

OTHER HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Sheldon Church

PRINCE WILLIAM'S PARISH

An Historic Property of the Parish Church of St. Helena

Established in 1745, Sheldon Church was built between 1751 and 1756 on land donated primarily by the Bull family and named after their ancestral home in Warwickshire,



England. Described as a monument to Anglican wealth and spiritual primacy, the church was designed as a compact auditory; built along a row of seven classic columns with colonnaded walls three-and-a-half feet thick. It was the earliest example of classical Greek architecture in America.

With reports that arms and munitions were hidden at Sheldon Church, British troops, under the command of General Augustine Prevost, burned the church in May 1779 during the American Revolution.

Sheldon lay in ruins until 1825 when a vestry was formed to restore the church to the center of spiritual life in Prince William's Parish. It prospered during the remainder of the antebellum era as a parish of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, but it would not survive the American Civil War.

During the Civil War (1861–1865), abandoned slaves on nearby plantations stripped the church of its timbers and furnishings for materials to build shelter. The church would never again be restored, and over time the ruins became known as Old Sheldon Church, Prince William's Parish.

In 1925 The Parish Church of St. Helena reclaimed these ruins from the encroaching wilderness and has scheduled an annual service at this site as a continuing legacy of Old Sheldon's spiritual heritage.

The Protestant Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina transferred ownership of Old Sheldon to St. Helena's Church in 1971. The ruins have become an iconic image in South Carolina history and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

William Fickling House

1109 Craven Street, Beaufort

The Rectory of the Parish Church of St. Helena since 1894, this house was originally home to William and Sarah Johnson Fickling prior to his death in 1807. Fickling, headmaster of a local boys' academy, is thought to have built the house in the late 18th century.



Supported by a raised tabby and brick foundation, the original two-story frame structure was one room deep with exterior tri-capped chimneys. It was discovered during the restoration of the property in the 1980s that the historical descriptions of the house were incomplete and the original structure also included a one-story ell at the back of the house. William Reed, a Union soldier stationed in Beaufort during the Civil War, was among the last to reside in the house in its original form, and he described it as, "...small, old, cold, and uncomfortable, but we had some merry times in it."

Near the close of the Civil War, the Direct Tax Commission for Districts in Insurrection sold the house at public auction for \$1,300 to Duncan Wilson, described as a loyal citizen. Wilson enlarged and transformed the structure in the Federal style with double verandas extending across the façade, supported by tapered columns and finished with a simple balustrade. The Adams-style interior includes random-width heart-pine floors, two-foot-wide boards forming the wainscoting to the windowsills, and dentil trim at the ceilings and some of the mantels. The mantels in the dining room and the two front bedrooms on the second floor are original, although the black marble mantel in the parlor is not. The stair rail and posts in the front entrance hall are solid walnut, and the absence of decorative trim in the rooms at the back of the house indicates they were additions to the original structure.

The house fronts directly on Craven Street, and the back lawn, surrounded by a variety of indigenous plantings, forms a broad sweep leading to St. Helena's historic churchyard and the nearby graves of William and Sarah Fickling.