

1. SUBJECT:

"Effingham". (PW-111)

2. LOCATION:

5 miles east of State Route #233. 10 miles from Manassas, Virginia.

3. DATE:

1745.

4. OWNERS:

The land on which "Effingham" was built was a grant from George III, to a Mr. Alexander who built the house now standing. The first recorded deed is in Deed Book Y, Folio 375, which is a deed of gift of the tract from the Effingham grant, from Gerard Alexander to Phillip Fitzhugh. It has since passed through various hands, the Howisons, the Loves, and to William Green, but all are family connections. In fact there was no sale out of the family until Mr. Green sold it to Joseph Horn, in 1921. Deed Book 76. The Horn family still own and occupy "Effingham".

5. DESCRIPTION:

This home gives a remarkable picture of a plantation before the war. As one approaches the house from the road (Route #646) by the long lane which extends nearly one fourth of a mile the effect is of a small village. The first building inside the gate is the smith's shop, a stone building with two large doors. The wide lawn is shaded by fine old trees, some of them of great age, and the house itself is beautiful and dignified, even in decay. To the left of the house is the coach house, and in the recollection of the older inhabitants the coach with the high drivers seat was still housed there. When they wanted to make room for another carriage a hole was made in the end of the house and the pole of the coach run through it, so there would be more room.

A few rods from the coach house is the weaving house, a two room frame building, the shingles of which are worn to almost paper thinness. There is a stone chimney and fireplace in the weaving room, and the loft was used for storing flax, and etc. The other room once had large bins and presses, and is supposed to have been a tobacco room. The ice house is quite near, and also the sites of several other buildings on this side of the house.

To the west, and approached by a wide flagstone walk is the outer kitchen, with its huge fireplace and a large pot still hanging from the crane. While the

present fireplace is notably large, it is not the original one which was four feet wider than this one, and had large ovens on either side. As the chimney needed to be repaired some years ago, the fireplace was torn down, and the present one put there, but it is very fine, and larger than the ones usually seen today. Back of this is the stone ash house, and a row of cabins, all with two stone chimneys, and one with an outside fireplace for heating water for washing. One of these cabins, up to a few months ago, had the old wooden latches. There are also a large smoke house, and a well house. The large barn which stood to the north of the house was forty by fifty feet, weatherboarded, and had floors two inches thick, put down with wooden pegs. This was a basement barn, and also had a mill which was run by horse power. While all the outbuildings are in bad repair, the atmosphere of the past is so striking that one can almost expect the negroes to come around the corner.

At the rear of the house is a terraced garden, with the remains of the flower lined walk that led to the sunken garden, which is said to have been the first in America. The terraces are at least sixty feet apart, and were once connected by a turf walk, flanked with shrubs, the scions of which linger on. Here were some of the finest fruits, and a vineyard, rows of gooseberry bushes, and currant, and beyond these, the kitchen garden. The lawn and the entire yard, including the cabins, was enclosed by a plank fence.

The house itself is distinguished by very fine chimneys, twin chimneys at each end, with a window and closet in each, the base of which extends nearly the width of the house. The weatherboarding was, all yellow poplar, and some of the original is in use now. One enters the house by a large double door with a wide hall which extends through the house with like doors at the rear. These once opened on a porch the same as the one at the front of the house, but that has been allowed to fall to decay, and the doors are permanently closed with the old night bar. The inner walls are very thick as can be seen by the arched doorways leading from the hall. This arch is elaborately carved, and there is a stairway which once led to the wine cellar, the racks of which were still there until a few years ago. The drawing room was entirely panelled, and had a remarkable mantel, and also a corner cupboard which is rarely seen outside of a museum. The panelling has been removed and sold, it is rumored for one thousand dollars.

The hall and three remaining rooms on the first floor were also wainscoted with some very fine panelling, and there were two other lovely mantels and fine cornices. There are six rooms on the second floor, all of which have chair rails, and fireplaces, and there is also a very large linen closet. There are two finished rooms in the attic. The cellar is composed, of four rooms and here the remarkable beams can be seen. They are eighteen inches square, and run the length of the house, one side showing the strokes of the

broad axe, the other of a whip saw. The floors of the cabins, and also of the outer kitchen were flag stone.

5. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

"Effingham" has such a colorful past that much could be written of the scenes which have been enacted there, and the characters who have played their parts on its stage. The house is said to have been built by convict labor, brought here from England, and all of the woodwork was imported and transported from Dumfries over the old road which once went close to the house on the southeast. This was one of the first roads in the county which led to the "Back woods", going on through what is now Catletts, being the one taken for transporting the hogsheads of tobacco from this section to the warehouses at Dumfries.

This was the scene of lavish entertainment, and the meeting place for many whose names have come down in history. John Love who was one of the owners of "Effingham" was an engineer, and laid out the Warrenton-Alexander Pike. During the War Between the States the spacious lawn here was a favorite place for various Companies of Union Cavalry to camp, and in many of the old trees there can still be seen the rings which were put there for fastening the horses. There were several sick and wounded from a Louisiana Regiment cared for by the mistress of "Effingham".

There were formerly about sixty slaves owned by the Alexanders and later by the Howisons, and none were sold at a distance until Jim, the coachman, acquired the habit of stealing. His master refused to believe it when first told, but some of the other slaves were indignant about it, and watched and caught him in the act. He begged to be whipped and allowed to remain but as there was never any whipping at "Effingham", for the morals of the other slaves he had to be sold.

To the east is a large graveyard, well fenced, where rests those whose lives were so closely connected with "Effingham". Inscriptions in this graveyard are as follows:

Sacred to the memory of Lucy Farrow, consort of Benj. Farrow, born on the 20th of July, 1776, and departed this life on the 22d of June, 1849. "Her children rise up and call her blessed her husband also, he praiseth her."

In Memory of Benj. Farrow, born the 4th of December, 1773, and departed this life October 18th, 1845. "Hear council and receive instruction, that ye mayst be wiser in thy later end."

Died January 19th, 1844, Lucy C. Howison, aged some 12 days. "And a little child shall lead them".

James Howison, born July 3d, 1804, died May 19th, 1874.

Though lost to sight to memory dear. William Alexander, departed this life the 3rd day of April, 1811(1814?), aged 70 years.

Sacred to the Memory of Elizabeth W. Howison, consort of Charles G. Howison, who died April 12th, 1851, aged 27 yrs., 6 months, 4 days. "And she -- (the rest could not be deciphered).

Sacred to the Memory of Frederick H. Muschett, who departed this life April 5th, 1852, in his 52d year.

Harriet W. D. Beadle, born April 30th, 1793, died January 18th, 1871. "She is not dead, but sleepeth".

Allen Howison, born October 29th, 1797, died April 20th, 1876. "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved".

Sacred to the Memory of Amanda, beloved wife of James Howison, born June 22nd, 1815, died September 26th, 1866.

William Alexander Dade, born 1785, died 1829.

Daniel McLean, son of Daniel and Lucretia McLean, of Alexandria, D. C., died September 12th, 1828, aged 25 years.

There are other inscriptions of more recent date, as this cemetery is still used by members of the family. There are also many graves which are marked by a bit of field stone without any inscriptions.

7. ART:

Photograph.

8. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Informants: Mrs. Celesting Brown, Nokesville, Virginia,
Mr. William Green, Haymarket, Virginia,
Mrs. E. H. Hibbs, Grant Avenue, Manassas, Virginia.

Prince William County Court Records.

Research made by
Susan Rogers Morton,
Haymarket, Virginia.

August 31, 1937