SHIRLEY

UNCHANGED SINCE 1770
SETTLED 1613
PRESENT HOUSE BUILT 1723-1740

LIMOUSINE LEAVES WILLIAMSBURG LODGE
AT APPROXIMATELY 10 A.M. DAILY
PHONE: SUTTON, WILLIAMSBURG 900

A

JAMES RIVER PLANTATION
that has been preserved as it was in the Eighteenth Century.
Hill the third, builder of the present house, was a member of the House of Burgesses and Collector of the Revenue. He married Elizabeth Williams, the daughter and heiress of Sir Edward Williams, of Wales, and the owner of North Wales, Virginia. At the death of their son, Edward Hill, the fourth, a boy of sixteen, his sister, Elizabeth, inherited the plantation. She married John Carter, Secretary of State of the colony and the son of Robert ‘King’ Carter, of Corotoman. The estate has remained in the Carter family.

“Shirley is one of the few Virginia residences that remain in the original family today.

“The house contains antiques of various periods and valuable ancestral portraits. The Washington portrait by Charles Wilson Peale, now in the Capitol at Williamsburg, hung in the dining room of Shirley for over one hundred years. It was a gift from General Washington to Genera’ Nelson, and came to the Carters through Mary Nelson, daughter of General Thomas Nelson, who married Robert Carter. Their likenesses, by Saint Memin, hang at Shirley on the panelled wall above the mantel in the drawing room.

The kitchen, the laundry, and two brick barns are in daily use and are not open for inspection. This set of buildings form a superb Queen Anne four-court unique in this country. Other buildings of the period are stable, smokehouse and dove cote. In fact there is practically a complete set of eighteenth century buildings standing on Shirley today.

“Anne Hill Carter, daughter of Anne Butler Moore and Charles Carter, probably—though not certain—was born at Shirley on March 26, 1773. Twenty years later she was married here to ‘Light Horse’ Harry Lee. Among their children was Robert Edward Lee, who, in childhood was a frequent visitor to the home of his mother.

“In 1613 Shirley was inhabited by Englishmen and was known as West and Shirley Hundred. It was owned by Thomas West, Lord Delaware, and his brothers, Captain Francis, Nathaniel, and John West. Some forty years later the tract was patented by Col. Edward Hill, Senior. He built ‘the old house,’ which was pulled down and rebuilt after the War Between the States, and now is known as Upper Shirley. On the death of Colonel Edward Hill, his son, of the same name, sometime Treasurer of Virginia and ‘Commander-in-Chief of Charles City and Surrey Counties,’ inherited Shirley.

“During Bacon’s Rebellion the dwelling was ransacked and plundered, and Mrs. Hill and her children were made prisoners. Edward
The Plantation House and all of the five major outbuildings are much the same today as they were over two hundred years ago.

One dozen family Oil Paintings of the period, rare antiques, and some of the outstanding English silver in America may be seen here.

The present owner is of the ninth generation of the same family to operate the plantation.

The garden is typical of the period in Virginia. The box is large and handsome. Several old plants survive notably a huge Lady Banksie rose, a camellia japonica, and a scuppernong vine. The low box walks and flower borders are generally intact.

The garden is at its best during Garden Week in Virginia. At other times it is not open to visitors.

Admission to house, $1.00, tax included. Admission to grounds and garden when garden is open, 50¢.

"One of the most interesting features of its beautiful interior is the carved walnut stair without visible support."

We believe there is no finer example of early plantation life in Virginia.

Material in quotations was taken from A Peninsula Pilgrimage by Mrs. E. V. Huntley.