

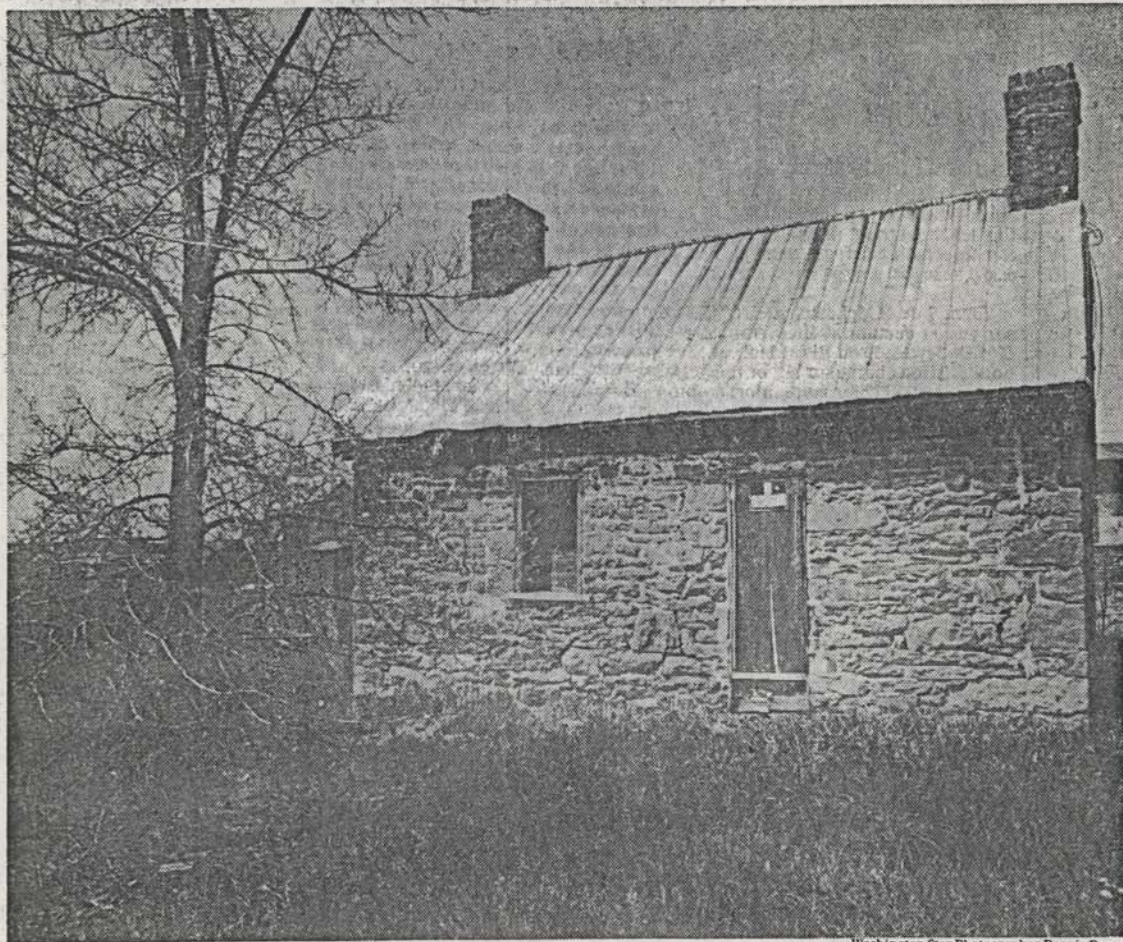
# The Fairfax Star

## Prince William & Loudoun

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Comics



—Washington Star Photographer Bernie Boston

One of the last slave homes in the country is in danger of being destroyed.

## Old Slave Quarters to Disappear?

By Gregory Byrne  
Special to The Washington Star

A pre-Civil War stone building in Manassas that may have been used as slave quarters is being threatened by the imminent construction of a Baptist church on the historic site.

If the house is razed to accommodate the church, area historical societies may lose a chance to perform the first excavation of a slave quarters in this part of the state.

"As we go from year to year we lose more of our history," said Prince William County Historic Commission Vice Chairman Ann Flory. "Buildings just disappear or get lost. Here's a chance to save one."

Flory has urged the county to absorb the \$18,000 to \$20,000 it would take to move the house to county-owned land nearby or 35 feet to the Ben Lomond estate.

The Ben Lomond estate is owned by Weaver Brothers, the development firm that built most of the homes in the Sudley area of the county. The small parcel of land containing the outbuilding, though

originally part of the estate, was sold by Weaver Brothers to the congregation of Westover Baptist Church five years ago.

The 120-member congregation has been meeting in a middle school cafeteria for the past five years while saving for its first church. The final plans, pending approval of the county planning commission, call for a 50-foot driveway which would cut through the existing building.

The Rev. Alfred Philley, the church's minister, has agreed to delay construction if the county wants the building.

"We have told the county they can have the building," Philley said. "I don't know how long we can wait, and I don't want to delay the building if we can help it."

The Ben Lomond estate, named after a city in Scotland, is the ancestral home of the Carter family, no relation to the Carters of Plains, Ga.

The land was first patented in 1724 by Robert King Carter as part of a 5,000-acre homestead stretching to Bull Run.

It passed to Carter's son, Robert Counselor Carter, whose daughter,

Sarah Chinn, inherited the land, the main building and the outbuilding, built in 1837. Sarah's son, Benjamin Tasker Chinn, and his wife Edmonia lived on the estate and may have occupied the small building.

Tradition has it the building housed slaves and may have been the overseer's residence at one time.

The Chinn's sold the land during the Civil War and fled to a safer area. The Ben Lomond tract was bought later by the late Robert L. Garner, one-time vice president of the World Bank. Garner sold the land to Weaver Brothers in the 1960s after making some improvements to both houses.

Frances Jones, who is surveying historic county sites for the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission cites the "rarity and uniqueness" of the building.

"No known slave quarters in the Northern Virginia area have been investigated for their architecture and effects," she said.

The small building is made of local red sandstone with a metal roof over wooden gables. The original

See SLAVE, FX-2



## Slave

From FX-1

nal roof was shingles, but was replaced by Garner in 1950. The timbers have not rotted and the lime-based mortar is sound, Jones said.

Earlier this month, two experts examined the building and found evidence it had been occupied in the first half of the 19th century. The design of the interior shows it may have housed as many as three families, she said.

The Historic American Building Survey would like to measure the building for inclusion in its list of historic sites in Virginia.

County officials are examining the options of moving the house and awaiting the recommendation of the planning commission on the church's plans.

It is ironic that new development is threatening a remnant of the Carter estate. Carter's holdings were at one time so large, Flory said, that they inhibited general development in the Manassas area until long after the Civil War.