

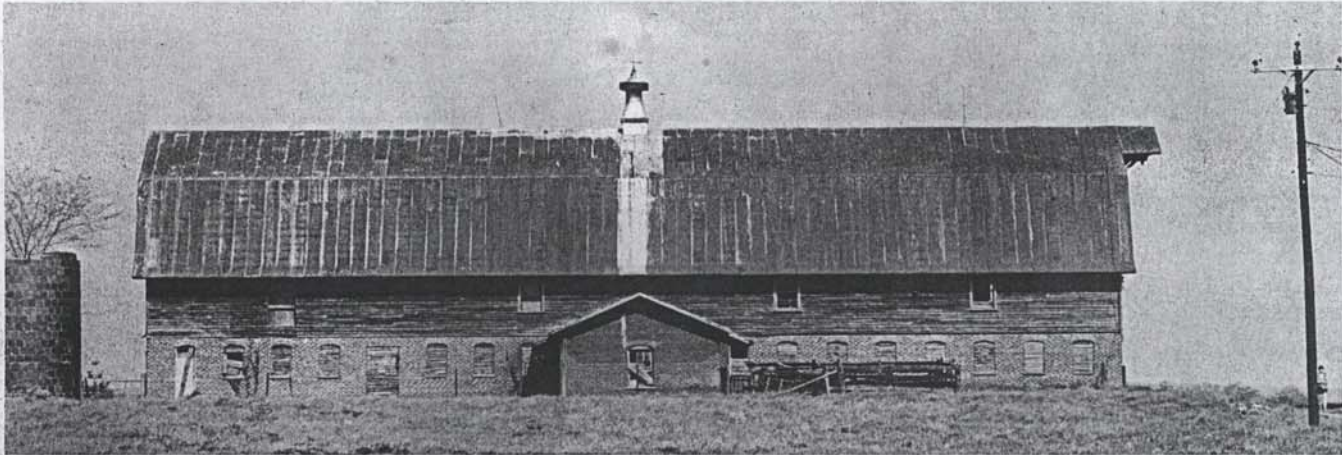
An editorial

Prince William Public Library
Manassas, Va.

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BEN LOMOND COMMUNITY CENTER

They like barns in Prince William, too — well, sort of



The camera lies; the handsome old barn on Ben Lomond farm near Manassas doesn't stand out there all by itself. . .

THE BARN contest has been one of the Piedmont Virginian's most popular weekly features. People, we have discovered, like barns.

Or, that is, **MOST** people like barns. Developers don't particularly like barns — not the ones around Manassas, at any rate. The people who

live near the barns don't much care for them either — at least, not everybody. A case in point is the large and handsome barn west of Manassas, in the

housing development area now generally known as "Sudley." Historically, the barn's location was known as Ben Lomond Farm, and it was originally part of a King Carter tract.

As the photographs show, the barn is now threatened with engulfment by rows of townhouses — rows and rows and rows of townhouses, — and where there aren't rows of townhouses, there's rows of other types of houses: Single families, multiple families, garden apartments.

THE DEVELOPER wanted to tear down the barn for still more townhouses. Some residents complained. They suggested that the barn should be saved, may be even developed as a community and recreation center.

The developer first agreed, then hedged. The supervisors agonized over the cost. Citizens themselves wavered back and forth. It seemed that some citizens didn't so much want the barn, especially if it cost them anything; they

just wanted a civic center, free if possible.

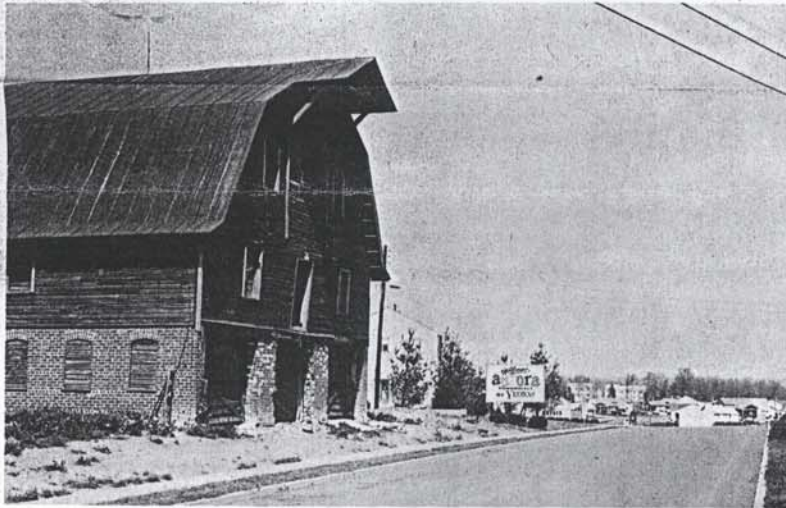
FINALLY, the Supervisors agreed to call a referendum on the issue. If the people wanted to tax themselves for saving the barn, then, by golly, they could.

Real courage in that decision, especially when it was decreed that only the citizens living within the Greater Manassas Sanitary District could vote—which means only those people would share the cost.

Previous civic centers had been built by general county funds at Dale City and Woodbridge, but those portions of poor Prince William have more voters, elect more Supervisors.

BARNs ARE indeed wonderful things, but not when "developments" and "growth" comes in. Then, they're fiscal and political nuisances, something to be converted into civic playrooms or demolished for townhouses.

We'd rather see them used as barns. □



. . .When you get closer, you see what's sneaking up on the other side. . .



. . .Houses and houses and houses and then still more houses. . . In row after row after row after row. Behind the barn.