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The name "Sully" and brief background information

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References from archives show the land here being called by Richard Bland Lee - "my lands in Loudoun County," "my lands and house," and "Sully" as early as 1789. In most of the correspondence, the site- once it has a name, is just called "Sully." We do have a sale ad for Sully in 1805 where it is called "Farm for Sale."

The origin of the name is unknown. The first mention of Sully was in a letter from Lee, while in Congress in New York, where he wrote to his brother Theodorick, giving directions for managing his farm. In the letter dated Aug. 12, 1789, Richard is writing about a possible early adjournment of Congress so that he might "be at Sully by the first of November." He addressed the letter to "Sully in Loudoun--Alexandria, Virginia."

One possibility is that Sully was named for a French estate, Chateau de Sully, in the Valley of Loire. Another possibility is that it could be from the *Memoires* of Maximilien de Bethune, Duke of Sully and France's Minister of Finance under Henry IV. English editions of this were certainly available among Virginians.

Before Richard Bland Lee's dwelling house and buildings were built, earlier generations of Lees had established quarters on the property that housed enslaved laborers and an overseer, all to produce tobacco, and then later a variety of crops were established, as tobacco was abandoned.

Once Richard Bland Lee's house and buildings are completed that eventually become his residence, he switches to multi-crop farming, and calls Sully "my farm." This time period is our main area of interpretation. Most of our programs, interpretive themes, and guided tours reflect the Richard Bland Lee time period: 1794-1811. Through our tours and programming, we give visitors an overview of life in the federal time period. We offer visitors guided tours of the main dwelling house that tell of the Richard Bland Lee family and enslaved community- as well as the other families who lived at Sully. We also offer guided tours of the outbuildings and representative slave quarter cabin where the contributions of those enslaved at Sully, such as Madam Juba, laundress, Thornton, a cook, and Sam the blacksmith and many others are highlighted.

The name "Sully Historic Site" was chosen as a place name as the site includes other structures that are not original to Sully- a gazebo that is original to the Fairfax County Courthouse and an mid 1800s log schoolhouse from Prince William County. Staff interpret the social history of many different families that have owned Sully- including the Victorian Period, Civil War Era, and the WWII era, as well as the preservation of the site after 1959. "Sully Historic Site" reflects the vast array of families that have owned the site since 1725 and offers a unique experience for visitors to this historic house museum, outbuildings and park grounds.

Families that owned Sully :

1725 (Land) Henry Lee I (Grandfather of Richard Bland Lee)

1747 (Land) Henry Lee II (Father of Richard Bland Lee)

1787- 1811 Richard Bland Lee, Northern Virginia's first congressman, inherited land from his father and establishes "Sully," he also inherits 29 enslaved men, women and children.

1811 – 1839 Frances Lightfoot Lee, cousin of Richard Bland Lee, and also the son of Richard Henry Lee, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Frances Lightfoot Lee was unable to manage the farm. Lee cousins, William and Winifred Brent establish a boys seminary at Sully.

1839 – 1842 William Swartwout, land investor from New York.

1842 – 1874 Jacob Haight & Amy Haight, then in 1855 – land deeded over to Maria Haight Barlow, married to James Barlow. All Quakers from New York, they continued farm and dairy operations on 751 acres, they divided the land among their children, Alexander Haight and Maria Haight Barlow. There were many Civil War influences during their residency. Alexander Haight was suspected of being a Union sympathizer.

1874 – 1911 Stephen and Conrad Shear – Father and son. Quakers who continued farming and dairy operations, the longest in residence at Sully.

1911 – 1920 William Eads Miller, Herndon realtor, continued modern dairy operations.

1920- 1939 King Poston, successful dairy farm.

1939 – 1946 Walter Thurston, Diplomatic corps of Washington, D.C. Sully becomes a country estate.

1946 – 1959 Frederick Nolting, State Department and N.A.T.O. European military affairs, post during WWII. He assisted in saving Sully and getting President Eisenhower to sign the Sully bill into law in 1959, making Sully as a preserved museum site.

1959 – present Fairfax County Park Authority operates Sully as a historic site and park grounds.