

Source: "A Past to Preserve" by the Prince William County Historical Commission

Historic Name: Brownsville

Date or Period: ca 1900 (with an earlier foundation)

Original Use: Residence

Vicinity: Manassas National Battlefield Park

The first house on this site was built by George N. Brown in the early nineteenth century and acquired by William M. Lewis in 1835. Brownsville was a safe refuge during the first battle of Manassas but it fell between the lines in the second battle of Manassas and was struck by artillery fire several times. After the battle, the wounded of both sides were brought to the house, which was converted into a temporary field hospital. Brownsville became the home of the Leachman family after the war and an uncle, disapproving the frivolity of the children's frolics, gave the place the name "Folly Castle." In 1885 French artist Louis Kowalsky boarded with the Leachman's for six months while he made field sketches of the battlefield that would be used to paint the highly regarded, "Panorama of the Second Battle of Manassas." A fire on Easter 1900 totally destroyed Brownsville, but a new house was built in part over the original foundation using at least one of the old stone chimneys. The second house was a two-story, hip-roofed, five-bay, frame structure with a giant portico across two-thirds of the front, a two-story screened porch across the rear, and two, massive, brick, end chimneys. The exterior was clad with wide, white, wooden siding. The structure survived until early 1988 when it was removed to make way for a development project that was later halted when the Manassas National Battlefield Park acquired the property.

Also see the following for additional information.

Deed Book X, page 42

Deed Book 12, page 49

Deed Book 26, page 743

Deed Book 64, page 357

CEMETERY REGISTER FORM

Cemetery Name: Brownsville – Folly Castle

Latitude / Longitude: N38 48.050 W077 33.035

Location: 30 yards NNE of Brownsville (Folly Castle)

Classification: Municipal Religious Family Civil War Private

Status: Abandoned Maintained Not in Use Currently Used

Condition: Excellent Good Fair Poor

Approximate size: unknown

Approximate Number of Burials: unknown

Markers: Tombstone Fieldstone Unmarked

Surnames Listed on Markers: only fieldstones present at the 2001 visit

Comment by Jim Burgess – Cemetery associated with Brownsville (44PW479) archeological investigation by Laura Galke. Much of the cemetery was covered with a pile of dirt during 1988 development operation and remains buried today.

Surveyed by: Ron Turner & Jim Burgess

Date: 2001