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REFERENCE

HAYMARKET

HISTORIC DISTRICT

Prince William Public Library
Manassas, Va.

COLONIAL ROADS

THE TOWN OF HAYMARKET, CHARTERED IN 1799, OWES ITS LOCATION TO THE JUNCTION OF THE OLD CAROLINA ROAD AND THE NORTH BRANCH OF THE DUMFRIES ROAD AT THE SITE OF THE RED HOUSE. THE CAROLINA ROAD DEVELOPED FROM THE IROQUOIS HUNTING PATH WHICH WAS ABANDONED BY THE INDIANS AFTER 1722 WHEN THEY WERE FORCED BY TREATY BEYOND THE BLUE RIDGE. THE DUMFRIES ROAD WAS IN USE AS A MAJOR TRADE ROUTE BETWEEN THE POTOMAC AND THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY BEFORE 1740.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
1978



Modernization in Moderation

By BETTY CALVIN
JM Staff Writer

"Many people here are anxious to see things done thing — but they're cautious. But there's no chance of us getting too modern." This is how Muriel Gilbertson sees her role as mayor of the tiny town of Haymarket, on Va. 55., about two miles northwest of Gainesville.

Gilbertson, who has lived in her rambling, comfortable Victorian home there for 10 years, is the moving force behind the revitalization of Haymarket, a community that has had a sense of place since it received its charter in 1799.

Gunder and Muriel Gilbertson came to Haymarket in 1972, after living an active life in Fairfax on a 70-acre spread with three houses. Gunder, an architect with a variety of interests, was ill and their life in Fairfax was "getting too much for us," the vivacious mayor relates.

"We came out to Haymarket and looked around, and Gunder saw a 'for sale' sign on the fence of this property. We went to the door and the lady said 'Yes, the entire acreage was for

sale,' but she wasn't prepared to show it to us that day. Would we come back the next day?"

"And we did, and Gunder went through the house like greased lightning and pulled out his checkbook...I said 'No, that's too much money; we'll have to talk about it,' Gilbertson's eyes twinkle.

"And we did, and they accepted what we offered them...The house was a dream, with Gunder being an architect," she added.

Muriel's father also was an architect and she had worked with him, and knew about buildings.

But Gunder died a year later, after he had built a sprawling studio behind the house and the guest cottage.

Now all Gilbertson's extra furniture is stored in the studio he designed, and the guest cottage lies empty.

But the old Victorian house is alive with kerosene lamps, family pictures and all the personal touches that make a house a home.

How did Muriel get into politics?

Well, it all started when she began to feel guilty about living in Haymarket but driving back and forth

to Fairfax to see her old friends. So she joined the Haymarket Woman's Club. "I was barely in the door when they nominated me for secretary," she laughs.

Not long after, Muriel got a phone call, saying she'd been selected to be a member of the Town Council. "I wasn't even a registered voter!" she exclaims. "But I said it'd accept, if it could be done legally."

So they called one of her children's friend's, Andrew Miller, who was then Virginia's attorney general. "He said I could serve, if I registered to vote by the next meeting...So I did."

That was "around 1975," Gilbertson recalls. She exclaims how she got to be mayor: "If I saw what needed doing, it was stupid of me not to do it."

The first thing Muriel asked was, "Where does this town begin and end?"

No one seemed to know. So the council approved paying \$3,000 for a reliable surveyor, who literally put the town on the map; it turned out to be one square mile in size, "and it's been a merry-go-round ever since."

See "HAYMARKET" on A-3.

Public Sewer Coming; Water Is Next

By BETTY CALVIN
JM Staff Writer

Public services come slowly to Haymarket. A public sewer system is being constructed now. Town officials hope a public water system will be next.

After years of letter writing, Haymarket was declared "a health hazard" by the Health Department. In 1978, about 75 percent of the septic systems were failing.

Then, in 1980, the Gainesville-Haymarket project was approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency.

"The town put up \$36,000 as the town's share, and about 92 homes will be connected, when the new line is completed," Mayor Muriel Gilbertson says.

Each homeowner will install his own laterals and interior plumbing and hook into the sewer lines in the street. The HUD grant has paid the connection fees of about \$2,250 for each customer, according to John Sloper, administrator of the Greater Manassas Sanitary District which includes Haymarket. The entire \$4.4 million project involves 100,000 feet of line and five pump stations. It will be

operational in a few months.

Then, with future grants, the town hopes to get public water!

Now Muriel is trying to get the town's zoning ordinance revised. A 44-page ordinance has been proposed about three times now, but "some people say it's too elaborate for a town as small as this, with 288 population."

Drafted by a consultant, the revisions which Muriel feels are necessary now that sewers have been installed have been put on the back burner, on Jan. 17, by the town council for six months. "We're getting too close to some of the oldtimers," she noted, adding that some people don't want change.

To keep Haymarket residents in touch with what is happening, she and Councilwoman Lois Crewdson put out the "Haymarket Bugle," a newsletter that this month noted, "We salute the New Year with some apprehension but strong in the faith that conditions will slowly but surely improve in our favor."

The little town has at least three industries: Precision Engineering, Annandale Millwork and 84 Lumber. Spokesmen for these companies indicate they like being located in Haymarket, for the atmosphere is

conducive to making progress.

As Muriel puts it, "It's quaint! And I use the word laughingly. But we're trying to encourage the people, to keep up their property...Even with the streets dug up (for the sewer installation) and all the mud, there were few complaints...People were glad to see the show on the road."

And when she's not busy with the myriad details that come with administering a town, Muriel can be found at the organ at St. Paul's Episcopal church, nearby.

After 28 years of playing at Truro in Fairfax, she came to be the organist at St. Paul's when her husband was dying.

"...he didn't want to go to the hospital. So Bob Crewdson (the Rev. Robert H. Crewdson, rector of St. Paul's) would come over every day to see him and to pray with him," Muriel said. "One day, he mentioned 'Christmas is coming. We need an organist.'"

(She had made Gunder promise he wouldn't tell anyone in Haymarket that she played.)

"First it was Christmas, then he (Crewdson) said 'How about Easter?'"

"And I'm still playing!"

HISTORIC SITE FILE
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
KELCO Bull Run Reg Lib - Manassas, VA

Haymarket

Continued from A-1

the lively mayor chuckles.

"I want a nice, clean orderly town; I'm not desirous of a big expansion," Muriel points out. She adds that for the most part "the town is grateful and the people complimentary."

The next job Muriel undertook was repairing the town hall. "Someone wanted to paint it, again. But I noticed there was layer upon layer of old paint already," she explains. "So I persuaded them to put in paneling." She also had new lights installed, and the building heated and air conditioned.

"The old stove would get flaming red in the winter...I wanted a safer one, and I told them 'We're going to fry' with only a front door exit, if this building ever catches on fire!"

They were reluctant, but they let the improvements go through. And now, even the upstairs is fixed up—the work of the two part-time police of-

icers, Don Fasick and Burl Kline. "The town is improving, and many people here are anxious to see things done right," Muriel explains. "It's been all uphill, but we did get the improvements."