



FEW PEOPLE TODAY associate the name Dranesville with more than a street sign on Route 7 or as the name of a local magisterial district. In fact, some years ago there was a movement, led by those ignorant of its significance, to change the name of the district. These folks were quickly set straight on the historic importance of the name and no more has been said about the matter since.

Dranesville, now almost erased by time and progress, was at one time a bustling town with taverns, stores, a church, a blacksmith shop, school, post office, doctors, and other necessities normally found in the hub of a 19th-century Virginia agrarian community. While in many aspects it was a typical country village, it was unique in the quantity of taverns congregated within its environs. Between the mid-18th century and the early 20th century, five different ones were in operation, several simultaneously.

Just because there were so many taverns, however, does not mean that Dranesville was a wild party town. Unlike most other villages and towns, this one did not develop just to serve the needs of local farmers. It evolved because of its location at the intersection of the main roads, which were the forerunners of Route 7, Georgetown Pike, Seneca Road and Reston Avenue.

These roads were adapted from Indian trails discovered by the first European travelers to pass through the region. For the next two hundred years they remained little more than rough dirt tracks. Centuries of use meant



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DRANESVILLE

PART 1

KAREN W.



COLEMAN'S ORDINARY

ESVILLE

ASHBURN

several name changes to the roads. The most important of these routes was the Eastern Ridge Road which was the predecessor to the modern Route 7. Originally called the Sugarland Path, it was also known later as Vestal's Gap Road, New Church Road, and the Old Leesburg Road. But whatever the name, it was the main route between Alexandria and the Shenandoah Valley and points farther west. Unlike the straighter engineered roads that followed, this early route turned and wound to avoid natural hazards and to deliver travelers to locations where they could ford streams and creeks.

Long before the establishment of the town, the first tavern keeper in the area was Richard Coleman. One of the first settlers in the area, he purchased a tract of land in 1740 on Sugarland Run and established a farm. With his land strategically located one day's journey from either Alexandria or Leesburg, it was a perfect place for a tavern. Coleman built his house near where the road forded Sugarland Run. There he established Coleman's Ordinary, a place to buy a meal and stay the night.

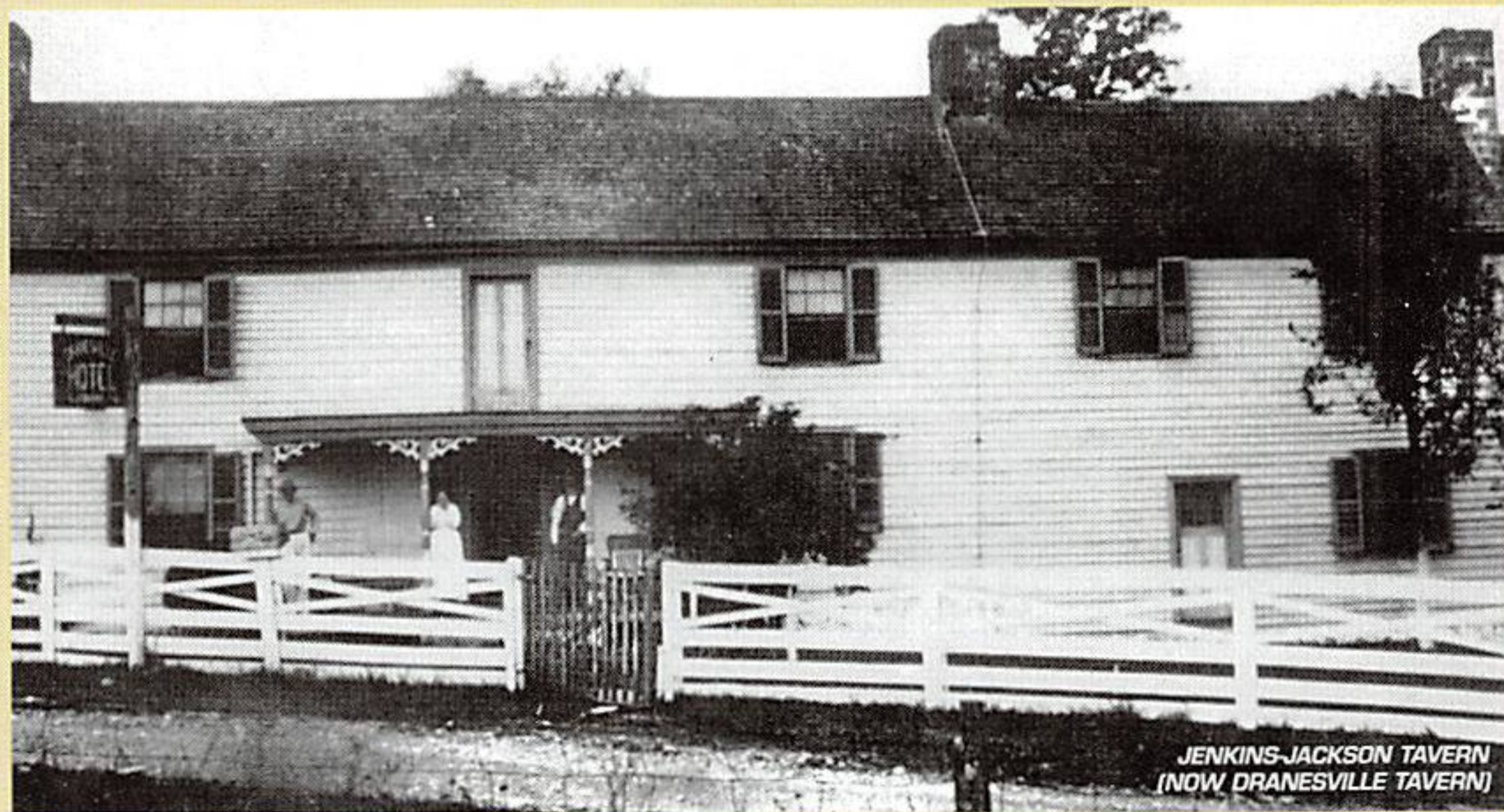
In the fifty years that it was in operation, Coleman's Ordinary was patronized by many travelers. Probably the best known of these was George Washington. According to his diaries, he would stop there on trips to and from the Shenandoah Valley. In 1755 during the French and Indian War, part of Braddock's army camped on the grounds of Coleman's Ordinary on their ill-fated journey to the west. Mrs. Browne, an English woman, also stopped at Coleman's on her way to join her brother, an army officer, who was serving with Braddock at Fort Cumberland. In her diary she left a clear account of the rigors of travel during the mid-eighteenth century in this area.

"At Break of Day the Drum beat. I was extremely sleepy but got up, and as soon as our Officer had eat 6 Eggs and drank a dram or two and some Punch we march'd. The roads are so bad I am almost disjointed. At 12 we halted at Mr. Coleman's, pitch'd our Markeys [tents] and dined on Salt Gammon, nothing better to be had."

In addition to providing shelter and food for humans and animals, taverns were also used as a place for meetings, including the county militia, sending or receiving mail, posting advertisements, voting, military enlisting, and the sale or hiring of slaves. Due to the difficulties and time connected with trips to the county courthouses, much legal business was also conducted there, including the recording of depositions needed for court cases. In fact there was very little business of the day that could not be transacted at a tavern.

It is therefore not surprising that tavern owner Richard Coleman was a prominent citizen and very active in the local government. He was a strong proponent for the formation of Loudoun County. When it was created in 1757, he served as one of the first commissioners of the court. Later his son James Coleman took over the operation of the Ordinary and the family farm. He also was politically active and was a captain in the Loudoun militia at the start of the American Revolution. Later he served Loudoun as the County Sheriff and tax commissioner. In 1798 the boundary between Loudoun and

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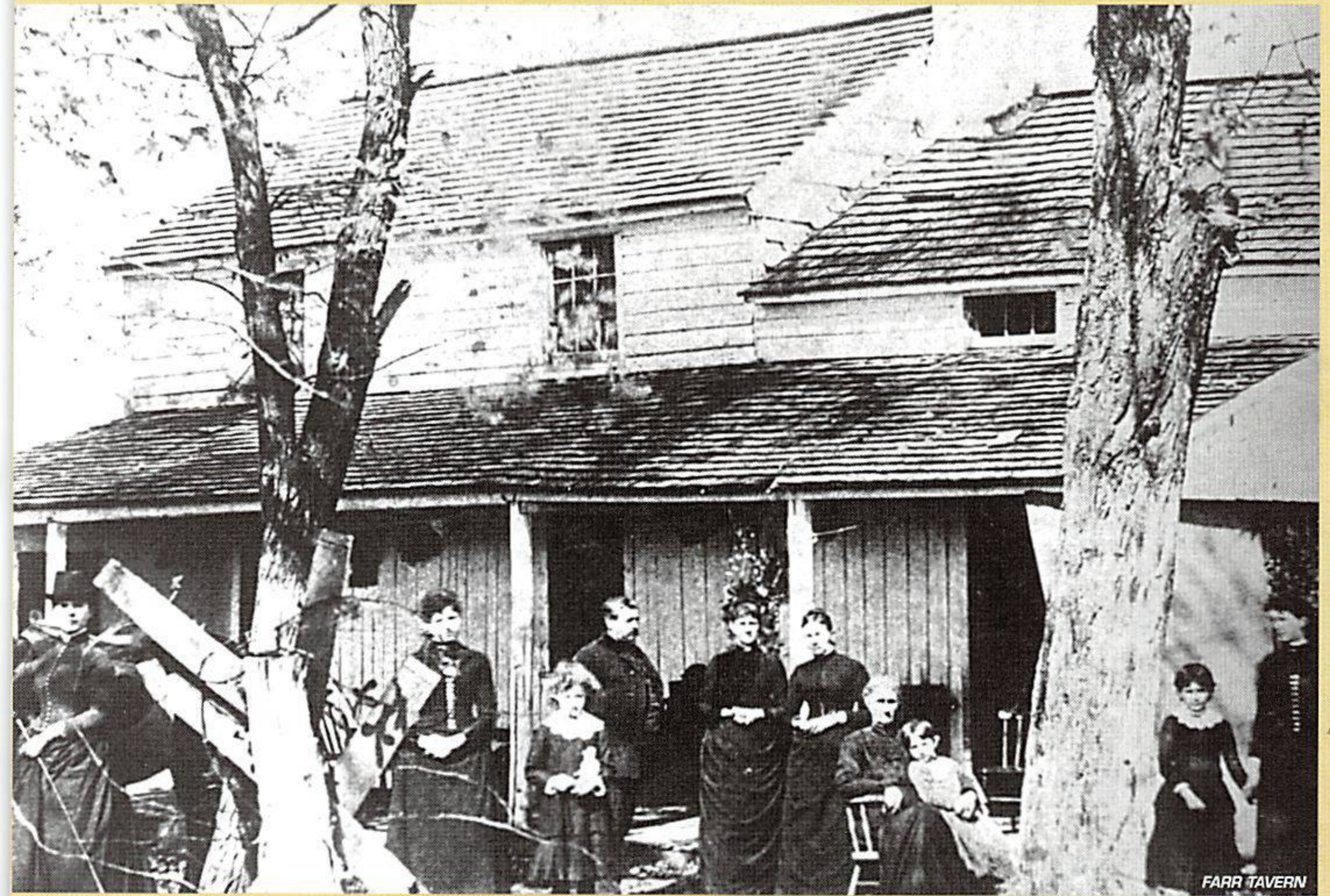


JENKINS-JACKSON TAVERN (NOW DRANESVILLE TAVERN)

Fairfax was changed from Difficult Run to near the present line. At that time the Dranesville neighborhood was returned to Fairfax.

Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century the population of the area increased as more settlers purchased or leased land and established farms. By the end of the 18th century the focal point of the community began to shift from the neighborhood of Coleman's Ordinary to closer to the intersection of Route 7 and the Georgetown Pike.

This shift was brought about by the plans of two turn-



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY, VIRGINIA ROOM

pike companies. These companies were promoted by merchants from Alexandria and Georgetown who wanted better roads to the west in hopes of attracting more business to their own cities. The companies began building the Georgetown Pike and the Leesburg and Alexandria Turnpike. While both of these roads followed the route of older roads, some changes were made to straighten them and bridges were built across creeks. This was particularly true of the Leesburg and Alexandria Turnpike and the roadbed was moved to the north and away from the Coleman's Ordinary.

While it was not chartered as a town until 1840, Dranesville was well established as a village by 1820. Since 1768, there had been a log meeting house and school on the hill where the Dranesville Methodist Church is today. However, Washington Drane was one of the first businessmen to take advantage of the new road system. In 1818, he established a store, saloon and the Mountain View Hotel on the north side of the Georgetown Pike at its intersection with Leesburg Pike. In addition to

lending his name to the town, Drane was also the town's first postmaster serving from 1822 to 1839. His hotel was different from taverns in that it did not accommodate drovers and teamsters, but catered to a more refined class of traveler. One of the more unusual guests was the body of General Armistead Mason which was on its way back to a Loudoun cemetery after a fatal duel with John McCarty.

Other taverns built along the Leesburg Pike were the Bicksler-Whitaker, Farr and the Jackson-Jenkins. These establishments served teamsters with wagons loaded with flour and grain and drovers taking livestock to the markets in Georgetown and Alexandria. Throughout the first half of the 19th century traffic was heavy. It was common for forty or fifty wagons, each pulled by four to six horses to pass through the town daily. Drovers crowded the roads with cows, hogs, sheep, turkeys and geese. The taverns had large yards with animal pens to accommodate the livestock. Each owners' animals were marked with paint of a certain color before being turned

into the pens. In the morning this must have made getting back on the road interesting as everyone sorted out their own animals.

The best known of the taverns was the Jackson-Jenkins, now called the Dranesville Tavern. Not only did it stay in business well into the 20th century, but it's the only one left standing. It now belongs to the Fairfax County Park Authority and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The meals that were provided were by today's standards copious in quantity, while somewhat limited in choices. The menu consisted of whatever was locally and seasonally available. Most taverns were supplied with food grown on farms owned by the tavern keepers or their neighbors. Typical items on the menu were ham, chicken, eggs, rolls, and beaten biscuits, supplemented with vegetables and fruits of the season and accompanied by butter, cream and honey. All of these things were served at once. After all, they had no worries about fat or cholesterol as they were walking many miles everyday. By the 1880's, beef, fish, cakes and pies had been added to the list. At the Dranesville

Tavern the cost for this repast and to spend the night with breakfast in the morning was 85 cents. The animals were boarded for between 3 and 5 cents a head depending on what kind they were.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, several different distilleries operated near the top of Seneca Road, both legally and illegally. These enterprises kept all the taverns supplied with the alcohol of their choice.

Travel in the 18th and 19th centuries was laborious at best, even though these people were used to very hard physical labor and very long work days. Many of them walked on the road all day, a trip that would start

in Leesburg and end at Dranesville. Most had to herd their livestock, which involved running back and forth as the animals didn't always stay on the road.

After eating and drinking, the tavern patrons would bed down for the night. Not all taverns offered indoor sleeping quarters. At many, the teamsters ate inside and then slept in or under their wagons. In bad weather they could sleep on the kitchen floor in front of the fire.

At the Dranesville Tavern there were three bedrooms with beds. The first ones to arrive got the beds and the rest slept on the floor. Of course they were not private rooms. As many as would fit often passed the night together. The lucky ones got the feather mattresses, but often had to share it with a stranger. Bathing was at best an occasional luxury.

In the years before the Civil War the practice of slave hiring traditionally took place at New Years in about four locations in Fairfax County. Dranesville was one of them. This was an opportunity for a slave owner to hire out any that he didn't need without having to sell them. On December 30, 1854, during the slave hiring, a murder was committed

at Bicksler's Tavern. Neither the victim, Henry Clay Sinclair, nor his killer, Robert Dickey, was a slave holder. But both were at the tavern, probably to participate in the festivities surrounding the hirings. Unfortunately a fight broke out, probably fueled by the amount of liquor consumed. When it was over, Sinclair had been stabbed to death. Dickey apparently served the 18-year sentence imposed on him for second degree murder. After he was paroled he lived and farmed in Great Falls for the rest of his life.

Coming in November: PART II - The Town of Dranesville

New Hotel on the Leesburg Road.

WASHINGTON DRANE

RESPECTFULLY informs his friends & the public in general, that he has opened a house of entertainment at his new building on the road leading from Georgetown to Leesburg---15 miles from the former and 16 miles from the latter place. The house and furniture are new and elegant and every requisite attendance has been provided for the good accommodation of either parties of pleasure or persons on business. There is an excellent spring of water on the place, excelled perhaps by none in the state of Virginia. The distance from Georgetown, Washington, or Alexandria, being an agreeable ride, he anticipates a share of public patronage, which he hopes his assiduity to business will justly merit.

August 25th—3c.

THE GENIUS OF LIBERTY, AUGUST 25, 1818



D RANESVILLE continued to grow throughout the first half of the 18th century. Because it had not been planned as a town, it was not laid out in a neat grid system, but was instead strung along the Leesburg Pike and several of the connecting roads. By 1840, when it was officially recognized as a town by the Virginia Legislature, the boundaries included thirty acres of land. Within this space were the taverns, a church, a school, several stores, a blacksmith shop, and numerous homes of varying degrees of stature. One of the only businesses not represented was a bank. At that time in this area, banks were located in the larger towns, usually the county seat. Due to the turnpike systems in the Dranesville area, many residents banked in Georgetown, a situation that was not altered until well into the twentieth century.

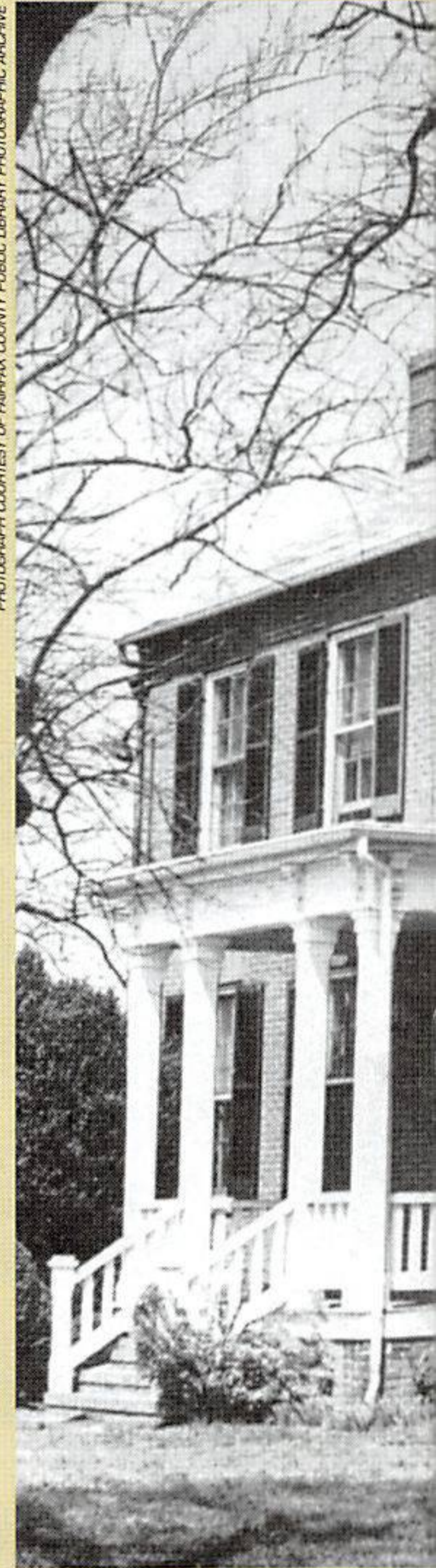
By 1852, another change in the town was the building of the new brick church on Church Hill, the third house of worship built on that location. Originally part of the Coleman property, the first structure used for religious purposes was the log meeting house. That was later replaced by a brick building. Then, in 1833 James Coleman, grandson of Richard, deeded two acres of land to the church for the "purpose of religious worship, free for denominations of professed Christians, without distinction, and also as a site and place for a School House." His wishes were carried out and throughout the 19th century the church was used by several denominations. This ecumenical policy evidently inspired its name, Liberty Church. The ministers were circuit riders who rotated Sunday services among several churches many miles apart.

In addition to its number of taverns, the town was



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DRANESVILLE

PART 2

by
KAREN WASHBURN




"HOLLY KNOLL"

also unique in that it had two physicians living within its boundaries at a time when doctors were scarce. Dr. William Day had moved to Dranesville some years before the town was chartered. Originally from Calvert County, Maryland, he took up residence at Mayfield. The large white house on the north side of Route 7 is believed to have been built about 1755. Dr. Day was a member of the Liberty Church and one of the six trustees named in Coleman's deed of 1852.

In the late 1850's Dr. Day's brother, Dr. John Day, built his home, Ivy Chimney, next door to Mayfield. Of course they made house calls throughout the countryside. Dr. William Day usually served patients to the east side of town and Dr. John Day to the west and in Herndon.

Another addition to the town was the large house at Holly Knoll on the Leesburg Pike. The new house was constructed to replace the log house that had been the Carper's home since 1815 on their 383-acre farm. Built of brick made on the property by slave labor, Holly Knoll took more than two years to build and was completed in 1858. It was owned and occupied by Martha Carper and her children, Philip, Thomas, Catharine and Francis.

While the Day and Carper homes anchored both ends of the town, they were also farming properties. The houses faced the Leesburg Pike and were built to relate to the town with the fields, gardens and barns behind them. There were also many other more modest dwellings scattered among the stores and taverns, or connected to those places of business. By 1860 the town had reached its maximum development, and residents were fairly prosperous as a brisk flow of travelers contributed to their economy. This picture was soon to change with the outbreak of the Civil War. 

DRANESVILLE

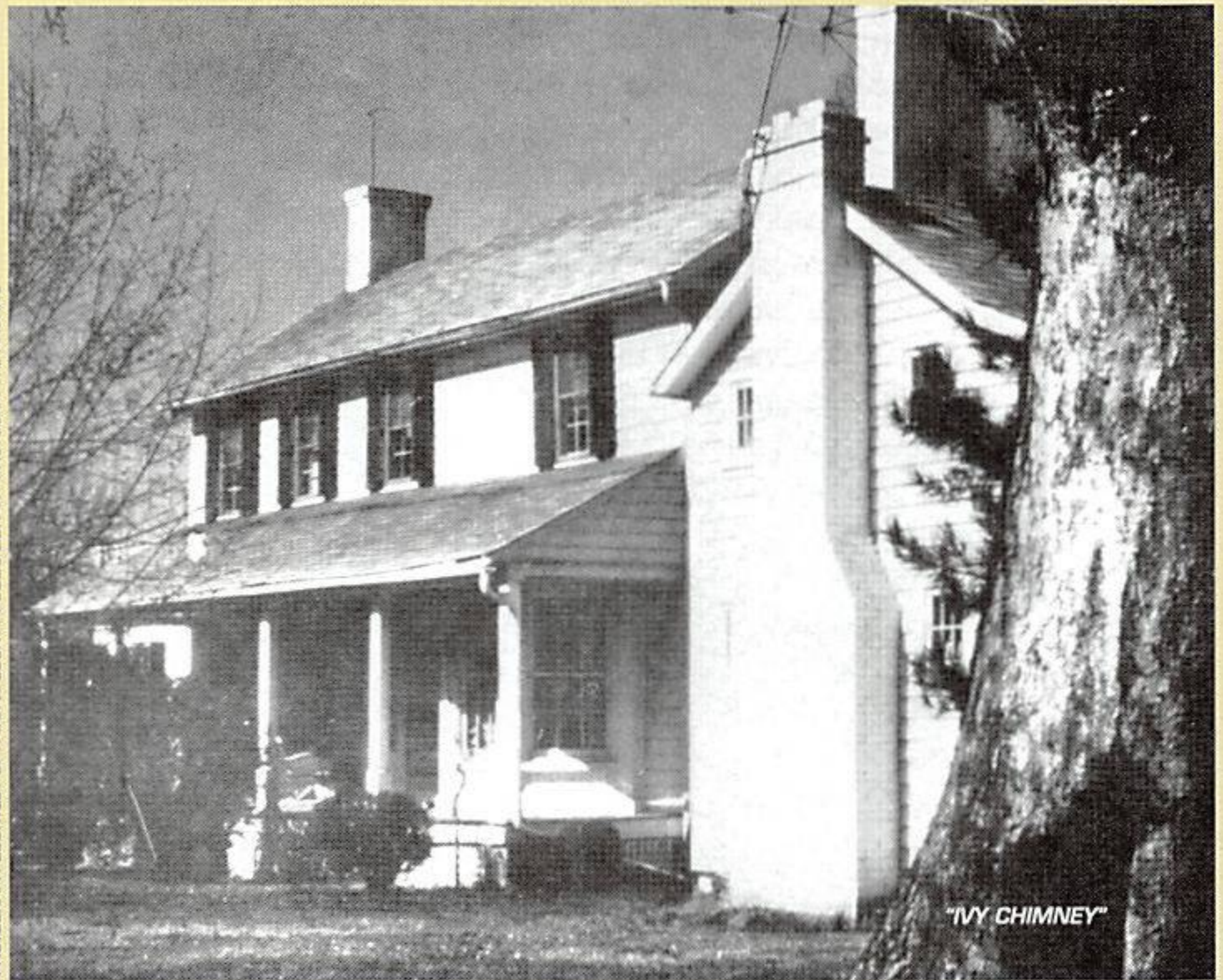
When the hostilities began, the residents of Dranesville were immediately involved. On May 23, 1861, at the polls, probably in one of the taverns, local voters decided overwhelmingly in favor of the Ordinance of Secession. There were 107 pro votes cast and only 4 against. And not only were they willing to vote for the South, but they were also prepared to defend it. On June 22, 1861, Company G of the 8th Virginia Infantry was formed at Dranesville with 33 local men enlisting. This is not surprising because of the long-standing militia units that used the town as their monthly meeting place. Since 1783 when the Commonwealth of Virginia had passed a law requiring every able-bodied man to serve in the militia, those companies had met once a month to drill. So at the outbreak of the Civil War, they easily converted into the Confederate army. As the war progressed, some Dranesville residents served with the Confederate Partisan Ranger Col. John Mosby and other branches of the southern army.

In addition to those actively serving in the army, other local citizens were drawn into the war. In November of 1861, Dranesville residents Philip Carper, who was serving in the Confederate army, and Drs. John and William Day, Charles, John and Thomas Coleman, John and James Farr and John DeBell were arrested by the U.S. government. They were accused of killing two Union soldiers who were pickets on Lowes Island, which is located at the end of Seneca Road on the Potomac River. And to compound the crime, not only were they accused of murder, but also of disposing of the bodies by feeding them to hogs that were kept there. These men were imprisoned in the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, D.C. The two doctors were incarcerated for nine months, but the others were released earlier. Before this incident, Dr. William Day had served as a surgeon with the 16th Virginia Regiment, and after his release he joined Cobb's Georgia Legion.

Due to Dranesville's strategic location, its residents suffered from the frequent passage of troops from both armies. While the citizens overwhelmingly supported the

Confederacy, having either army forage for food on their farms caused significant hardships. If it was the Union troops, the supplies were confiscated. If the Southern Army came to call, it was a donation. Either way the barns and pantries were left empty. The war also interrupted the flow of commercial traffic on the road that had supported the Dranesville economy for the first half of the century. To make matters worse, both armies also wanted control of the turnpikes and regularly collided near the town. Between November of 1861 through the winter of 1865, there were at least six skirmishes and one larger encounter.

While in the official records this was only deemed an

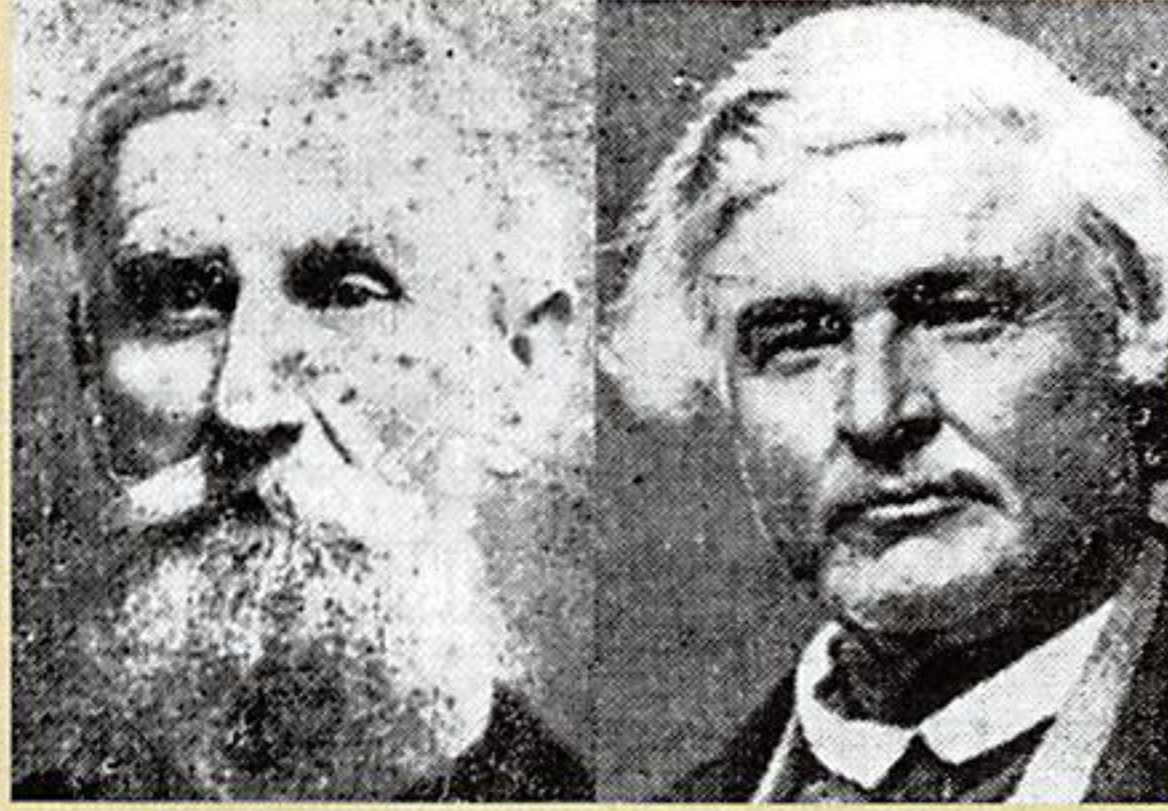


“action,” not a full-fledged battle, it was, nonetheless, a cataclysmic event for the local residents who saw their neighborhood suddenly turned into a field of combat. This bloody encounter occurred on December 20, 1861, when the Confederate army sent a forage party from their camp at Centreville to Dranesville. Due to below-freezing temperatures and snow, their mission was to collect as much hay as possible to feed the cavalry horses. General J.E.B. Stuart was ordered to defend the wagon train of the foraging party. To accomplish this aim, he took with him a force of about 4 infantry regiments, 150 cavalrymen and four pieces of artillery.

Union General George McCall had received a report that the Confederates were going to Dranesville. He

ordered General Ord to the area with a force double the size of Stuart's. Their orders were to prevent Stuart from taking the hay and to gather all available forage for the Union Army horses. The Confederate army advanced up what was then called the Ridge Road and is now Reston Avenue. Ord's troops proceeded down the Georgetown Pike. When Stuart realized that the Union forces were approaching, he attacked them in order to give his wagons time to get away. The collision of the two armies occurred in the area bounded by Reston Avenue, Georgetown Pike, Leesburg Pike and Seneca Road, just to the east of the town of Dranesville.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



DR. JOHN DAY, LEFT AND BROTHER DR. WILLIAM DAY

At the end of this engagement, both sides claimed victory. The casualties were: The Confederates had 43 killed and 143 wounded; the Union had only 7 killed and 60 wounded. Stuart had managed to save all of his wagons, and Ord's troops also filled all of their wagons with hay and provender. Most of the wounded Yankees had to be carried on stretchers back up the Georgetown Pike to Langley.

As the war dragged on, Kate Carper, an ardent Southerner who lived at Holly Knoll, wrote about their hardships in her diary. On January 1, 1862 she wrote:

"Loody and I go to the village. How dreadful the thought that we are at the threshold of a new year, with no prospects of peace but all things foretelling another year of bloodshed and distress."

On July 4, the same year she noted:

"One year ago today we dined with Capt. Terry, etc. at the Frying Pan Camp but oh! how changed is everything now. So many of our soldiers who were the pride of our country and the sunshine of these homes have been hurried off the stage of action by these miserable Northern hirelings."

Throughout the next three years, she made note numerous times of their home and those of neighbors

being searched by the Yankees for Confederate soldiers, other citizens being arrested and of troop movements through the town. Mosby and his Partisan Rangers passed through the town several times to skirmish with the Northerners or on other business. They would ford the Potomac from Lowes Island at the top of Seneca Road and scout for Stuart into Maryland.

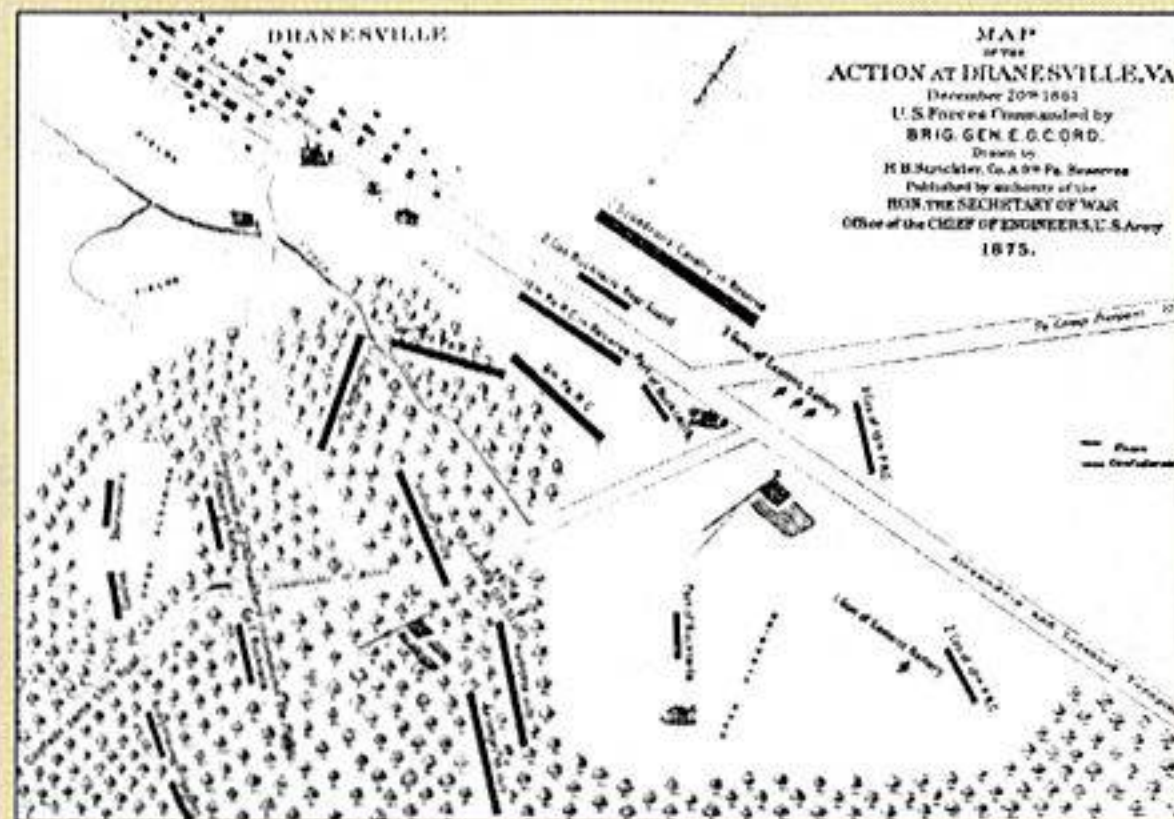
Because it was on the main road, the Carper's farm was frequently used as a campground for one army or the other. In September of 1862, General "Stonewall" Jackson's men stopped there briefly on their way to Maryland. In November of that year, the Yankees took possession of Dranesville and stayed through March of 1863. More Northern troops returned later that year as they attempted to prevent General Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania.

During that campaign, General Hooker's soldier's were unwelcome guests at the Carper's. They departed on the morning of June 27, and General Stuart's army arrived to take their place that same afternoon. Stuart's stay was briefer, as he was anxious to join Lee.

Due to the position of the Northern troops and high water, Stuart was having trouble finding a place to cross the Potomac. Mosby scouted the area for him and suggested that the ford at Lowes Island was the most feasible. So during the night of June

27 and the early morning of June 28, Stuart's command of approximately 2,500 men with horses, mules, supply wagons, artillery pieces and all the other equipment necessary to wage war passed through Dranesville and crossed into Maryland.

Kate Carper continued her chronicle of daily life in Dranesville through the rest of the war years. Although there continued to be troops in and out of the area, never again were they present in such large numbers as before the Gettysburg Campaign.



1875 MAP OF THE "ACTION AT DRANESVILLE"

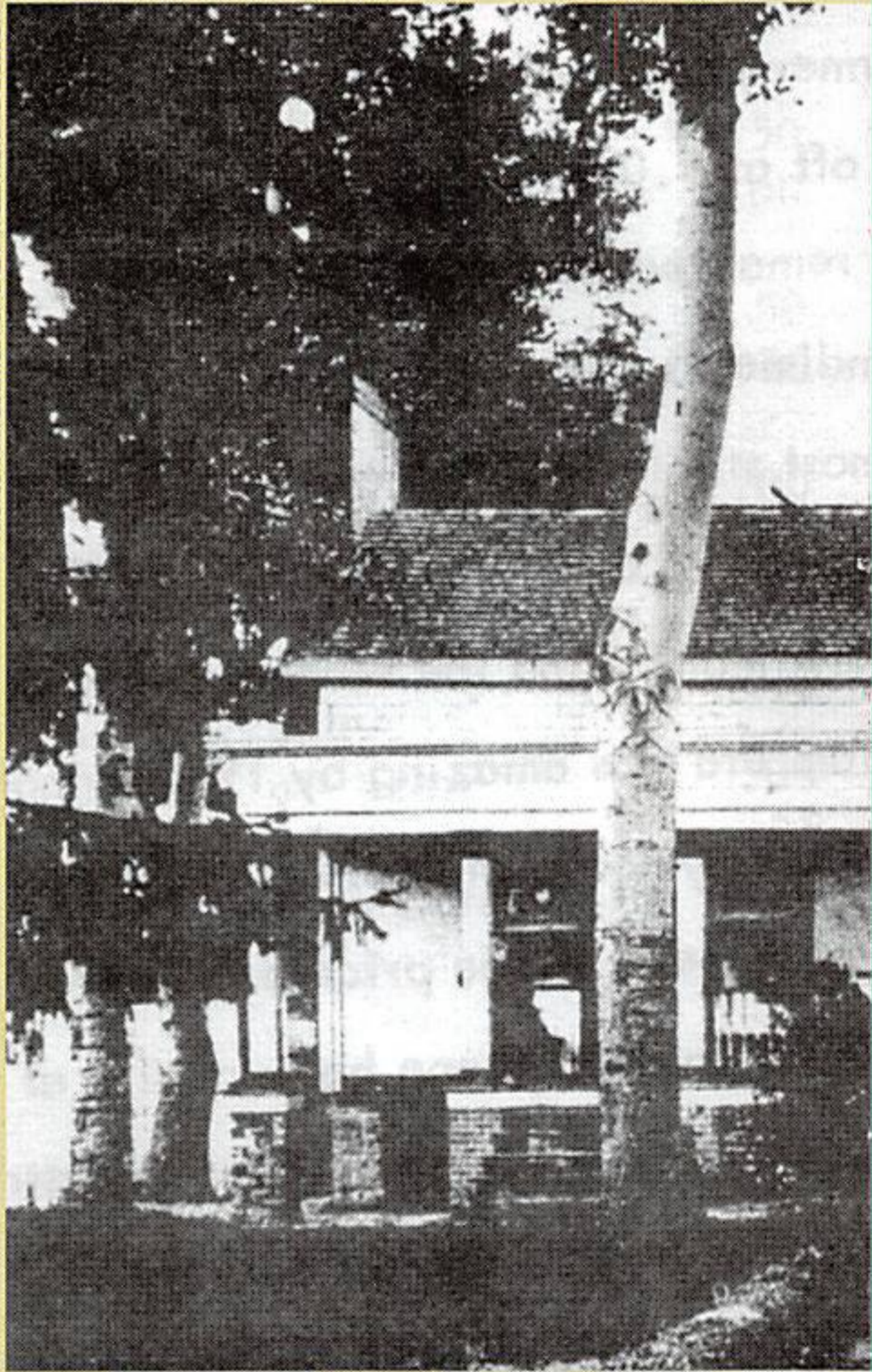
Coming in December: DRANESVILLE, PART III.



THE CIVIL WAR was devastating to Dranesville and the surrounding countryside. Constant troop movement and several skirmishes had taken a large toll on both the land and its inhabitants. The post-war years brought equally hard times, as the mainstay of the local economy, drovers and teamsters, no longer traveled on the roads through the town in any great numbers. The tavern trade, once the financial backbone of the community, never fully recovered and Dranesville never regained its pre-war level of prosperity.

The demise of the the drover and teamster trade occurred in part because of competition from the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad line. While this line had been completed to Leesburg in 1860, the outbreak of the war postponed its ultimate effect on Dranesville's commerce. Sections of the tracks were frequently torn up to prevent use by Rebel forces. But after the war, when it became operational again, the rail line had a very negative effect on Dranesville. It bypassed the town by several miles to the south and went through Herndon. This fact ensured the growth of that community, while bringing about the demise of Dranesville as a commercial center. The new line offered a better alternative for moving produce to market. Farmers who had once traveled the road through Dranesville were now able to stay home and send their products by rail. The development of the railroad also promoted dairy farming, since it provided farmers with a practical way to ship milk to city processing plants.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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DRANESVILLE

PART 3

by
KAREN WASHBURN

Nonetheless, the citizens of Dranesville set about rebuilding their community, but it was a long, slow process. Both money and labor were in short supply and several residents lost their property for unpaid taxes. By the end of the 1870's the taverns were re-opened, and there were several stores, two blacksmith shops, and a post office. The town had assumed the same character as most other rural Virginia crossroads communities. Dranesville's commerce now centered around supporting

the needs of local farmers rather than travelers.

The condition of the Leesburg Pike was a major problem. During the Civil War it had received virtually no maintenance, and its constant use by the military of both sides had left the road devastated. This condition remained a problem through the 1920's. Citizens from Leesburg to Alexandria complained about the condition of the Pike and sought creative measures to improve it. Many banded together to form the Good Roads League, but little hap-

pened to correct the problems. For a short while, parts of it were operated as a toll road, but still it remained in poor repair.

While the post-war years brought substantial changes to Dranesville, some institutions survived and prospered. In spite of being occupied by Union troops, the Liberty Church was left standing and continued in use as before. The congregation filed a claim against the U.S. government for damages caused by the Union troops stabling their horses in the building. This process took quite some time; however, in 1906, the congregation was finally awarded \$700 for damages. Given the political sentiments of the congregation in 1861, it is a bit surprising that the claim was awarded based on the fact that the church was loyal to the United States.

In 1880 a one-room school was built next to the church and a second room was added in 1912. A long succession of different young women were teachers in the school. They would board with a neighborhood family during the school year and return to their own homes during



MAYFIELD, HOME OF
DR. WILLIAM B. DAY

DRANESVILLE



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HARRISON'S STORE

vacations. The school building was heated by a wood stove that the teacher would keep going throughout the day. Drinking water was carried from a spring across the Leesburg Pike. Maintenance and repairs were done by local residents. While by modern standards the conditions may seem primitive, it was very typical of a rural Virginia school in that era and many children received good educations there.

Both of the Doctors Day continued to live and practice in Dranesville for the rest of their lives. They were kept very busy with house calls throughout the surrounding countryside for which they charged between \$1.00 and \$5.00, depending on the severity of the case. The doctors often had to wait many months to get paid, so it was often more expedient to accept barter in lieu of cash. The variety of items offered ran from meat, chickens, and butter to merchandise from a store keeper. Both men were highly respected members of the community and early members of the Fairfax County Medical Society. Dr. William was the first Dranesville representative to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. He also farmed at

his home, Mayfield, where he had extensive apple and peach orchards. When he died in 1886, the newspaper referred to him and his brother John as "among the best known and best loved physicians in the country adjacent to Washington." Dr. John Day was a founder of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Herndon. When he died in 1893 the Fairfax County Medical Society adopted a resolution, which said, in part, "That, we the members of the Fairfax County Medical Society do feel that by the death of our fellow member, Dr. John T. Day, we have suffered a severe and well-nigh irreparable loss, both as a physician and as a man."

Kate Carper never married, but lived at her family home, Holly Knoll, for the rest of her life. Her sister Francis married a circuit-riding minister who had come to preach at the Liberty Church, William G. Hammond. They had four sons, one of whom, Frank, stayed to farm Holly Knoll for his Aunt Kate. The property remained in the Hammond family and was a dairy farm until 1959.

In spite of hardships suffered, life in Dranesville was not all work. In the 1870's there was a revival of the

ancient tournaments that had been held by the knights in medieval England. These became very popular with both equestrian participants and spectators. Different contests were held, although jousting was not included. The mounted "knights" would have a lance and attempt to spear a ring suspended from a pole while riding at full gallop. The winner would usually get a cash prize and also be able to choose a lady friend to receive a title, such as "Queen of Love and Beauty." The second- and third-place winners got smaller cash prizes, and their ladies would be

Foxhunting was another leisure time activity in the area. Sam Jenkins had a cousin, also named Sam Jenkins, who lived near the river and was an avid fox-hunter. He kept his own pack of hounds and hunted them regularly. At this particular time there were numerous cousins all with the same name. So in order to help identify them, they all had nicknames. Sam of the tavern was called "Stiff Legged Sam." Sam of the fox hounds was "Long Sam." In 1908 "Long Sam" and his hounds came to the attention of Harry Worcester Smith, a noted



JENKINS GENERAL STORE

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

named the first and second maids of honor. Post-tournament festivities usually included dancing. These events were well-attended and drew many participants from other areas, even as far away as Centreville, Leesburg, Manassas, and Washington, D.C.

Community social get-togethers were often centered around dances that by the end of the nineteenth century were called "hops." Sam Jenkins, proprietor of the Jackson/Jenkins tavern, hosted many of these popular social events. It was a good way to promote business for his establishment, since many of the dancers traveled from a distance and spent the night. The dances also included a supper of fried chicken or oysters, when they were in season.

sportsman from Massachusetts. Smith was wintering in Leesburg and was the Master of Fox Hounds of the Loudoun Hunt. He and his companions who were wealthy New Yorkers and Bostonians foxhunted five days a week. Seeking new territory to "chase the fox," Smith discovered that "Long Sam" was an excellent guide to hunting the Dranesville area. He would arrange for all the fox-hunters to stay at "Stiff Legged Sam's" tavern overnight so that they could hunt with "Long Sam" all the next day, an arrangement that suited both of the "Sams" who were, if nothing else, creative when it came to ways to earn a living.

Special thanks to Kathryn Harrison Farrar.
Coming in February: Dranesville in the twentieth century.

AT THE BEGINNING of the twentieth century, the citizens of Dranesville had adjusted to the changes in their economy. Sam Jenkins had renamed his tavern the Dranesville Hotel.

While the tavern still did some business with overnight guests, Jenkins also opened a store to supplement his family's income. The hotel business had a personal effect on the Jenkins family when one young guest married their daughter Iva. Walter O. Harrison was a commercial traveler who toured the country with a horse and wagon selling Comfort Stoves. He stopped at the hotel to sell them a stove and to spend the night. There he met Iva Jenkins, a young widow with two children. He courted her for some time before she finally agreed to marry him. She told him that working in the hotel was very hard work, but at least she knew that her babies had a roof over their head. Harrison went to work for Sam in the store and then bought a house and land in Dranesville and built his own store.

Both the Jenkins' and Harrison's stores and another operated by the White family were in business to serve the local community. They all sold a little bit of everything. The Harrisons sold groceries, hardware, farming tools, work clothes, shotgun shells, seeds, garden plants and other various and sundry items. Mrs. Harrison also made hand-cranked homemade ice cream, cakes and pies to sell. Mr. Harrison cured his own meat and grew vegetables. He sold these commodities in the markets in Washington, D.C. and returned with supplies for his store.

Although some businessmen in Dranesville were able to earn a decent living, early in the twentieth century the town began to decline further. The post office closed in 1907. Mail that was once delivered by stage coach now had to be collected in Herndon from the train. When Rural Free Delivery was instituted, Dranesville was included in a Herndon route and the local post office was deemed unnecessary.

With the arrival of the automobile, the terrible condition of the Leesburg Pike had a detrimental effect on travel through Dranesville. The new autos with balloon tires needed a fairly smooth surface for efficient travel. This meant that drivers avoided the Leesburg Pike unless they had specific business there. Most drivers heading west from Washington, D.C. preferred to use Route 50 even if it took them miles out of their way.



Chairman of the Fairfax County History Commission, chairman of the Historic Preservation Committee of the Great Falls Task Force and vice president of the Great Falls Citizens' Association, and recognized for her considerable community service with the Lady Fairfax 2000 Award, Karen concludes her four-part history of Dranesville.

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DRANESVILLE

PART 4

by
KAREN WASHBURN



DRANESVILLE TAVERN,
CIRCA 1966

ESVILLE



DRANESVILLE TAVERN TODAY

Despite the problems, there were several new additions to the Dranesville community. In 1912 Philip Riely donated land along Leesburg Pike for the construction of a new church of the Brethren faith. The Oakton Church of the Brethren had been holding services once a month and a revival once a year at Dranesville's Liberty Church. Hiram Miller rode his bicycle from Oakton to do most of the work of building the new Church of the Brethren. The same year a third church was added when the Salem Baptist Church was built on Georgetown Pike across from the Church of the Brethren.

While some progress and change in Dranesville was positive, most was not. In 1925, school bus service was started to take the high school students to Forestville. However, several years later, in 1931, the two-room schoolhouse was closed and the elementary school students went by bus to Herndon. This closing certainly contributed to the loss of community identity.

When the Great Depression occurred in the 1930's, the citizens of Dranesville felt its consequences. Hardest hit were store owners who had extended credit to their patrons. The White's Store was forced to close due to over-extension of credit to customers, who were also neighbors. Many other residents had trouble raising enough cash to pay their property taxes. The Dranesville Hotel, however,

did survive those years. It offered fried chicken dinners on Sundays and was also a popular place for many local organizations to hold luncheon meetings.

The final death blow to Dranesville as a recognizable town came when the old Leesburg Pike was accepted into the state road system and designated as Route 7. Modern population explosions necessitated numerous expansions of that route. The original construction of the Leesburg Pike was the genesis of the town. For most of its history, the condition of the road directly impacted the economy of Dranesville. During its first century, citizens constantly wanted the road improved. Ironically, when it finally happened, it destroyed the town.

Today, while the actual sense of a town is gone, many of the historic structures survive. In 1968, the Jackson/Jenkins Tavern, now called the Dranesville Tavern, was moved back on its site and now belongs to the Fairfax County Park Authority. Across the road Holly Knoll, Mayfield, Ivy Chimney and the W.O. Harrison home have also stood the test of time and still remain as private residences. The Dranesville Church of the Brethren and Salem Baptist Church are still in use. And last, the venerable Liberty Church still stands on Church Hill and is now the Dranesville United Methodist Church. Yes, Virginia, there is a Dranesville. You just have to know where to look for it. 