

Va. Wm. (Buckland and Tavern)

2-25-76

Former Buckland Tavern owner dies

GRACE FULTON BEAR died February 9, 1976, at the Manassas Manor Nursing Home, Manassas. Mrs. Bear was the owner of Buckland Tavern in the Village of Buckland, between Gainesville and Warrenton, from 1947 until August 1975.

Grace Bear was the daughter of a Navy machinist whose work took him to many parts of the country. He was, however, teaching school in Kansas when Grace was born on April 6, 1888. Grace said, "My father used to like to travel around. We moved so many times it was my job to keep the legs on the chairs wrapped with newspaper to keep them from getting all scratched up. He was transferred frequently, but he always managed to anticipate or instigate the moves. He wasn't really moved, he moved himself. We lived all over."

In 1898 Harry G. took another

turn at school teaching as the "Yankee professor" in Homer-ville, Clinton County, Ga., at a monthly salary of \$75. From 1903 to 1906 they were in Washington, D. C. In October 1906, Harry put his family on the train and headed for Washington State, where he had arranged a transfer to the Puget Sound Navy Yard at Bremerton.

In Washington State they lived in the town of Charleston. Harry Fulton managed to stay put for 2 1/2 years. In April 1910 Grace and her father filed on separate homesteads deep in the forest on Olson Hill on the north slough of Coos Bay, Or., near what is now the town of Hauser. Both Grace and her father "proved up" on their homesteads in April 1913. One of her homesteading neighbors was Chester Bear. They were married in May 1916, and returned to Washington, D. C. in 1917.

They both worked for the Government, and Mr. Bear gradually worked into the construction business. The crash of 1929 practically wiped them out. Grace returned to the Government, and they leased Hyatt Manor, the old colonial mansion at 1410 Rhode Island Avenue, Hyattsville, operating as a tourist home and later as apartments. Mr. Bear died of cancer in January 1938. He was buried at Cedar Hill Cemetery, 4000 Suitland Road, Suitland, Md. During the 1940s, Grace continued to work at the Treasury Department and kept up the apartments at Hyatt Manor.

FINALLY, in 1947, she discovered Buckland Tavern. It was in terrible condition, and was not exactly what she wanted, but on August 18, 1947, she became its owner. Almost everything had to be done to the house, and how she managed it all, and the final result, is a minor miracle.

In the late 1960s her health began to fail, and early in 1970 she became a resident of Manassas Manor Nursing Home. She never saw Buckland Tavern again, although she expected to be returning there "sometime within the next few days." The court appointed Committee, Edwin H. Pierce, Jr., of Alexandria, did nothing to protect the property or

to protect her interests. The house became a shambles, open to vandals and the weather.

In 1972, the Pioneer America Society became interested in the situation, visited Mrs. Bear, and made a thorough probe of the situation. Finally, early in 1975, the Circuit Court was prevailed upon to request the resignation of Mr. Pierce. Thomas O. Beane, of Manassas, was appointed in his place. Within a few weeks Mr. Beane had matters sufficiently in order to be able to offer the property for sale. The auction was held on August 25, 1975, at which time Thomas J. Ashe, of Cheverly, Md., was the successful bidder. Restoration work by Mr. Ashe has been in progress for some time.

It was merciful that Mrs. Bear was never able to see the later condition of the house she loved so much. She was buried beside her husband at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Suitland.

(A fuller account of Mrs. Bear's life is to be found in **Echoes of History**, March 1974, available from the Pioneer America Society, 626 South Washington Street, Falls Church, Va. 22046. An earlier general account of the Village of Buckland is available in the November 1973 issue of **Echoes**. Individual copies are \$1.25 postpaid.) — H. H. Douglas

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