

# Historical Ben Lomond house gets new look

By ALEXANDRA B. STODDARD  
of the Potomac News

Old Ben Lomond has finally gotten its first lift. Though restoration plans have been in the making for years, phase one of the project was completed in June.

The preliminary restoration work, which was completed during phase one in May and June, was a stabilization effort which included repairing the stonework and broken windows and installing a ventilation system and a drain field to drain excessive water away from the foundation of the building.

At a ceremony on June 28, visitors were invited to help excavate the property for artifacts found during the stabilization project. Animal bones, pottery and glass shards, and nails dating back to the late 19th century were found, according to Hud Croasdale, a project manager at AT&T who is a member of the Ben Lomond Manor House Commission.

The commission, established in August 1990, was put together to raise additional funds for the restoration in addition to determining the end use for the building and the property.

"We were commissioned to track the restoration and work with the park authority and the restoration firm to ensure that the work is done properly," Croasdale said.

Phase two cannot be started until the necessary funds, estimated to be around \$900,000, are raised. Presently \$140,000 has been donated for the restoration. Of that \$40,000 has been given by the state, Croasdale said.

The commission plans on holding special fund-raisers at the site.

"We're looking to the business community and individuals to be supportive of the restoration of the manor house," he said. "We're looking to prepare the site so that it can be used for various functions like wedding receptions."

The commission may recommend that the manor house be restored to its Civil War period appearance, but is also considering restoring it to its original date of 1837. "(This) would show it more as a Colonial working farm. There is already a large amount of focus in the county on the Civil War and this pre-dates that. We thought it would be better to see it as a working farm and what that would have been like."

To clear up the mystery, there never was a man named Ben Lomond who fought a battle or invented a machine or even raised farm animals in these parts.

The historic landmark, built on 730 acres in 1837, was named for a mountain in Scotland associated with Loch Lomond, according to Scott Harris of the Manassas Museum. It is best known for its use as a field hospital during the two battles of Manassas during the Civil War.

The property was originally owned by Robert "King" Carter who owned 6,730 acres of land known as the Lower Bull Run Tract which he patented in 1724 and gave to his son Councillor Robert Carter. He divided his land between his children. His daughter Sarah was given the Ben Lomond property, part of which is now known as Fairfax County.

HISTORIC SITE FILE: BEN LOMOND  
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS  
RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA

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Volunteers for the Northern Virginia chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia search for artifacts at the Ben Lomond house