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BUCKLAND
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Family Feud Reaches Beyond Grave

As Haft Lay Dying, Questions About Companion, Competency Swirled

By MICHAEL E. RUANE,
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Washington Post Staff Writers

It was early evening on Aug. 18 when they gathered at the bedside of legendary Washington tycoon Herbert H. Haft, who lay in a glass-enclosed cubicle in the second-floor intensive care unit of Sibley Memorial Hospital.

Wearied by age and illness, Haft, 83, was jaundiced from liver failure, his weakened heart maintained a feeble beat and his kidneys no longer functioned.

Short and pugnacious, the white-haired millionaire and former Wall Street terror who stood just over five feet tall now seemed shrunken and frail against the expanse of his hospital bed.

He had just two weeks to live, but those who had assembled amid monitors, IV

tubes and other hospital machinery that muggy Wednesday hadn't come to say farewell.

They were there to see Haft marry. His fiancée, Myrna C. Ruben, 69, wearing an elegant new pink suit, looked nervous as a judge intoned, "Repeat after me." The wedding ceremony lasted about 15 minutes. There was no cake. Then the

See HAFT, C8, Col. 1



"I love Myrna very, very, very, very much," Herbert Haft said after marrying her at Sibley Memorial Hospital, a friend said.



A drawing of Civil War activity on Broad Run reveals the similarity of today's landscape to that of the 1800s on the Fauquier-Prince William line.

Embracing the Past in a Va. Town

Residents of Tiny Buckland Hope Historical Significance Will Deter VDOT

By ERIC M. WEISS
Washington Post Staff Writer

For 140 years, the town of Buckland was, in many ways, extinct. No post office stands among its stone houses and old mill. No mayor protects its interests. No chamber of commerce touts its 18th-century buildings. In effect, the town, on the Prince William County-Fauquier County line, had been locked away in a municipal time capsule.

Now, a quirky but savvy group of Buckland landowners is trying to revive the town under its original 1798 charter—complete with elections and a Buckland mailing address. Beyond a renewed sense of civic duty, the group has a second aim: fighting the Virginia Department of Transportation. Residents hope that restarting the town and raising Buckland's historical profile will give it more clout to



David Blake, in front of his home with his dogs, is one of the Buckland residents fighting the widening of Route 29 and trying to preserve the town's character.

fight the state's plan to eventually widen the highway that runs through the middle of it.

"It's divided us and conquered us," said David W. Blake, the owner of Buckland Farm and the town's putative mayor-in-waiting, referring to busy Route 29. The highway carries 20,000 vehicles a day. Con-

timing growth in the area means more trucks and commuters.

While many area preservationists agitate for open space, Blake and a handful of Buckland residents have gone further—digging into their pockets to buy more than a dozen town properties in the name of blocking suburban encroachment. They are willing to forgo tens of millions of dollars from developers to keep their town the way it is.

They have proposed conservation easements on the entire town and a nearby Civil War battlefield. Their enthusiasm is shared by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which places Buckland in the same rarefied category as Jamestown and Williamsburg.

"Between the sprawl and the road and the bridge, our window of getting this off the

See BUCKLAND, C5, Col. 1

Newcomer Pressing Davis for House Seat

Democrat Banks On Presidential Race

By LISA REIN
Washington Post Staff Writer

Democratic activists in Virginia's 11th District gave incumbent Thomas M. Davis III a free ride in two of the last three elections, failing to field an opponent to the popular GOP congressman. But this season, a challenger has emerged to take on Davis, hoping to win on John F. Kerry's coattails.

Ken Longmyer, 66, is a political novice, but he brings a long résumé in the federal government to his campaign: a career as a Foreign Service officer. He said he was motivated to seek a seat in Congress by Bush administration policies he dislikes, including the war in Iraq and the government's failure to ensure that millions of uninsured people have access to health care.

Longmyer, who lives in the Falls Church area, has two campaign strategies: He pledges to provide support in Congress for Kerry's policies if the Massachusetts Democrat wins the presidency, and he attacks Davis as being more conservative than he purports to be, voting with the leadership of the GOP-controlled House of Representatives more than his constituents realize.

Davis "has an image he cultivates assiduously," Longmyer said. "But he has gotten in bed with [Majority Leader] Tom DeLay. I

See CONGRESS, C6, Col. 1

Few in D.C. Transfer Schools

More Than Half

Preserving the Past in Va.

BUCKLAND, From C1

ground is diminishing," said Linda L. Wright, 53, a member of the newly formed Buckland Preservation Society and the owner of Cerro Gordo Farm, which has more than 60 acres.

The society's efforts have awakened interest in Buckland by historians and preservationists, who now see the town's past failure as an opportunity. Old buildings in Buckland were not demolished to make way for new ones, as they were in more successful towns. Today, Buckland boasts 17 structures from the 18th century—about 80 percent of what was built. Much of the original town's land is intact and open.

"The neat thing about Buckland is that it is raw and pure; it remains the same as it was during Revolutionary times and the Civil War," said Margi Carpenter, a project director of the Washington-based Cultural Landscape Foundation, which aims to preserve historical context rather than just individual structures. Last week, the organization named Buckland one of the nation's seven most endangered landscapes.

"I don't think there's any other place with this kind of layering of history and private willpower to protect the land for the future, combined with the degree of threat that Buckland faces," said Rob Nieweg, director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's southern field office.

As they battle roads and suburban growth, Buckland residents are discovering more about the town, its history and its strange but strong pull on those who call it home.

"It is all still here," said Blake, 44, whose family came to Virginia in 1650. "You just have to look for it."

The Town

In 1774, Samuel Love built Buckland Hall and bought the nearby mill on Broad Run. Soon, Buckland became a thriving mercantile outpost with a woolen factory, wheelwright, cooper, apothecary, shoemaker, saddle maker, church and two taverns.

In 1797, Samuel Love's heir, John Love, laid out 48 lots, and the next year he obtained a town charter from the Virginia General Assembly. The Marquis de Lafayette visited the Buckland tavern, and Love sold a horse to George Washington and wheat to James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.



Next came a road connecting Warrenton to Alexandria that ran through Buckland. By 1835, Buckland was a thriving stagecoach stop with two flour mills, a distillery and an inn. The population was about 180, including 50 free blacks, who were skilled craftsmen and owned homes and even had slaves, according to documents unearthed by Blake.

Some of the first shots of the Second Battle of Manassas were fired from the bridge over Broad Run at Buckland. The next year, on Oct. 19, 1863, Confederates routed Union cavalry at Buckland—including troops commanded by Union Gen. George Armstrong Custer—in what Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart called "the Buckland Races."

The Buckland advocates want to preserve most of the battlefield and the town in an expanded historical area of 2,000 acres.

The Protectors

When David Blake moved to the area in 1999, all he wanted to do was breed thoroughbred horses on the 550 acres of Buckland Farm. But then he started researching its long history. In recent years, Buckland research has led him to seven states and dozens of libraries and courthouses. It even prompted him to take a class on how to read 18th-century land records.

Saving the town from sprawl and VDOT highway engineers—whom he calls "philistines"—has become a near obsession.

He says his girlfriend fears that the ghosts of Buckland "have taken possession of my soul and are using me as a workhorse to make their story known. This happens to people who move here."

In addition to planning to put all of Buckland Farm under an easement, Blake has bought two newer houses in Buckland just to tear them down. He is merely following the path of other Buckland protectors.

Martha Leitch, who used to live in the old post office, started buying up Buckland properties in the 1950s, accumulating four houses, a tannery and 25 acres of the original town. Then she became ill and passed the job to Thomas Ashe, who had caught the bug in the 1970s, buying the old Buckland Tavern after he saw an article about its auction in the Washington Star.

"I was rather taken by it," said Ashe, 77. Soon he bought the house next door. Then he heard that the church was going to be replaced with a strip mall. So he bought that, too. Now he owns three houses, a



Thomas Ashe, in the old tavern, also owns three houses, a church, a schoolhouse, portions of four streets and half the old town green.



Linda L. Wright in front of her home, where Gen. J.E.B. Stuart is said to have hidden in the chimney and to have presented a piece of shrapnel embedded in a tree limb to residents.

church, a tavern, a schoolhouse, portions of Madison, Fayette, Jane and Elizabeth streets and half the old town green.

Neighbor Brian Mannix, 53, joined the club, buying the Buckland Mill, the miller's house and 43 other acres, including 4,000 feet of Broad Run itself.

All of them—Blake, Leitch, Ashe, Wright and Mannix—are prepared to give up development rights in order to preserve Buckland.

"What's special about Buckland?" Ashe said. "Well, it's been here a long time."

The Road

Although John Love's town of Buckland was a failure, the turnpike he helped build is a continuing, raging success. At peak

times, 2,000 vehicles an hour whiz through the town at speeds of up to 70 mph.

As growth continues in the area, VDOT plans to increase the width of four-lane Route 29 to as many as eight lanes and upgrade its intersections. In the short term, the agency wants to replace the highway bridge over Broad Run, which was built in 1953. Early drafts called for widening the bridge by more than 50 percent, which would slice away what little space exists between the houses and the highway.

What Buckland preservationists want most is a bypass around the town, linking Route 29 to Interstate 66 west of Buckland.

"Why spend all this money on Route 29 when you could bypass all that to I-66, where 85 percent of the traffic is going anyway?" asked Del. Robert G. Marshall (R-

Prince William).

"That may be in their plans, but it is not in ours," said Joan Morris, a VDOT spokeswoman. Blake and other Buckland advocates are meeting with state transportation officials this week to discuss the bridge project.

The Strategy

The strategy of Blake and Buckland boosters to save the town is multi-layered and sophisticated. First, research the town's history to bolster its significance. Get the historical groups and preservation societies on board. Partner with open space, environmental and Civil War groups. Try to get Buckland on as many "endangered" lists as possible. Enlist local politicians. Learn the arcane rules and language of planners and engineers, and learn what makes a town a town.

All this is new for the small band of Bucklanders, who have long relied only on themselves and were pleased to disappear into the woods and along the calm waters of Broad Run. But now that Buckland is threatened, they are ready to fight for their town.

They point out that for 200 years, residents quietly kept the town going. "We didn't ask for any money from the government. But if they [expand] the road here, it's all gone," Ashe said.

Buckland leaders point to an opinion from the state attorney general saying that the town charter is still in effect, since it was never formally rescinded by the General Assembly. Blake said it is just a matter of scheduling local elections. Whatever it takes, he said.

"Everything that's ever happened, happened here," Blake said. "Now if we could just move that bloody road."

PHOTOS BY GERALD MARTEAU—THE WASHINGTON POST