

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

24958

1. State Virginia	2. Theme(s). If archeological site, write "Arch" before theme No. Themes IX, Dev. of Eng. Col., 1700-1775; also Theme XX, Arts and Sciences		4. Approx. acreage 775 acres
3. Name(s) of site Shirley Plantation			
5. Exact location (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Charles City County, 17 miles southeast of Richmond on State Highway 5.			
6. Name and address of present owner (Also administrator if different from owner) Mr. Hill Carter, Shirley Plantation, Charles City Co., Va.			
7. Importance and description (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)			

Shirley Plantation is historically important because of its connection with the Carter family, prominent in the affairs of colonial Virginia, in the hands of whose descendants the property remains today. Originally settled in 1613 as "West-and-Sherley Hundred", the plantation was producing tobacco for export within three years, thus making it one of the very earliest of Virginia tobacco plantations. Colonel Edward Hill II acquired two tracts totaling 2,476 acres in 1660, which included the present property. His son, Edward Hill III, reputedly built the existing house in the early eighteenth century, perhaps as early as 1723. His daughter, Elizabeth, was married to John, eldest son of Robert "King" Carter, in that year. Seventy years later, their granddaughter, Ann Hill Carter, was married at Shirley to "Light Horse Harry" Lee, from which union was born Robert Edward Lee. Charles Carter, who owned Shirley in the early nineteenth century, was one of the largest landowners in Virginia with some 170,000 acres. At Shirley he had over 200 slaves.

Architecturally, Shirley is an interesting example of Georgian architecture. Exterior features include two-story porticos on both main facades; a double-hipped roof with a single pineapple finial; gabled dormers on all four sides of the roof; and a square, three-story brick central bulk with a deep denticulated cornice. The interior is marked by an unusually large entrance hall, with a hanging stair rising three flights; full paneling in a number of rooms; mantels, overmantels and ornate broken pediments over the interior doorways. The house has all original furnishings, including portraits of most of the prominent members of the family.

Besides the main house, about eight of the original dependencies survive, including twin storage houses, a smokehouse and a dovecote. The house which immediately preceded the present mansion remained standing until 1867. Re-erected three years later some distance to the north, it is now the mansion house of the neighboring plantation known as Upper Shirley.

Though still an agricultural operation and a private home, Shirley Plantation is open to visitors daily throughout the year.

8. Bibliographical references (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Thomas T. Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776 (Chapel Hill, 1946); Waterman and J. A. Barrows, Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater Virginia (New York, 1932); Edith T. Sale, Interiors of Virginia Houses of Colonial Times (Richmond, 1927).

9. Reports and studies (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

Historic American Buildings Survey, 15 photographs, 1934-39.

10. Photographs * Attached: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	11. Condition Good	12. Present use (Museum, farm, etc.) (See under Item 7)	13. Date of visit July 14, 1958
14. Name of recorder (Signature) Frank B. Searles, Jr.	15. Title Historian	16. Date July 24, 1958	

* Dry mount on an 8 x 10 1/2 sheet of fairly heavy paper. Identify by view and name of the site, date of photograph and name of photographer. Give location of negative. If attached, enclose in proper negative envelopes.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NO.)

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

24958

1. State <u>Virginia</u>	2. Theme(s). If archeological site, write "Arch" before theme No. <u>Themes IX, Dev. of Eng. Col., 1700-1775; also</u>	
3. Name(s) of site <u>Shirley Plantation</u>	<u>Theme XX, Arts and Sciences</u>	4. Approx. acreage <u>775 acres</u>
5. Exact location (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) <u>Charles City County, 17 miles southeast of Richmond on State Highway 5.</u>		
6. Name and address of present owner (Also administrator if different from owner) <u>Mr. Hill Carter, Shirley Plantation, Charles City Co., Va.</u>		
7. Importance and description (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)		

Shirley Plantation is historically important because of its connection with the Carter family, prominent in the affairs of colonial Virginia, in the hands of whose descendants the property remains today. Originally settled in 1613 as "West-and-Sherley Hundred", the plantation was producing tobacco for export within three years, thus making it one of the very earliest of Virginia tobacco plantations. Colonel Edward Hill II acquired two tracts totaling 2,476 acres in 1660, which included the present property. His son, Edward Hill III, reputedly built the existing house in the early eighteenth century, perhaps as early as 1723. His daughter, Elizabeth, was married to John, eldest son of Robert "King" Carter, in that year. Seventy years later, their granddaughter, Ann Hill Carter, was married at Shirley to "Light Horse Harry" Lee, from which union was born Robert Edward Lee. Charles Carter, who owned Shirley in the early nineteenth century, was one of the largest landowners in Virginia with some 170,000 acres. At Shirley he had over 200 slaves.

Architecturally, Shirley is an interesting example of Georgian architecture. Exterior features include two-story porticos on both main facades; a double-hipped roof with a single pineapple finial; gabled dormers on all four sides of the roof; and a square, three-story brick central bulk with a deep denticulated cornice. The interior is marked by an unusually large entrance hall, with a hanging stair rising three flights; full paneling in a number of rooms; mantels, overmantels and ornate broken pediments over the interior doorways. The house has all original furnishings, including portraits of most of the prominent members of the family.

Besides the main house, about eight of the original dependencies survive, including twin storage houses, a smokehouse and a dovecote. The house which immediately preceded the present mansion remained standing until 1867. Re-erected three years later some distance to the north, it is now the mansion house of the neighboring plantation known as Upper Shirley.

Though still an agricultural operation and a private home, Shirley Plantation is open to visitors daily throughout the year.

8. Bibliographical references (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Thomas T. Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776 (Chapel Hill, 1946); Waterman and J. A. Barrows, Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater Virginia (New York, 1932); Edith T. Sale, Interiors of Virginia Houses of Colonial Times (Richmond, 1927).

9. Reports and studies (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

Historic American Buildings Survey, 15 photographs, 1934-39.

10. Photographs * Attached: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	11. Condition <u>Good</u>	12. Present use (Museum, farm, etc.) <u>(See under item 7)</u>	13. Date of visit <u>July 14, 1958</u>
14. Name of recorder (Signature) <u>Frank B. Searles</u>		15. Title <u>Historian</u>	16. Date <u>July 24, 1958</u>

* Dry mount on an 8 x 10½ sheet of fairly heavy paper. Identify by view and name of the site, date of photograph and name of photographer. Give location of negative. If attached, enclose in proper negative envelopes.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NO.)