

The secret chamber is accessible only through a trap door on the third floor of the house. Perhaps it was originally used to hide from Indians. As one story goes, children put a cat in the chamber, and the cat disappeared without a trace.

Architectural Style

The architecture of Reveille House is a mix of Federal and Greek Revival. The West Wing, which is the dining room, was added to the original house in 1839. The kitchen wing was added in the 1920s by the last owner, Elizabeth Crutchfield. This last addition moved the kitchen out of the English basement.

Famous Guests

Reveille has had many distinguished guests. Edgar Allan Poe was once a guest at Reveille, and John James Audubon, the great naturalist, was a frequent visitor when he stayed with his friend, General Richardson, across the road at "Windsor." Robert E. Lee bivouacked his troops on Reveille's grounds, and one of the last offenses of the Civil War is thought to have taken place here. Ellen Glasgow, a Richmond author, wrote of her many visits to Reveille in her autobiography, *The Woman Within*.

Reveille Today: Seven Acres Set Apart

Reveille United Methodist Church is very fortunate to have a historic landmark on the grounds and is very proud of the beautiful garden that surrounds the house. The "seven acres set apart," including the house and garden, are lovingly maintained. Although Reveille House did not become a museum as Mrs. Crutchfield wished, she probably would approve of the many ways the house is used. It serves the church as an administrative center, and many social activities are held within its walls.

Cover Photo: Anne Hodges



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The Legacy of REVEILLE House



REVEILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Brick House Tract

Reveille House, once part of a plantation facing the James River, may be the oldest house in Richmond, except for possibly the Old Stone House (now part of the Poe Museum). Built as early as 1720 on a land grant from the King of England to the Kennon family, the house was already a landmark by 1800.

Members of the Kennon family were among the great landholders of Henrico County and other parts of the state, with property amounting to 50,000 acres. The property known as the “Brick House Tract” on Westham Plank Road (now Cary Street Road) was large. History of the house during the Kennon occupancy is misty, but Henrico Courthouse records begin to bring clarity to its history shortly after the Revolution. According to those records, Colonel Turner Southall was master of the house. His will was probated June 6, 1791.

The Reveille Call

Colonel Southall’s descendants sold the estate to Edward C. Mayo and wife in 1831. James M. Boyd bought the property, containing fifty-eight acres, from Mr. and Mrs. Mayo in 1838. In 1842 Phillip Mayo Tabb and his wife Martha Tabb Mayo acquired the “Brick House Tract” from James Boyd.

A great-granddaughter of the Tabbs contacted Reveille’s historian and revealed the origin of the name Reveille. The story, handed down through several generations, is that Martha Tabb insisted everyone rise every morning by sunrise; thus, the term “Reveille Call” became a household word for Martha’s children, and eventually a name for the estate. This story is supported by historical data.

In 1852, Henrico County land books recorded that John M. Wrenn and wife bought “all that certain tract lying on the north side of Westham Plank Road in the County of Henrico known as the ‘Brick House Tract’ now called Reveille.” From this first reference, we can surmise that the name Reveille is not connected with the Revolutionary or Civil Wars. The reference is too late for the former and too early for the latter.

Civil War and Latter Nineteenth Century

In 1861, John D. Hammersly bought the property from John Wrenn, and in 1869 Dr. Richard Archibald Patterson, a physician and surgeon who had served in the Confederate Army, became the owner of Reveille with 73 acres. Nearby Patterson Avenue is named for him. Malvern Avenue, one block to the east, is named for Patterson’s son who was born on the day of the Civil War Battle of Malvern Hill.

Twentieth Century

At Dr. Patterson’s death, Reveille was inherited by his daughter, Elizabeth. She married E. M. Crutchfield. The couple added the kitchen wing to the house in the 1920s. Mr. Crutchfield was murdered on the back porch by his chauffeur on July 3, 1937. Elizabeth married a second time, but neither marriage produced any children. In 1942, the city of Richmond annexed part of the county of Henrico, including Reveille.

At her death in 1949, Mrs. Crutchfield bequeathed the house and seven remaining acres to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities with the hope it would be used as a museum. The Association could not accept the property with all the stipulations in Mrs. Crutchfield’s will so it was available to be sold. In 1951, the Reveille Estate with its “seven acres set apart” was purchased by two displaced Methodist churches – Monument and Union Station. The estate gave the new congregation a home and also its name.

Folklore and Secrets

Like many old houses, Reveille has many stories to share from its long history. A ghost and a secret chamber are two of its most well-known legends.

The ghost is that of a young girl who planned to elope with her lover. At night, in her haste, she fell down the stone steps breaking her neck. At the foot of the steps her lover was waiting with two horses. It is said, on a moonlit night, you can hear the sound of galloping horses’ hooves. Those who have felt the presence of the ghost agree she is friendly, and they were not afraid.