



A Short History of 6 Purvis Lane Fredericksburg, Virginia

This simple country home, circa 1832, was built by Simeon Peyton. It faced the road that led from Belle Plains landing, on the Potomac River, to the town of Fredericksburg. Thirty years later—in 1862—it was home to an English sailor, Captain John Sands, and his wife Pina.

They were witness to the passage of over 100,000 Union Army soldiers heading to invade Fredericksburg, with horse-drawn wagons hauling supplies and pontoon bridge components. The march was delayed when the pontoon wagons became mired in mud on the road in front of the Sands' house. The battle commenced on December 13, 1862. Captain Sands stated that the fires burning in Fredericksburg during the onslaught lit up the sky and were visible from the home.

After the battle, some wounded Federal troops were sheltered at the house. Purvis Sullivan, whose family owned this house in the 1920s, reported a visit by Army veterans of the war, from New York state, who remembered being nursed to recovery by the Sands family.

Originally, this old house had one room downstairs, with a hall and staircase to the second floor, which had one room and a hallway to the attic staircase. There were small fireplaces on the first and second floors. In the early 1870s the house was doubled in size, with one new room on each floor, plus a room in the extended attic.

The 1920s saw the addition of a small kitchen on the back of the house. In the 1940s a larger kitchen was added onto the east end, and the nearby smokehouse still stands. In the early 1950s, a bathroom was added on the south side. Land surrounding the house is partly open in lawns and partly wooded, with some prominent trees that have been on the property for more than 100 years.

In 1958 Murphy and Elizabeth Street purchased the home, where they raised their family of five daughters and one son. In the 189-year history of this old house, the Street family tenure of 63 years represents the longest span of ownership.

