

Manor house restoration begins

By **BENNIE SCARTON JR.**
Assistant Editor

Historic Ben Lomond Manor House, constructed in 1837, is in its first stages of restoration.

A construction crew from the Worcester Brothers Co., Inc., which specializes in the restoration of brick and stone has been working on the building and its various outbuildings for the past month.

The initial restoration work by the Baltimore firm will cost about \$38,000 and is being done primarily to prevent any further deterioration of the buildings.

One of the main projects the crew is doing is putting in a better drainage system to get rain water away from the house.

Also, the replacement of mortar between the stones is being done on all of the buildings. Other improvements include work on the roof and replacement of windows that have been broken by vandals.

During a 'walk through' Monday by members of the Ben Lomond Manor House Commission and Gainesville Supervisor Bobby McManus in whose district the home is located, McManus said, "I've noticed a big difference already in the appearance of the building."

McManus said long-range plans are to have the buildings and grounds completely restored as they were in the 1800's.

"We would like for the property to be similar in its restoration to that of Sully Plantation in Fairfax where it could be used as either a museum or to host events such as weddings or quilt shows," said McManus.

Agreeing was Hud Croasdale, vice chairman and public relations chairman for the commission, who



Historic Ben Lomond Manor House on Sudley Manor Drive in Manassas is getting a face lifting. A crew from Worcester Brothers Co. Inc. of Baltimore is doing the initial restoration work on the structure.

Worcester Brothers were hired for the initial restoration work because of their vast knowledge and experience in historic restoration work.

"We wanted to stabilize any further damage to the structures and we found them to be the best firm to do the job," he said.

Mulhern also said that an archaeologist has made many trips to the site to oversee the work. Some artifacts such as buttons, pieces of

In addition to the main house, which is located on a 5.92-acre tract of land, there is a small stone house, a smokehouse and dairy house and farmhouse and a block structure.

The commission was created for coordinating fund-raising activities to provide funding for the restoration, maintenance and use of the property.

The commission is made up of 15

County. Their son Benjamin Tasker Chinn (1807-1886) inherited Ben Lomond, enlarged with property to 1,642 acres and built the manor house in 1837.

The land was later used as a dairy farm and after a series of owners Robert L. Garner purchased the house in 1951 and restored it. In 1966, he sold the 814-acre farm to the Weaver Brothers Corporation, developers of Sudley Manor.

...that the commission is studying ways to raise money to complete the restoration project which he estimated could cost \$900,000.

"I'm really looking forward to the day when we will have enough money to get the project finished," he said.

The initial funding for the restoration project has come from a \$100,000 proffer donation by the builders of the projected housing development of Waverly and \$40,000 from the Virginia Historical Resources Commission.

Pat Mulhern who is a member of the Ben Lomond Manor House Commission and the Park Authority's director of planning and engineering division, said the Wor-

glass and pottery and lead were found while the construction crews dug trenches to put in pipes to take the rain water away from the structure.

Also on hand for the 'walk through' besides Mulhern, Croasdale and McManus was Martha Hendley, chairman of Historic Prince William, and a member of the Ben Lomond Commission. Other Park Authority members were also present.

The Park Authority and the commission, which was appointed by the Board of County Supervisors, is overseeing the construction work. A planning study for the restoration was prepared by Joseph Dye Lahendro, architect.

members that includes historical commissions in the county, chamber of commerce members, bankers, Realtors and private citizens.

Ben Lomond is situated on land originally granted to Robert "King" Carter as part of his 6,730-acre lower Bull Run Tract.

In 1724 Carter patented this tract in the name of his son, Councillor Robert Carter who divided it among his children, Sarah, Priscilla and George.

When Sarah received the 730-acre Ben Lomond plantation, it extended into Fairfax County.

Not until the early 19th century did it acquire its present name. Sarah married Dr. John Yates Chinn and lived at Edgehill in Richmond

developers of Sudley, the present subdivision surrounding Ben Lomond.

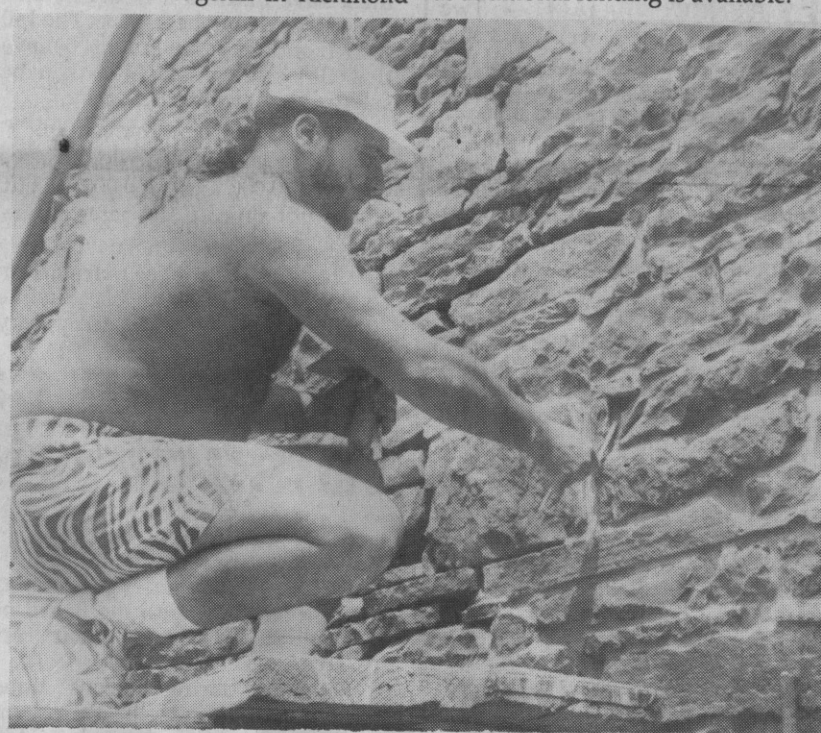
The county acquired the site in the early 1980's and while the outside remains in fairly good shape, there will be lot of work needed to finish off the interior before it can be used again.

The house was used as a hospital during the two Civil War battles at Bull Run and historic graffiti has been found on the walls, including wills and testaments written by soldiers on the interior plaster walls.

The present restoration crew will finish its work by the end of this month with further work on the structures to be completed as soon as additional funding is available.



Bennie Scarton Jr. - Journal Messenger
Paul Mackert replaces the mortar in one of the walls in one of the outbuildings at the Ben Lomond Manor House property.



Bennie Scarton Jr. - Journal Messenger
Mark Kinney with the Worcester Brothers Co. Inc. construction company works on a wall at the Ben Lomond Manor House.

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