

MOUNT ATLAS— STILL A TANGIBLE LINK TO HAYMARKET'S PAST

Covered by vines and surrounded by underbrush, the old house cannot be seen from the road that bears its name. But Mount Atlas – surrounded by much newer homes in a subdivision northwest of Haymarket – still stands, as time and the weather take their toll.

Regarded as "...one of the finest and least altered examples of late Georgian domestic architecture in Prince William County," the c. 1795 house was described as "in deteriorating condition" in its nomination for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places completed in July 1988. The nomination, completed by William T. Frazier and George W. Polhill Jr., of Frazier Associates of Staunton, Va., concludes with the comment, "Mount Atlas merits preservation because of its unique interior features and its architectural integrity."



Vintage photos courtesy of the Prince William County Planning Department.

The original part of Mount Atlas had not changed much from the early days when this photograph was taken in the 1930s.



Mount Atlas today is covered with vines and surrounded by debris and underbrush. Many of the notable architectural features have been removed.

The Emporium

Omega  Visions.

“Impacting lives globally”

Registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization

www.omegavisions.org

info@omegavisions.org



Do you need help
cleaning your house?

Call:

Petrona's Cleaning Services

703-209-3766

Owner / Operator



Thorpe Landscape, Inc.

703-926-6320

snowplow4u.com

lawnmowing4u.com



Mention: **BIZ10** for 10% off

www.wild-thangs.com

info@wild-thangs.com

- ✓ *New treatment*
- ✓ *New technology*
- ✓ *Experienced physicians*

Welcome to the treatment center proven to heal wounds.

At Fauquier Health Wound Healing Center, skilled physicians use the latest advances in technology to heal wounds. Our proven care is covered by most major insurance plans and Medicare.

Talk to your doctor or call **540.316.HEAL** (4325).

FAUQUIER HEALTH
Wound Healing Center

493 Blackwell Road, Suite 101A • Warrenton, VA 20186
www.fauquierhealth.org



Dr. Robert
Dart
Medical Director



Dr. Joseph
David



Dr. Larry
Heath



Dr. Tam Ly



Dr. Kevin
McCarthy



Dr. John
McCue



Dr. Jorge
Minera



Dr. Lynn
Samuel

OLD MOUNT ATLAS DESCRIBED

The nomination was approved and Mt. Atlas was added to the National Register in 1989. Typical of most National Register nominations done by expert architectural historians, the description of Mount Atlas in 1988 is painstakingly detailed.

The two-and-one-half story structure rests on a coursed stone foundation, and is clad with weatherboards. The basic design is described as “three bays and a single-pile side hall plan,” meaning that the home has three frontal sections (the two windows on each floor and the entry); that the house is one room deep; and that the entry hall is at a side bay of the first floor, rather than in the middle.

Mount Atlas is further described as having “a single, exterior stone rubble and brick chimney, metal gable roof, and a fine, molded, boxed cornice with carved modillions () that are original.” Additions to the main structure include the two-bay front porch, dormers, and the ell on the rear of the house containing the kitchen and dining room downstairs, and three small rooms upstairs.

The main entrance has three Roman Doric columns on the porch, and at the time of the nomination, a six-panel front door “capped with a transom with five lights... and its original H-L hinges.” There is also a one-story porch on the south end that leads to the cellar. The one-and-a-half story ell contains the kitchen and dining room.

The interior of the first floor of the house retained much of the fine woodwork, including the parlor Federal mantel and an

over-mantel. “The most interesting interior feature is the painted over-mantel in the parlor, that was probably done in the first quarter of the nineteenth century,” according to the nomination. “It features a folk portrait of a young lady and is titled *Maiden in Prayer*. The subject, possibly a daughter of the Carter family, is featured in early nineteenth century dress, with balloon sleeves, a white collar, and a cape.”

Access to the second floor is by the single-flight open-string staircase on the north wall. On the second floor are two bedrooms. The larger room with fireplace may have been the dining room at one time, while the smaller room could have been the pantry before the ell was added. The upstairs hallway has an enclosed stairway leading to the finished attic, which had two more small bedrooms, but was in poor condition in 1988. The attic fireplace had been enclosed for a small wood burning stove.

“According to a previous survey there was a large cooking fireplace in the basement,” as noted in the nomination. “The original fireplace cranes are still in the possession of the current owner (Mr. and Mrs. Barton C. Padgett).”

The only surviving outbuilding at the time of the nomination was the one-story smokehouse with a metal hipped roof. It has since been removed. The other outbuildings on the property – including the barn, kitchen/servants’ quarters, and carriage house off of the approach from an old lane – are long gone. East of the old house on a sliver of property is the grave of Charles B. Carter.

Mount Atlas Continued on Page 12



The overseer's house on Mount Atlas, photographed in the 1930s, is long gone; so is the old plantation's barn, smokehouse and carriage house.



Maiden in Prayer, painted over the parlor mantel in the early 1800s, has been removed from the house.



Dormers were added to the roof in the early 1950s, when the old house was the home of Barton C. and Pauline Padgett.

THE LONG HISTORY OF MOUNT ATLAS

The first owner of the vast tract of land that included Mount Atlas was Robert "King" Carter, who acquired the 41,600 acre Bull Run Tract, patented in 1724 in the names of his sons, Landon and George Carter, and his five grandsons, who eventually sold off large parts of the property.

Peter Whiting acquired a parcel in the hills west of the Carolina Road, and in 1795 built the two-and-one half story farmhouse known as Mount Atlas. Whiting did not keep the property for very long. In 1801, he sold Mount Atlas to Charles B. Carter (1766-1807), son of Charles Carter of Shirley and brother of Edward Carter of Cloverland (*See the story on Cloverland in the October issue of The Haymarket Lifestyle*). According to Frazier and Polhill, he married his cousin, Ann Beale Carter of Sabine Hall, who was the granddaughter of Landon Carter.

Charles B. Carter's will was written in 1800, before he purchased Mount Atlas, and it was never updated to include the property. He died in 1807 and was buried at Mount Atlas, and because of the omission in the will, a predictable dispute over the ownership of the property arose. After several years, ownership passed to John Hill Carter, who sold Mount Atlas to John W. and Henry B. Tyler.

Title to Mount Atlas changed again in 1835, when the Tylers sold the property to Willis Foley, of Fauquier County. Foley and his wife, Nancy Mallory Foley, had 11 children. During the Civil War, there was significant action in and around the nearby villages of Waterfall and Haymarket, and the residents of Mount Atlas clearly felt the effects of the war. Many of the local men served the Prince William Rifles.

"The wealthy family in the neighborhood was the Foleys, who had purchased the old Mount Atlas plantation. Mount Atlas had a thousand acres and many slaves," wrote Randolph Smith in his family history, *The Civil War Experiences of William Randolph Smith*. "The Rev. A. G. Hawley, a Baptist minister, started and maintained a military school at Waterfall which was attended by Smiths, Picketts and Foleys."

Haymarket was burned by Union troops in November 1862, "...and the slaves slipped away before Lincoln announced his proclamation," wrote Randolph Smith. "Mount Atlas did not survive the war."

Upon Willis Foley's death in 1863, the property was divided into eight lots, with their unmarried daughter Elizabeth getting the house and 46 acres. After the war, the Foley and Smith families were joined when former Mosby Ranger James Philip Smith (one of Randolph Smith's ancestors) and Annie Foley were married. They built a home next to Mount Atlas, which they called "Hagley."

Elizabeth Foley willed Mount Atlas to her niece, Mildred Jackson Smith, daughter of her brother, Richard A. Foley, in 1894. Six years later, the Mildred and George Smith sold the property to R.B. Gossom, who made significant changes



The back of Mount Atlas in the 1930s, when it was owned by the Gossom family, had fruit trees and grape arbors.



The addition on the rear of the house containing the kitchen and dining room still stands, but is in very poor condition.

to the house about 1910, including the addition to the rear of the house and the hip-roofed front porch.

The Gossom's daughter, Pauline G. Padgett and her husband Barton C. Padgett purchased the property in 1952. Mrs. Padgett was also the great-great-granddaughter of Willis Foley. Early in their ownership, the Padgetts added the two distinctive dormers to the attic. They lived in Mount Atlas until 1974, when structural problems with the old house led to the decision to build a new, modern residence adjacent to the original home, rather than putting the money into fixing the old place.

It was also during the Padgett's ownership that most of the 46-acre tract was subdivided and sold off; by the time of the survey by Frazier and Polhill, the remaining Mount Atlas property had shrunk to 8.17 acres. Also, access was shifted from the east (to the front of the house) to the west off Mount Atlas Road, after the eastern section of the property was divided and sold along present-day Padgett Drive.

PRINCE WILLIAM CONSIDERS, REJECTS ACQUISITION

According to Prince William County records, in addition to the National Register of Historic Places, Mount Atlas was also designated a Prince William County Registered Historic Site, with the notation, "The structure needs immediate attention. Unless the roof, windows and foundation are repaired, Mount Atlas may soon be too dilapidated to warrant restoration."

Barton Padgett later died, and in 1999 his estate gave Mount Atlas to Prince William County through a Deed of Gift and Easement. The deed gifted the house and associated easements to the county on the condition that the house be moved from its current location. The Padgett estate gave the county until April 17, 2001 to move the house.

One of the options considered was to move the house to the Brentsville Courthouse Complex, where it would be used as the tavern. However, the Brentsville Trust rejected the plan, since the old house pre-dated the original tavern that once stood at Brentsville. Meanwhile, the Prince William Historical Commission was tasked to catalog and remove the contents of Mount Atlas, and

volunteers did several small archeological excavations on the property.

The Padgett estate offered to give the county until July 17, 2001 to come up with a proposal to move the house, but the county declined. According to county records, "Contributing factors were: 1) there was no site available to receive the Mount Atlas structure; 2) the estimate to remove the structure from the old site and to place the structure on a potential new site was estimated at \$300,000; and 3) the county was actively working on Rippon Lodge, Ben Lomond and the Brentsville Courthouse Complex at the time, and had other priorities."

Before putting the property on the market, the Padgett estate offered Mount Atlas to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, which also declined. The remaining property was again divided in 2004, and according to county records, the old house and part of the land purchased by H. David and Lydia Zigler of Manassas. The Padgett's rambler and about 1.5 acres were sold to Mr. and Mrs. Derek Elliott, who lived in the house while completely remodeling it.

Family historian Randolph Smith wrote about Mount Atlas after a recent visit. "The ancient Mount Atlas house still stands, though overgrown with weeds

and cobwebs, looking smaller than a plantation house should. It is padlocked, with windows boarded up."

A FUTURE FOR MOUNT ATLAS?

The oldest part of Mount Atlas appears to be sound, its "bones" still strong, even after decades of neglect. It is likely that the ell at the rear is probably too far-gone. Since the area has transitioned from an agricultural setting to a residential neighborhood, it is logical that the house should be moved to a more appropriate setting, where it would fit in. Then work to restore Mount Atlas could start.

Apparently, not much has been done to the house since it was sold the last time, with the exception of the removal of the old smokehouse, which was noted in the 1988 as the only other "contributing structure" on the property. Because Mount Atlas is registered as an historic house and earlier agreements with Prince William regarding rezoning and easements remain in place, options are limited.

But next-door neighbor Derek Elliott has some ideas. He suggests that since Mount Atlas played a part during the Civil War, it should be moved to the nearby Manassas National Battlefield, where volunteers and trades people-in-training could do the restoration work as part of their education, "...like they do in Baltimore." Elliott also believes grant money and volunteer labor could be found to help with the project, starting with an initial clean up and stabilization of the house.

Most people recognize that even in its present state, Mount Atlas is more than "just an old house," and deserves to survive. It is a tangible part of the history of Western Prince William County and Haymarket that should not be lost.



Courtesy PW Co. Planning Office.

Before the property was sold, Prince William County invited volunteers to do supervised archeological excavations on the property.

Author John Toler is a writer and historian and has served Fauquier County for over 50 years, including 4 decades with the Fauquier-Times Democrat. He has written and lectured about many legendary characters in Fauquier County's history. Toler is the co-author of *250 Years in Fauquier County: A Virginia Story*.



Fauquier Health

DIET, LIFESTYLE CHANGES CAN HELP YOU AVOID OR MANAGE DIABETES

FAUQUIER
HEALTH

www.fauquierhealth.org

A recent government report says that the number of adults with type 2 diabetes could double or even triple by the year 2050. It's not inevitable, though. Diabetes is what experts call a lifestyle disease, and it can be avoided in most cases with careful attention to diet and exercise.

Dr. Esther Bahk, of Fauquier Health Internal Medicine at Lake Manassas, believes that the most important action you can take to avoid diabetes is to take responsibility for your own health. "There are some things you don't have a choice about. You can't choose your genes, and diabetes does have a genetic component. But you can choose to eat well, exercise regularly and work with your doctor to make sure your glucose numbers are within a healthy range. You'll be amazed what a big difference small changes can make. And as you work toward a healthier lifestyle, you'll see other important numbers drop as well – cholesterol, blood pressure and resting heart rate."

Aren Dodge, certified dietitian at Fauquier Health's Wellness Center, is teaming up with Dr. Bahk to provide nutritional counseling and diabetes education at Dr. Bahk's Gainesville office. On Tuesday afternoons, Aren will work one-on-one with Dr. Bahk's diabetes patients on any and all aspects of their diabetes management. Aren explained, "I can provide nutritional counseling or advice on other lifestyle changes. We can discuss their medications or the use of an insulin pump – whatever they need to help manage their diabetes."

The sessions are multidisciplinary, and family members are welcome to attend so that they can provide continuing support. "We're holding the sessions in the Gainesville office for the convenience of those who live in Haymarket and nearby," said Aren. "I encourage patients to take a proactive role in own health; I empower them to manage their own disease."

Diabetes group and individual classes are held at the Wellness Center in Warrenton, as well. Call Aren at 540-316-2652 or e-mail her at diabetes@fauquierhealth.org.

Most health insurance will pay for individual and group diabetes education.



*Dr. Esther Bahk,
specialist in internal medicine*

Internal Medicine
at Lake Manassas
7915 Lake Manassas Drive,
Suite 101
Gainesville, VA 20155
703-743-7300



*Aren Dodge, certified dietitian
and diabetes educator*

DIABETES SERVICES AT FAUQUIER HEALTH

Diabetes Self-Management Classes

Day, evening and weekend classes are now forming at Fauquier Health Wellness Center

Diabetes Support Group

Meets second Thursday of every other month, at Fauquier Health Wellness Center

Thursday, January 13

6 to 7 p.m.: Diabetes and Stroke discussion, with Dr. Kristin Williams, neurologist

Tuesday, December 7

5:30 to 6:30 p.m.: Intro to insulin pumping

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.: Advanced insulin pumping

Visit www.fauquierhealth.org
for a complete listing of classes
and events at Fauquier Health