthy seasonal residents of the mountains of the state.
The natural beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains offered an inspired setting, and along its crest near Blowing Rock in Watauga County, the internationally known artist Elliott Daingerfield built a home and studio called Westglow. Daingerfield's specialty was landscape art and the view from his summer home heightened his inspiration and strengthened his talent. Westglow itself was completed in 1917, but Daingerfield's love affair with the North Carolina mountains began much earlier.

Elliott Daingerfield, the son of John E. P. and Matilda Daingerfield, was born March 26, 1859, at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. His father offered his services to the Confederate government in 1861 and was transferred to Fayetteville, North Carolina. There Elliott spent his boyhood, being educated in the local schools and academies, and by private tutors. One biographical account asserts that Daingerfield's talent became evident early in life and that he learned to draw before he could write. Another sketch contends that he had decided by age twelve to make art his life's work.

While still a young man, Daingerfield left Fayetteville to pursue his chosen career. After a brief stopover in Norfolk, Virginia, he arrived in New York. There he joined the Art Students League while also receiving instruction from private tutors. Daingerfield was much impressed by the style of George Inness and in time became a leading authority on Inness' work. His own career as a promising painter began in 1880 when some of his works were exhibited at the National Academy of Design.

Daingerfield's love of landscapes brought him to Blowing Rock for the first time in 1885. The Blue Ridge Mountains proved perfect for both inspiration and artistic material. He established a summer home and studio in the village, returning each fall to his "commercial home" in New York. One of his early projects was the creation of the Permanent Art School of Blowing Rock, a school which he headed for more than a quarter century.

In 1896 Daingerfield began purchasing adjoining properties along the Yonahlossee Road, the old turnpike from Blowing Rock to Linville. The largest single tract he bought was a twenty-one acre parcel purchased in 1915. This appears to be the tract on which Westglow was erected; however, the house was centered on a thirty-nine acre estate. Construction began in 1916 and the house was ready for occupancy a year later. The setting was described by a Daingerfield contemporary:

Westglow is on the very crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains and occupies a position that is sublime and majestic in the extreme. The house is on a commanding elevation at the base of which winds the Yonahlossee Road . . . to the west is the great
Grandfather Mountain, one of the highest peaks of the Appalachian system... to the north, west and south the Blue Ridge Mountains sweep in great billows, almost always clad in a haze of deep blue through which the sunlight is never glaring, but almost golden, even at midday. The mountains are covered with grassy meadows and great forests... A most inspiring location for an artist could not well be imagined. The house is a large two-story structure, very attractive architecturally, and is one of the show places of the Blowing Rock region.

Daingerfield's daughter recalled that the site for construction of Westglow was carefully selected by Elliott Daingerfield. The light for his art and the view for his inspiration had to be perfect, so for many nights the entire family camped under the stars to inspect the first morning light at various places on the property. Having selected the site, Daingerfield roughly designed the house from his memory of a favorite Virginia home. He hired a New York architect, Mr. Smythe, to put the design into plans and specifications for construction. Smythe's plans were turned over to a local builder named Lee Hayes who had built a number of homes in Blowing Rock and had earned a good reputation in the area. Daingerfield's daughter, however, described Hayes as a "mountain builder" whose ideas of construction often conflicted with those of Mr. Smythe. When the fireplace was to be installed in the big room, for instance, Hayes inserted a floor to ceiling stone chimney in true mountain style. Smythe discovered the spontaneous change in plans and reported to Daingerfield that such construction would lose heat and present structural problems. Daingerfield agreed with his architect and made Hayes rip out his masterpiece and install the fireplace according to Smythe's plans.

Westglow's beautiful staircase was the family's favorite feature. The entire staircase was handcrafted by a Belgian from Brooklyn whose name has been lost. The various parts were designed separately and expertly crafted to fit together perfectly. Smythe apparently brought the Belgian with him from New York specifically for the purpose of creating the elegant staircase which Smythe had designed, a move that Lee Hayes considered an insult to his talents as a builder.

Despite the minor conflicts between Hayes and Smythe, Westglow was completed in less than a year, but not without difficulty:

The year construction began, 1916, is remembered by elderly mountain people as the year of the great flood. Excessive rains had swollen the waterways, causing extensive flooding and washing away roads and bridges. The waters had not fully receded when the large columns for the portico at Westglow arrived by rail from California. Unable to be transported by usual means, the columns were floated down the Yadkin River to a landing near Blowing Rock. From there teams of oxen hauled the columns up the mountain over badly damaged logging roads.
because the turnpike had been partially destroyed by the flooding. After much trouble and expense, the columns arrived and stand today as the most prominent feature of the house.

From the start Westglow was designed to be a summer home and art studio. A lack of winterizing rendered the house unlivable during the mountain winters. From 1917 until his death in 1932, Elliott Daingerfield spent his summers at Westglow, returning to New York around October 1. A caretaker's cottage was erected on Daingerfield's property across the Yonahlossee Road to house an overseer who cared for the "big house" during the winter months. The caretaker for many years was Christopher Columbus Winkler whose first house burned some years after Westglow was completed. Winkler built the current caretaker's house as a replacement and it has had numerous additions since its construction.

Daingerfield first married in 1884. His bride was Roberta Strange French, daughter of North Carolina Judge Robert S. French. Roberta died in 1891 and four years later Daingerfield married Anna E. Grainger of Louisville, Kentucky. This marriage produced two daughters, Marjorie and Gwendoline. The girls received formal education in New York, but the appreciation of natural beauty inherited from their father was annually reinforced by life on the Blue Ridge. Daingerfield's youngest daughter, Gwendoline, remembers her childhood there as an idyllic time. Fondly she reminisces about the days when she and sister Marjorie would run through the dew covered grass to the stables near the caretaker's cottage, and the great pleasure they had in riding the family horses in the cool mountain air. Also recalled with great affection were the grand receptions hosted by the Daingerfields. Westglow was a social center for the area and when a party was held, people came from all parts of North Carolina. To the family, Westglow was their home no matter where they resided the rest of the year.

Elliott Daingerfield died suddenly on October 22, 1932, in New York. He was buried, as he had requested, in Cross Creek Cemetery, Fayetteville. In his will, Daingerfield bequeathed all his property to his wife, Anna, who survived him by seven years. Anna Daingerfield died in 1939 leaving all her property, including "Westglow, the summer home near Blowing Rock, North Carolina," jointly to her daughters, Marjorie Daingerfield Holmes and Gwendoline Daingerfield Dulaney.

Westglow continued as the summer home for the Daingerfield sisters for many years after the death of their father. Both Marjorie and Gwendoline were married more than once, but no matter where they resided, they returned to the North Carolina mountains for a few months of each year. Inside Westglow were exhibited many of Daingerfield's paintings along with the works of other artists and a collection of art objects. Most
had been entrusted to Marjorie and Gwendoline's care by the will of their mother, Anna Daingerfield. Westglow became more than just a summer home; it was in many ways an art museum for the Blowing Rock community.

Gwendoline Daingerfield (Dulaney) Plyler transferred her interest in Westglow to her sons Joseph and Elliott Dulany in the 1960s, but reserved right for continued use of the house. In 1972, William and Ruth Matson purchased the Westglow estate from the Dulaneys and Marjorie Daingerfield (Holmes) (Lundean) Howlett. The tract consisted of two parcels totaling 19.635 acres. A small section was excepted from the sale so that Gwendoline Plyler could maintain a smaller summer home in the shadow of Westglow.

The Matsons planned to use the house as a summer home as had the Daingerfield family. They made immediate changes to the kitchen area of the house. The food pantry and butler's pantry was torn out and made into a breakfast nook. The window was enlarged to create a picture window with a full view of Grandfather Mountain in the distance. A reddish tile was laid and the back porch enclosed. Other changes were contemplated but a year after purchase, William Matson died. Mrs. Matson retained the house for a few years before transferring ownership to her children, Christine McGown and the Rev. Raymer Matson. In March, 1979, the 19.635 acres with the Daingerfield House were sold to Mr. and Mrs. Robert McPheters of Fayetteville.

The McPheters' long range plans are to convert the house for use as a year round residence. Until funds are available for the renovation, they will reside in the caretaker's house across the road. The new owners intend to keep the estate intact, but plans are indefinite regarding future changes to the interior.

Westglow's historical significance stems from its association with the artist Elliott Daingerfield. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Daingerfield disdained showy public exhibitions, preferring instead a small gathering in the privacy of his studio. His accomplishments, nonetheless, were significant. Among the most notable works is the Lady Chapel in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in New York City which he painted in 1902. Daingerfield paintings hang in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery, several churches, and in the private collections of some of the world's best known art collectors. He was for many years a professor of composition and paintings at the Philadelphia School of Design. He held memberships in the Fine Arts Federation, the New York Water Color Club, the Society of American Artists, the National Academy of Design, and the Lotos and Church Clubs of New York. Daingerfield also wrote several books, primarily concerning the life and works of George Innes.
One of Daingerfield's most cherished goals was to establish recognition of a distinctly American art form. He was one of only a few prominent artists to make the effort.\(^1\) Although he wrote frequent articles on the subject for national art magazines, it was his own style that helped to secure his goal. His productions were largely figure and landscape, and his subjects were taken from rural life. Daingerfield employed opulent color schemes, and the concentration of light on the central object came a distinguishing characteristic of his art.\(^2\)

Just how many of Daingerfield's works were actually executed in his summer home is not known. One, however, "Madonna of the Hills," now hangs in St. Mary's of the Hills Episcopal Church in Blowing Rock. Daingerfield painted the "Madonna" while the church was under construction and presented it as his contribution to the effort.\(^3\) Daingerfield once claimed that Westglow and the surrounding natural beauty provided the scene and inspiration for his best works,\(^4\) a statement that underlies the historical significance of the house.

**FOOTNOTES**


\(^3\) Archibald Henderson, North Carolina, The Old North State and the New (Chicago, 3 vols., 1941), II, 818, hereinafter cited as Henderson, North Carolina; Connor, History of North Carolina, 353; and National Cyclopedia, 111.

\(^4\) National Cyclopedia, 111; and Henderson, North Carolina, 818.

\(^5\) Connor, History of North Carolina, 353; Henderson, North Carolina, 818; and National Cyclopedia, 111.


8. Connor, History of North Carolina, 353-354; and Plyler interview. One of Daingerfield's successful protégés was his daughter Marjorie who received international recognition as a sculptress.

9. Watauga County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Watauga County Courthouse, Boone, Deed Book 18, p. 157, hereinafter cited as Watauga County Deed Book. See also Deed Book S, 592, 594; Deed Book Y, 54, 580; Deed Book 16, pp. 80, 121, 136; Deed Book 18, pp. 157, 286; and Deed Book 19, p. 49.

10. Connor, History of North Carolina, 354. This sketch was written about 1918 and appears to have been based on information supplied by Daingerfield himself.

11. Information on selection of site from Plyler interview. Mrs. Plyler did not remember Smythe's first name but she was certain of the spelling of the surname. A check of directories of architects and volumes of Who's Who and Who Was Who failed to yield any additional information.

12. The Hayes-Smythe relationship from Plyler interview. Mrs. Plyler was about twelve years old when the house was built.

13. Plyler interview. Mrs. Plyler could not remember the Belgian's name.

14. Plyler interview.

15. Connor, History of North Carolina, 354; and Plyler interview.

16. Plyler interview; and Researcher's interview with Helen Tellekomp, owner of Blowing Rock real estate firm and lifelong resident of the area, March 20, 1979, hereinafter cited as Tellekomp interview.

17. National Cyclopedia, 112.

18. Plyler interview.


20. Watauga County Will Books, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Watauga County Courthouse, Boone, Will Book B, 155, hereinafter cited as Watauga County Will Books. This a copy of the will probated in New York.
21 Anna Daingerfield died in New York and her will was probated there shortly after her death. The copy, however, was not recorded in Watauga County until 1958 and bears that date of registration. Watauga County Will Book C, 499-501.

22 Gwendoline first married a Dulaney and then Worth Plyler. Marjorie married in order a Holmes, a Lundeans, and a Howlett. See codicil to Anna Daingerfield's will, Watauga County Will Book C, 501; Letter from Marjorie Daingerfield Lundeans to William S. Powell, May 22, 1951, in North Carolina Highway Historical Marker File I 34 (Elliott Daingerfield), Research Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh; and Watauga County Marriage Register, 1873-1969, microfilm copy in State Archives, Raleigh. See also Plyler interview.

23 Watauga County Will Book C, 499; and Plyler interview.

24 The interest was granted in two deed books dated September 8, 1964, and February 18, 1969. Watauga County Deed Book 94, p. 124, and Deed Book 107, p. 315. See also Plyler interview.

25 Tellekomp interview. Mrs. Tellekomp handled the transfer for the Matsons and the Daingerfield heirs. She provided the information from her files. See fn. 16.

26 Plyler interview.

27 Tellekomp interview. Mrs. Tellekomp also handled this transaction and was waiting for the copy of the deed to arrive at the time of the interview. See fn. 16.

28 Tellekomp interview.

29 National Cyclopedia, 112.

30 National Cyclopedia, 112; Connor, History of North Carolina, 353; Henderson, North Carolina, 818-819; and Plyler interview.

31 Connor, History of North Carolina, 353.

32 National Cyclopedia, 111-112.

33 Plyler interview.

34 Plyler interview; and Connor, History of North Carolina, 353. See fn. 10.


ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 19.6 acres

UTM REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>EASTING</th>
<th>NORHTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 1</td>
<td>4354</td>
<td>9950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 1</td>
<td>4354</td>
<td>9950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 1</td>
<td>4354</td>
<td>9950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 1</td>
<td>4354</td>
<td>9950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes the 19.6 acres of mountainside land that has remained in continuous association with the Daingerfield estate. This includes the house, the studio, the caretaker's cottage, and surrounding land on both sides of US 221 identified in the Watauga County Tax Office as parcels 03-240-6 and 03-240-13.

FORM PREPARED BY

Architectural Description by Michael Southern, Survey Specialist
Statement of Significance by Jerry L. Cross, Researcher

ORGANIZATION
Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section
N. C. Division of Archives and History

DATE
May 10, 1979

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL ___ STATE X LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPS OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 892453
CONTINUATION SHEET


Highway Historical Marker File I 34, Elliott Daingerfield. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Interviews

Helen Tellekamp, March 20, 1979.
Gwendoline Flyer, March 26, 1979.


Watauga County Records

Deeds
Estate Papers
Will


WESTGLOW
(ELLIOTT DANGERFIELD HOUSE)

COPYED FROM
WATAUGA COUNTY
TAX MAPS
SHEET NO. 240

BLOWING ROCK VICINITY
WATAUGA COUNTY, N.C.
MAY 1979

1" = 400'

(Care Gale's Cottage)
UTM References:
A: N 3999550, E 435675;
B: N 3999180, E 435570;
C: N 3999090, E 435910;
D: N 3999335, E 435985

Westglow (Elliot Daingerfield House)
US 221
Blowing Rock vicinity, Watauga County
Boone, N. C. Quadrangle
Scale: 1:24000
19.6 acres