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Buckland Tavern sold at auction

BUCKLAND TAVERN, which some historians believe is the only 18th century building still standing between Bull Run Battlefield and Warrenton, was sold at auction Monday, to benefit the estate of ailing Mrs. Grace Bear.

Successful bidder at \$40,150 was Thomas Ashe of Cheverly, Md. He plans to restore the handsome old stone building, which has fallen into disrepair and been victimized by vandals, but he's not absolutely certain yet what he plans to do with it. Ashe owns and operates an antique shop in Bladensburg, Md.

First bids were asked at \$20,000, but the actual competition started at \$15,000, with George Wiltshire of Middleburg working the price up to \$30,000, where he pulled out. (Wiltshire owns Country Squire Realty of Centreville, and lives at Mosby Spring Farm.)

Prince William County representatives stayed in the bidding until the price reached \$31,500, and then it was between Ashe and Dorothy Abbott, a secretary for the Prince William Circuit Court, in increments of \$100 until the successful bid of \$40,500 was reached.

SCORES of people showed up for the auction, and Martha Leitch of Buckland served lunch to between 40 and 50 persons after the auction was over.

One of Buckland Tavern's staunchest supporters, H.H. Douglas of the Pioneer America Society, thought the auction provided "a satisfactory conclusion" to what had been a worsening situation.

Douglas wrote an article for the **Piedmont Virginian** early this year describing the tangled state of Mrs. Bear's affairs caused by Circuit Court inaction over settling the Buckland Tavern estate. The first attorney appointed had done nothing about the matter since being appointed in 1970 to look after Mrs. Bear's affairs, and her account at the Manassas Manor Nursing Home had fallen into arrears. Douglas charged that because of the attorney's failure to provide necessary information on two occasions, Mrs. Bear's old age assistance was cancelled.

After the **Virginian** article appeared, Judge Arthur Sinclair appointed Thomas O. Beane as committee to replace Edwin Pierce, and it was Beane who prepared necessary arrangements for Monday's auction.

Buckland Tavern is reputed to have been host to three "generals" — George Washington, Lafayette and Tom Thumb—and was brushed by history later when President Theodore Roosevelt used it as a stopping over place on his famous horseback ride from the White House, to demonstrate a need for physical fitness. □