

9a5. American Ways of Life; Economic Classes

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE:	Virginia
COUNTY:	Charles City
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**(NATIONAL HISTORIC INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM)**  
**LANDMARKS**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Westover

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Westover

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
7 miles southwest of Charles City

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charles City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
First (1st)

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE: 51

COUNTY:  
Charles City

CODE: 039

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mrs. Bruce C. Fisher

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Westover

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charles City

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE:  
51

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Charles City Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Charles City

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE:  
51

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress/Annex

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Prints and Photographs Division

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE:  
D. C.

CODE:  
11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia

COUNTY: Charles City

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Westover mansion may well be the most famous Georgian house in America. It is noted both for the quality of its workmanship and for its architectural completeness. The mansion proper consists of a two-story central section on a high basement with two attached wings; the eastern wing is a replacement of the original, destroyed during the Civil War.

Several dependencies stand nearby, including the original kitchen, which may predate the main house. A brick privy, brick fence, and an iron gate leading to what once were the slave quarters also date to the seventeenth century. A brick house, barn, and silo lie northeast of the main building. They are contemporary structures, but are shielded from view by a tall hedge standing between them and the mansion.

The mansion itself features formal doorways in Portland stone on both main facades; a steeply pitched hip roof, rising to a sharp ridge rather than a deck; an off-center main hall, utilizing one of the regularly spaced facade windows as a light source; and a finely detailed interior with full-length paneling and enriched plaster ceilings. Exterior features include three original wrought iron gates of great intricacy; an under-ground tunnel from the house to the river bank; the site of the first Westover church, where William Byrd I and his wife are buried; the remains of an old ice house; and formal gardens, at the center of which is William Byrd II's grave.

The mansion group was restored about 1920 and came into possession of the present family shortly thereafter. The grounds are open to the public, but the interior of the main house is not.

Boundaries:

The historic extent of the Westover property is described by the description found in "Evidences Relating to Westover:

The Patent to Capt. Thomas Pawlett January the 15th 1637 by Sir John Harvey:"

"Now know ye that I the said Harvey Knight do with the Consent of the Council of State accordingly give and Grant unto Captain Thomas Pawlett Two Thousand Acres of Land Situate, Lying, and being in the Country of Charles City bounding to the River South, Northwest to the Main [?], Eastward to the Land of Capt Perry, West upon Berkeley Hundred Land extending by the Rivers Side from Herring Creek to a Gut of Land dividing said Land from the land of Barkley Hundred."

(Westover Title Book, John H. Guy, ed., Richmond 1921)

In 1666 Captain Pawlett transferred this same property to a Theodorick Bland and on February 4 of the same year Bland sold it, still intact, to William Byrd I. The landmark boundaries include all this land still belonging to the Westover estate.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1730-1744

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Westover is a superb example of early Georgian architecture. It was also the home of William Byrd II (1674-1744), American colonial planter, writer, politician, and a founder of Virginia gentry society.

History:

Westover is located on one of the earliest Virginia plantations, first occupied in 1619. The present mansion is quite possibly the most famous Georgian house in America. It was built between the years 1730 and 1734 by William Byrd II, colonial planter, speculator, author, and public official.

Biography:

William Byrd II (1674-1744) was the son of William Byrd I, one of the founders of Virginia gentry society. The elder Byrd sent his son to London for study, and left him 26,000 acres of land upon his death in 1704.

The younger Byrd had been very popular in London due to his wit, looks, and personal charm. But he left immediately to look after his father's estate. When he himself died forty years later, it had grown to include some 180,000 acres. Despite his many holdings, or because of them, Byrd was often short of funds and was frequently obliged to sell land or slaves to make ends meet.

Byrd owned the largest library in the colonies up to that time, more than 4000 volumes. He was also a member of the scientific Royal Society and a prolific author. Less than a renaissance man but much more than a dilettante, his manuscripts and diaries are written in a witty, cutting style which establish him as one of America's first important authors. His History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina describes his work settling the boundary dispute between those two colonies. The accounts of the scheming and intrigue involved in the establishment of that border are as fascinating as his opinions of North Carolina, its swamps and its inhabitants are droll. History of the Dividing Line has become a classic of early American literature.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture From the First Colonial Settlements to the National Period (New York, 1952).  
 Sale, Edith T., Interiors of Virginia Houses of Colonial Times (Richmond, 1927)  
 Sale, Manors of Virginia in Colonial Times (Philadelphia, 1909)  
 Waterman, Thomas T., The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER				LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
UTM			Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	18.307160	.4133390	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	18.310000	.4133510						
SE	18.310700	.4131180						
SW	18.308000	.4131220						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1.025**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Stephen Lissandrello, Historian, Landmarks Review Project**

ORGANIZATION: **Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service**      DATE: **2/1/75**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 L Street, NW.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **D. C.**      CODE: **11**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National     State     Local

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)      OF 9, 1960

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Boundary \_\_\_\_\_

*Al. W. ...*      7/3/75

Keeper of The National Register      date

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Charles City	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries) #7 Description "Westover" Page #2

The present Westover estate is entirely within the original boundaries, and about one half its size. As shown by the yellow line on the accompanying U.S.G.S. topographic map, entitled "Westover" and dated 1965: Beginning on Route 633, at a point approximately 3300 feet east of the junction of Routes 633 and 5, proceed northeast about 3000 feet to the center Herring Creek, then east and south about 14,000 feet along Herring Creek to the eastern tip of Ducking Stool Point. Proceed west along the James River northern shoreline about 9000 feet, then north about 4000 feet to Route 633. Proceed northwest along Route 633 about 2000 feet to the point of beginning.