

Famous past, restful present

Haymarket remains town where 'everybody knows you'

By LYNNE GRANDSTAFF

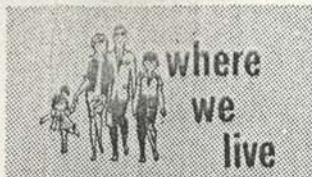
Haymarket is a tiny town with a famous past and great hopes for the future. Most of all, Haymarket is a town with a tranquil present.

The town is bisected by busy Va. 55. After the visitor moves off the main highway, the loudest noise on a spring evening in Haymarket is the chirping of birds. The streets are narrow, and some are winding; it doesn't matter much, because there is little traffic. Huge shade trees stand everywhere. In the spring, dogwood and redbud make the quiet scene idyllic and immensely beautiful.

A visitor to Haymarket comes away with the memory of large frame homes, most of them white with black trim. They stand amid huge, well-kept lawns, surrounded with trees and shrubs. However, Haymarket also has a large number of newer, more modern homes. Several streets are lined with ramblers, each of which was custom-built. The big old houses are striking, but the newer ones may outnumber them.

Although Haymarket could hardly be described as a teeming commercial center, the town has shops to meet its residents' daily needs. People can buy almost anything at Gossom's store, located in the middle of town. As women go in one door to buy a few groceries, men emerge from the rear with huge rolls of baling wire and farm supplies.

The bank is within walking distance from everyone's home, and so is the tiny post office. Farther down the



street is a police station which makes the post office look big. With one town policeman, Haymarket does not need imposing facilities. The volunteer fire department is also in the center of town, near the tack shop. Town hall is in a prominent location, but overgrown shrubbery partially obscures the doorway.

Haymarket is a town that has everything, most of it in miniature. The 288 residents have what they need without anything ostentatious.

EVERYONE AGREES that the prime attribute of the town is its friendliness. Mrs. Monica Handley explained: "It's not like living in a subdivision and going to a supermarket. Here, you can call the store to see if they have something and send one of the kids down for it. You can pay for it later, if you want to. Everybody knows you here."

Even so, Fewell Melton contends that some of the friendliness is gone. "The people have changed. I don't know everyone in town anymore, but some of that is my fault. They move in and out so fast; it's a lot different than it used to be." Melton has lived in

Haymarket for 44 years.

Postmaster Dick Jordan, who has been in Haymarket "only 60 years", disagrees. "There are a few more houses; a few businesses are gone, and there are two or three new businesses, but it hasn't really changed," he says.

There has been some recent development. The 84 Lumber Co. has a large facility on the edge of town, and Annandale Mill Works now has a plant in town. Virginia Tractor will complete a place in Haymarket this summer.

Melton, a member of the town council, said that there is room for development in Haymarket. Although there are only a few empty spots in the center of town, Melton said that there are places for residential development and large areas on the outskirts of town which could be used for commercial or light industrial development.

However, Mayor Mason Pickett added that he expects very little development until the town can get water and sewer service. "We could stand some development, but it will be very limited without sewers. You can build a house if you can get a perc test on the land."

There is no denial that water and sewer are the biggest, if not the only, problem in Haymarket. The town council has been trying for years to find a way of getting sanitary services for their town.

Their area is too small for people to afford a municipal system, and no one

runs sewer lines near the town. Two schools just outside Haymarket have a pump-and-haul arrangement with the Greater Manassas Sanitary District: that is the closest the town has ever come.

Asked about the prospects for a sanitary system, Pickett chuckled slightly: "I wish I could tell you what the prospects are."

Melton added that the town has not always had the sewage problem. He said that development in the past 10 or 15 years has made it impossible for the ground to absorb all the increased sewage. "People are patching their systems together, trying to make them last a little longer," he added.

PICKETT POINTED to another problem: the traffic on Va. 55 is terrible. Besides connecting U.S. 29-211 and U.S. 15, the road is the major access from Washington to the mountain resorts. "In the summer, the traffic is backed up all the way from 29-211 past 15," Pickett maintained.

He hopes that Interstate 66 will be built (the plans are to by-pass Haymarket) and relieve the congestion. Pickett also feels that building the interstate would spur the increased development he desires.

For Mrs. Handley, there is another problem. Her husband commutes to work in Washington. "It takes him two hours in heavy traffic to get there and another two hours to get back." The Handleys are trying to renovate

—See COUNTRY, Page A-5



Staff photo by Lynne Grandstaff

Laurie Stokeley's just planted a marigold at her Haymarket home

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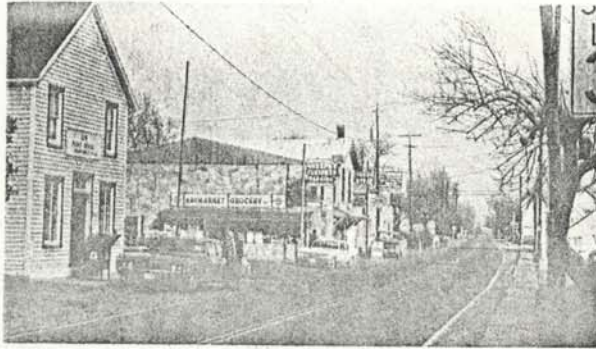
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Down Haymarket's Main Street: Va. 55

The country life at Haymarket

• **Continued**
- from page 1

their home: "He's not good for anything when he gets here. Everything has to wait 'til the weekend."

Still Mrs. Handley likes the country life. "I couldn't live in Washington. We lived in a subdivision, and moved out because we wanted the country life. We wanted to buy a farm, but we couldn't find one we could afford. So we bought 3.5 acres here, and we have a mini-farm on it. We have a milk-cow and ducks and chickens and rabbits and a garden. The children can walk down to the creek to go fishing."

Pickett sees the town as a part of suburbia. "It's a convenient place, and you can get to the places you want to go. It's living in suburbia which is kind of country, too."

However, it is described, life in Haymarket is obviously pleasant and peaceful.

It wasn't always that way. Hay Market was chartered in 1798 (or maybe 1799, histories differ) because it was already a booming area. As

with most other towns in Virginia's inlands, Haymarket started as a crossroads. The Carolina Trail and the Dumfries Trail intersected at Haymarket, and the Red House tavern was built on the spot.

Merchants rode in every direction carrying loads to the port at Dumfries or baubles to the north for barter. The tavern (presumably a combination hotel, restaurant and bar like most colonial taverns) was a stopping place and a center of local life.

THE TOWN HAD a brief prominence in the early 1800's, when the district court for Prince William, Fairfax, Loudoun and Fauquier counties was located there. Therefore, a courthouse, clerk's office and prison were built in the town.

However, the district courts were abolished in 1807, and the courthouse buildings were sold. The Hygeia Academy purchased the buildings and remodeled them.

Fame came again to Haymarket during the Civil War.

In 1860 and 1861, the Prince William Rifles organized and drilled at

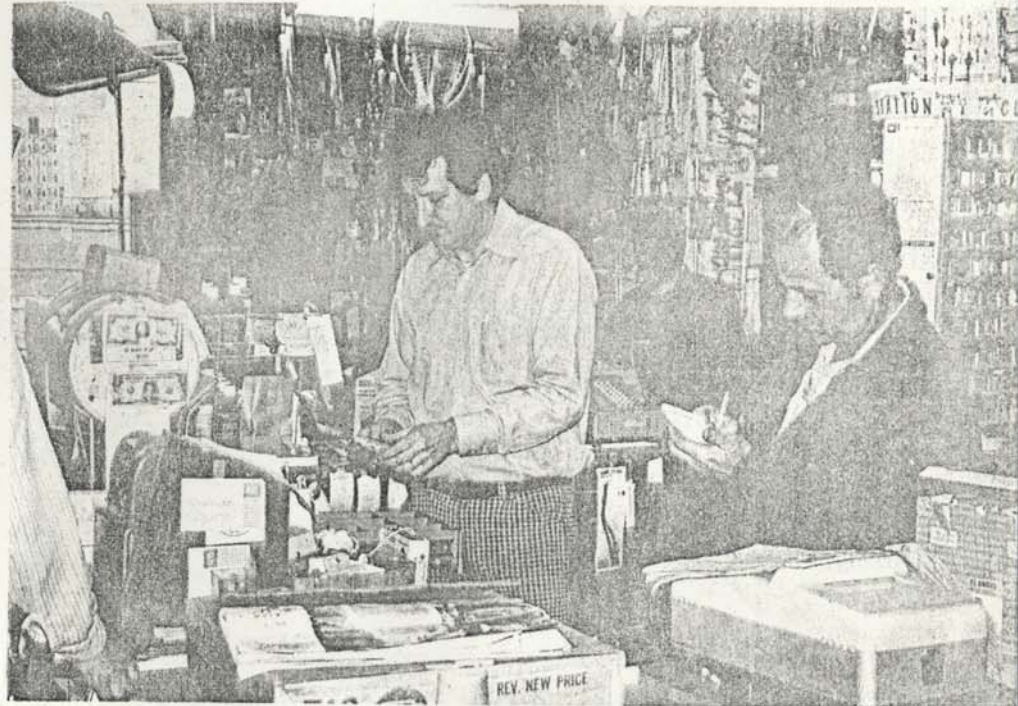
Haymarket. Later, the outfit was incorporated into the 17th Virginia Infantry.

Although none of the battles of Manassas stretched as far as Haymarket, the sick and wounded were cared for in the town. St. Paul's Episcopal Church served alternately as a hospital for soldiers, a stable and a refuge for frightened villagers.

Then, in 1862, Union troops burned the town, all of it. Only two buildings, St. Paul's and the McCormack House, were left standing. Having burned the town, the troops then used the pulpit and pews of St. Paul's for firewood and stabled their horses there. After the war, the church, which had been the original courthouse, was rebuilt. The town, too, grew again.

The original town had been laid out on a grid pattern, with wide streets. The new town had no plan. The narrow streets wind through the town.

Still, the town is lovely. As Pickett put it, "The people here have nice lawns and trees. It's a comfort to them. There are a lot of places where people can't even have a big bush."



Alan Gossum, Bob Kennedy in Gossum's Store, a Haymarket institution

Staff photo by Herald Grandstaff