

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION OF VIRGINIA  
HISTORICAL INVENTORY

7

COUNTY: Prince William

CLASS: Home

--- "SHELTER" ---

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VA MICROFILM 975.5 VIR (order # 167 on film)

1. SUBJECT:

"Shelter".

2. LOCATION:

Off Waterfall, Catharpin Road, east of Wooley, Virginia. 7 miles from Haymarket, Virginia, going out the Carolina Road to Woolsey, then turning to the right. First lane on the left, not the first gate.

3. DATE:

About 1770.

4. OWNERS:

"Shelter" was built as a summer home for Martin Cockburn, of Springfield, (close to Mount Vernon and Gunston Hall). Martin Cockburn married a Miss Bronough and, having no children, the estate passed to her family, the Tylers, in whose possession it has been ever since. It is at present owned and occupied by Mr. Bailey Tyler.

5. DESCRIPTION:

As this old house has been built at three different periods it is rather hard to describe it. The right and that part which is to the east is evidently the oldest. At the time the present owner came there was still a dirt floor in the basement kitchen, and a large fireplace with spit and crane. This part naturally is of stone, but the upper stories of this part are built of logs, weatherboarded over. The other part of the house is of frame entirely, made of hand-hewn laths and beams. The old brass hardware is very lovely. The original Cockburn tract contained one thousand, one hundred acres, but there are only three hundred and twenty-eight acres at the present time.

6. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Apart from the very beautiful old furniture with which the house is filled, there is a remarkably fine library, many of the books being a part of some of the Dumfries homes, as the Tylers came from there. There are numerous books with Martin Cockburn's name in them, some of his old school books with drawings that have been a part of school boy life in different generations; no doubt some of them caricatures of his tutors, Ludwell Lee, Lee Massy, John Linton, and other names- a fascinating collection.

There is also an old and valuable map on the wall in the wide entrance hall, a very fine chandelier in the drawing



room, lovely acorn beds, and many things it would take long to see.

Mr. Robert Tyler, the father of the present owner, graduated from Princeton, in 1819, at the age of nineteen, with the medal for oratory. He later served in the 8th Virginia Regiment, and he and Runy Lee were held as hostages at Fort Lafayette. Captain Tyler lived at "Milpark", about three miles from "Shelter", on the Carolina Road, prior to 1847, but at that time enlarged "Shelter", moving what had at one time been a part of a boy's school, on the land across the road on what is known as "Snow Hill", and later abandoned. There are many interesting stories told of "Shelter" and ghosts. One of the heavy doors which leads to the dining room at times noiselessly opens, the latch lifting as if the invisible, well-trained butler was there, but the other spectral visitors were not such gentle spirits, for they manifest themselves in strange noises and spectral lights.

The story is told of a family who once lived there as tenants called the "Rattlesnake Grahams", which name was apparently due to their ill tempers. At the death of the head of the family, a very old woman, the horses refused to pull the corpse to the grave across the field to the cemetery, where so many of the Tylers are now sleeping. Other horses were found, but they too refused, and it was not until the wagon was hitched to some oxen that the corpse found a resting place, and even the oxen were very unwilling to pull it, but that night the stock got in the graveyard and exhumed the body.

The unhappy spirit was supposed to dwell in a large tree close to the house, and for years the ivy which grew verdantly at the base would die as soon as it reached a certain height. Time and storms have broken the old tree, and evidently the vengeful spirit is released, for now the ivy grows unblighted, and there is a peaceful spirit about the old house.

There was considerable skirmishing about here during the war. Union troops were camped to the south of the house, and after one of the raids which they made often one of the most valuable books was found in the woods by one of the children, none the worse for the adventure. It is now in Mr. Tyler's possession. There have also been found many Indian relics about here, as "Snow Hill", their camping ground, was not far away.

7. ART:

8. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Informants: Mr. Bailey Tyler, Haymarket, Virginia.  
Miss Maude Ewell, Haymarket, Virginia.



ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING CALLED FOR IN  
S-A. of BULLETIN 3400

3686

Name of Building "SHELTER"

EXTERIOR

1. Building Plan Rectangular Cellar (X)
2. No. of stories: ( 2 ) Attic classed as 1/2 story.
3. Material: Brick ( ) Frame ( X ) Stone ( ) Log ( X )
4. If brick, state what bond: Flemish ( ) English ( ) Common ( ) Other ( )
5. Kind of roof: Hip ( ) Gabled ( X ) Gambrel ( ) Lean-to ( ) Deck ( )
6. If church, describe or draw sketch of roof on reverse side.
7. Roof Material: Slate ( ) Shingle ( X ) Metal ( ) Tile ( )
8. Chimneys: Number ( 3 ) Brick ( ) Stone ( X ) Location Ends and middle
9. Weatherboarding: X Beaded ( X ) Plain ( )
10. Cornices: Plain or Elaborate Plain Material Wood
11. Windows: Number ( 24 ) Size and number of panes 12 and 15 panes
12. Shutters: Describe: None
13. Dormers: Number, and Shape of roof One, gabled.
14. Porch: Portico
15. Type of Entrance: Door with fan light.
16. Columns: Doric ( ) Ionic ( ) Corinthian ( ) Square ( )

INTERIOR

17. No. of Rooms: ( 8 ) Large ( X ) Small ( ) Approx. ceiling height. Various heights.
18. Stairway: Open String ( X ) Closed String ( ) Describe: Plain. Rather wide
19. Cellar: Describe Under old part. Used as dining room and kitchen.
20. Doors: Style and type of wood Two and six panels. Mostly painted.
21. Walls: Panelled, papered or painted Papered and painted.
22. Interior Cornices Plain.
23. Hardware: Locks and hinges Brass locks and knobs. "HL" hinges.
24. Floors: Wide, irregular boards.
25. Mantels: Plain, but splendid lines.
26. Misc: Added to many times, it is hard to describe.
27. Present condition, and state if spoiled architecturally by remodelling: Remodelling done with taste and forethought.
28. Does occupant seem to appreciate old architectural features? Yes.

Your Name Susan Rogers Morton.