

Flat Rock

Flat Rock's interestingly evolved plantation house is a study in local vernacular building traditions. The oldest part was erected in the late 18th century for James Hooper using a two-story, side passage format. The Chambers family added an east room just before 1820. In 1855 Flat Rock became the property of Robert S. Bagley during whose tenure a second story was put on the east room and one story wings were added, making a relatively large, formal house out of a formerly unpretentious one. A stylish note of this later enlargement is the unusual hexagonal chimney stacks placed atop the older chimneys. The interior woodwork is almost completely intact and reflects the various changes. On the grounds are a rare plank smokehouse and a large, granite lined ice pit. Carefully restored in recent years, Flat Rock remains in the ownership of Robert Bagley's descendants.

Prestwould

Sir Peyton Skipwith, the only Virginia-born baronet, moved to his Roanoke River lands following marriage to his second wife, Jean Miller, in 1788. In 1795 he completed Prestwould, his large Georgian mansion, the nucleus of a 10,000-acre plantation. Built of dressed sandstone, Sir Peyton's house, with its French scenic wallpapers and fine furnishings, is an imposing expression of the elegant life style maintained by Virginia's gentry in the remote countryside. The formal garden, laid out by Lady Skipwith, is one of the state's most thoroughly documented historic gardens. On the grounds is an unusually complete collection of outbuildings, including an octagonal pavilion, a rare early garden folly. A diverse group of buildings in which enslaved African Americans lived and worked survived at Prestwould into the twentieth century, and three of the buildings still stand: a 1790's slave house, an early plantation store converted to workers' housing after the Civil War, and a circa 1825 loom house with slaves' rooms upstairs. The late eighteenth century slave house is considered to be the earliest known slave house extant in Virginia and perhaps in the South. Prestwould was owned by Skipwith descendants until 1914. In 1963 the house and forty-six acres were acquired by the Prestwould Foundation, which exhibits the property to the public and is engaged in long-term restoration of the plantation's many components.

Spring Bank

Spring Bank, known also as Ravenscroft and Magnolia Grove, was built in 1793 for John Stark Ravenscroft and his wife, Anne, a member of the Burwell and Carter families, Tidewater Virginia gentry. It has a five-part, or Palladian plan—the only such example in Lunenburg County—featuring a two-story central block and flanking one-story wings. It was the work of two well-known Lunenburg craftsmen: carpenter John Inge and mason Jacob Shelor. The property had been part of the vast landholdings of Colonel Lewis Burwell, Anne's father, and represents early settlement in the area by one of Virginia's oldest and most widely connected colonial families. Armistead Burwell, Anne's grandfather, originally patented over 3,000 acres when the county was formed in 1746, 610 of which were sold to Ravenscroft for the building of the house. Ravenscroft, born in 1772 in Prince George County, attended schools in Scotland and England, and later enrolled at William and Mary, where he earned the nickname "Mad Jack." His family had strong ties to the Anglican Church, and he would later become the first Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina, serving from 1823-30.