

Elim Plantation

The Fry family built their home in what was then Orange, or perhaps Culpeper county Virginia.



The Biblical Elim was an oasis in the desert, a place where God showed his compassion to the thirsty refugees traveling out of Egypt, toward the Promised Land. Today Elim operates as an upscale Virginia Wine Country Bed and Breakfast - The Inn at Meander Plantation.

Two plantations are attributed to Joshua Fry in the beautiful countryside surrounding the city of Charlottesville Virginia. Elim, located near the community of Locust Dale is about thirty-five miles north and east of Charlottesville.

Viewmont is ten miles south of Charlottesville. Viewmont was probably built and occupied by the Joshua Fry family about 1744, when they moved west from Essex county Virginia to Albemarle County Virginia.

Elim was constructed sometime between 1745 and 1766. Opinions differ on whether it was the home of Joshua Fry, or his son Henry Fry (my 5x great-grandfather).

Henry Fry was married to Susan “Sukey” Walker in 1764, and Elim was the home where they raised their large family. The home remained in the hands of descendants (the Lightfoot family) into the early 1900s.

The plantation was patented in 1726 by Col. Joshua Fry, a member of the House of Burgesses and professor at William and Mary. Col. Fry and his partner Peter Jefferson, father of Thomas Jefferson, surveyed and drew the first official map of the area known as Virginia. Fry commanded the Virginia Militia at the start of the French and Indian War, with George Washington as his second in command. After Col. Fry died [1754] from injuries sustained in travel to battle, Washington assumed command of the forces and “locals” say Washington encamped here [Elim] for about a month to pay tribute to Fry’s widow and children.

Originally named Elim, the manor was enlarged in 1766 by Joshua’s son, Henry Fry. (He is buried in the family cemetery located in the field behind the house.) His lifelong friend, Thomas Jefferson, visited here often, as did General Lafayette. William Wirt, famous 18th Century American lawyer and counsel for the prosecution against Aaron Burr in 1807, spent

much of his youth here. At that time, the plantation encompassed more than 3,000 acres.

During the Civil War, the mansion housed a Union official, Col. Baynard. Numerous important Civil War battles were fought near the property, which is only 4 miles from Cedar Mountain, site of one of the war's largest and fiercest cavalry battles. Local historians believe the Battle of Cedar Mountain actually began at Meander's front gates.