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Title: OLD ASHBURN'S IDENTITY CRISIS
THREE NEW COMMUNITIES ENGULF LOUDOUN VILLAGE
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For 80-year-old Evelyn B. Caylor, the village of Ashburn is a far cry from the days when horses and buggies drove along Rte. 641, and going to the post office was the big social event of the day.

Caylor, who has lived in the eastern Loudoun County community since 1913, remembers her family's small grocery store and the livery stables out back of their home.

"When salesmen would come to town, they sometimes would spend the night with us," she recalled. "If they needed one, they'd take a horse and buggy and go to Ryan, Waxpool, Arcola or wherever they needed to go."

The clock is ticking on Ashburn's rural past. The once-quiet village five miles east of Leesburg is now home to about 200 people and smack in the middle of one of Loudoun's fastest growing regions.

Ashburn, which grew around a station for the Washington & Old Dominion railway, is now surrounded by three other Ashburns -- Ashburn Village, Ashburn Farm and Ashburn Center -- new communities that, when completed, will add to the area more than 18,000 residents and nearly 100 businesses, shops and restaurants over the next 10 years.

Some longtime residents of the area, fed up with swelling traffic and rising property taxes, are selling their homes, while many who remain are lamenting what they see going on around them.

"Twenty-two years ago, we moved out from Falls Church to the country and now it's gone," said Loy Roach, who lives in a large gray house on Rte. 641 with her husband Jay. "It's sad to see."

William L. Costello, 78, was chief of Company 6 of the Ashburn Volunteer Fire Department for nearly 20 years. Two years ago, he moved from his rented house in Ashburn to an apartment in Leesburg. "I'm sort of glad I'm out of there," he said. "It's just too much work for a volunteer. We didn't have as many calls in my day as they have now."

Dump trucks, tractors and commuters zip through Ashburn on their way to construction sites, jobs and home. Change is everywhere: The old post office is being replaced by a larger, modern facility, and the fire department's Friday night turkey shoots are on the chopping block as open fields around Ashburn give way to subdivisions.

But some residents aren't easily dissuaded, and others see a silver lining to the cloud of development hanging over the village.

"I'm going to hang on to the old country-store feel as long as I can," said John Beiler, owner of Partlow Bros., a 38-year-old local landmark next to the old railroad station. "I know a lot of people who've lived in the town a while don't like to see development. Personally, I don't like it either, but for business it's great."

Beiler bought Partlow's from Calvin Partlow two years ago and decided to keep the name. "When I bought it, it was a country grocery," Beiler recalled. "... But I changed it

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Ashburn
Caylor
(11/24/11)

to more of a convenience store because so many people had moved away. But now I'm finding with all the people moving in, I may have to change it back."

Partlow's is the kind of place where clerks still ask, "How ya doin'?" where construction workers stop in for a sandwich and soda and to cash their paychecks, and where fishermen get their bait and tackle.

The developers of the new Ashburns are catering to a different clientele: increasing numbers of home buyers who are tired of traffic snarls and crowding in areas closer to Washington.

Ashburn Village and Ashburn Farm, large residential subdivisions, are under construction, while Ashburn Center, an office, residential and commercial park, is on the drawing board.

Ashburn Village is rising on 1,580 acres between Rtes. 7 and 640. When completed in about 10 years, more than 5,000 residential units and 3 million square feet of office and retail space will be in place. A 7,500-square-foot community center is already finished and the developer, Ashburn Village Joint Venture, is creating a lake where a small marina is planned.

To the south, Ashburn Farm is being developed as a 1,274-acre community of more than 1,700 single-family houses, 1,300 town houses and 750 garden apartments. Plans for Ashburn Farm, which is being developed by Cavalier Land Development Corp. and is scheduled for completion in 1997, call for two shopping centers, sites for two schools, four churches and four day care centers.

Two of Cavalier's principals, William Hazel and John D. Stokely Jr., are also behind the Ashburn Center project, which is expected to have 5.6 million square feet of retail and commercial space, 314 detached houses and 363 town houses when completed in 1998.

"We spent a lot of time planning this thing," Stokely said. "We planted lots of trees and created berms to shield the homes. We know it's kind of tucked away, but it's like the early days of Reston and Burke when people went a long way to get there."

Access to the Ashburns, currently afforded primarily by Rte. 7 and by Rte. 641 -- a typical rural Virginia backroad, not quite two lanes wide, with a high crown and no shoulders -- should improve if the Dulles Toll Road is extended to Leesburg, as a private firm has proposed. The extension would slice across the southern edge of the new communities.

David G. Thompson, Ashburn Village's project manager, said he is trying to create a neighborhood atmosphere in clusters of houses with names such as The Woods, The Mills, The Lakes and The Hamlets. Houses vary in style and price, with a range of \$150,000 to \$300,000.

"It will be dense," Thompson said, but "if all is done right, it will be a very beautiful place."

Edward and Denise Higgins and their infant son Brian moved from their rented home in Oakton to a three-level town house in Ashburn Village last month.

"We've seen this place come from bulldozers a year ago to a completely new community," said Higgins, a Defense Department employee. "It's kind of exciting."

Bob and Jackie Silvay, who work for American Telephone & Telegraph Co. at its new office building about three miles from Ashburn, are the first residents of Ashburn Farm, where housing prices range from \$130,000 to \$260,000. In July, the Silvays moved from a smaller home in Fairfax County to get away from the traffic.

"Four years ago when we moved here from New Jersey, there wasn't a lot of traffic on the roads," Jackie Silvay said. "And now, we couldn't believe it. We wanted to get a little outside of the traffic, but not too far away from our jobs."

Silvay said she knows traffic is going to worsen at Ashburn, but said she likes being part of the growth. "I'm taking a lot of pictures so that 10 years from now we can see how the area's grown."

With growth comes a demand for more amenities and services. Developers have installed the water and sewer lines for the new communities and have set aside land for churches and schools as proffers -- items offered in exchange for county approval of their projects. They also agreed to pay for improvements to Rtes. 641, 625, 607 and 640 so that all those new home buyers can get to work and back each day.

Ashburn's volunteer fire department is feeling the strain, too. Since its inception in 1945, most of its funding has come from the annual Ladies' Auxiliary ham and fried oyster dinner and the fall turkey shoots.

Old-timers such as Calvin Partlow, 64, his brother Melvin, 63, and Charles Fletcher, 66 -- all original members and still active in the fire department -- recall the days when a major event was rescuing a horse that had fallen into a well. The job is much more demanding today, they agree. By the end of October, the 35-member firefighting company had responded to 503 calls this year, compared with 433 in the same period a year earlier, and 396 the year before that.

By January, the county is expected to extend full-time service to the Ashburn area. Overnight accommodations have been added to the firehouse, and a retirement fund for firefighters has been started.

Not everyone sees this as progress. "Now, the alarm goes off three or four times a day . . . and a lot of people who live here work too far away to get here anyway," Calvin Partlow said.

Still, growth can have its compensations. "It's a real asset for the school to have more students living close," said E. Wayne Griffith, principal of Broad Run High School, about 1 1/2 miles south of Ashburn. "It provides more chances for students to get involved in after-school activities."

Local religious leaders also are affected. Ministers at two of the area's oldest churches said they plan to add space for larger Sunday school classes and are considering enlarging their sanctuaries.

"As the community begins to become more of a community, there will be more focus on the church," said the Rev. Charles N. Pickell, pastor of the 112-year-old Ashburn Presbyterian Church. Pickell said he has been going door to door, inviting new residents to join his flock of 80, more than half of whom have been members for less than three years.

Pickell said he moved his family from Fairfax to Ashburn Village so he could learn more about the area and to send a signal that his church was reaching out to the older as well as the newer Ashburn community. But he said that he and other local pastors will have to work to make sure that both groups don't get swallowed up in the region's growth.

"If we can keep a sense of closeness and share it with people," he said, "then it will still be a great place to live."

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