

Courtesy photo

FAREWELL: Mountain View Elementary School Principal Lyn McElwee leaves the school for the last time Monday to retire to Florida.

them on to others.

— Plato, The Republic

The Mountain View Elementary School family said adieu to a very special person this week.

On Monday, Principal Lyn McElwee, perhaps too emotional to stay until the last child left from the bus circle, left her office around 2

"She kind of slipped away," said Cindy Zumbrum, one of the two secretaries at the school, who said McElwee had hinted she might leave quietly.

McElwee, the school's second principal, has served in that capacity since 1996.

By the end of this week, the newly retired principal should be in her home and saying hello to a host of

and husband, Joe, began making plans for this week. They had a home built in Florida and rented it out until he moved down in May.

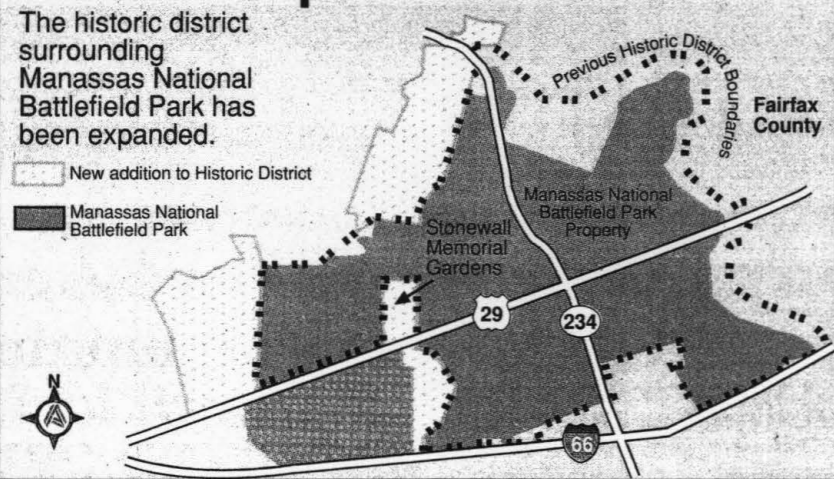
Last week, he flew back to Virginia to attend his wife's retirement parties and to drive her off into the sunset to the state where they met.

See MCELWEE, Page A5

Historic expansion OK'd

The historic district surrounding Manassas National Battlefield Park has been expanded.

Legend:
New addition to Historic District
Manassas National Battlefield Park



Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Times Newspapers Graphic/Damie Malone

Battlefield historic district expands

By TARA SLATE DONALDSON
tdonaldson@timespapers.com

The process took five years, but the wait was worth it for supporters of the battlefield, who learned Wednesday that the historic district expansion was unanimously approved by the Virginia Historic

Resources Board.

The historic district—first established in 1966 and expanded in 1981—is somewhat larger than the Manassas National Battlefield Park. The district includes most of

See HISTORIC, Page A10

Remembering Thoroughfare

Broad Run enclave honors community's founding families

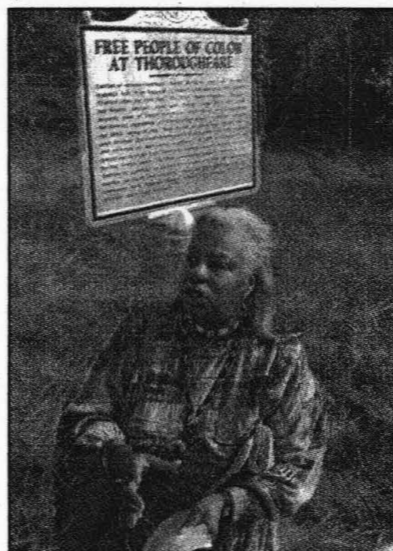
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Few people—even western Prince William residents—could pinpoint the community of Thoroughfare, much less display any knowledge of its unique history. Former residents and the descendants of residents are trying to make sure that the community and its founders are not forgotten.

On Sunday, Oct. 10, they came a step closer to preserving the history of the unique community when an historical marker was unveiled on the John Marshall Highway, marking the community that was founded more than 100 years ago by free blacks and American Indians.

Approximately 75 people attended the ceremony Sunday, at the Oakrum Baptist Church in Thoroughfare.

See MARKER, Page A4



Times Staff Photo/Mark F. Sypher

A FAMILY PLACE: At Sunday's ceremony, Victoria Price explains that the community of Thoroughfare, once the site of a slave auction block, was formed after the Civil War as former slaves converged on the area to find out what had become of their families.

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PWC - Cities & Towns - Thoroughfare Historic District

Gainesville Times Friday, Oct. 15, 2004 p. A1.

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MARKER

From Page A1

Following the ceremony, they walked to the marker, which stands across from Broadrum Grocery, on the south side of John Marshall Highway between Thoroughfare Road and the railroad tracks.

The silver sign, labeled "Free People of Color at Thoroughfare," gives a brief account of the community's roots.

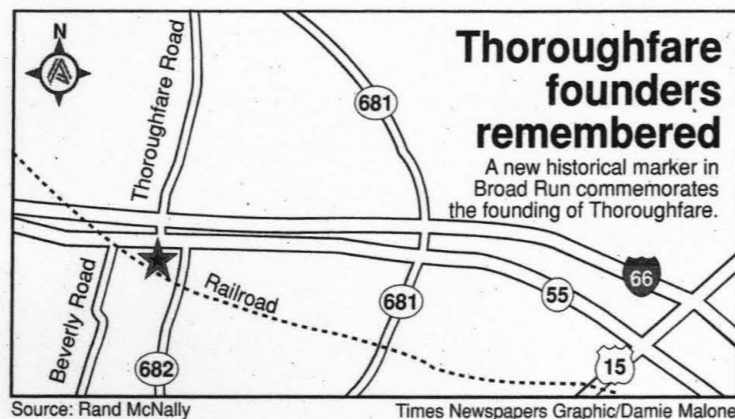
After the Civil War, groups of African Americans, American Indians and others of mixed ancestry moved into Thoroughfare.

Victoria Price, of Silver Spring, Md., is among those whose ancestors founded the community.

"My grandfather told me that Thoroughfare was an auction block, and that, after emancipation, hundreds of freed slaves converged on Thoroughfare to find long-lost loved ones who had been sold away from them," she said in an e-mail, adding that the auction block itself is believed to have been at Thoroughfare Gap in Fauquier County, not in the community on the Prince William side.

Price said her mother and grandfather started her on a quest to learn more about the community because her mother was of American-Indian ancestry.

Her mother's father's ancestors, the Harris family, were listed as free blacks and free mulattoes (American Indians were generally listed as mulat-



The land for the school had been donated by the Primas family, but the site was so small that there was no play area for the children, Berry said. When the neighboring fields were empty, they played there, but, for most of the year, the fields were off-limits. "We had to play in the road," she said, referring to the Thoroughfare Pike, before it was paved and renamed the John Marshall Highway. "At that time, there was no cars at all. There were horse and buggies, and, when the horses came up the road, we had to get out of the road."

In the 1920s, the school was moved several miles away to Waterfall.

"Waterfall is technically Haymarket, where people of color, at that time, were not allowed to live within city limits," Price explained.

According to Berry, when the school was moved, Thoroughfare residents again approached the school board, this time requesting a school bus. After many requests, the

Thoroughfare residents took turns taking soup to Waterfall so the students could have a hot lunch every day while they were at school.

Berry's cousin, Pat Fletcher, now lives in Seattle but is the granddaughter of Thoroughfare residents.

Fletcher's ancestor, Frank Fletcher, was an American Indian who left Scrabble, a tiny town in Rappahannock County, and walked the 45 miles to The Plains. There, he met Kate Vass, a black American Indian who was a slave.

The two later moved to Thoroughfare, and Frank Fletcher, a master carpenter, built most of the houses in the community.

Two of his houses still stand on the John Marshall Highway, including the home where Berry lived for 70 years.

Five years ago, Pat Fletcher did not know Price, her cousin. Price's family tree had been published in the Journal of African-American History, and Fletcher saw it and realized that the two had

Hughes-White. Hughes-White is the president of the Afro American Historical Association of Fauquier County and director and co-founder of the association's museum in The Plains. She approached Price and informed her that the two also had the same ancestors.

"We were all researching our family history before we met," Price said Tuesday. "I just think it was providential."

Four years ago, Fletcher, Hughes-White and Price met with the Prince William County Historical Commission and requested that an historical marker be erected to honor their ancestors and the community they founded.

In April 2004, they finally received their answer when Historical Commissioner Jim Burgess contacted them to inform them that the marker would indeed become a reality.

Hughes-White said Tuesday that her primary role in the process has been to encourage the descendants of Thoroughfare residents to pursue the historical marker.

While most of Hughes-White's family is from Fauquier, she too had ancestors on the Prince William side.

The small community of Thoroughfare, she said, was predominately self-sufficient.

"Most communities were stand-alone communities where they could survive," she said. "Now they might go up to Beverly Mill, where they could have things ground like sugar,

but they had whatever they needed for the community to survive. They had midwives and blacksmiths."

The community of Thoroughfare still stands, but the name has been almost lost to history, and all but a few now know the area as just a small part of Broad Run.

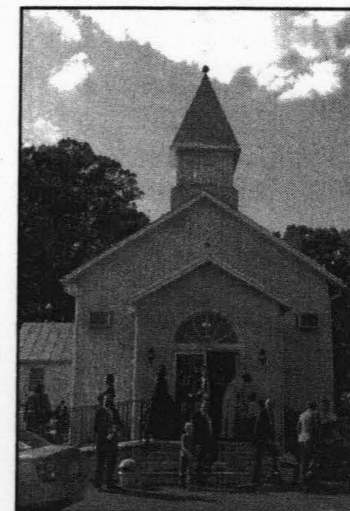
Over the last 50 years, development and construction have begun to encroach on the small enclave of homes.

In the 1950s, Interstate 66 was constructed through the farmlands, forcing some residents to move, Price said.

And five years ago, residents first began to see deer in the roads, pushed out of the woods by encroaching development.

And now, Price said, a sign on the corner indicates that a large office building will soon be built in the community.

"They're going to bulldoze all the woods," she said. "It's all been crunched up, torn



DEDICATION: Participants gather outside Oakrum Baptist Church in Broad Run Sunday.

down, and this little tiny place can't survive all this building. Thoroughfare is too small for the kind of full growth that these developers want."



**If You Rent,
There's One Thing
You Can't Afford
Not to Own.**

MARKER

From Page A1

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Her mother's father's ancestors, the Harris family, were listed as free blacks and free mulattoes (American Indians were generally listed as mulattoes in Virginia). Price's maternal great-grandfather, John Edward Peyton, was an American Indian who was one of the founders of Thoroughfare.

Price's aunt, Betty Berry, moved to Warrenton two years ago from Thoroughfare, where she has lived for most of her life. Berry, who turns 99 on Oct. 19, was the daughter of Cornelius Allen, an American Indian who also helped in the founding of the community.

According to Price, Allen left the Tuscorora Indian nation in North Carolina and walked north to the Catawbas before moving on to Buckingham County, where he lived with the Buffalo Ridge Cherokee. From there, he walked to The Plains, where he married Berry's mother and moved to Thoroughfare.

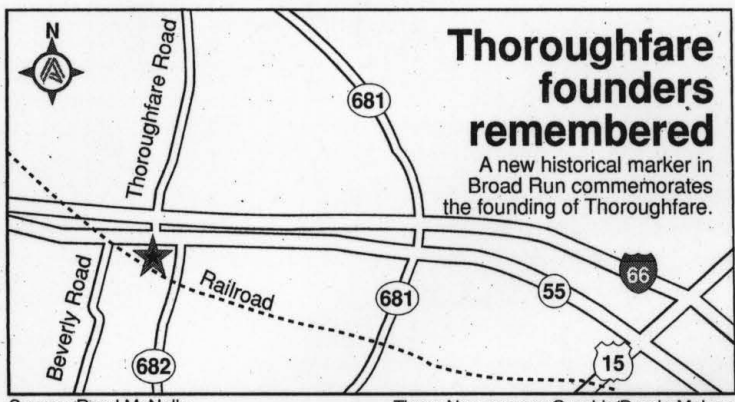
Berry was born in 1906 and said Monday that she remembers the train that passed through Thoroughfare every day to and from Washington, D.C.

She also remembers the one-room North Fork School, which was built in 1885 because the black children were not allowed to go to the white schools.

"People in Thoroughfare had big families," she said, recalling that the school quickly became so overcrowded that younger children could not attend classes. "They went to the school board and asked them to put another room on."

The school board refused to allocate funds for the black school, so Thoroughfare residents, who earned only 75 cents to \$1 per day, saved their pennies to fund the extra room, which was built in 1899.

"They sacrificed their money to give their children a good education," she said.



Source: Rand McNally

Times Newspapers Graphic/Damie Malone

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Later, while Price was working with the Friends of Bull Run (now the Bull Run Mountains Conservancy), she found another cousin, Karen

Hughes-White.

Hughes-White is the president of the Afro American Historical Association of Fauquier County and director and co-founder of the association's museum in The Plains. She approached Price and informed her that the two also had the same ancestors.

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FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR AT THOROUGHFARE

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Families of African-American, Native-American, and mixed ancestry migrated here from Fauquier, Culpeper, Rappahannock, and Warren Counties after the Civil War. The Allen, Berry, Fletcher, Nickens, and Peyton families, along with former slaves from this area, acquired parts of former plantations, built homes, and established the farming community of Thoroughfare which prospered through the 1940s. Many of the "Free People of Color" who settled here were illiterate but their families were not accepted into the schools and churches of their white neighbors. In 1885, the North Fork School was built by local labor with county funding on land donated by the Primas family. In 1899, community growth compelled the families to construct a second floor room and hire an additional teacher at their own expense. Also, in 1909 members of the community built Oakrum Baptist Church, on donated land and selected their own ministers.

MARKING HISTORY: This historical marker stands across from Broadrun Grocery on the John Marshall Highway.

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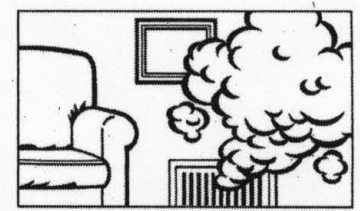



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A FAMILIAR PLACE: Marshall resident Virginia Anderson listens to the ceremony at Oakrum Baptist Church.



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