

Buckland Tavern

Court officials criticized for inaction

By H. H. DOUGLAS

ON AUGUST 18, 1947, Mrs. Grace F. Bear bought Buckland Tavern. It had been vacant for many years and was in terrible condition. Her persistent efforts during the more than 20 years she lived there transformed the old building into an attractive and very livable residence. Built before 1800, Buckland Tavern is the only historic landmark standing between the Bull Run Battlefield (Bull Run Bridge and the Stone House at Routes 29-211 and 234) and Warrenton.

In the late 1960's, Mrs. Bear became progressively less able to care for herself and her home. Early in 1970 she went to the Manassas Manor Nursing Home, where she has been ever since, in spite of her thought that she will soon be going back home.

On February 12, 1970, the 19th Judicial Circuit Court of Virginia appointed Edwin H. Pierce, Jr., of Pierce and Prendergast, 117 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, 22313, as Committee to look after the affairs of Mrs. Bear, with Claude Compton as guardian ad litem. The initiative and responsibility in such an arrangement lie with the Committee.

Since his appointment by the

Court, Mr. Pierce has done nothing to promote the affairs of Mrs. Bear, nor to keep them in order. Her account with the Nursing Home was \$5019.40 in arrears as of May 9, 1973, and was increasing at the rate of \$525.00 per month. Because of Mr. Pierce's failure to provide the required information on May 23, 1972, and again on September 11, 1972, Old Age Assistance for Mrs. Bear was cancelled as of December 31, 1972.

FOLLOWING Mr. Pierce's appointment as Committee for Mrs. Bear, the house was left open and was ransacked and vandalized. Rain comes in through parts of the roof and is rapidly destroying the interior. Mr. Pierce has done nothing to secure or protect the property. Mrs. Bear can never (for physical reasons) return to her home, but even if this were possible, the shock would probably be fatal. The appropriate thing to do would be to sell the property to someone who would salvage and restore it. Many people have been interested in doing this.

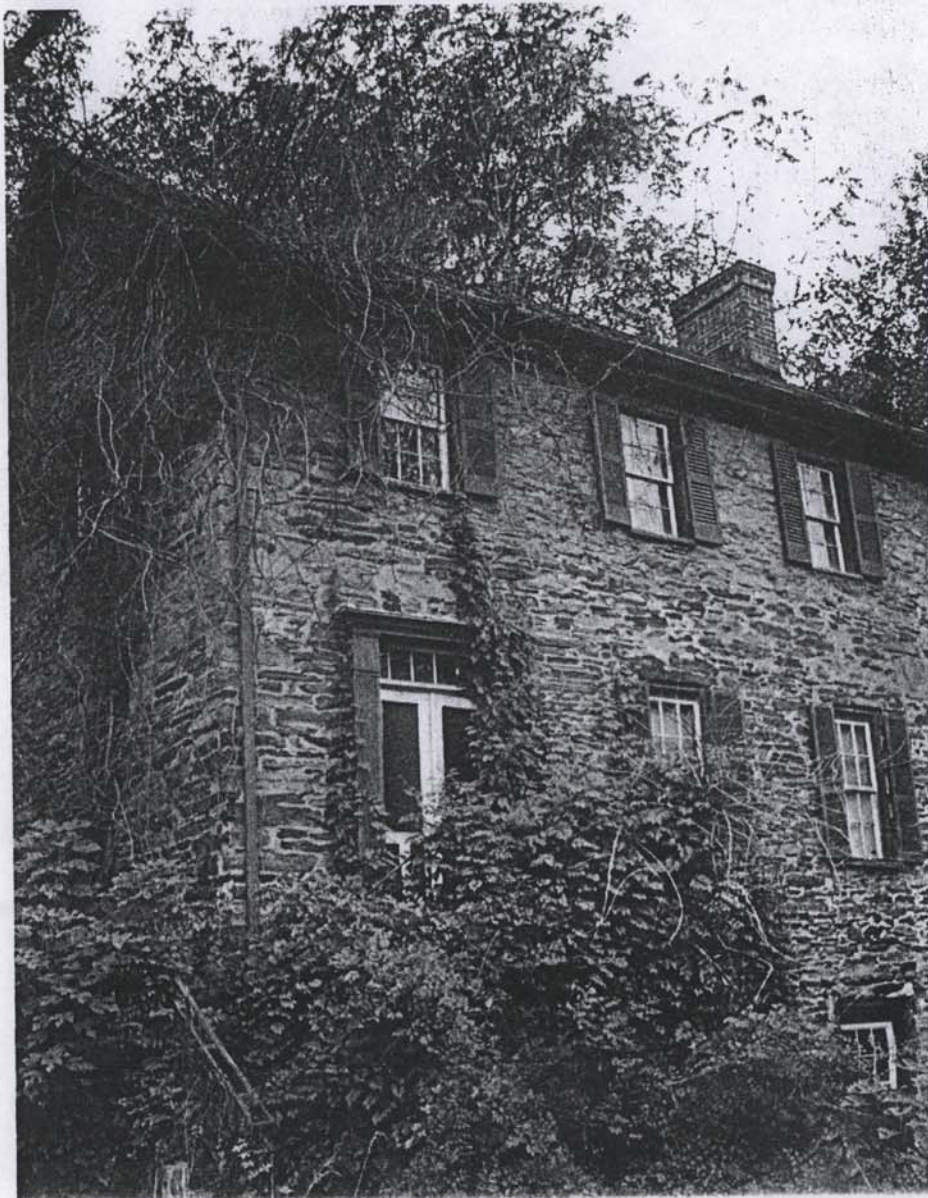
On March 11, 1970, Mr. Pierce made certain motions in the direction of selling the house, but nothing happened. Early in 1974 Mr. Pierce was reminded of the situation, and the situation, in precise detail, was presented to the Circuit Court. Mr. Pierce did nothing, and the Court did nothing. On September 9, 1974, H. H. Douglas, Executive Director of the Pioneer America Society, who is interested only in seeing this historic building salvaged and restored, met with Chief Judge Arthur W. Sinclair of the 19th Judicial Court of Virginia in his office in the Fairfax Court House.

Editor's note—The author, in addition to his administrative position with the Pioneer Society,

is editor of the organization's publication, "Echoes of History." He is a resident of Falls Church. □

Rifle expert

Marine Lance Corporal Jeffrey O. Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Williams Jr., and whose wife Joyce is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Lee of Willisville Road, Kentfield Farm, all of Middleburg, has qualified as a rifle expert at the Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N.C.



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He scored 229 out of a possible 250 points during his annual marksmanship training. A former student of Fauquier High School, Warrenton, he joined the Marine Corps in July 1973. □

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Pioneer America Society, who is interested only in seeing this historic building salvaged and restored, met with Chief Judge Arthur W. Sinclair of the 19th Judicial Court of Virginia in his office in the Fairfax Court House. When asked if when it became obvious that the Court had made a mistake, would not the Court then be interested in correcting that mistake, the Judge replied that the Court does not make mistakes, and that only through regular court procedure can sought-for changes ever be made.

THE BASICS of the situation as it presently stands are:

(1) Edwin H. Pierce, Jr., intends to do nothing.

(2) The Court intends to do nothing.

(3) Mrs. Bear's heirs are interested in having the situation rectified and the property sold, but do not have money to bring about the court consideration indicated by Judge Sinclair. If they did have the money, the court costs would probably equal or exceed the proceeds.

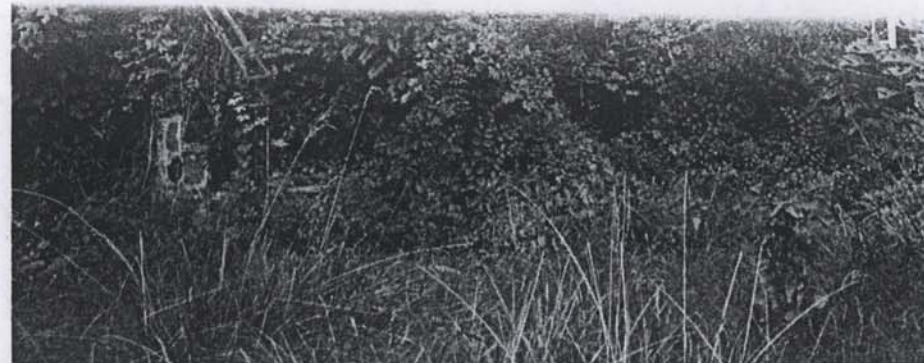
(4) A prospective buyer, through legal action, could force court reconsideration, with two negative results:

(a) The Court could refuse to alter the situation

(b) The Court could order the sale of the property, at auction. In this case the prospective buyer who brought suit would have no assurance of any kind that he might be the successful bidder.

(5) Buckland Tavern sits and rots, rapidly becoming a derelict, and more and more a detriment to the well-kept village of Buckland, in which it is located.

All this, in the final analysis, is due to the error made by the 19th Judicial Circuit Court of Virginia early in 1970, and to its current intransigent attitude.



The old Buckland Tavern, where legend has it "three generals" once stopped—George Washington, Lafayette and Tom Thumb—is falling into decay and a historian, in the accompanying article, blames court officials for needless delays that are perpetuating the building's fall into disrepair.



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