



The Sands-Ring Homestead, or Old Homestead, dates back to the 1700's. This Dutch-colonial style building is one of the oldest in Cornwall and one of the most historic. It was inhabited by the Nathaniel Sands family and their descendants from the early 1750's until 1907.

David Sands, Nathaniel's son came from Long Island, now Sands Point, in the 1750's and settled in Cornwall. As a renowned Quaker preacher, more Quaker families came, and David offered his house as a place to worship and for a number of years, the Friends would gather there for First Day and other meetings.

Situated along an important 18th century highway, now Main Street, the house was prominent during the American Revolution. Tradition has it that George Washington was a visitor at the house and even planned to stay overnight, but a plan to kidnap him was foiled by a warning from his soldiers. David Sands, a staunch Quaker, did not believe in war, a fact which led him to be suspected of Tory leanings. A contingent of militia was stationed at the house, but was withdrawn when David's wife produced a letter from her husband in which he avowed firm allegiance to the American cause.

Throughout the years, Sands-Ring Homestead stood as a meeting place for many organizations. During the Civil War, the Dorcas Society met at the house to collect and store items to be sent to the Union Soldiers. During the Spanish-American War, the home was used as a soldier's convalescent home. In World War I the Old Homestead was headquarters for war relief; in later years the American Legion rented a room for its meetings. During the latter part of the 20th century school children in the area came to learn about colonial life as part of the 4th grade curriculum.

The Sands home was one of the first in Cornwall take in summer boarders. David's daughter Catherine married Elias Ring and together had 10 children. Catherine Sands-Ring invited boarders to "Rose Cottage" so named for a rose arbor which extended from the gate to the front porch.

The last family member to occupy the house died in 1907. By this time, the house was in such a dilapidated condition there were thoughts of tearing it down. In 1912, Cornwall's two Village

Improvement Societies voted to purchase and restore the building. The Old Homestead was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Card parties, rummage sales, a woman's exchange and tea-room brought many visitors to the house. The annual fair became a familiar part of the summer scene, and a dance pavilion, erected on the grounds was a popular attraction.

After World War II, the Cornwall taxpayers voted in 1950 to take over the maintenance of the Homestead with a Board of Trustees appointed by the town. Three rooms on the first floor were restored along with David Sands store. A new shingle roof, 18th century brick for the fireplace, and the second floor renovations followed.

During the latter part of the 20th century, school children came to learn about colonial life as part of the 4th grade curriculum. This educational series became a mainstay for the school and encouraged young people to appreciate history. The local Garden Club had an annual fundraising flower drive on the grounds and maintained the gardens.

The Homestead was repaired and reopened on July 2, 2016. We are again holding open houses, providing tours and conducting educational programs for residents and visitors to enjoy and experience the rich history of the Sands Ring Homestead.