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Know?



## Blenheim

You have probably read the notification that the Fairfax City Council changed the name of Old Lee Highway to Blenheim Boulevard effective January 1, 2023. Blenheim refers to the historic house located on the east side of Blenheim Boulevard about three-quarters of a mile south of the Fairfax club entrance. What follows is an introduction to Historic Blenheim.

Blenheim is the circa 1859 Greek-Revival-style brick house built by Albert and Mary Willcoxon. It served as the home to four generations of their descendants until the city purchased the house and surrounding 12 acres in 1999 as a public historic site today. It is designated as Historic Blenheim and the Civil War Interpretive Center. The site is famous for its Federal soldier signatures, pictographs, and thoughts preserved on the attic and house walls.



This “diary on the walls” left by Federal soldiers in 1862-1863 provides historians and visitors insight into the lives of common soldiers and extends to the effect of this war on local residents, such as the Willcoxon family, and free and enslaved people of African descent.



Grandma' Cottage

The secluded 12-acre grounds include groomed pathways with interpretive signage and other sites such as Grandma’s Cottage, c. 1840, which was home to Margaret Conn Willcoxon Farr, Albert Willcoxon’s sister. It was moved to the Historic Blenheim site in 2001. The cottage is important for its combination of log-wall construction and rare hewn timber framing with brick infill between the studs.

Another noteworthy site is the Willcoxon Family Cemetery where you will find the graves of both Willcoxon and Farr family members.

For more on Historic Blenheim, go to:

<https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/historic-resources/historic-blenheim>



**Willcoxon Family Cemetery**



**Blenheim Palace**

**The Original Blenheim.** Fairfax's Blenheim was named after Blenheim Palace, a country house built between 1705 and 1722 in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England. The Palace, which was named after the 1704 Battle of Blenheim, is the seat of the Duke of Marlborough and was the birthplace of Winston Churchill. Churchill is buried at nearby Saint Martin's church in Bladon.

**Summary:** The boulevard is named after the house, the house is named after the palace, the palace is named after the battle, and the battle is named after the small (population 1,700) Bavarian village (Blindheim<sup>1</sup>) near which the battle was fought. Therefore, one could make the case that the boulevard is named after a small Bavarian village.



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<sup>1</sup> Blenheim is the traditional English spelling of the Bavarian village of Blindheim.