1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **PRESTWOULD**

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: US Route 15 Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Clarksville Vicinity: NA

State: Virginia County: Mecklenburg Code: 117 Zip Code: 23927

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	___
Public-Local:	___	District:	X
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6	1	buildings
3	___	sites
2	2	structures
___	___	objects
11	2	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Sub:
Domestic	Single Dwelling
Domestic	Secondary Structure
Domestic	Multiple Dwelling
Agriculture	Processing
Funerary	Cemetery
Domestic	Garden

Current:	Sub:
Recreation/Culture	Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Georgian

Materials:

Foundation:	Sandstone
	Brick
Walls:	Sandstone
	Weatherboard
Roof:	Tin
	Wood
Other:	

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Prestwould, the historic home and plantation of four generations of the Skipwith family, is located in a rural setting near the small town of Clarksville and approximately two miles from US Route 15, a north-south road that has connected agricultural communities in Virginia's Piedmont since the eighteenth century. Set on a hill, the large Georgian ashlar stone house and its supporting domestic and agricultural buildings have a commanding view of the Roanoke River Valley and the now-inundated confluence of the Dan and Stanton Rivers (the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Roanoke River to create Buggs Island Lake in the 1960s). Expansive lawns roll away from the house toward the south and the river. An unpaved axial road lined with low rubble stone walls approaches the plantation past the site of a large 1790s stable (burned c.1969) to the domestic center of the plantation which is surrounded by a rectangular stone wall. The Skipwith family cemetery stands visibly to the east of the main house, just inside the compound and surrounded by its own wall. The domestic core of Prestwould was one of the most substantial home plantation complexes constructed in post-Revolutionary Virginia, and survives remarkably intact. The main house, summerhouse, office, loom house, store, smoke houses and rare surviving slave house retain the spatial relationships they have held since their construction. The main house (1795), the plantation office (1780s), a large garden (c. 1801), and the Skipwith family cemetery form the core of the complex and are separated by stone walls from the plantation's work buildings. A plantation store (1790s), a loom house (c. 1830), two meat houses (1790s), and a slave house (1780s) are all located on the down slope of the complex, east and below the main house. This arrangement evokes the interactions between Prestwould's owners – most durably Lady Jean Skipwith (1748-1826) and her husband Sir Peyton Skipwith (1740-1805) – and their African-American slaves. Most of the building fabric dates from the first phase of construction, begun by Sir Peyton Skipwith in the 1780s. The second Skipwith generation to live at Prestwould, Humberston and his wife Lelia, made modest changes to the plantation in the 1830s.

1. Plantation House (1795, 1830s) - -Contributing building

Prestwould Plantation House is a rectangular, two-story, edifice with a hipped roof constructed of cream-colored sandstone, roughly squared and laid with wide raised joints originally painted to make the stone blocks look more regular than they are. Completed in 1795, the house stands on sloping ground at the center of an ensemble of frame ancillary buildings. The house is relatively plain and has much in common with the large plantation houses Virginia's planter gentry built in the decades that preceded the American Revolution.[1] There are gable-roof porches on both the principal (north) façade, which faces the entrance road, and the matched rear (south) façade, which faces the Roanoke River (now Buggs Island Lake). Doric columns set on plinths support pediments with modillions and porch railings executed in a Chippendale style. A third porch, built to match the original porches, was added to the west side of the house in the 1820s. A bell system, first installed in the 1790s to summon slaves, was rearranged so that the call bells rang on this new porch. Two chimneys constructed of the same stone blocks pierce the low-hipped roof. Beneath new raised-seam metal roofing installed in 1995 there remain two earlier roofs, an 1830s roof consisting of metal shingles and a 1790s roof made of round-butt wooden shingles beneath that. The two chimneys contain multiple flues for fireplaces in the four corner rooms on all three floors. The central spaces on all three floors are unheated. The present exterior shutters were added in the 1830s; most of the shutter catches date from that installation. All the sash windows on the first floor are nine-over-nine, while the widows on the second floor are six-over-six. The windows that

[1] A letter from William R. Curtis, who lived at Brandon in Prince George County, Virginia, to Sir Peyton Skipwith indicates that Skipwith intended to copy Maycox, a former residence of his brother-in-law John Ravenscroft also in Prince George County (Skipwith Papers, Ms C8, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia).

provide light for the work and storage rooms in the cellar retain many of their transom bars inside stationary nine pane windows.

The framing system used for the roof includes principal trusses that consist of kingposts, braces, principal rafters and joists. Heavy chamfers that terminated in lamb's tongues decorate the kingposts, an interesting feature given that the attic was likely never intended for use. Kingposts are closely spaced and tenoned into a large ridge board that runs from the peak of one hip to the peak of the other. Common rafters extend uninterrupted from the plate to the ridge. Kneewall studs support the rafters.

Outwardly conventional, Prestwould's interior is remarkable for its juxtaposition of woodwork that reflects conservative architectural tastes with a circulation pattern as sophisticated as that of any large eighteenth-century house in America. What architectural historians Edward Chappell and White Graham of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation have called the "marked division between rooms used for entertainment, family life and service" can be viewed as the culmination of a process that began in the Chesapeake a century earlier.[2] Evidence for the preference wealthy Virginians expressed for the careful delineation of public from private rooms survives in the names Sir Peyton Skipwith gave rooms in his new house.[3] Prestwould's plan, by means of service stairs, service entrances, and service closets that doubled as service passages, imposed these attitudes on the household, segregating service functions from both public and private rooms and the activities that they contained. Prestwould's floor plan also created a circulation pattern that rigorously channeled interaction between the family and the enslaved Africans who provided all household services. Prestwould's plan, in other words, provides good evidence, first, of the evolution and increasing sophistication of interior circulation patterns within the houses built by Virginia's wealthy eighteenth-century planters, and second, the growing segregation of room function that was both a reflection of the pursuit of architectural refinement in late eighteenth-century Virginia and evidence of continual adjustments to an enslaved labor force.

Four rooms occupy the corners of both principal floors. The front door opens into an entrance hall that occupies less than half the depth of the house. This room was the mansion's only true public room, and it was this room that regulated access to the rest of the house. Beyond the hall is a deeper square saloon (identified by this term in Peyton Skipwith's 1805 inventory) that opens onto the riverside porch and contains a wide stairway that rises along two walls within a generous stairwell. The stairwell occupies most of the upper public circulation space that otherwise wraps around three sides on the second floor. The two rooms on the west side of the hall on the first floor housed reception rooms; the dining room is to the north and a drawing room to the south. Private family rooms were placed to the east of the hall. Most rooms have some means of service or private access through lobbies beside chimneys in addition to doorways that open into the three central spaces. A cellar stair rises under the main stair and opens into a lobby between the two northeast first-floor rooms, called in Skipwith's inventory a bedchamber and parlor. The west exterior side door opens into a lobby containing a service stair and access to the front room. The service stair leads to the second-floor bedroom above it but not down to the cellar. All the upper rooms listed in the inventory are called bedrooms rather than chambers. Closets with sizable shelves connect the two east bedrooms and the dining room and drawing room on the first floor. Only the south bedroom lacks some secondary means of access; in contrast, only the dining room and bedroom above it had direct service access from outside. There are two small rooms at the head of the stairs on the second floor; both are unheated. The northeastern one communicates with the north bedroom, as though it was intended as a dressing room, nursery, or servant's room. The house is unusual in the amount of finished space set aside for storage closets, many of which retain their original fixtures.

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[2] Edward Chappell and Wille Graham, "Prestwould Architecture," *The Magazine Antiques* 147 (1995): 158.
[3] Peyton Skipwith , will dated 1803-1807, Will Book 5, pp. 301-306, Mecklenburg County.

Decorative woodwork throughout the house is unusually uniform in contrast to the distinctions in finish between best rooms and secondary rooms that craftsmen typically applied in the Chesapeake. All the principal rooms have flush-panel wainscoting, cornices, and classical mantels with eccentric cornices and friezes over architrave surrounds. The house retains much of its original wall covering. First-generation wallpaper had small, repetitive botanical patterns. Most of this paper was covered on the first floor by bolder scenic French wallpaper installed by Humberston and Lelia Skipwith in 1831. Most of an extensive servant bell system installed in the 1790s survives, indicating that slaves at the kitchen, outside, or (after the 1820s) on the west side porch were summoned by bells hung on the west side of the house. The dining room retains its original hand-powered ceiling fan.

2. Office (1780s) – Contributing building

An early frame office/work building now stands closest to the house. One-and-a half stories on a raised, uncoursed stone foundation, the office has a porch that faces the plantation house. The porch also overlooks the plantation's work yard and the frame buildings that dribble downhill along a lane that leads to the river. The porch has three turned columns which support a full Ionic entablature and a shallow hipped roof, and the railing between the columns is done in Chippendale style. Thus the office porch reflects, in a simplified manner, the porches on the plantation house. The porch shelters two doorways, one originally entering a small storage room and the other a stair lobby leading to a counting room on the first floor and to attic quarters (living space, conceivably, for an employee of low but trusted status) above. The interior finishes of the rooms on both floors are generally intact. The cellar contains a rough workroom thought to have been used as a kitchen when Peyton Skipwith lived at Prestwould during construction of the nearby main house in 1789-94 and again after abandonment of the separate c.1790s kitchen (destroyed c.1950) which stood to the southwest (the ruins of this early kitchen have not been explored archaeologically). There is a separate entrance to the cellar workroom by a doorway on the downhill, or west side of the main house, facing away from the house but into the work yard.

3. Plantation Store (1780s, c. 1880) – Contributing building

A lane descends to the west through the compound, past a c.1790s plantation store and workers's quarters. The frame store has two square rooms one of which was heated by an exterior rubble stone chimney. The interiors of both rooms have conventional early interior finish: lathe and plaster walls with simple window and door casing. A door with a small, unglazed opening separated an unheated sales room on the south from the heated counting room on the north. Much of the original exterior cladding has been lost but the rear, or west, wall retains a significant surviving section of first period exterior finish. Long sawn and beaded weatherboards feathered at the ends are fastened to the building frame with hand-headed wrought iron nails. The store was simply remodeled as a workers's house after the Civil War. During this renovation, matchboard sheathing was applied to some section of ceiling and interior wall.

While this building was used as the plantation's store, it was used for storing commodities needed to clothe and feed the residents of Prestwould home quarter and its outlying quarters. By the antebellum period, several hundred slaves resided at Prestwould and quarters located on farms that occupied a large island, now inundated, that lay at the junction of the Stanton and Dan Rivers.

4. Slave House (1780s) – Contributing building

Beyond the store is a two-family slave house, the only survivor of a larger group noted as the "New Quarter" on a 1798 Prestwould plat now in the Prestwould Foundation's collection. The surviving building began as a single-room house, measuring 12 by 16 feet. During its first phase, this dwelling was covered by riven

clapboard roof and siding and had an exterior end chimney. This small, roughly-finished house is a rare survival and may very well be the earliest known surviving fully detached workers's house in the Chesapeake. This house was enlarged to house two families about 1830-40 when two-unit, central-chimney quarters had become more standard slave housing throughout the South. When enlarged, the house provided separate access by separate exterior doorways for the two families who lived there. The original west weatherboarded gable end of the first period house survives encased by the second period addition. Through both periods, this dwelling had rough plank floors, shuttered windows, unplastered walls and wide hearths.

Another two-family house survived in ruins opposite it, to the north, into the late twentieth century and was partially recorded in Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) drawings. The building was in an advanced state of collapse in the 1980s when the staff of the architectural research department of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation systematically documented the complex for the Prestwould Foundation. It has now disappeared entirely; its ruin has not been investigated archaeologically.

5. Loom House/Quarter (c.1830s, c.1900) – Contributing building

A distinctive frame building called a loom house was built in the plantation's work yard c.1830s on a site between the plantation office and two early meathouses. Constructed on a rubble stone foundation, the steeply pitched gable roof of this rectangular building has a metal raised seam covering. Three doorways pierce the southern façade, the front of the building that faces the plantation work yard. The outermost doors open into two substantial first floor workrooms. The central doorway has side lights and originally opened into a lighted lobby that led, via separate stairs, to two attic quarters. A central chimney, demolished about 1900 when the plan of this building was altered, once provided fireplaces for all four rooms.

6. and 7. Smoke House (c. 1794 - 1815) and Meat House – Contributing buildings

Two square stone buildings built on the western edge of the Prestwould ensemble of work buildings were employed through most of the plantation's history in the curing and storage of meat. Constructed during the first phase of construction at the plantation, these two buildings lay to the north and west of the loom house along a lane, now only faintly visible, that led to the plantation's approach road and that provided a second means of access to the plantation's work yards. Both buildings also lay outside the stone walls that enclose the formal yards, garden, and buildings that form the core of the plantation. Timber roof frames form pyramidal roofs now clad with v-crimped metal panels.

8. Summerhouse (c. 1801) – Contributing building

A summerhouse, the most elaborate of Prestwould's outbuildings, occupies a site beyond the southern edge of the plantation's large formal garden. Tradition holds that Lady Jean Skipwith designed this octagonal frame structure to complement the garden she had installed to the east of the plantation house about 1801. Set on a high raised foundation of roughly squared sandstone blocks, the summerhouse has an unusually high level of architectural finish that betrays its high status. The summerhouse sits beyond the border of the garden separate and apart from the garden in a manner that insulated its elite function from the garden and the rest of the plantation complex. A straight run of wooden steps on the southern front of the building lead up to an uncovered porch whose side railings match those on the large porches of the plantation house (the steps and railings have been removed for restoration). The elevated room contains refined finish paralleling that found in the main house, with wainscot, plaster walls, and a cornice. Original internal louvered shutters slide horizontally into wall pockets. Below it is an unfinished room probably used as a gardening shed and root

storage space with enclosed stairs and a doorway modestly facing toward the northeast. The summerhouse provides a view of the garden that stretches away to the north, and of the Roanoke River Valley to the south.

9. Cemetery (19th and 20th century) – Contributing site

A small family cemetery is located inside the stone walls that surround the gardens of the main house and inside cemetery walls that date from the first half of the nineteenth century. These walls retain their original gate hardware including wrought iron pintels, latch catch and stop. Sixteen monuments marking the burials of Skipwith family members from the early nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century remain in the cemetery. Among the markers are those erected in memory of Sir Peyton Skipwith (1740-1805) and his second wife Lady Jean Skipwith (1748-1826).

10. Garden (c. 1801) – Contributing site

In 1801 surveyor Samuel Dedman received $22 for "my services in building [the] Garden" at Prestwould.[4] The symmetrical T-shaped arrangement of parterres is comparable in scale to the large more rectilinear gardens installed before the Revolution at King's Mill, Carter's Grove, and other large gentry estates in eastern Virginia. The gardens at Prestwould are located to the east of the main house. The principal east-west axis extends from the house to the family cemetery. The longer north-south axis is 230 feet in length and is intersected by other crosswalks, each 15 feet wide that create generous parterres. Into these parterres Lady Jean Skipwith set what she called "simples," geometric plantings of annuals, vegetables, and ornamental shrubs. The geometry of this grid of walks, parterres and beds seems not to have a formal relationship to either the house or the cemetery.

A thin rectangular greenhouse stood at the northwest corner of the garden. Constructed about 1801 as part of the garden's original design, only the foundation of squared sandstone and an open cellar remain visible (the upper structure disappeared early in the twentieth century apparently without being photographed). The Garden Club of Virginia supported an interpretative restoration of the garden in 1980 that was directed by landscape architect Rudy J. Favretti.

A number of gateways pierce the walls that surround the garden and the plantation compound. The largest, at the approach road, retains original stone finials and wrought-iron gates complete with hardware. Smaller gateways have wooden gates based on an identifiable one recorded in a c.1890s photograph.

11. Well House (c. 1940) – Non-contributing structure (outside the period of significance)

To the west of the plantation house and abutting the stone wall that separates the house from the plantation's work buildings is a square stone well house with a pyramidal roof. The form and materials used in the construction of this twentieth-century building mimics the surviving meat house and smoke house. Irregularly coursed rubble stone walls set with Portland cement mark this as a modern building. Oral tradition and photographs place its construction just before World War II. Built to shelter a modern well, the building now contains pumps that still supply the plantation with water.

Current Use

[4] Skipwith Papers, Special Collections, box XXI, folder 32, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Prestwould has been owned and administered since 1963 by the Prestwould Foundation as an historic site. The Historic American Buildings Survey recorded the plantation in 1974 as a prelude to restoration; the Architectural Research Department of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has conducted additional research and completed additional documentation drawings of all surviving buildings. A program of sensitive repairs and restoration has been pursued since the late 1980s including repointing the sandstone masonry walls of the plantation house, restoring the graining of interior doors, and conserving the wallpapers installed in 1795 and 1831.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:_

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B_ C_ D_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A_ B_ C_ D_ E_ F_ G_

NHL Criteria:

NHL Theme(s):

Areas of Significance: Social history
Ethnic heritage/Black
Landscape architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1782-1865

Significant Dates: 1795, 1801, 1831

Significant Person(s): Sir Peyton Skipwith, Lady Jean Skipwith

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder: Skipwith, Sir Peyton
Skipwith, Lady Jean
Inge, John, carpenter
Shelor, Jacob, mason

Historic Contexts: XVI. Architecture
C. Federal (1780-1820)
XVII. Landscape Architecture
XXX. American Ways of Life
A. Slavery and Plantation Life

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Prestwould is significant as the most intact and best documented plantation surviving in Southside Virginia and as the home to four generations of the Skipwith family who resided there from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Sir Peyton Skipwith, a third generation resident of Virginia, purchased the site as he expanded land holdings in Mecklenburg County prior to the American Revolution. Among the largest plantation complexes built in Post-Revolutionary Virginia, Prestwould was planned and built by Sir Peyton and Lady Jean Skipwith soon after their marriage in 1788. The formal geometries of the house and garden Lady Jean designed in 1801, contrast with the surviving plantation buildings that straggle down the hill toward the river. Prestwould's significance also stems from these humble buildings and their links to hundreds of enslaved African men and women who also lived and labored there prior to Emancipation. An office, a loom house/quarter, two meat houses, a store, and the last survivor of a cluster of slave houses are unparalleled as a group in the amount of original fabric that survives. Of particular significance is the surviving slave house, quite possibly the oldest surviving frame slave dwelling in the American South. This dwelling is a significant surviving link to the experiences of enslaved Africans, not only those who lived and worked at Prestwould but the majority of slaves in Virginia and the upper South whose lives were shaped and constrained by the experience of living and working in large work gangs like those at Prestwould. A rich legacy of surviving plantation manuscripts make Prestwould almost unique in the potential to explore the relationship of race, gender, architectural design, household furnishings, and household function in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Historical Summary

Four generations of Skipwith owners managed Prestwould Plantation from its creation on the eve of the American Revolution until 1914. Sir Peyton Skipwith (1740-1805) made his home on lands he purchased in the 1760s and where he and his wife Lady Jean (1748-1826) completed in 1795 a large neoclassical stone house that remained in the family until 1914. Lady Jean managed the plantation from her husband's death in 1805 until the end of her life. At Prestwould, Lady Jean acquired one of the largest libraries assembled by a woman in early America and gained a wide reputation for her garden designs and botanical observations. The second generation, the Skipwith's son Humberston (1791-1863) and his wife Lelia, managed the plantation from Lady Jean's death in 1826 through the Civil War. Prestwould remained in the Skipwith family for another two generations. When the family sold the plantation in 1914 it had changed little since improvements Lelia and Humberston made in the 1830s. Prestwould changed hands five times in the next five decades, held briefly by owners who used the house and its surrounding lands primarily for hunting and as a rural retreat. Sale of the plantation in 1947 cut away most of the land that remained and dispersed the household furnishings the first two generations of Skipwith residents acquired in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Roanoke River Museum acquired Prestwould in 1963. Now organized as the Prestwould Foundation, the organization administers the plantation as an historic house museum. The house and its outbuildings have recently been the subjects of extensive architectural and historical research. Diligent efforts have been mounted to return original furnishings to the house and to restore the interior to its late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century appearance. Research and restoration continue on Prestwould's important surviving plantation buildings, its gardens, stone wall enclosures, the experience of its slave work force, and the rich documentary source materials. There is significant potential for archaeological research.

Historical Background

The plantation Sir Peyton Skipwith created at Prestwould was among Virginia's largest and during his lifetime, reflected the economic, social and cultural currents that shaped it and its inhabitants. Sir Peyton Skipwith, Prestwould's builder, was born about 1740 in Prince George County, Virginia, perhaps at Blanford near Petersburg. A true English baronet, he was a third generation member of the Virginia-born Skipwiths. Sir Peyton's great-grandfather, Sir Grey Skipwith, had emigrated to Virginia during the Cromwell era. Sir Grey's father, Henry Skipwith of Prestwould, Leicestershire, was made a baronet in 1622. Peyton inherited this title when his father, William, died in 1764.[5]

By the time of his father's death Sir Peyton was active in the two pursuits to which Virginia's gentry devoted themselves, land acquisition and county politics. When he was named a justice of the peace for Prince George's County in 1764, he may have already begun to plan a move further west to the lands he was assembling along the Roanoke River. In 1769 Sir Peyton was appointed a justice for Mecklenburg County. An ad in the *Virginia Gazette* referring to "Sir Peyton Skipwith's Plantation on the Forks of Roanoke," a note in the proceedings of the Virginia Council in 1771 that he had "removed to another County," and the sale of the 1260 acres in Brunswick County he had inherited from his father make it clear that he had shifted the focus of his plantation activities to his lands at Prestwould.[6]

Skipwith began to assemble the plantation in Mecklenburg County he would call Prestwould in the 1760s. Land speculation gripped Virginia in the decades that preceded the Revolution, and Sir Peyton was among the planters who sought new wealth in new counties that lay south of the James River along the boundary with North Carolina. James River planter William Byrd II was among the eager speculators. Byrd called the Roanoke River "the most beautiful stream I ever saw," and wrote that its banks "were fringed with tall canes which are perpetually green. The water was as clear as liquid crystal, the bottom gravelly, and spangled very thick with flecks of mother of pearl." Byrd was sure when he first saw this land as part of the commission that established the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia that it would fill rapidly with new settlements. "As fine a country I never saw," he wrote, "nor do I believe the world can afford than that lying near the mountains. The land is rich, the climate is mild, the water clear, all the woods full of timber, and the hills full of marble and alabaster. Did the poor people in the old world . . . know how happy a retreat they might find here, it would not long lye uninhabited."[7] Although Byrd trumpeted what he saw as the benefits of his discoveries and settlement there, his lands netted disappointing returns on his enthusiasm. Byrd's son, eager to transform some of his father's lands into assets, did find a buyer for some of the acres that lay in what the elder Byrd had called "Eden." Peyton Skipwith purchased the largest of the tracts he assembled at Prestwould for £1200 from Byrd in 1765. Skipwith's will contains a list of the individuals from whom he purchased the lands

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[5] Susan McNeil Turner. "The Skipwiths of Prestwould Plantation," *Virginia Cavalcade* 10 (Summer, 1960): 43; Herbert A. Elliot, "Sir Peyton Skipwith and the Byrd Land," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 80 (January, 1972): 52-59; Philip Slaughter, *A History of Bristol Parish, Virginia* (Richmond, 1879): 225-227.

[6] *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond, 1966) vol. 5, 262; vol. 6, 329, 402, 681; *Virginia Gazette* 5 December 1771 (no. 1062, Purdie and Dixon): 3; 27 February 1772 (no. 1074, Purdie and Dixon): 3; 22 October 1771 (no. 1108, Purdie and Dixon): 3.

[7] William Byrd to [John Perceval] 10 June 1729 in Marion Tinling, ed., *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 402-405; for land speculation in Virginia's Southside and on William Byrd III's financial difficulties see Charles Royster, *The Fabulous History of the Dismal Swamp Company* (New York: Random House, 1999). On land speculation and the migration of Tidewater culture into Virginia's Southside see Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 141-161.

that eventually composed Prestwould. Byrd's tract was the largest and first.[8] Sir Peyton added eight other parcels between 1773 and 1793, assembling a total of about 4470 acres. When Skipwith died in 1805 he owned 5342 acres; he was the largest landholder in Mecklenburg County.[9]

Like his neighbors, Skipwith devoted Prestwould to the production of tobacco. By the time Skipwith began to clear new fields at Prestwould, tobacco had been Virginia's primary export commodity for 150 years. For almost as long, Virginia planters had relied on a consignment system to market their crops. Under this system, planters assumed responsibility for shipping costs and an agent, usually in London, sold the tobacco and paid debts, collected his fees, and purchased goods for the planter. Between 1773 and 1775, Skipwith shipped eighty-seven hogsheads of tobacco directly to London.[10] But like other large Virginia planters, he pursued income from other plantation sources. His ferry across the Roanoke was a local landmark by 1777. Ads in the *Virginia Gazette* reveal he was selling cattle and sheep and offered breeding facilities for horses. He built and managed the operation of several mills.[11] And like large planters everywhere in Virginia, Skipwith had assembled a labor force of enslaved Africans. In 1787, he owned 144 slaves, 135 of them in Mecklenburg.[12]

Sir Peyton's landholding placed him at the top of Mecklenburg County's social structure, a position that gained him increasing political stature in the 1770s. Named a justice of the peace for the county in 1769, Sir Peyton was appointed county sheriff in 1777. He was a member of the county's Commission of Safety as Virginia moved toward revolution. Sir Peyton was among the citizens of Mecklenburg County who petitioned the Virginia House of Delegates to levy what they called "more severe punishment" on Scottish storekeepers who refused to take new paper currency in payment for old debts payable in sterling.[13] However, some of his neighbors judged his support of the revolutionary cause lukewarm and, thus, suspect. Accused of treason, he was tried but the charges were dismissed. The unsettled political climate in Mecklenburg may have motivated Skipwith to lease Hog Island in Surry County where he lived until he returned to Prestwould in 1782 to resume old projects. Before the decade had run its course, he had successfully wooed Jean Miller, sister of his deceased first wife Anne (d. 1779), who resided at nearby Elm Hill. Sir Peyton and Jean married in 1788.[14] He was then one of the 100 richest men in Virginia.[15]

Daughter of a wealthy Scottish merchant, Jean was the first of two remarkable women to live in succession at Prestwould. Lady Jean took an active part in planning and building the stone house at Prestwould and in

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[8] Peyton Skipwith , will dated 1803-1807, Will Book 5, pp. 301-306, Mecklenburg County; The Skipwith Papers, Special Collections, box 24, folder 3, Earl Gregg Swem Library, The College of William and Mary.

[9] Mecklenburg County Land Tax Records, 1782-1805. The average holding for the county in 1805 was 338 acres. Skipwith's holdings were valued at £7600.

[10] Robert P. Thompson, "The Tobacco Exports of the Upper James River Naval District, 173-1775," *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 18 (1961): 406-407.

[11] *Virginia Gazette*, March 15, 1776 (no. 59, Pinckney) 3; April 18, 1777 (no. 1340, Dixon and Hunter) 7; January 17, 1777 (no. 103, Purdie) 3; April 11, 1777 (no. 115, Purdie) 2; May 8, 1778 (no. 1414, Dixon and Hunter) 6; August 8, 1777 (no. 1356, Dixon and Hunter) 3; April 4, 1777 (no. 114, Purdie) 4; May 30, 1777 (no. 122, Purdie) 4; April 18, 1777 (no. 1340, Dixon and Hunter) 7; January 17, 1777 (no. 103, Purdie) 3; April 4, 1777 (no. 114, Purdie) 4.

[12] Jackson T. Main, "The One Hundred," *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 11 (1954): 382-83.

[13] Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, I, 304; VI, 411; *Virginia Gazette*, June 1, 1775 (no. 473, Pinckney) 1; Peyton Skipwith et al. to House of Delegates, May 14, 1777, Legislative Petitions, Mecklenburg County, Library of Virginia. As settlement moved into Virginia's Southside, Scottish merchants introduced an alternative to the consignment system - - direct sale at country stores. Repayment of debts owed Scottish merchants had become a sore point by the 1770s. See Charles J. Farmer, *In the Absence of Towns: Settlement and Country Trade in Southside Virginia, 1730-1800* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993), 69-112.

[14] Sir Peyton asked Jean in a letter on 7 September 1788 "immediately to compleat a Union on which my future happiness so much, & so imediately depends." Sir Peyton Skipwith to Jean Miller, "Notes and Queries, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 25 (1917): 190.

[15] Main, "The One Hundred," 382-83.

designing and planting the large garden that soon adjoined the house. Her tastes in furnishings and in household organization distinguished Prestwould from other great houses in Virginia. Her daughter-in-law, Lelia Robertson Skipwith, second wife of Jean's son Humberston (1791-1863), held equally strong opinions, and she too left her strong intellectual and decorative imprint on the house.

Letters and invoices reveal that the house was under construction in 1794. John Hill, Skipwith's steward, managed the project. Jacob Shelor, a stonemason, had completed almost three-quarters of his work by October 1794 when Sir Peyton ordered work stopped because of the on-set of cold weather. John Inge was carpenter for the project and leased two slaves, Dick and Pliny, from Skipwith to assist him.[16]

Prestwould was substantially complete by 1795. In 1800 Wade Hampton described the house as having "not as much gingerbread work on it as the Presidents in the city of Washington, but the materials, design, and executions make it altogether but little inferior to it . . . . This edifice and its appendages stand on a very commanding height, half a mile from the Roanoke. . . the ground to the river is sloping, wavy, and highly improved which affords a fine view of the rivers and an Island between the two latter of upwards of 1,000 acres in which that of cultivation - - upon the whole - - except about New York or up the North River I have never seen anything so handsome."[17]

Sir Peyton and Lady Jean gathered furnishings for the interior of their new house from a wide range of sources. Letters from Lady Jean to English agent James Maury ordered "sundry articles we wish to import to finish a House Sir Peyton is building." These letters reveal that Lady Jean had clear ideas about what she wanted and that she was determined to secure them. She sought, for example, "Scotch Carpeting of the best quality, and neatest patterns," and made deliberate selections for wallpaper. On August 6, 1795, Lady Skipwith was thinking about the walls of her still-new house. She wrote Maury, "We wish to have our House papered; but as we are not well acquainted with the prices of the different sorts of House paper, will defer ordering it till some future opportunity. In the mean time will thank you to send us patterns of different qualitied papers, with the prices of them. We do not mean to go the length of India paper, only plain English and Irish. I am very partial to papers of only one colour, or two at most – velvet paper I thinks looks too warm for this country."[18] Maury complied with Lady Jean's request and sent in March 1796 "some patterns of paper I have obtained for your Examination. The prices annexed."[19]

While their selections reflect the continuing influence of English and French tastes in the post-Revolutionary period, the sources of the beds, chairs, tables, and other pieces of furniture the Skipwiths chose reflected the emergence of new, robust furniture-making centers in the new United States and the skills of local slave craftsmen. Furniture from Philadelphia, Raleigh, Norfolk, Petersburg, and Richmond, and from Prestwould's own shops, filled the house. Although these furnishings were dispersed when the plantation was sold in 1946, much of it has been reassembled and has been returned to its original location. An important part of this collection is the library Lady Skipwith gathered during her lifetime. Roughly half of what historians have called "incomparably the largest and best made by a woman" in Virginia and one of the largest and most important libraries assembled by a woman in early America has been returned to Prestwould.[20]

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[16] "Memorandum of Agreement entered into this . . . seventeen hundred & Ninety four, Between Jacob Shelor of the County of Mecklenburg. . . & Sir Peyton Skipwith Baronet," and "Memorandum of Agreement between Sir Peyton Skipwith . . . and John Inge, Carpenter of the same County," July 8, 1794, Prestwould Foundation Collections.

[17] Wade Hampton to Aaron Burr, October 25, 1800, Skipwith Papers, *MS* C8, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

[18] Skipwith Papers, box 6, folder 54.

[19] James Maury to Lady Skipwith, 13 March 1796, The Skipwith Papers, Volume 4, Prestwould.

[20] Mildred K. Abraham, "The Library of Lady Jean Skipwith: A Book Collection from the Age of Jefferson," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 91 (1983): 296-347.

Lady Jean's correspondence and other plantation records suggest that as soon as the new mansion at Prestwould was complete she turned her creative energies to planning a new garden. Samuel Dedman, a local surveyor, signed a receipt on April 24, 1801 acknowledging that he had received "twenty-two dollars in part for my services in building the Garden."[21] While the plans of the garden Lady Skipwith designed and then tended for a quarter century shared much with other large Virginia gardens, its location did not. At Kingsmill and Carter's Grove, two eighteenth-century plantations whose formal landscapes have been the object of intensive archaeological investigation, elaborate symmetrical gardens arranged in parterres axis lay between the house and the river. At Prestwould the garden faces the east side of the house, away from the service yard. Visitors could catch a glimpse of the gardens as they approached on the entrance drive. Better views were from inside the house where windows in first floor parlors and second floor bed chambers provided good views of the beds that contained Lady Skipwith's extensive collections of native and imported plantings. An octagonal summer house, located at the end of the principal 630 foot long north-south crosswalk, provided another vantage from which to enjoy views of the garden and retreat in which Lady Skipwith kept the plantation books and her garden journal. Other garden structures, including a twelve by twenty-eight foot orangery and a bee house, have disappeared. Three shorter crosswalks, each one 230 feet in length, divide the garden into six large beds. Lady Jean kept copious notes of the plantings in these beds and systematically recorded trials of both domestic and wild specimens. Her notes, as well as invoices for the purchase of seeds and plants, survive, and one historian who has studied these documents has argued that "perhaps the most remarkable garden known to have been planted, and perhaps designed, by a woman in eighteenth-century Virginia was Lady Jean Skipwith's at Prestwould."[22]

Lady Skipwith managed Prestwould from her husband's death in 1805 until her own death in 1826. Her oldest son Humberston inherited the plantation and, two years later, married a cousin, Lelia Skipwith Robertson. Born in Paris, Lelia was the widow of Thomas Bolling Robertson, a Virginia native who had served as governor of Louisiana. Lelia and Humberston left their imprint on the house and the organization of the plantation. They were energetic in acquiring additional, stylish furnishings and, in an enthusiastic decorating campaign in the 1830s, applied new wallcoverings. They had the surviving household bell system installed and the large porch that dominates the west façade of the house that overlooks the plantation's work yard.

Prestwould reflects the social, economic, and cultural processes that transported the plantation culture that had taken root in Virginia's tidewater in the seventeenth century into the colony's hinterlands during the second half of the eighteenth century. The successful planters who carved large land holdings for themselves along the banks of Virginia's great tidal rivers, mimicked England's landed gentry in shaping their plantations. They generally situated their houses on the most prominent, most visible site in their holdings, dominating surrounding vistas. What traveler Hugh Grove saw when he sailed along the York River in 1732 was true for Virginia's Southside as planters like Skipwith replicated familiar patterns on new holdings. Grove wrote that he saw "pleasant Seats on the Bank which Shew Like little villages." These "seats" resembled small towns because it was the planters habit to build separate buildings to house "Kitchins, Dayry houses, Barns, Stables, Store houses, and . . . 2 or 3 Negro Quarters all Separate from Each other but near the mansion houses."[23] This habit of clustering support buildings became one of the hallmarks of Virginia, and later, southern plantations. What Hugh Grove called "little Villages" also contained the dwellings planters built to house their slaves.

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[21] Skipwith Papers, Special Collections, box 21, folder 32, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

[22] Skipwith Papers, Special Collections, box 21, folder 10, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary; Peter Martin, *The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia from Jamestown to Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 126-131.

[23] Gregory A. Stiverson and Patrick H. Butler III, eds., "Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85 (1977): 26.

Most of the slaves who lived and worked at Prestwould tended the plantation's fields from the late eighteenth century until Emancipation. The plantation's records indicate that slave craftsmen such as the carpenter Pliny assumed important roles in meeting the plantation's needs for skilled labor and were especially active in furniture making. Most of their counterparts, however, worked at more mundane farming tasks. Their places in the plantation's daily routines and hierarchy are etched in the placement and quality of the houses in which they lived.

Slave Housing at Prestwould

Historians of American slavery have pointed out that although most slave owning southerners owned fewer than five slaves, it was the experience of most slaves who lived and worked in the south to live and work in groups of twenty or more. For that reason, historian John Vlach and others have made the point that "through the first half of the nineteenth century the plantation was thus the crucible for a large portion of the black experience."[24] Decades before the Skipwiths established their plantation holdings in Mecklenburg County, Virginians had in the counties that lined the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers, which ran into it, established patterns and rhythms in the management of their plantations and farms that began to edge into the piedmont and Southside. By the time Skipwith moved to Prestwould, he and his neighbor's language contained a kind of planter's shorthand that reflected shared assumptions about the shape and character of plantations. One of those terms used, quarter, could mean a single building or dwelling where slaves lived, or it could mean a place where slave dwellings were located, or the term could mean, and was used to mean, the lands slaves worked. Traveler Edward Kimber wrote early in the century that "A Negro Quarter is a Number of Huts or Hovels, built some Distance from the Mansion-House; where the Negroes reside with their wives and Families and cultivate at vacant times the little Spots allow'd them."[25]

At Prestwould, there were, as there were at larger plantations throughout Virginia, quarters dispersed over the Skipwith lands that put slaves close to the fields in which they toiled. There was at Prestwould, as there were at other plantations, a home quarter. At Prestwould the home quarter lay down hill from the mansion behind low stone walls, beyond the plantation's store and office, not quite out of view but veiled by plantation buildings and activities.[26] Only one of perhaps as many as nine slave houses survive, at what was called the "new quarter" on a 1798 plat of the plantation. This remarkable survivor has been called "arguably the oldest extant slave house in the rural South."[27] This slave dwelling was built in two stages. Initially, the house measured twelve by sixteen feet. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, as the plantation's slave population increased, the house was expanded into a two-room duplex, each room with a separate entrance. Each of the rooms housed, as suggested by recent studies of plantation records, a separate family. The extension of this dwelling took place about the same time a loom house with attic rooms for workers was built in the service yard.

Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted observed slave houses during his travels through the South and wrote that "the houses of the slaves are usually log-cabins, of various degrees of comfort and commodiousness. At one end there is a great open fire-place, which is exterior to the wall of the house, being made of clay in an

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[24] John Michael Vlach, "Plantation Landscapes of the Antebellum South," in Campbell and Rice, eds., *Before Freedom Came: African-American Life in the Antebellum South* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 23.
[25] Edward Kimber, "Observations in Several Voyages and Travels in America in the Year 1736," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 1st series, 15 (1906-07): 148.
[26] "on the first day of February began and on the 15th Completed a Survey of the within Tract of Sir Peyton Skipwith's Land, AD 1798," wrote John Hill, the surveyor who completed a plat that shows the relationship of the home quarter to outlying quarters and other plantation buildings (Prestwould Foundation).
[27] Edward Chappell and Willie Graham, "Prestwould Architecture," *The Magazine Antiques* 147 (1995): 159.

enclosure, about eight feet square and high, of logs. The chimney is sometimes of brick, but more commonly of lath or split sticks, laid up like log."[28] Prestwould's slave houses were not of the common type of log construction Olmsted noted during his travels, but in the "various degrees of comfort and commodiousness" he saw, Prestwould's may have had more in common with slave houses an eighteenth-century traveler saw in Virginia. J.F.D. Smythe described a house in which an overseer and six slaves lived as a "miserable shell, a poor apology for a house, consisted but of one small room, which served for the accommodation of the overseer and six negroes; it was not lathed or plastered, neither ceiled nor lofted above, and only very thin boards for its covering; it had a door on each side, one window but no glass in it; it had not even a brick chimney, and as it stood on blocks about a foot [from] the ground, the hogs lay constantly under the floor which made it swarm with flies."[29] The slave house at Prestwould was floored to create sleeping space, but in all other aspects, the house Smythe saw and the house built at Prestwould at the end of the eighteenth century, were the same. Living spaces constructed for slaves tended to be small. Twelve by sixteen feet at Prestwould is not unlike the dimensions of slaves houses built elsewhere. One planter wrote that "16 by 18 is a convenient size for a small family." And in 1847 a Mississippi planter advised his neighbors that "a Negro house should never be crowded. One sixteen or eighteen feet square is not too large for a man and woman and three or four small children."[30]

The size and quality of slave housing in Virginia, and the South, varied widely. The surviving slave duplex at Prestwould, however, is of a size and type that was, by the early nineteenth century, common on plantations in both the upper and lower South.[31] Recent historical analyses indicates that the experience of enslaved Africans in the Chesapeake varied widely too, but these studies suggest that by about 1800, the "typical" slave in Virginia was an agricultural worker who lived in a plantation quarter like Sir Peyton Skipwith's "new quarter" at Prestwould in a community of eight families. Prestwould, with its rare surviving slave quarter and its other slave-related buildings, contains a full range of plantation buildings that evoke everyday relations between black and white and male and female members of the plantation household.

Prestwould in National Context

The ensemble of late eighteenth-century buildings that survive at Prestwould occupies a unique place in Virginia's larger plantations between the surviving Georgian plantations built in the state's tidewater counties before the Revolution and the neo-classical and classical revival complexes that sprang up in the Piedmont counties in the antebellum period. From the vantage Prestwould provides, looking back toward the eighteenth century and forward toward the nineteenth, two trends are visible. First, it is possible to see at Prestwould the shape and substance of Chesapeake culture at the culmination of processes that created, among other things, its distinct architectural forms, building methods, farming practices, and landscapes. Each of these reflected, as did every aspect of life in the Chesapeake, the accommodation of white and black colonists to each other as they adapted to life in the colonies.

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[28] Frederick Law Olmstead, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States*, Arthur Schlesinger, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1953), 81. For a general discussion see John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 18-32 and 153-182; see James O. Breeden, ed., *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 114-139 for recommendations planters made concerning the construction of houses for slaves.

[29] J.F.D. Smythe, *Travels through the Interior Parts of America* (London, 1789), 2:381-82.

[30] James O. Breeden, ed., *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 120-121.

[31] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcounty* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 105-122.

Prestwould thus encapsulates and describes a century, and more, of architectural, cultural and economic change. Second, Prestwould presages what would unfold in Kentucky and Tennessee and the deep South states when cotton and opportunity propelled the Chesapeake's house forms, from the big houses to slave quarters, its plantation system, and its culture over a very broad area in a relatively short period. What slowly evolved as commonplace for the late eighteenth-century Chesapeake area migrated *en suite et complete* to the middle and lower South by 1820.

Prestwould's significance, as well as its relationship to the broad cultural events it reflects, is made clearer by comparing it to other larger plantation complexes in Virginia and the South. An analysis of eighteenth-century Virginia plantation houses listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as National Historic Landmarks confirms the significance of Prestwould's status as that state's best-preserved eighteenth-century plantation complex. Despite the loss of some ancillary buildings, Prestwould retains more of the diverse service structures that were a common aspect of the Chesapeake's plantations and, later, cotton plantations in the Deep South, than any other Virginia plantation. More significant perhaps is the fact that Prestwould's service buildings reflect the building forms and building practices that migrated into the Deep South more accurately than the handful of surviving plantations where service activities were housed in substantial masonry service wings, an architectural accomplishment only a very small number of planters achieved. Remarkable in their own right, these plantations are less reflective of broader trends than Prestwould.

The once densely-populated yards at most eighteenth-century Virginia plantations have lost their service buildings. Westover Plantation, constructed on the north shore of the James River in Charles City County during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, was the home of William Byrd III, a close contemporary of Sir Peyton Skipwith from whom he purchased the Mecklenburg County lands on which he would build Prestwould. Noted for its sophisticated interior ornamental woodwork, Westover is one of the finest of mansions constructed in Virginia prior to the Revolution. While some aspects of its once extensive gardens survive, notably iron gates and Portland stone piers and finials that form part of an enclosed land side forecourt, the service buildings that once populated Westover's work yard and slave houses that sheltered the plantations extensive labor force, have vanished. Westover is not alone in having lost the slave houses and service buildings that for Hugh Grove, Edward Kimber and other eighteenth-century observers were the distinguishing hallmarks of the "seats" of Virginia's planter elite. The earliest section of Tuckahoe, the two-story frame house Thomas Randolph built in Goochland County, was completed during the first quarter of the eighteenth century and enlarged prior to the Revolution. Tuckahoe's slave street survives, but the date of construction of the surviving quarters there, a matter of debate, probably rests in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Two other early large houses, Shirley in Charles City County (completed in the first quarter of the eighteenth century) and Stratford Hall, residence of Thomas Lee in Westmoreland County (1743), are surrounded by remarkable collections of surviving brick service buildings. While it is likely that the kitchens at Stratford and Shirley, and probably the latter's laundry, provided living spaces for high status domestic slaves at these plantations, the home quarters at both have been lost. That is also true for Mount Airy, completed about 1758 by John Tayloe, and Blandfield, the Essex County house William Beverly completed in 1770. These ambitious houses contain service wings that provided additional residential space for family members as well as sleeping quarters for the slaves who worked in the houses. No other service buildings, however, survive at either Mount Airy or Blandfield. While an impressive number of large eighteenth-century plantation houses survive in Virginia, and while they are also among the most architecturally impressive houses built in the American colonies prior to the Revolution, as a group they are almost entirely bereft of the once numerous service buildings that housed and supported myriad household activities and the enslaved African men and women who performed them.

Another of Sir Peyton Skipwith's contemporaries, George Washington, reconfigured his plantation at Mount Vernon after the Revolution to execute in wood what Mount Airy and Blandfield achieved in stone and brick. Washington connected the main house at Mount Vernon with two of its service buildings by means of a covered portico. This created a land side forecourt like those at Mount Airy and Blandfield beyond which Washington positioned essential service buildings. These were heavily restored in the twentieth century. A range of slave rooms were incorporated into a large brick structure that included an orangerie, but these buildings were essentially reconstructed as part of the twentieth century effort to restore Mount Vernon to its late eighteenth-century appearance. While Washington's own correspondence reveals much about the houses he constructed for field slaves, none of these buildings survive and, further, even very recent investigations of life at Mount Vernon do not reconstruct slave life and slave buildings fully.[29]

Thomas Jefferson was also one of Skipwith's contemporaries and like him, Jefferson was engaged in significant architectural projects at his mountaintop residence Monticello, at the close of the eighteenth-century (a second major building campaign lasted from 1796 until 1809). Jefferson famously pursued what he called "tearing down and building up" for the remainder of his life and thus was architecturally active for nearly two decades after Skipwith's death. What Jefferson contrived at Monticello, and in particular how he placed slave houses and service activities in his household, provides interesting and instructive contrasts with Prestwould. Jefferson and Skipwith, like other wealthy planters who built large houses during the eighteenth century, worked within common frames of reference. Some of those extended back to traditional patterns that had migrated to the American colonies from England, while others evolved in the Chesapeake.[30] One of these organizational premises was the placement of elite houses in extensive ornamental landscapes that not only provided tamed, or controlled outdoor spaces within which elites pursued practical interests in ornamental and useful plants and performed social rituals, but these landscapes, it has been argued, demonstrated powerful planters's dominant position in their society. Certainly the dominant building sites Virginia's elites preferred and the vistas that visually connected them to lands and activities beyond their own served to visually reaffirm, when the view was up toward a great house, the planter's social and political positions.[31] The Skipwith's hilltop was not as high as Jefferson's, but their preference for a commanding view was just as clear. Similar too were the practical benefits and the pleasure that the gardens at Monticello and Prestwould provided. But Jefferson, in a singular way that no other American builder matched, imposed a far more rigorous and artful order to Monticello. Everything on his mountaintop, from roads to paths, to copses of trees, to gardens was carefully planned as aspects of his effort to establish at Monticello a *ferme orne*, or "ornamental farm."

Jefferson's Monticello is thus unique. Kitchens, food storage, stables, and other support activities were hidden away from plain view, folded into the hill on which Jefferson's house was built. Hidden too was the slave community whose houses, all but one of which, and that one radically altered in size and configuration, have vanished. Constructed along the road that led to the mansion's front door,

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[32] Robert F. Dalzell, Jr. and Lee Baldwin Dalzell, *George Washington's Mount Vernon: At Home in Revolutionary America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 132-138.
[33] Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17-55.
[34] Historians and archaeologists have explored this theme, among them Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); and Mark P. Leone, "The Georgian Order as the Order of Merchant Capitalism in Annapolis, Maryland," in *The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 235-261.

Jefferson's domestic slaves occupied houses constructed beneath the brow of his mountain, a site not unlike the one Skipwith chose for the houses he built for the home quarter at Prestwould. The placement of kitchen, office, slave houses and smoke houses at Prestwould is not as precise, nor as artful, as Jefferson's plan at Monticello. In this, Jefferson was singular. There is, however, in the effort made to separate visually as well as physically slave houses from the planter's view, a second shared organizational premise. Executed at almost the same time, the plans for the plantation yards at Monticello and at Prestwould are very different. They differ in scale, materials, and sophistication of design. Recent archaeological excavations at Monticello have examined the sites of the slave houses that once populated Mulberry Row, the slave street along which Jefferson's domestic slaves lived. These excavations have revealed that the slave housing at Monticello encompassed a broad range of materials, from log to stone.[32] Despite their differences, the slave houses at Monticello and at Prestwould are alike in the sense that both were products of the process of change and adaptation obliged by the interaction between the white planters of the Chesapeake and their slaves. The slave house at Prestwould provides a unique glimpse of what now missing slave houses at Monticello might have looked like. Architectural historian Calder Loth has written that the Prestwould house is important in this regard "not just as an oddity but as a rare and informative survival from a century in which slave housing was universally inferior even to the relatively low expectations of the late eighteenth century."[33]

The routine of segregation and separation that channeled life at Prestwould and Monticello were similar. Other plantations constructed in the post Revolutionary era shared them too. But almost everywhere what had by the end of the eighteenth century emerged as the Chesapeake tradition in plantation plans, was closer to Prestwould than it was to Monticello. At Hampton Plantation (1790) in Baltimore County, Maryland, the view down from the mansion house toward its home quarter takes in stables, barns, dairies, and quarters, most of them constructed of stone and arranged in groups with respect to work function, rather than the orderly geometries of the main house and its gardens. At Berry Hill, a Greek Revival style house in Halifax County, Virginia, that was constructed between 1842 and 1844, the house and its rear service wing belie planning that Jefferson would have appreciated. The brick quarters there, now in ruins, were tucked behind the house out of view of visitors.

Plantations similar in scale to Hampton or equal in architectural sophistication to Berry Hill were, however, the exception rather than the rule in the antebellum South. More typical of the character of houses built for slaves in the American South during the antebellum period are those that survive at Somerset Plantation in Bertie County, North Carolina and McLeod Plantation in Charleston County, South Carolina. The slave village at Somerset and the slave street at McLeod still retain many of their once more numerous single family dwellings that housed the plantations's field slaves. Set on masonry piers, these lightly-framed houses had brick, gable-end chimneys and were clad with weatherboards and wood shingle. During the antebellum period their interior walls were not plastered. Similar in size, in method of construction and finish to the surviving slave house at Prestwould, the slave houses at Somerset and McLeod are the progeny of the pattern of slave housing that was established in the

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[35] William M. Kelso, *Archaeology at Monticello: Artifacts of Everyday Life in the Plantation Community* (Charlottesville: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1997).
[36] Calder Loth, *Virginia Landmarks of Black History: Sites on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 145.

Chesapeake during the eighteenth-century and that survives, uniquely, at Prestwould.

Recent scholarly efforts to identify and interpret slave housing in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake have placed the surviving slave house at Prestwould at the center of their analysis. For example, architectural historians at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation embarked in the late 1980s on an ambitious study of slave housing that was intended to provide information necessary to the interpretation of slave housing in eighteenth-century Williamsburg and support the reconstruction of the eighteenth-century slave quarter at Carter's Grove Plantation. Thorough review of the architectural inventories managed by the State Historic Preservation offices in Virginia and Maryland and the Foundation's own files revealed that while numerous slave houses survive in the Chesapeake from the antebellum period, the slave house at Prestwould was the only surviving eighteenth-century slave house they could identify. Further field study of traditional rural agricultural buildings and efforts to identify eighteenth-century slave houses in North and South Carolina discovered no hitherto unknown slave houses. It is for that reason that the slave house at Prestwould has served as a design source for the re-created slave quarter at Carter's Grove and slave domestic space in Williamsburg. The singular significance of the Prestwould slave house also attracted the attention of the British Broadcasting Company which incorporated the house into a film on the archaeology and public interpretation of slavery. In an advanced state of decay by 1991, the house was stabilized and carefully restored with technical advice and support from Colonial Williamsburg Foundation experts.

Prestwould and the Study of Early National America

The mansion house at Prestwould contains only furnishings purchased by the Skipwiths. This extensive collection of furniture is significant not only for the range and quality of the pieces, but for what it demonstrates about consumer patterns in early republican Virginia. Within the collection are objects made in Norfolk, Richmond, and Petersburg as well as Philadelphia and New York. Of particular interest are the pieces made at Prestwould by the slave artisan Pliny, especially large pedimented book shelf that also housed two globes on rolling stands, one terrestrial, the other celestial. A large collection of plantation manuscripts (numbering more than 10,000 items) wait for further study and analysis that should shed much light on the everyday lives of Prestwould's inhabitants between 1782 and 1865.

Statement on Prestwould's Architectural Integrity

The ensemble of buildings at Prestwould is distinguished by a remarkably high degree of architectural integrity. Obscure because of their location in Virginia's rural Southside, they have received little notice, perhaps because they lack association with a significant political figure. Modern lack of appreciation for the plantation Sir Peyton and Lady Jean Skipwith built at Prestwould has however, played an essential role in its preservation. Unlike large plantations elsewhere in Virginia that attracted wealthy twentieth century owners who made aggressive changes that reshaped landscapes and altered building plans and interior features, Prestwould has remained largely unchanged since its construction. Prestwould is so well preserved, in fact, that architectural scholars, particularly the staff at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, have turned to Prestwould for information about eighteenth-century buildings, construction methods, and household furnishing and fixturing that survive nowhere else in the Chesapeake. In building Prestwould Sir Peyton and Lady Jane Skipwith clearly stamped their tastes and aspirations on the plantation, and so did succeeding owners Humberston and Lelia Skipwith. Subsequent owners made very few changes to the house or its service buildings.

More of the eighteenth century plantation complex, its original fabric, landscape, and furnishings and fixturing of the main house survive at Prestwould, than at any post-Revolutionary plantation in Virginia.

Prestwould retains its general setting, including the extensive stone walls that enclosed fields adjacent to the long entrance road that led to the house and that separated work yards from the formally landscaped setting of the house, and its extensive garden. The house itself has changed little since the middle of the nineteenth century and retains original lighting fixtures, an unusual dining room fan that retains its original decorative paper, shelving, and the extensive wallcoverings that were applied in two campaigns. The wall coverings are among the best-preserved in America from the period of the early republic and are in themselves of national significance. A significant number of pieces of furniture have been returned to the house, as have a significant number of the books from the extensive library Lady Jean assembled. With the exception of the handful of eighteenth-century Tidewater plantations that have remained in the hands of the family that built them (Shirley plantation in Charles City County and Mount Airy and Sabine Hall in Richmond County, for example), Prestwould retains more of its original fixtures and furnishing than any other large eighteenth-century house in Virginia.

The ensemble of service buildings at Prestwould is unmatched. While buildings that match the functions of Prestwould's service buildings survive elsewhere, nowhere in Virginia is there a better-preserved group. Like the main house, the service buildings retain significant original fabric and have been little altered in appearance or configuration since their construction.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register.
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
_X_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #HABS VA-59 and HABS VA-320
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

__ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
_X_ Federal Agency: Historic American Building Survey
__ Local Government
_X_ University: Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia; Prestwould Foundation, Clarksville, Virginia
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): Department of Architectural Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation,
Prestwould Foundation, Clarksville, Virginia

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 45.95 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**

Verbal Boundary Description: "All that certain lot or parcel of land lying, begin and situtated in Bluestone Magisterial District, Mecklenburg County, Virginia about two miles north of the town of Clarksville, Virginia, containing 45.95 acres . . . parcel of land being part of Prestwould Plantation . . . said deed of record in the Clerk's office of the Circuit Court of Mecklenburg County, Virginia in Deed Book 171 at page 428."

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes all land owned by Historic Prestwould Foundation, all of which was historically part of Prestwould Plantation. The boundaries encompass the plantation house, ancillary buildings, garden and cemetery that are included in the nominated property and all of which were part of the plantation as it was developed from 1782 to 1865.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
July 31, 2003

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Prestwould
   Mecklenburg County, Virginia
   North façade of Plantation House, view facing southeast
   Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
   2 August 2001
   1 of 8

2. Prestwould
   Mecklenburg County, Virginia
   South façade of Plantation House, view facing north
   Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
   2 August 2001
   2 of 8

3. Prestwould
   Mecklenburg County, Virginia
   South façade of Plantation Office, view facing south
   Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
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4. Prestwould
   Mecklenburg County, Virginia
   East façade of Plantation Store, view facing west
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5. Prestwould
   Mecklenburg County, Virginia
   South façade of Loom House, view facing north
   Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
   2 August 2001
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6. Prestwould
   Mecklenburg County, Virginia
   South façade of Smoke House, view facing north
   Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
   2 August 2001
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7. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
South façade of Slave House, view facing northeast
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
2 August 2001
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8. Prestwould
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Southeast façade of Summer House, view facing northwest
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
2 August 2001
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LIST OF SLIDES

1. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
View through North Yard Gate to North Façade of Plantation House, view facing south
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
2 August 2001
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2. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
North Façade of Plantation House, view facing south
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
2 August 2001
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3. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
South Façade of Plantation House, view facing north
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4. Prestwould
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South Façade of Plantation Office, view facing northwest
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5. Prestwould
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East Façade of Plantation Store, view facing west
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
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6. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
South Façade of Loom House, view facing north
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
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7. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
South Façade of Slave House, view facing northeast
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
2 August 2001
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8. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
South Façade of Slave House, view facing northwest
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
2 August 2001
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9. Prestwould
Mecklenburg County, Virginia
Southeast Façade of Summer House, view facing northwest
Carter L. Hudgins, photographer
2 August 2001
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