

King William County Registered Historical Landmarks

Burlington



Location: Aylett Vicinity

Summary: This was the first large track of land in the Burwell grant to be sold. Lewis Burwell conveyed it in 1752 to Owen Gwathmey of King and Queen County, and the track contained 1,343 acres, which lay along the Mattaponi River. The Gwathmey family changed the name to Burlington. The two-part residence is on the top of a mound-like hilltop, which affords a fine view of the lowlands along the Mattaponi River and overlooks The Meadow plantation.

Construction Dates: The Burwell family built the original frame house in the mid eighteenth century. Dr. William Gwathmey erected an additional brick house adjacent to the frame structure circa 1842.

Architecture: The original portion of the house was two-story frame. This house became a rear wing when the brick two-story, conservative Classic Revival was constructed. The brick house underwent a treatment called pargetting (a lime, water, sand solution mixed with straw or animal hair). Cement replaced it in the late 1800's.

Early Families: The Burwell family resided at Burlington until 1752 and the Gwathmey family has lived there since that time.

Historical Significance: Prehistoric occupation – probably by Mattaponi Indians. Captain Owen Gwathmey was in the Commission of Justices and had been an officer in the militia in King and Queen County.

Chelsea



Location: West Point Vicinity

Summary: Located on the Mattaponi River, Chelsea is a brick early eighteenth century home built in a T-shaped plan whose main two-story block with hipped roof and modillion cornice faces east. A one-and-one-half story gambrel roofed rear ell projects to the west. All the brickwork is in Flemish bond; however, the two-story block is an extremely fine example of early Virginia bricklaying technique with a complete glazed header pattern, rubbed brick belt course, rubbed flat arches, and rubbed corner detailing with queen closers. Augustine Moore (1685-1743) became quite a successful planter in the area and earned the nickname of "Old Grub Moore" for his zeal in land acquisition.

Construction Dates: It is believed that the original house was built circa 1709 by Augustine Moore who had immigrated to Virginia circa 1705. His son Bernard added the house wing circa 1766.

Architecture: Five bay, two story mid-Georgian plantation with outstanding brickwork, fine paneling and a notable Georgian stair.

Early Families: Moore Family

Historical Significance: Colonel Bernard Moore (circa 1720-1772) was a successful planter, served as a justice of the peace for King William County, and was a member of the House of Burgesses. Governor Alexander Spotswood and his "Knights of the Golden Horseshoe" embarked from this plantation in 1716 on their expedition across the Blue Ridge Mountains. Lafayette camped here before the Battle of Yorktown.

Chericoke



Location: King William Courthouse vicinity

Summary: On a rise above the Pamunkey River, this plantation has been the property of the Braxton family and their descendents since the mid eighteenth century. Carter Braxton built the original house shortly after his 2nd marriage, reputedly because he wanted a home even bigger than his substantial dwelling at nearby Elsing Green.

Construction Dates: The original home was built around 1770 but destroyed by fire five years later. The present dwelling was built in 1828 by Carter Braxton's grandson.

Architecture: The plan of Chericoke is an interesting variation on the standard central passage, double-pile Georgian plan. The front tier of rooms is deeper than the rear, and the chimneys are located on the lateral partition. The hall passage is L-shaped and occupies the entire left rear corner of the house. It has many architectural parallels to Richmond homes of the era, including a formal but restrained entrance front and a porticoed garden.

Early Families: The Braxton family since mid eighteenth century

Historical Significance: A Braxton son, Carter, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Elsing Green



Location: Lanesville Vicinity

Summary: The scale and formality of this complex is accentuated on its riverside by a series of terraces, which lead to the Pamunkey River. While on the landside, the mansion is approached on axis by a long avenue about a mile in length. Elsing Green is a two-story structure built in the shape of a U. Its walls are laid in Flemish bond with random glazed headers both above and below the double molded water table cap. Rubbed brick appears at the corners and around all the windows; gauged brickwork is found in the belt course, splayed flat arches over all the windows (said to be among the deepest in Virginia), and in the pedimented entrance surround. On the riverfront, the house is seven bays long, while each side elevation is five bays with a center door. On the eastern side of the mansion is a story-and-a-half dependency, which was probably the earlier main house of the plantation. Balancing this dependency on the west is the restored kitchen. A smokehouse and dairy have been rebuilt on their old foundations and are symmetrically placed in the building complex.

Construction Dates: William Burnett Brown built the original structure circa 1690, which now serves as the east dependency. Carter Braxton built the main house circa 1758. The interior walls were destroyed by fire in the early 1800's. The brick walls survived and the house was rebuilt around them.

Architecture: Elsing Green is a distinguished and unusual example of a Virginia mansion of the mid eighteenth century; its U-shaped plan is unique for a home of its size, and the brickwork is of the highest colonial Virginia standards.

Early Families: Col William Dandridge. William Burnett Brown family and Carter Braxton family. Gregory family (eighteenth, nineteenth century). The Lafferty family from 1949 until present day.

Historical Significance: The land was conveyed to Col. John West by deed of gift from the Pamunkey Indians in the late 1600's. The land was purchased in 1753 by Carter Braxton, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Horn Quarter



Location: Hanover Courthouse Vicinity

Summary: Horn Quarter stands as one of the most impressive and highly ornamental Federal-style residences in the Commonwealth. It is located on a rise at the end of an axial farm lane. The rectangular, 57' x 40', two-story brick structure has a double-pile, central hall plan and is set on a brick foundation. All the walls are executed in notably fine Flemish bond with oiled brick. Gauged brick elliptical arches enhance both the main (south) and rear (north) entrances. A corbelled brick water table is located above the basement story. The original painted mortar joints are still visible under the south portico. The center bay of the front elevation preserves its original tetra style Roman Doric pediment portico with paired stuccoed columns and pilasters.

Construction Dates: The current house was erected in 1829-30 for George Taylor, son of the noted agrarian reformer, politician, and pamphleteer John Taylor of Caroline County.

Architecture: A Federal style residence with pediment portico, Adamesque detailing and an interior spiral staircase rising from the basement to the attic. Also noted for its plasterwork ceilings and cornices and window and door trim work.

Early Families: The property was owned by Frederick Jones (eighteenth century), then passed on to the Nelson family of Yorktown around 1770. The Taylor family resided on the property during the nineteenth century.

Historical Significance: Its craftsmanship, architectural detail and complement of outbuildings. It's also notable for remnants of elaborate terraced gardens and for being one of the earliest Virginia houses with documented indoor plumbing. Major John Nelson was the brother of Virginia Governor, Thomas Nelson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Mount Columbia

Location: Manquin Vicinity

Summary: Located in an isolated rural setting in King William County, Mount Columbia is a two-story brick residence constructed in two stages. The original section has a two-story side hall and parlor plan, while the later portion, to which it is attached as an ell, has a center-passage, single pile plan. The house is constructed of brick, finely laid in Flemish bond. The house is remarkably intact and retains its open setting with views towards the Pamunkey River. Also located on the property are a brick kitchen dependency, a family cemetery, and the vestiges of a formal garden.

Construction Dates: The rear portion was built circa 1792, and the front was added circa 1835.

Architecture: Federal

Early Families: Joseph Abrahams and Gideon Bosher family

Historical Significance: This property was originally part of a 10,000 acre parcel granted to the College of William and Mary to provide a source of income from its rent.

Roseville



Location: Mangohick Vicinity

Summary: A striking row of cedar trees welcomes guests and directs them down the path from Herring Creek Road towards Roseville Plantation. The plantation abuts the Herring Creek to the east, which has proven to be particularly advantageous and critical to its success. Roseville's contributing resources consist of a two and a half story, four bay frame dwelling with basement and a plantation office that was moved and attached in the late 1800's. Surviving outbuildings include: a one and a half story detached frame kitchen and school, a large frame granary, frame smokehouse, a privy, and a 1930's era barn. Also located on the grounds are the Ryland family cemetery, a slave cemetery and the ruins of an icehouse.

Construction Dates: The house was built in 1807. The five surviving outbuildings were built between 1820 and 1840, and the large barn around 1935.

Architecture: Early Republic – Federal. The south end features a remarkable double chimney laid in Flemish bond, with glazed headers and a pent closet the width of the chimney. The north end of the house originally had the same configuration but the west portion collapsed in the late 1800's.

Early Families: Captain John Fox family (1807-1822) and William Semple Ryland family (1822-1917).

Historical Significance: Captain John Fox was a member of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. He was a lawyer, sheriff, surveyor and one of the 12 Justices of the Court that governed King William County. John Fox's great grandfather was the first presiding justice of the King William Court (1702), a magistrate, a county sheriff and represented King William County in the Virginia House of Burgesses. Henry donated two acres of land to King William County which became the sight of the first county courthouse.

Seven Springs



Location: Enfield Vicinity

Summary: Seven Springs is situated on the Mehixen Swamp near the Pamunkey River. It is a striking and unusual specimen of eighteenth century Tidewater domestic architecture. Its odd, square, central-chimney plan, one not found in any other known Virginia house, lends additional interest to a house distinguished by its excellent brickwork, clipped gables, T-chimney, and fine surviving interior details. The exterior of the house remains substantially as it was when it was erected.

Construction Dates: Built circa 1725-1740 by the Dabney family and remodeled in early 1800's.

Architecture: Small brick colonial manor home, square plan with center chimney. It is three bays long, with doors in the southern bay of each facade and in the west bay of the north end.

Early Families: Built for Captain George Dabney and remained in the Dabney family for four generations. Early in the nineteenth century, Seven Springs was sold to an A. B. Pullen and descended through the Pullen and Atkinson families into the twentieth century.

Historical Significance: Captain George Dabney received a land grant in St. John's Parish (then King and Queen County) in 1701. Dabney, described as "Gent." in early documents, was a prominent figure in the early history of King William

County. He served as a member of the County Court from the county's organization in 1702 until at least 1716, as its first sheriff, and as an original feoffee of Delawaretown (now West Point) in 1706. In 1722, the legislature authorized the establishment of a ferry at Dabney's plantation.

Sweet Hall



Location: Sweet Hall Vicinity

Summary: Sweet Hall is situated on an open tract of land overlooking broad reaches of marshland at a bend of the Pamunkey River. It is a story-and-a-half, asymmetrical, T-shaped structure built of brick laid in English bond throughout, except for the (south) front, which is in Flemish bond with glazed headers above the beveled water table. The house was covered with scored stucco early in the nineteenth century; this survives on most of the principal facade, and on the east wall of the ell.

Construction Dates: Home probably constructed late in the first quarter of the eighteenth century for Thomas Claiborne

Architecture: The T-shaped, brick manor house is a significant example of Virginia's rare pre-Georgian architecture. Its fine brickwork, unusual plan, and surviving interior appointments would in themselves distinguish Sweet Hall; but its upper-cruck (curved timbers support both roof and walls) is one of only three found in America to date. The main block is five bays long and a nineteenth-century porch shelters the central three bays of the facade. Five gabled Greek Revival dormers break the front slope. Two interior end chimneys with T-shaped stacks, and elaborately molded caps surmount the main block.

Early Families: Thomas Clairborne (1680-1723) grandson of Secretary of the Colony, William Clairborne

Historical Significance: The only surviving home in Virginia with the unique upper-cruck roof and wall support. Aside from its unusual roof framing, Sweet Hall, with its T-plan, formal façade, elaborate T-shaped chimney stacks and hall-parlor plan is one of the states most impressive pre-Georgian manor houses. Also, because of its proximity to New Kent Court House a ferry was located at Sweet Hall in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Windsor Shades



Location: Sweet Hall Vicinity

Summary: Windsor Shades, also known as Waterville, is a strikingly handsome, little-altered Tidewater planter's house situated on the Pamunkey River about ten miles above West Point. The house sits in a small open area between the river and a pond and is shielded from the public road by a stand of evergreen trees. The dwelling is a story and a half, five bay, gambrel roofed structure built of frame, covered with beaded weatherboards and set on a low, English-bond brick basement. The feature for which the house is renowned is the massive Flemish bond brick chimney stacks at either end. The east chimneys consist of double stacks with three sets of tiled weatherings on each and with a two-story pent between them. In the basement there is an unusually large cooking fireplace topped by a segmental arch. The fireplace is served by the south flue of the east chimneys.

Construction Dates: Most likely built by Augustine Claiborne (Great Grandson of Secretary William Claiborne) in 1745.

Architecture: Architectural interest of this frame Tidewater Planter's home is its gambrel roof, high-quality eighteenth and early nineteenth century interiors and for its well-known massive Flemish-bond brick chimney structures.

Early Families: The property was part of the 1600 acre grant to William Claiborne in 1657. Augustine Claiborne sold the house to Thomas Dansie who established a ferry at the site in 1753. The property was sold to Robert Ruffin in 1768, and to Edward Pye Chamberlayne in 1786.

Historical Significance: The house site was the location of a Native American village on John Smith's 1607 map. By virtue of its location on the river at a point close to New Kent Court House, it was the site of a heavily traveled ferry from 1753 to 1927. The house served as a tavern for the ferry (often referred to as Ruffin's Ferry) and was an important Colonial site used for people coming from and going to Williamsburg. George Washington was a frequent visitor to the tavern. The Marquis de LaFayette visited the house in August 1781, and Generals Washington and Rochambeau crossed at the ferry on September 14, 1781 on their way to the Battle of Yorktown.

Wyoming



Location: Etna Mills Vicinity

Summary: The house is dramatically situated on the edge of a narrow plateau overlooking the bottomlands of the Pamunkey River. The setting is completely rural, consisting mostly of open fields but with trees along the river and adjoining creeks. Wyoming is a two-story, five-bay frame house set on a Flemish-bond underpinning and flanked by tall Flemish-bond brick chimneys with a single set of stepped weathering's. Wyoming has a simple central passage, single-pile plan that is unusual principally for its outsized proportions. It is fifty-five feet long and twenty-five feet deep. Normally houses of this sort are forty-five to fifty feet long and not much more than twenty feet deep. This large scale is maintained in the vertical dimensions as well and the first-floor ceilings are over eleven feet high.

Construction Dates: The house was built around 1800 for the Hoomes family, large landowners in the western Tidewater.

Architecture: Architecturally the large two-story frame house maintains the traditional Virginia-Georgian flavor of earlier decades; however, it departs from the norm with its exceptionally generous proportions. Exterior dimensions and room sizes are all considerably greater than similar Tidewater houses built either before or after the Revolution. Wyoming may be the largest house of its plan type (hall-parlor, central passage) in Virginia. The house is further distinguished by its elegant detailing, including its exterior modillion.

Early Families: John Hoomes of Caroline County bought the Wyoming tract from Thomas R. Rootes in 1796. John Hoomes is the apparent builder of the house, erected for his son George W. Hoomes.

Historical Significance: Its name may allude to the Revolutionary battle of Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania, or to the Indian word for "plain."
