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Archives of American Gardens

The Garden Club of America Collection - Alice Lockwood's Lecture American Gardens of the Southern States

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VIRGINIA 1-

SHIRLEY

1. Shirley's land grant was as early as 1611, but the house belongs largely to the 18th century. The property, one of the loveliest on the James, still belongs to the Carter family. Mrs. Marion Carter Oliver is now in residence.

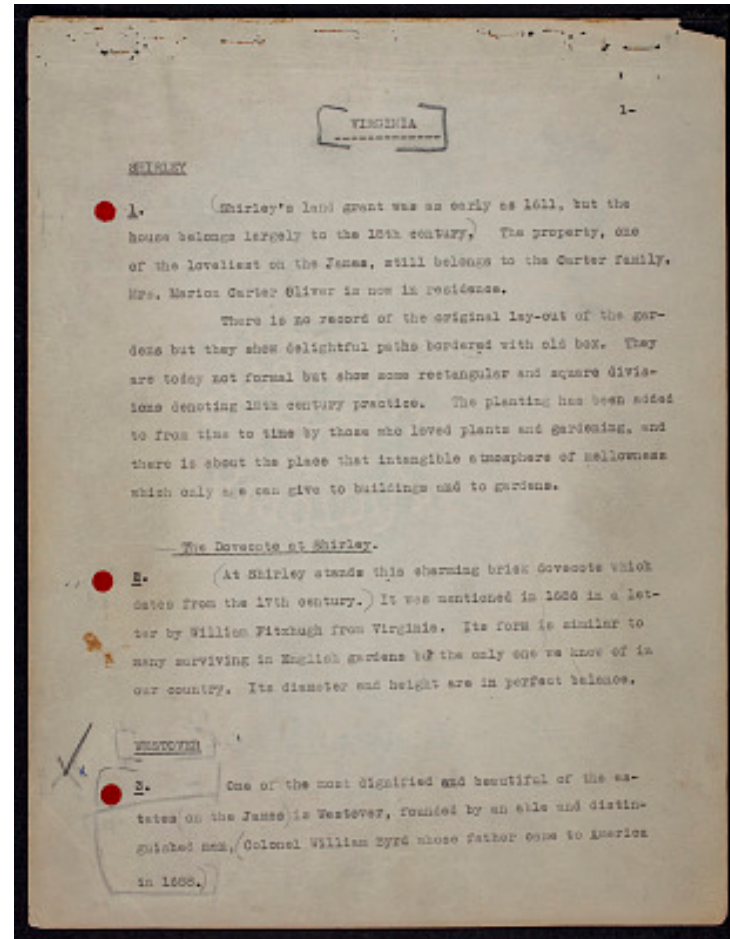
There is no record of the original lay-out of the gardens but they show delightful paths bordered with old box. They are today not formal but show some rectangular and square divisions denoting 18th century practice. The planting has been added to from time to time by those who loved plants and gardening, and there is about the place that intangible atmosphere of mellowness which only age can give to buildings and to gardens.

The Dovecote at Shirley

2. At Shirley stands this charming brick dovecote which dates from the 17th century. It was mentioned in 1686 in a letter by William Fitzhugh from Virginia. Its form is similar to many surviving in English gardens but the only one we know of in our country. Its diameter and height are in perfect balance.

WESTOVER

3. One of the most dignified and beautiful of the estates on the James is Westover, founded by an able and distinguished man, Colonel William Byrd whose father came to America in 1688.



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