

HISTORIC SITE FILE: *Bushy Park*
 PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
 RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA

6/22/04

ON THE MOVE



John Tully/News & Messenger

A power company employee, left, raises the powerlines early Sunday near the intersection of Va. 234 and U.S. 15 to accommodate the oversized structure of the Bushy Park house.

18th-century house moves into the future

By MATT HOURIHAN

mhourihan@manassasjm.com

The first piece of a new Gainesville library is in place after contractors moved a historic Catharpin house in the early morning hours Sunday.

Until then, the Bushy Park house had sat on the same hill near Catharpin Road that it had in the late 18th century. Now, it sits on a small lot near the corner of Lightner Road and U.S. 15, where the county plans

to build a library for the growing Gainesville population.

"It's pretty amazing when you think about what they can move," said county library system Director Dick Murphy. "I'm glad it's not getting torn down."

The old frontier house originally came to the county's attention when the Catharpin Valley Estates subdivision began to spread around it. The developer came forward to ask what should be done with it, and Murphy had the idea of moving the

house and using it as part of the library.

The move had originally been planned for late April or early May, but was postponed on numerous occasions because of unfavorable weather.

"In the springtime, you have to play the weather a little. It's hit or miss," said Brendon Hanafin, the county's historic preservation manager.

But the rising sun welcomed clear skies Sunday as county police escorted the small

See HOUSE, Page A2

HOUSE

Continued from Page A1

convoy of contractors, power company trucks and county officials during their slow transit. Before sunrise, flashing lights illuminated the house's profile as it crept along two-lane country roads, riding on a towed flatbed.

The two-hour move, which began at 4 a.m., went largely without incident. Power company personnel had to lift a few power lines on Catharpin Road to avoid a snag, but the house itself held up fine.

"The frame was in really good shape, so we didn't have to shore up the sides as much as you'd think," said Hanafin.

Jason Ayers, owner of contracting company Ayers Movers, said the house's stability was because

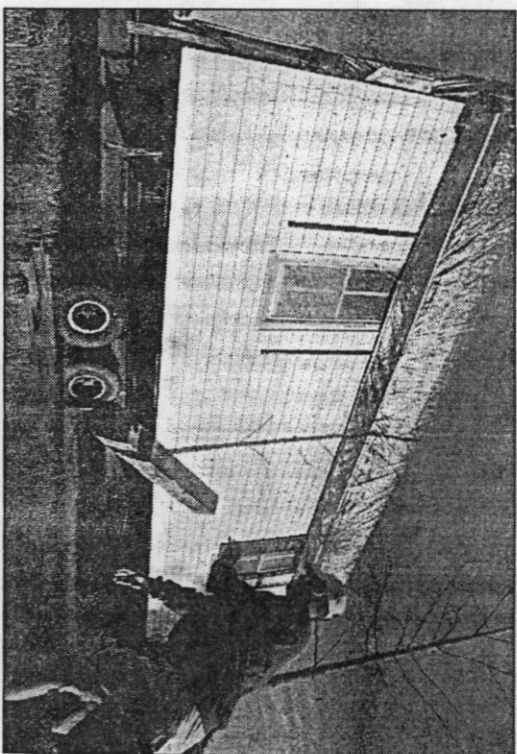
of its superior construction. Older houses generally have firmer bases and sounder carpentry work than modern houses, he said, allowing for structural endurance.

"You couldn't afford to build them like that today," said Ayers. "A lot of houses built today won't be around in 200 years."

Murphy envisions the house as part museum, part children's reading room once the library is completed, he said.

The library land was set aside after the Dominion Valley development was approved, and funding for design and construction could come from a 2006 bond referendum, said Murphy. The new library, which will replace the smaller library at James S. Long Park, is estimated to cost about \$10 million.

"I think because of this, we'll have better focus for that referen-



John Tully/News & Messenger

Jason Ayers piles lumber used to unload the Busby Park house onto its new site on Lightner Road.

dum," Murphy said.

While he was excited about the house's eventual library use, it was obvious that Murphy saw the historic relevance to the move as well.

"I'm thrilled with being able to keep anything from the 1700s in Prince William County," he said.

Staff writer Matt Hourhan can be reached at (703) 369-6591.