

CATHARPIN STORE & POST OFFICE

Historical significance continued

in ruinous condition in 1975. In about 1895 Frederick Sanders built a larger, 2-story frame house to the west of the store and east of the site of the old Sanders house. This house is the residence of Robert W. Alvey. In the late 19th century, a combined blacksmith/wheelwright shop was built just southeast of the store. This shop was later converted to a barn and demolished sometime after World War I. In 1874 the first Catharpin School was built, a 1-room structure which was later replaced by a larger building. Upon the completion of the larger school in about 1898, the original school was moved to Sanders' property and used as a chicken coop, later a dwelling and finally, after being moved a second time, a storehouse for Sanders' mill. The mill, a kerosene-powered grist mill, which was built about 1905, has been demolished, along with the storehouse. From about 1900 to about 1910 there was a cattle scale and pen located west of the school. In 1910, Frederick Sanders' nephew, Emmett N. Pattie, who had clerked in both the store and post office, built a store/residence on the south side of Sudley Road, across from the school and began his own business. He also built a large warehouse east of the store, the upper floor of which became the local Lodge Hall where meetings and entertainments were held.

In 1922 a local farmers' cooperative, the Farm Products Corporation, established a cheese factory on 16/100 of an acre purchased from Frederick Sanders adjacent to his store. A 1½-story frame building, the cheese factory was equipped to handle 6,000 lbs of milk per day and produced two kinds of cheese, "longhorn" and "daisy," for markets in Manassas and Washington, D.C. The plant was closed, owing to a lack of patronage, and in 1926 Sanders bought the property back and converted the cheese factory to a warehouse. In 1974 the post office was moved into the building.

The Sanders (later Alvey) Store retained the same general outward appearance until 1943 when owner J.W. Alvey turned the store so that the broad side faced the road, and moved the entrance from the end to the side. New siding was put on, and additions were made to the right. Sanders' grist mill and the storehouse which had been the original school building were torn down. Pattie's store, which had closed in 1930, was reopened in 1934, and was moved to its present location (on a new cinder block foundation) in 1940 and operated until 1943. This store was vacant from 1943 to 1956 and in recent years was remodeled as a residence. The Catharpin School, which was closed in 1935, remained unused for many years but has recently been converted for use as the salesroom for a lawn and gardening center.

Alvey's store and the Catharpin Post Office assumed their present outward appearance in 1974 when brick veneer was applied to the store, post office and connecting building. The store, though it is probably the oldest building in Catharpin, has lost much of its character through remodeling.

GAINESVILLE QUAD

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5481 NW
SOLEBURG

77° 37' 30"
38° 52' 30"

0.6 MI. TO U.S. 15
76-13
76-37
4305000m N

SITE 76-41

6-202
7-188

6-162

NE
USING
76-163

SE 76-215

E 76-216

int 76-

MISC

- 165

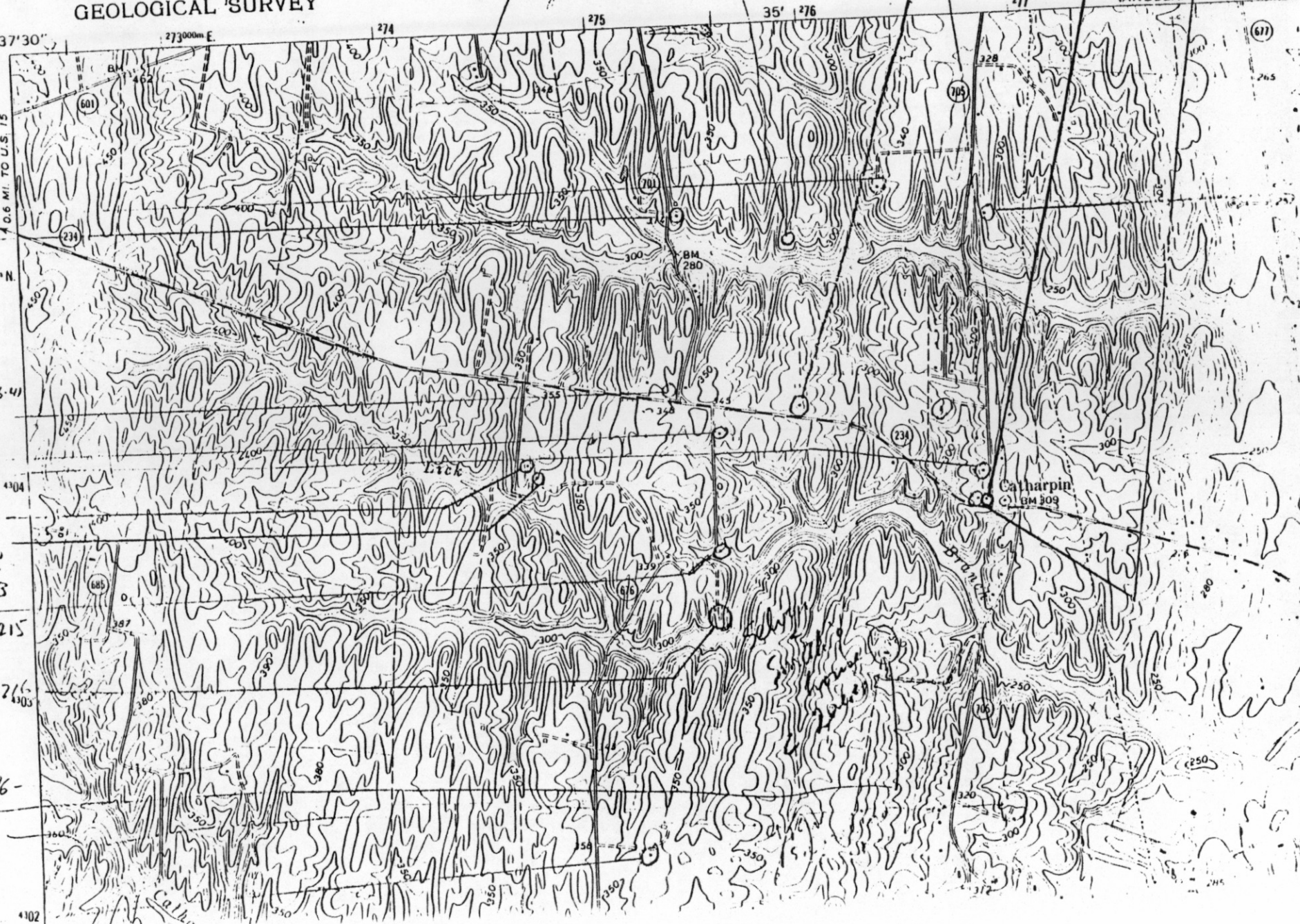
Ellen Vei (76-182)

76-159

G. Pattie House 76-160

CATHARPIN STORE
POST OFFICE 76-161

5461 NE
(ARCOLA) 278



in the main room held 4,500 lbs. of milk at a time. Steam pipes ran under this vat to heat the milk and form curd, as well as to separate the whey and pipe it to the upper floor by means of steam jets. After draining, cutting, and pressing, cheese was ripened in a storeroom which had solid concrete walls.

Most of the cheese found its way to locker plants in Manassas and Washington, D.C., for storage. Two types of cheese, "longhorn" and "daisy," were made here, as were the round wooden cheeseboxes. Edward Allison recalled that he spent a summer here bending wood for the cheeseboxes, and that the master cheese-makers were William Ellicott and Luther Pearson. According to Luther Lynn, a former director of the corporation, farmers eventually became annoyed at the time and trouble required to transport milk to Catharpin by wagon. Patronage dropped, and the plant was closed. In 1926 Sanders bought the property back and converted the cheese factory to a warehouse. In 1974 the post office was moved into this building.

The 1930s were times of trouble for Catharpin. In the summer of 1930 the worst drought ever to strike northern Virginia dried up all the streams except Catamount Creek, which is fed by three perpetual springs. It was possible to walk for miles along the beds of Catharpin and Bull Runs. J. W. Alvey, Jr., remembers standing in the dust in front of his grandfather's store, seeing how long he could remain in one spot before the dust burned his feet. Crops dried up in the fields and cattle died of thirst. Pattie's store closed, although the business was reorganized by Emmert Pattie and Lyndon Anderson in the spring of 1934 and lasted nine more years. In 1935 the new district elementary school at Haymarket was completed, and Catharpin was among the local elementary schools closed. In 1932 Sudley Road was realigned from Manassas to Catharpin, and the road leading from Catharpin to Loudoun County was taken over by the State, widened, and routed over an iron truss bridge at Putnam's Ford. In 1940 the Sudley Road was completed to Woolsey on its present alignment. Pattie's store was moved to the east and the long-abandoned lodge hall was torn down. The highway department paid for the cinder block basement required at the store's new location, the first instance of cinder block construction in the area.

In the summer of 1943, Sanders' store, then owned by J. W. Alvey, a native of

Maryland, was turned on its foundations to its present location. Sanders' grist mill, operated until 1940 by Luther Lynn, was torn down along with the original school building which had been moved a second time to be used as a storeroom for the mill, and the lumber was used to build the rear addition to the present Alvey's store. In 1974 brick facades were applied to the lower stories of the store and the old cheese factory, and the post office, which had recently become a third-class installation, were moved into the latter building.

This year, Catharpin Post Office and J. W. Alvey Sons General Merchandise observe their hundredth year of continuous operation in the same family. Pattie's old store, vacant from 1943 to 1956, has been remodeled for a dwelling. The Sanders-Downs house, at least ninety year old, is in imminent danger of collapse; restoration at this late stage is impossible. Catharpin School, since the removal of the precinct voting place to Sudley Church, is unused and has recently been acquired by land speculators. At this writing it seems only a matter of time until it will be demolished to make way for commercial development. Thus, although most of the major buildings that contributed to the growth of Catharpin still stand, albeit in modified form in some cases, their future is very precarious.

Leesburg, Virginia

An "Architectural Survey of the Original Nicholas Minor Section of Leesburg, Virginia," has been completed by John G. Lewis, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission representative in Loudoun County, and Calder C. Loth, Senior Architectural Historian for the Landmarks Commission.

This was done to make a complete photographic record of all the existing standing structures, regardless of age, style, or condition, in the original Nicholas Minor section. It comprises over three hundred photographs, and a brief paragraph about each structure, its period, and an architectural rating as to its importance in the community. This section was laid out in 1757.

There is also a section of photos of the various buildings which have been torn down, with a listing of the structures which were torn down before 1950 (18), since 1950 (12), and since 1973, or with permission granted to do so (7). The report includes a letter to the Chairman of the Town Board of Architectural Review with some thoughts and recommendations as to developing a design criteria for the restoration, remodeling, and/or new construction within this area, and approaches to parking (so essential to

