

THE OLD PHILLIPS HOUSE

McLean, Virginia

by

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Preface

Spring Hill Road winds between Georgetown Pike and Old Dominion Drive, in places its width completely covered with over-arching trees attesting to the length of time the road has been in this same place. Newer neighborhoods, with clusters of neat, sparkling new brick homes with two- and three-car garages and large Palladian windows above the entrance, can be seen on either side of the road. The architectural styles and the meticulous attention to proper details try to convey a distinction and venerability which clearly is not there. The houses are clearly new, and they have been built on lots scraped into the red Northern Virginia soil through the green trees and foliage.

Not every home along this stretch of Spring Hill Road fits this mold, however. Modestly nestled on a small hill among towering trees hidden from the view of the road sits the Old Phillips House. It has a white brick exterior with shutters setting off the front windows. A large bay window in front opens the well-appointed interior to the beautiful

setting, and tall slender columns along the back support the roof that protects the terrace. The two-car garage is separated from the house itself. This home is clearly not one of the new houses developers have built in the area. More important than its distinctive appearance, however, is the distinguished and interesting history that stands behind the house.

The Old Phillips House at 940 Spring Hill Road is a living time capsule whose roots reach back into the rural history of McLean, but whose continuing vitality links that past with the sometimes rootlessness of contemporary suburban life in McLean.

Chapter 1

The Phillips Era

(1884 - 1935)

The "Old Phillips House" at 940 Spring Hill Road takes its name from Evan Deskin Phillips and his family, who built the home and lived in it during the first several decades of its existence.

E. D. Phillips, as he was most often called, moved to this part of Fairfax County from Rappahannock County in 1884 with his wife, Ida Jackson Harrell Phillips, and their six children. On October 15, 1884, Evan Deskin Phillips, referred to as "E.D. Phillips of Rappahannock County," purchased 98 acres, 1 rod, and 20 poles of land on Spring Hill Road from Eliza Ewers, apparently for a price of \$2,400.¹ Since the

¹ *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book D-5, p. 446. This description of the area of the amount of land purchased is somewhat confusing.

Phillips family name is still associated with the house, it is appropriate to ask who E. D. Phillips was and why he came to Fairfax County.

The Background of Evan Deskin Phillips

Evan Deskin Phillips was born on June 18, 1841 in Markham, Fauquier County, Virginia. His father was Evan Peyton Phillips and his mother was Lucinda Ann Stephenson. He was one of four boys born to this family. His first name was taken from his father, but his middle name came from the middle name of a neighbor and close friend of his father, John *Deskin* Ferguson. The name by which most people knew E.D. Phillips was "Dump."² When he was only three and a half years old, his father died. His mother and three older brothers (Alexander Wallace, John Taliaferro, and Benjamin Cornelius) continued farming as

According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1986), a rod is a unit of length of 5.50 yards (16.5 feet) and a unit of area of 30.25 square yards (272.25 square feet). The dictionary indicates that a "pole" is "2 a: a varying unit of length; esp one measuring 16 1/2 feet (5.03 meters); b: a unit of area equal to a square rod (25.293 square meters)." Apparently in Fairfax County when this land transaction took place in 1884, a "rod" and a "pole" were not the same unit of measure, and a "pole" was a smaller measure than a "rod."

² Lois Grubb Ward, "Notes for Evan Deskin Phillips," in the *Genealogical Records of the Evan Deskin Phillips Family* in the possession of Lois Grubb Ward.

best they could, and young Dump helped on the farm as soon as he was able.

During the Civil War, Evan D. Phillips served in the Confederate Army. His first service came before the war itself began at the time he was only 18 years old. When John Brown carried out his celebrated raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859, the nearby Virginia and Maryland militia were mobilized to help put down the insurrection. There was considerable excitement and misunderstanding about what actually was underway in nearby Harper's Ferry.³ One incident, recounted by Dump Phillips' grandnephew gives some flavor of his personality and the excitement of those times:

When the call came to go to Charles Town for John Brown's hiatus -- the men that were called dropped what they were doing right there -- unhitched whatever horses they wanted to take with them and took off for Charles Town across country -- they took the nearest route and if there was no gates to open or bars to let down to pass through, they just jumped their horses over the fences and went straight ahead. The women, children, and if there were any hired men around, went out and brought the rest of the horses into the barn yards. From then on they farmed the best way they could.

³ Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Lincoln: Prologue to Civil War 1859-1861*, Volume 3 of *The Ordeal of the Union* (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), pp. 80-82.

Dump's mother wanted him to stay home with the family. She already had three sons gone off to the ruckus. She got her hands on Dump's horse's bridle and hid it. Well Dump was very much shaken up and he raised such a howl, he fussed and stewed and fretted so much that she finally gave up and went and got the bridle and gave it to him. She said, "Here take it and go on if you must go."

When a bunch of horses have been together and you take most away, those left behind are anxious to go follow the other horses. Dump's horse was that way. Dump had a long suit of hair and had on a jacket. He mounted his horse and took out after the others -- the horse knew which way they went and he lit out at a very fast speed in that direction.

They said he cleared every fence very high, and Dump was doing a good job of riding. Dump was so fast that his long hair and his coat tail was setting straight out behind him. He jumped from their field into Long Field, then into the John Field and then into the Iron Field. By that time he was onto the Thomas Glascock Mt. Edie Farm. From there on until he passed Paris, he was in the old roadway. It was never learned just where he caught up with the other young people.⁴

The call to arms at the time of John Brown's Raid at Harper's Ferry was only the prelude to the full furry of the conflict that came a year and a half later. When the Civil War burst upon the nation, Dump Phillips

⁴ This account of Dump Phillips joining the militia at the time of John Brown's Raid on Harpers' Ferry was told by Wallace Phillips, a local historian and grandnephew of Dump Phillips. Wallace Phillips was the grandson of Alexander Wallace Phillips, who is the older brother of Evan Deskin [Dump] Phillips. Lois Grubb Ward, "Notes for Evan Deskin Phillips," in *Genealogical Records of the Evan Deskin Phillips Family* in the possession of Lois Grubb Ward.

was one of the first to volunteer for service in behalf of his native Virginia and he was one of the last to be mustered out at the end of the war. Just ten days after Confederate troops began the attack on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, on April 22, 1861, at the village of "Poto" Furnace,⁵ Dump Phillips was enlisted in the 7th Virginia Cavalry by Captain Ashby, who commanded the military unit for the duration of the war. Military records indicate that he was in Company A of the 7th Virginia Cavalry for the full length of the war.⁶ According the account of the ride to join the troops at Harper's Ferry, Dump was an excellent horseman, so it was not surprising that he joined a Cavalry unit. The military records note that he had his own brown horse.

At the end of the war on May 8, 1865, he became a prisoner of war, but like most of the other Confederate troops, he was paroled after signing a statement that he would "not take up arms against the United

⁵ The military records identify the place where he enlisted as "Poto Furnace." It may be that the place is "Potomac" Furnace. The precise location of the place has not been identified.

⁶ Confederate military records are spotty, but it appears that all of the existing "Muster Rolls" for Company A of the 7th (Ashby's) Virginia Cavalry show him present. He was present for November-December 1862, December 31 1863 to March 31, 1864; March-April 1864; and July-August 1864. *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers who Served in Organizations from Virginia. 7th (Ashby's) Virginia Cavalry.* National Archives. Microfilm No. 324, Virginia Microfilm Reel 78.

States government" and that he would remain at his home. The parole form, issued at the "Head Quarters: Army of the Shenandoah" in Winchester gives a description of young Dump Phillips at the conclusion of his military service. He was 24 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches tall, with a fair complexion, dark hair, and blue eyes.⁷

A few years after completing his Civil War military service, he married Ida Jackson Harrell on January 8, 1868. Ida Jackson Harrell was born on May 8, 1847, also in Markham, Fauquier County, Virginia. The couple apparently settled in nearby Rappahannock County where family tradition holds they were involved in farming and E.D. also had a mill. The 1880 Census confirms this. It shows them living in the Wakefield District of that county and E.D Phillips' occupation is given as a miller, although the census notes that he was unemployed for the previous twelve months.⁸ During the time they were living in Rappahannock County, Evan

⁷ *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers who Served in Organizations from Virginia. 7th (Ashby's) Virginia Cavalry.* National Archives. Microfilm No. 324, Virginia Microfilm Reel 78.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census. *United States Census for 1880.* Rappahannock County, Virginia. Microfilm copy of original census schedules. Reel No. 1386. Washington, D.C.: National Archives.

D. and Ida J. Phillips had six children -- William Edmund, Lura Virginia, Lizzie Bernice, Annie Wallace, Mary Margaret, and Daniel.⁹

E. D. Phillips Purchases Land in Fairfax County

In 1884 E. D. Phillips moved his family to a new farm he purchased in Fairfax County. The family does not have records of why the decision was made to move, but the fact that in 1880 he was unemployed for 12 months suggests that his mill in Rappahannock County may not have been doing well.

The land on Spring Hill Road that E. D. Phillips purchased was a part of an original land grant made to Major John Colvill on August 17, 1739 and subsequently conveyed to William Fairfax by Colvill on January 23, 1740.¹⁰ The ownership of the land on which the Old Phillips House

⁹ *Genealogical Records of the Evan Deskin Phillips Family* in the possession of Lois Grubb Ward.

¹⁰For information about the early Colvill-Fairfax land grant, see Beth Mitchell, *Beginning at a White Oak: Patents and Northern Neck Grants of Fairfax County, Virginia* (Fairfax, Virginia: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1977), pp. 149, 165, 167.

was built was only traced with certainty to 1847 because earlier purchased parcels of land were being broken into smaller pieces to be sold. On January 26, 1847, William Swink and his wife, Margaret, bought 150 acres of land in McLean, Virginia from George C. Alexander, executor of the estate of William B. Alexander.¹¹

Eight years later on January 1, 1855, the Swinks sold about two-thirds of their original 150 acres of land -- 98 acres, 1 rod, and 20 poles - - to John Landstreet of Baltimore and his wife for \$1,700.¹² Landstreet and his wife held the property for more than 22 years. On August 1, 1876, they sold the entire tract to Eliza Ewers of Fairfax County.¹³ After holding the property for 8 years, Eliza Ewers sold the tract to E.D. Phillips for \$2,400.¹⁴

¹¹*Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book L-3, p. 121. For a detailed summary of the property transactions involving the Old Phillips House from 1847 to the most recent sale of the property, see Appendix I.

¹²*Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book W-3, p. 127.

¹³This property transaction was never officially recorded in the land records of Fairfax County, Virginia, but the transaction is referred to specifically by date and no legal questions regarding it were raised when Eliza E. Ewers sold the land to E.D. Phillips on October 15, 1884. See *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book D-5, p. 446.

¹⁴*Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book D-5, p. 446.

Construction of the Old Phillips House

The Phillips family apparently lived in an older house on the original 98 acre tract. When the Phillips children were married and left home, parts of the original property were subdivided to provide home sites for the new families. Lizzie Bernice, the third child of E.D. and Ida J. Phillips was married to Ernest Linwood Johnson on July 4, 1900 in Washington, D.C.¹⁵ Johnson was employed as a police officer in Washington, D.C., and in order for him to work in the city, the family lived there.

About 1907 Johnson, decided to move his family to a new house on Spring Hill Road in order for them to enjoy the benefits of country living and for his wife to be near her family. He felt that with the completion through McLean of the Great Falls & Old Dominion Railroad along what is now Old Dominion Drive in July 1906, it would be possible for him to commute to Washington, D.C. from the train stop at the corner of Spring

¹⁵*Genealogical Records of the Evan Deskin Phillips Family* in the possession of Lois Grubb Ward.

Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive, which was only a few hundred yards from the family property.¹⁶

Sometime around 1907, Ernest Johnson built what is now referred as the Old Phillips House on a six acre piece of the original E. D. Phillips property.¹⁷ There have been suggestions that the new house he built was simply a much larger addition to an older building that existed before the Civil War, but that possibility has not been confirmed.¹⁸ It is most likely that the entire house was built at this time.

After completing the house, however, Johnson decided that it was too far away for him to commute to Washington every day. He moved back to Washington, D.C. with his family and left the house for his father- and mother-in-law. At this time, Evan D. and Ida J. Phillips had

¹⁶On the impact of the coming of the Great Falls & Old Dominion Railway and expectations for commuting into Washington, D.C., see Nan Netherton, Donald Sweig, Janice Artemel, Patricia Hickin, and Patrick Reed, *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, Virginia: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978), p. 484-485.

¹⁷Interview with Mrs. Audrey Lowe Grubb, granddaughter of E.D. Phillips.

¹⁸In an interview Theodore Suranyi-Unger reported that he had heard reports that this was true, but he was not able to confirm it either with reliable reports or physical evidence when he was involved in reconstructing the house.

only one unmarried child remaining at home, Mary Margaret.¹⁹ The three of them moved into the house soon after construction was completed.

E. D. and Ida J. Phillips were the owners of the house and the land on which it was built. Evan was 66 at the time the house was completed and Ida was 60. They were at the point in life that they were not able to do a great deal of the heavy work that maintaining a household required at that time. In order to provide for the older couple, an arrangement was made that was relatively common at that time.

The ownership of the "six acres, more or less" of land on which the Old Phillips house was built was transferred from E. D. Phillips to his youngest daughter, the then-unmarried Mary Margaret Phillips on November 26, 1909. The documents specified that the "said property [is] to be a home for E.D. Phillips and I.J. Phillips his wife as long as they shall live. This Deed not to be put on record until after their death[.] then the said M. M. Phillips is to have full possession and the said M. M.

¹⁹For detailed genealogical information about the Evan D. Phillips family with marriage dates of the children and other data, see Appendix II.

Phillips is not to claim any part of the remainder of the estate of E.D. Phillips."²⁰

The Old Phillips House was a self-sustaining small farm. There was a smoke house on the property in which to cure meat. The foundation of the smoke house is still visible today. The house also had a chicken coop and a place to keep horses and other animals. The family grew its own wheat and took it to Colvin Run Mill in Great Falls to be ground.

Within a year or two after the Phillips family moved into the new house, Mary Margaret Phillips married Lewis Rector Lowe on December 30, 1909. Lewis, born July 20, 1877, in Leesburg, Virginia, was the son of Rector Lewis Lowe and Mary Ellen Donohoe. For many years he and his parents lived on Leesburg Pike not far from the intersection with Spring Hill Road. The young couple lived in the house for the first fourteen years of their marriage from 1910 to 1923.²¹

²⁰ *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book R-8, p. 60. Although the deed is dated November 26, 1909 and the signatures on it were notarized on November 27, 1909, it was not officially recorded at the office of land records of Fairfax County Virginia until August 7, 1920. The deed specified that it not be put on record until after the death of E. D. and Ida J. Phillips.

²¹ Interview with Mrs. Audrey Lowe Grubb.

Life in the Old Phillips House During the Phillips/Lowe Years²²

Lewis R. Lowe worked in Washington for National Electric, a company that later became part of General Electric. Their daughter, Audrey Lowe, was born April 26, 1911 in the room that is now the master bedroom of the Old Phillips House. Audrey spent her first 12 years in the house. She received her elementary education at a one-room schoolhouse on Georgetown Pike across the road from the Carper House.²³ The schoolhouse had students from grades 1 through 7, all taught by the same teacher, Bernice Carper, one of Audrey's cousins.

During the early twentieth-century, there was only one doctor in the area, and he lived in Great Falls. When Audrey Lowe was 7 years old, she got the measles, as did her baby sister, Ethel Doris Lowe, who was born March 2, 1917. Audrey had to remain home from school for several days. She liked to rock her sister's cradle. Despite her mother's counsel

²²Unless otherwise noted, the following information was based on an interview with Mrs. Audrey Lowe Grubb.

²³Lura Virginia Phillips, the second child of E.D. and Ida J. Phillips married Thomas Samuel Carper and they lived on a part of the old family land.

to stay away, Audrey rocked the cradle and the baby went into convulsions and died soon afterward. Audrey, who was too young to understand, felt that she had caused the baby's death by rocking the cradle too hard.

The house was always hot in the summer because there was no air-conditioning. The entire family would take a bath every Saturday night. Water was heated on the stove and then put into a large tub in which everyone took turns bathing.

One summer, Audrey was outside playing with her cousins. Since she did not have any girl cousins her age, she played with her boy cousins. A cousin who was younger than her had a tricycle that he could ride without holding on with his hands. Audrey, older than him, had to show that she could do anything he could do, only better. While she was riding the tricycle with out holding on with her hands, she lost control and ran into a stone wall, breaking her arm.

Every Sunday, the Lowe and Phillips relatives would come over for Sunday dinner. The house had a large kitchen that could accommodate

such large numbers. After eating dinner, all the members of the family told family stories. Audrey and her cousins would play upstairs since they were bored listening to talk about the family.

Eliza Johnson was a black woman who lived near the intersection of Old Dominion and Spring Hill Road.²⁴ She was a domestic servant for the family. She washed clothes for 50 cents a day, and did the cooking. Audrey Lowe affectionately called her "Aunt Lizzie." Whenever Audrey walked by her house, "Aunt Lizzie" would give her a pan of yeast rolls to take home. On one occasion, Audrey wanted to eat in the kitchen with "Aunt Lizzie," but Eliza would not allow it. She told her that "those white folks don't want you eating with me."

On March 17, 1919, E. D. Phillips died in the Old Phillips House on Spring Hill Road. He was buried in the cemetery of the Baptist Church on Leesburg Pike (today Route 7). The Lowes cared for the ailing Ida Phillips until she died later in December of that same year. When E.D. Phillips died, his will specified that his 98 acres, 1 rod, and

²⁴ All the houses in the small black community where she lived were torn down in 1987 to provide land to build large luxury houses.

20 poles be divided among his five remaining children.²⁵ Mary Phillips Lowe received the land that included the Old Phillips House, and the rest of the property was divided among her four remaining siblings.

In 1923, the Lowe family moved from the Old Phillips house at Spring Hill to a house in the center of McLean. When Mary Lowe rode the Old Dominion Railroad, she always saw the house and thought she liked it. In 1923, when the house was put up for sale, Lewis bought it. Ironically, Mary never liked the house after moving into it.

The Lowes did not sell the Old Phillips House at Spring Hill until 1935. On June 1, 1935, Mary P. Lowe and Lewis R. Lowe, her husband, sold "six acres, more or less," "including the Old Phillips House," to Edward E. Hurbert and Mamie W. Hurbert, his wife.²⁶ With the sale of the Old Phillips House and the land at Spring Hill, more than half a century of Phillips ownership of the property and nearly three decades of ownership of the house came to an end.

²⁵E.D. and Ida J. Phillip's son, Daniel Phillips, died unmarried in 1902 at the age of 21.

²⁶*Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book U-11, pp. 362-365.

Chapter 2

The Hurbert Years (1935 - 1953) --

The Spring Hill Nursing Home and its Problems

Twelve years after the Lowe family moved out of the Old Phillips House on Spring Hill Road after the death of E. D. and Ida J. Phillips, the home was sold. A former owner of the house who lived there during the 1960s and 1970s thought that the house remained empty during this entire period.²⁷ Extensive research has turned up no information to prove otherwise, but there are no public records which would indicate conclusively whether in fact it was rented. Logically it seems likely that the house was rented since there was no reason to leave it vacant. The empty house would have deteriorated faster, and failing to rent or sell the house would have shown unusually poor business judgment.

²⁷ Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

On June 1, 1935, the land and home was bought by Edward D. Hurbert and his wife Mamie.²⁸ Mr. Hurbert was an American Indian²⁹ who wanted to change the Phillips House from a domestic dwelling to a nursing home. He believed that because the house was very large and the land pleasantly secluded it would be an ideal nursing home.

Reconstructing The House

In order to pursue his dream, Edward Hurbert began a radical change in the make up of the house. Between 1935 and 1951 Hurbert made extensive additions and changes throughout the house, including the addition of several rooms and bathrooms. When the house was sold after he and his wife had owned it for 18 years, there were a total of 8 bedrooms and six bathrooms.³⁰ In addition it had a large living room and dining room. There was a large kitchen large enough to prepare meals for

²⁸ *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book U-11, pp. 362-365.

²⁹ Interview with Ruth Trotter by Kathryn Colton.

³⁰ Deposition of Alfred W. Trueax, July 9, 1952, p. 7-8, in Falls Church vs. Edward E. Hurbert *et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

the number of patients which the nursing home could accommodate. The house had a sizable laundry room to handle the sheets and other laundry requirements. The home also had a steam or hot water heating system, which was a state-of-the-art heating system for that time.³¹

The quality of Hurbert's work, however, was not very good. When the house was later renovated, one of the owners said some walls were constructed of beer cans and chicken wire covered in plaster. One of the rooms added by Hurbert had a ceiling only six feet high.³²

Edward Hurbert's taste in decoration, at least in the opinion of many of the people who saw his work, was dreadful. The rooms were painted in a multi-colored array of bright colors. Upon completion of any new portion of the house, he simply painted the new room in his latest favorite bright color. He disregarded standard decorating practice by not bothering to match the newly chosen color to any other existing part of the house.

³¹ Deposition of Alfred W. Trueax, July 9, 1952, p. 7-8, in *Falls Church vs. Edward E. Hurbert et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

³² Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

Thus the house began to take on the appearance of a bizarre rainbow-colored fruit drink.³³

In addition to decorating the interior in this vast array of colors, Mr. Hurbert covered the entire front of the house with stone. In contrast to his wild taste in colors for the interior, the exterior had a "very nice" appearance to it according to George E. Walker, a rather conservative-sounding officer of the Falls Church Bank, who visited the house in the early 1950s.³⁴

Shaky Financing for the Nursing Home Venture

In order to carry out the renovation and start the operation of the Spring Hill Nursing Home, Edward Hurbert needed a substantial amount of capital, and he undertook this venture without giving proper consideration to the financial details. Mr. Hurbert was unemployed except for his renovation work and the management of the nursing home. He

³³ Interview with Ruth Trotter by Kathryn Colton.

³⁴ Deposition of George E. Walker, July 9, 1952, p. 4, in Falls Church vs. Edward E. Hurbert *et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

relied on the support of his wife, Mamie, to provide the money needed for the construction of the home and support of the family until the nursing home became profitable. Mamie was employed as a nurse at a local hospital, and her income was not large, at least not large enough to support the reconstruction of a large nursing home.³⁵

Apparently to provided the necessary capital for the nursing home, during 1950 and 1951 Edward and Mamie Hurbert took out a series of loans. By August 1951, they had borrowed a total of \$22,725 in four separate loans.³⁶ It is not clear whether any of the later loans were used to pay off any previous loan, but the evidence suggests that this was not the case. The Hurbert's financial situation continued to worsen.

³⁵Interview with Ruth Trotter by Kathryn Colton.

³⁶For a summary of these debts see items 1, 8, 9, and 10 in the "Bill of Complaint" in Falls Church Bank vs. Edward E. Hurbert and Mamie W. Hurbert; Spring Hill Nursing Home; *et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631, page 1 and 4. These court records report a promissory note from the Falls Church Bank for \$3,375 which was executed on July 3, 1951. The records of the other liens against the Hurbert home are found in the *Land Records of Fairfax County (Virginia)*: Deed of trust dated August 12, 1950, recorded August 15, 1950, Deed Book 789, page 226 for \$10,000; Deed of trust dated November 25, 1950 and recorded November 25, 1950, Deed Book 821, page 21 for \$2,100; Deed of trust dated August 7, 1951 and recorded August 9, 1951, Deed book 894, page 433 for \$7,850.

Faced with mounting debt, in November 1951, Edward and Mamie Hurbert restructured the ownership of the nursing home by transferring it to the Spring Hill Nursing Home Corporation. All of the stock in the corporation was owned by Edward and Mamie Hurbert and their attorney H. Eugene Bryan. Apparently Mr. Bryan was given 100 shares of stock in the Spring Hill Nursing Home for performing the legal services to create the corporation and transferring the ownership of the house from Edward and Mamie Hurbert to the new corporation. The transfer of ownership was a paper transaction that took place without any payment of any kind. After the creation of the Spring Hill Nursing Home Corporation, the Hurberts continued to reside in the Old Phillips House and treat it as their residence.³⁷

The Property Seized and Sold at Auction

Despite the incorporation and all the borrowing, the Hurberts financial situation did not improve and they made no payments on their

³⁷ See pp. 2-3, items 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the "Bill of Complaint" in Falls Church Bank vs. Edward E. Hurbert *et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

loan from the bank. There is no information in the records to indicate whether they were making payments on any of their other debts. The Falls Church Bank was rather patient with the delinquent borrowers. After the loan was made in July 1951 and the Hurberts made no payments on the loan at all, the bank did not take action for eight months. Finally on March 13, 1952, the Falls Church Bank filed a complaint in Fairfax County Circuit Court against both the Hurberts, the Spring Hill Nursing Home Corporation, Eugene Bryan, and 7 other trustees of loans that had been recorded as liens against the Hurberts home in the Deed Books of Fairfax County.³⁸

The legal proceedings took a full year and a half to complete. Until ownership of the property was transferred on July 3, 1953, the Hurberts apparently continued to live in the house.

On July 9, 1952, four months after the case first came before the court a special commissioner began to take depositions relevant to the case. Attorneys for both sides were present for the depositions. George E. Walker, Executive Vice President of Falls Church Bank, and Alfred W.

³⁸List of Proceedings and Bill of Complaint, in Falls Church vs. Edward E. Hurbert *et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

Trueax, a professional appraiser made sworn statements. Mr. Walker testified as to the validity of the lawsuit and the estimated value of the land. Mr. Trueax testified as to the lands worth along with making a statement regarding the good character of Edward Hurbert.

The court documents filed in the case over the next few months established clearly the extent of the indebtedness of the Hurberts. The Hurberts did not dispute these facts. The most controversial issue seemed to be the present value of the home, and "whether or not the rents and profits from said property will be sufficient within a period of five years to pay off the liens thereon."³⁹

The estate was given a different value by three different expert witnesses. George E. Walker of Falls Church Bank estimated the cost of the land at \$30,000 with the rental value at \$3,000 a year.⁴⁰ Professional appraiser Alfred W. Trueax estimated the value at \$35,000 dollars with a

³⁹Bill of Complaint, p. 4, Paragraph 11, in Falls Church Bank vs. Edward E. Hurbert *et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

⁴⁰Deposition of George E. Walker, July 9, 1952, p. 4, in Falls Church vs. Edward E. Hurbert *et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

yearly rental value of \$3,500.⁴¹ The third witness was James Byrne, who was a prominent long-time real estate salesman in McLean. He estimated the value at \$45,000, but did not give a rental value.⁴²

The court determined that rents on the property over a five year period were not adequate to pay the liens against it and issued a judgment that it should be sold in order to recover the debts. The court appointed four "Special Commissioners of Sale" to carry out the sale of the house. The four included Mr. Trueax, the appraiser who made a deposition regarding the worth of the house. The house was placed on the market and advertised for sale in newspapers and by other means. Despite the efforts of the Commissioners, however, they were not able to sell the property in a private sale.

At the direction of the court, they offered the house for sale at a public auction which was held on May 4, 1953, at 2:00 p.m. The public auction was advertised in a number of local newspapers. On the

⁴¹ Deposition of Alfred W. Trueax, July 9, 1952, p. 7-8, in *Falls Church vs. Edward E. Hurbert et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

⁴² Deposition of James Byrne, July 18, 1952, p. 13, in *Falls Church vs. Edward E. Hurbert et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631.

appointed day, Manning Gasch was the "last and highest bidder," offering \$19,100.⁴³ The amount for which the property sold was considerably less than even the most conservative estimates of the worth of the property by the appraisers who gave depositions in the court proceedings. The amount was also considerably less than the total outstanding loans made against the house, particularly when the original principal, the accumulated interest, and the court and commissioners costs that would have to be paid out of the sale are taken into consideration.

The court records suggest that Edward and Mamie Hurbert were not much better at managing their financial affairs than they were in remodeling and decorating the Old Phillips House. Their effort to create the Spring Hill Nursing Home left the old house in poor condition. It is significant that it was purchased at auction by Manning Gasch principally as an investment and not as a place for his family to live. To make it a liveable home would require extensive redecorating and renovation.

⁴³ See Report of Commissioners and copies of newspaper advertisements for the sale and auction of the property, in *Falls Church Bank vs. Edward E. Hurbert et al*, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Case No. 8631. A summary of the commissioners efforts to sell the house privately and the decision to sell it at public auction is also reported in the *Land Records of Fairfax County (Virginia)*, Deed Book 1106, pp. 406-407.

Chapter 3
The Old Phillips House
And The New McLean
(1953 to the Present)

After the bankruptcy and forced sale of the Old Phillips home in 1953, the new owner, Manning Gasch left the house vacant for the two years he owned it. Gasch, a successful McLean real estate developer, purchased the house and land for \$19,100 as an investment. Professional appraisals of the property during the court proceedings against the Hurberts valued the house at \$30,000 to \$45,000, so it would appear that the auction price made it a good investment.

More important, however, was the transformation of McLean that was about to take place. Gasch was a shrewd businessman, and he sensed

the coming influx of suburban commuters into McLean as Washington grew after World War II. In 1939, McLean had 335 homes and 138 post office boxes. By 1989, this had swelled to 16,421 homes, 4,154 post office boxes, and 1,182 businesses.⁴⁴ In 1955, McLean stood poised on the brink of these dramatic changes.

Manning Gasch at one point or another bought and sold much of the land in the McLean area.⁴⁵ Like many of the developers in the area, he was a middle man between the old families who owned the land when McLean was rural and agricultural and the new suburban commuters who began to dominate McLean after the 1950s.

Gasch has lived for many years on a large estate on Georgetown Pike opposite the Madeira School and just around the corner from the Old Phillips House. His wife Hilda, who was a co-owner of the property, died at the age of 80 on May 9, 1990.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Bill Elvin, "Old-timers set to meet again this Saturday," *The McLean Providence Journal and Fairfax Herald*, May 10, 1990, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

⁴⁶ Obituaries, "Hilda Gash, Longtime Resident", the *McLean Providence Journal and Fairfax Herold*, May 17, 1990, p. 7.

The role of Manning Gasch in the ownership of the estate was one of transition. The clouded status of the property was cleared up by Gasch. His interest was purely financial. He held the house for two years and waited for the best opportunity to sell it. He finally sold the estate on March 10, 1955.⁴⁷

The Barabas Family: The First Commuters

Stephen J. Barabas and wife Helen bought the house on March 10, 1955, with the express purpose of living in it. The only other persons who lived there during the 15 years they owned it were John and Irene Gouli. The Goulis lived in the house with the Barabases about 2 years.⁴⁸

In the years that they lived in the house, it was changed little. Although it was last used as a nursing home, they apparently left the house in much the same condition. The only significant addition they

⁴⁷ *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book 1286 p. 172.

⁴⁸ Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

made to the house was a two car garage located about 100 yards from the house at the foot of the driveway.

Mr. Barabas loved the rural McLean countryside. To escape the hectic world of Washington D.C., where his business was located, he commuted from McLean to Washington every day. Ernest L. Johnson failed in 1907 to live in McLean and work in Washington, D.C., but in the 1950s Stephen Barabas succeeded.

Mr. Barabas was able to commute back and forth to Washington because of substantial changes since Ernest L. Johnson first tried. Because there were few commuters in 1907, trains were infrequent. Commuting then required walking along the dirt road to Old Dominion and then an hour long train ride. By the mid-1950s, commuters used private automobiles. Though roads were not as good as they are today, they were paved, and traffic was much lighter. Thus for the first time in the history of the Old Phillips house, commuting to Washington was possible.

In Washington, D.C., Mr. Barabas established the Georgetown University Shop, a well-known men's clothing store in Georgetown near

the University.⁴⁹ Located at 1248 36th Street in Northwest Washington, the shop was successful in large part because it catered to the clothing needs of affluent students who attended Georgetown University in the 1950s and 1960s. Georgetown was the alma mater of Barabas. He was something of a star on its football team during the 1920s while he was a student there. During his later years, he made significant contributions to the University.⁵⁰

After living in the Old Phillips House for 15 years, the Barabases sold the property. The reasons they moved are not known, but since it was the family home, the decision was not based on any investment strategy or speculation. They apparently decided to live elsewhere.

The Suranyi-Unger Family: Modernizing the Old Homestead

On April 24, 1964, Stephen James and Helen Margaret Barabas sold the Old Phillips House to Theodore Suranyi-Unger and his wife Mary

⁴⁹Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

⁵⁰Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

H. Suranyi-Unger.⁵¹ The purchase price was estimated at \$53,000 or \$57,000.⁵²

When the Suranyi-Ungers bought the home they described it as a "mess,"⁵³ but they saw that the house had great potential. The extent and cost of improvements in the house undertaken by the Suranyi-Ungers were as extensive as the work of Edward Hurbert two decades before. The Suranyi-Ungers undid the Hurbert nursing home changes and turned it from a nursing home back into a single family home.

⁵¹ *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book 2443, pp. 515-518. The Fairfax County land records contain a property transaction of the same date as this transaction, April 24, 1964, which is recorded immediately after this transaction in the county deed book. It reports that "Robert T.S. Colby and Robert I. Bowles, trustees, both of Alexandria, Virginia, parties of the second part" purchased the land from Theodore and Mary Suranyi-Unger. This transaction apparently involved some legal requirement related to the financing and purchase of the property by the Suranyi-Ungers. When the property was sold next, the Suranyi-Ungers were in sole possession of the property and there is no record that Colby and Bowles, "trustees", ever took possession of the property or sold it. *see Fairfax County Virginia Deeds, Book 2443, pp. 515-518.

⁵² Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger. The figure of \$53,000 was what Mr. Suranyi-Unger remembered the price to be, while Mrs. Suranyi-Unger remembered the price to have been \$57,000. After a quick discussion they could not conclude at what price the home was bought, but they both agreed that the home was indeed bought by them.

⁵³ Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Ungers.

The first steps in remodeling were to identify all the changes that needed to be made. They found that much of the construction previously made by Edward Hurbert was haphazard, unplanned, and of poor quality. Glass portals (internal glass walls) had been placed throughout the house, uselessly dividing rooms. In addition, columns were sporadically placed around the house, including a considerably large unnecessary column in the middle of the living room.⁵⁴ The front door entered into the living room, and this made the facade unsymmetrical. The roof of the house was made of tin, which caused the sound of rain falling on the house to be magnified. A huge fireplace protruded into the living room, it was not necessary because of new methods of heating being used in those days. A large front window gave the house the appearance of being the front door of a store. One room on the second floor had only a six foot high ceiling, affectionately called the "slave quarters".⁵⁵

Unlike Edward Hurbert, Mr. Suranyi-Unger felt that professional help was needed to reconstruct the house. He realized through analysis of many of Hurberts mistakes, that improvements were no good unless

⁵⁴Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

⁵⁵Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger.

they were well done. Mr. Suranyi-Unger hired independent workers to rebuild the house.

He hired a Mr. Lightfoot to work on the roof.⁵⁶ With a slate roof the old tin roof was replaced. Where Mr. Hurbert had put in soft pine floors, Mr. Suranyi-Unger ripped out the pine and replaced it with oak. The column in the middle of the living room was taken out, along with the portals that broke up the house. The large window in the front of the house was replaced with a beautiful bay window. The front door was moved, and the space was covered with brick and plaster. The large fireplace in the living room was shortened and left primarily for appearance. The Suranyi-Ungers also "dug out" the basement. Previously there had been only a small cellar.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger. Mr. Suranyi-Unger specifically remembered the ironic name of the man, since Mr. Lightfoot was constantly stomping on the roof as he worked on it.

⁵⁷Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger. The Suranyi-Ungers discussed at length many of the improvements that they had made on the home. They said that they basically remade the entire house, leaving only the basic frame. Listed in the paper are only a few specific examples, all the changes being too lengthy and monotonous to either describe or read.

The Suranyi-Ungers loved horse back riding. They built a small horse stable located at the edge of the horse pasture behind the house. The Suranyi-Ungers went horse back riding often, using a multitude of trails that existed in and around the woods off of Spring Hill Road.⁵⁸ To increase their riding area, the Suranyi-Ungers bought an additional 10+ acres from a nearby resident that was adjacent to their land.

In order to buy the neighboring parcel of land, they needed a substantial loan from the bank. At the time, the loan was large enough that only a corporation would have grounds to borrow that much. They established a corporation, and on March 11, 1969, the Suranyi-Unger Corporation bought the house and "6.9416" acres of land from Mr. and Mary Suranyi-Unger.⁵⁹ When this action was completed they were free to

⁵⁸Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger, June 1, 1990. The Suranyi-Ungers were discussing why they move to the house and also why they moved out. The reason was for their love of horses.

⁵⁹*Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book 147, pp. 495-496. All land transactions after this one give the area of the land involved as 6.970 acres, but all transactions prior to this one give the area as 6.9416 acres. The description of the land's boundaries before and after this change in acreage are slightly different. This suggests that a new survey was made at this time and the area was recalculated. The difference is 0.0284 acres or 137.456 square yards (1237.104 square feet).

proceed with the purchase of the additional 10+ acres using a loan given to the Suranyi-Unger Corporation at 12% interest.⁶⁰

When the Suranyi-Ungers moved to The Old Phillips home the land around them was still largely undeveloped and little changed from the time when the Old Phillips House was built. The Suranyi-Ungers enjoyed the horse trails and peace and tranquility. As the mid-1970s approached, the area became more populated. Developments to the west and south of the Old Phillips House increased the urbanization of the area, and the house was near the road where traffic was increasing.⁶¹ For all of these reasons the Suranyi-Ungers decided to move to a quieter location. They sold the home and moved to a more secluded area in Great Falls.⁶²

⁶⁰Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger. This land was later bought from the Suranyi-Ungers by a man named Fred Vitek. Unknown is the amount of money that this 10+ acres was bought or sold for.

⁶¹Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger. In addition to describing increasing urbanization at this time, the Suranyi-Ungers told of losing three cats at the hands of increasing car travel along Spring Hill Road.

⁶²Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger. It may be ironic that the in the interview the Suranyi-Unger confided that they were now looking for a more seclude location than present day Great Falls. It seems that wherever they go urban development follows.

The Fromms and the Coltons: Suburban Living

The new owners of the Old Phillips House were Joseph and Gloria Fromm, who purchased it on July 15, 1974.⁶³ The Fromms paid between \$219,000 and \$230,000 for the property.⁶⁴ The Fromms lived in the house for 8 years. Other than minor changes in the decoration, the house remained essentially unchanged. They sold the home on September 15, 1982 to Kent W. Colton and Kathryn P. Colton for \$400,000.⁶⁵

Using the Old Phillips House as an urban refuge, and following the example set by Stephen Barabas, Mr. Colton commuted into Washington each day to work. He was the Executive Vice President of the National Association of Home Builders. The Coltons had five children: Kathryn, Bradley, Lynne, Lauren, and Ann. The house provided an excellent environment for raising a family. The nearly 7 acres allowed plenty of space for the more adventurous children to roam.

⁶³ *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book 4072, pp. 17-21.

⁶⁴ Interview with Theodore and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger. The Suranyi-Ungers gave the approximate price as \$219,000 or \$230,000. Mr. and Mrs. Suranyi-Unger again both disagreed as to the specific amount that they sold the house for, but did agree to the fact that they sold the house.

⁶⁵ *Land Records of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Deed Book 5687, pp. 1321-1337.

During the Colton years much emphasis has been put on improvements. The basement which the Suranyi-Ungers dug out was completely redone, a new modern kitchen was put in, and the second floor was increased by 2 rooms. Other improvements included taking down several interior brick walls and replacing them with plaster.

The Old Phillips House: Its Future and its Past

The Old Phillips House is a living time capsule whose roots reach back into the rural history of McLean, but it is also a living, vital place which comfortably fits into contemporary suburban life in McLean. The Old Phillips House still stands on Spring Hill Road, which follows the same route it did when the house was first built nearly a century ago.

Times have changed a great deal since the house was built. The Old Phillips House has had to change over the years to keep up with changing times. Evan Deskin Phillips and his wife Ida J. would hardly recognize the place today as their old home if they could stop by for a

visit, but if they spent a few minutes wandering through the place, they would soon recognize it and feel right at home -- and they would certainly appreciate the indoor plumbing!

This history of the first century of the Old Phillips House suggests that historic buildings can serve the present as well as the past. While the house may not have some of the modern conveniences and architectural consistency of the sparkling new residences that surround it, the character of the home and its links with McLean's bucolic past are much more important than Palladian windows and a three-car garage.

APPENDIX I

Property Transactions

Involving

the Old Phillips House

940 Spring Hill Road, McLean, Virginia

1. Date of Property Transaction: September 15, 1982

Buyer: Kent W. Colton and Kathryn Peterson Colton, his wife.

Seller: Joseph Fromm and Gloria Fromm, his wife.

Acreage at time of purchase: 6.970 acres

Purchase Price: \$400,000

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 5687, pages 1321-1337.

2. Date of Property Transaction: July 15, 1974

Buyer: Joseph Fromm and Gloria Fromm, his wife.

Seller: Theodore Suranyi-Unger and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger, his wife.

Acreage at time of purchase: 6.970 acres

Purchase Price: \$219,000 or \$230,000

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 4072, pages 17-21.

3. Date of Property Transaction: March 26, 1969

Buyer: Theodore Suranyi-Unger and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger, his wife.

Seller: Suranyi-Unger Corporation, a Virginia corporation

Acreage at time of purchase: 6.970 acres

Purchase Price: \$50,000

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 3221, pages 426-428.

4. Date of Property Transaction: 11 March 1969

Buyer: Suranyi-Unger Corporation, a Virginia corporation

Seller: Theodore Suranyi-Unger and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger, his wife

Acreage at time of purchase: 6.9416 acres.

All land transactions after this one give the area of the land involved as 6.970 acres, but all transactions prior to this one give the area as 6.9416 acres. The description of the land's boundaries before and after this change in acreage is slightly different. This suggests that a new survey was made at this time and the area was recalculated. The difference is 0.0284 acres or 137.456 square yards (1237.104 square feet).

Purchase Price: [Not given]

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 3149, pages 495-496.

5. Date of Property Transaction: April 24, 1964

Buyer: Theodore Suranyi-Unger and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger, his wife

Seller: Stephen James Barabas and Helen Margaret Barabas, his wife

Acreage at time of purchase: 6.9416 acres

Purchase Price: \$53,000 or \$57,000

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 2443, pages 513-514.

Note: The Fairfax county land records contain a property transaction of the same date as this transaction, April 24, 1964, which is recorded immediately after this transaction in the county deed book. It reports that "Robert T.S. Colby and Robert I. Bowles, trustees, both of Alexandria, Virginia, parties of the second part" purchased the land from Theodore Suranyi-Unger and Mary H. Suranyi-Unger, his wife. This transaction apparently involved some legal requirement related to the financing of the purchase of the property by the Suranyi-Ungers. When the property was next sold, the Suranyi-Ungers were in full and sole possession of the property and there is no record that Colby and Bowles, "trustees," ever took possession of the property or sold it. See *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 2443, pages 515-518.

6. Date of Property Transaction: March 10, 1955

Buyer: Stephen James Barabas and Helen Margaret Barabas, his wife

Seller: Manning Gasch and Hilda L. Gasch, his wife

Acreage at time of purchase: 6.9416 acres

Purchase Price: [Not given]

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 1286, pages 172-176.

7. Date of Property Transaction: July 3, 1953

Buyer: Manning Gasch

Seller: James Keith, Alfred W. Trueax, Henry P. Thomas, Edward D. Gasson, Commissioners of Sale for Edward E. Hurbert, Mamie W. Hurbert, and Spring Hill Nursing Home.

The property was sold at a public auction held on May 4, 1953 at 2:00 p.m. The auction was ordered by the Fairfax County Circuit Court in connection with a bankruptcy proceeding against Edward E. Hurbert, Mamie W. Hurbert, and Spring Hill Nursing Home. See Fairfax County Circuit Court, Chancery Cause No. 8631. Decree entered on December 3, 1952 and decision rendered February 25, 1953.

Acreage at time of purchase: 6.9416 acres

Purchase Price: \$19,100

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book 1106, pages 406-407.

8. Date of Property Transaction: June 1, 1935

Buyer: Edward E. Hurbert and Mamie W. Hurbert, his wife

Seller: Mary P. Lowe and Lewis R. Lowe, her husband.

This is the only time in all of the land records involving the transfer of this property in which the wife is listed first and the man is identified as "her husband." This is because Mary Phillips Lowe initially inherited this land before her marriage to Lewis R. Lowe.

Acreage at time of purchase: "six acres, more or less."

The deed is not more specific about the precise acreage involved in this transaction, explaining that this is "a sale and conveyance in gross and not by the acre."

Purchase Price: [Not given]

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book U-11, pages 362-365.

9. Date of Property Transaction: November 26, 1909

Buyer: M.[Mary] M. Phillips.

Mary Phillips subsequently married Lewis R. Lowe and she is referred to as "Mary P. Lowe" when the property was sold 26 years later.

Seller: E.[Evan] D. Phillips.

This deed states that it is made between E.D. Phillips and M.M. Phillips. It does not mention the interest in the property of E.D. Phillips wife, Ida J. Phillips. However, Ida J. Phillips signed the deed and a notary public certified that both E.D. Phillips and his wife signed the deed the day after it was made on November 26, 1909. The deed for the sale of this property to Edward E. Hurbert and Mamie W. Hurbert by Mary P. Lowe and Lewis R. Lowe in 1935 states: "Ida J. Phillips, wife of said Evan D. Phillips, while not named as a party to said deed, appears to have signed the same and acknowledged it." *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book U-11, page 362.

Acreage at time of purchase: "six acres, more or less"

Purchase Price: [Not given]

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book R-8, page 60.

Although the deed is dated November 26, 1909 and the signatures on it were notarized on November 27, 1909, it was not officially recorded at the office of land records of Fairfax County until August 7, 1920. The deed specifies that "said property [is] to be a home for E. D. Phillips and I. J. Phillips his wife as long as they shall live. This Deed not to be put on Record until their Death[.] then the said M.M. Phillips is to have full possession and the said M.M. Phillips is not to claim any part of the Remainder of the estate of E. D. Phillips.[sic]"

10. Date of Property Transaction: October 15, 1884

Buyer: E. [Evan] D. Phillips of Rappahannock County, Virginia.

Seller: Eliza Ewers of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Acreage at time of purchase: "98 acres 1 rod and 20 poles."

This description of the area of the amount of land purchased is somewhat confusing. According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1986), a rod is a unit of length of 5.50 yards (16.5 feet) and a unit of area of 30.25 square yards (272.25 square feet). The dictionary indicates that a "pole" is "2 a: a varying unit

of length; *esp* one measuring 16 1/2 feet (5.03 meters); b: a unit of area equal to a square rod (25.293 square meters)." Apparently in Fairfax County when this land transaction took place in 1884, a "rod" and a "pole" were not the same unit of measure, and a "pole" was a smaller measure than a "rod."

Purchase Price: \$2,400

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book D-5, page 446.

11. Date of Property Transaction: August 1, 1876

Buyer: Eliza Ewers

Seller: John Landstreet and his wife

Acreage at time of purchase: "98 acres 1 rod and 20 poles."

Purchase Price: [Not given]

Reference: This property transaction was never officially recorded in the land records of Fairfax County, Virginia, but the transaction is referred to specifically by date and no legal questions about it were raised when Eliza E. Ewers sold the land to E. D. Phillips on October 15, 1884. See *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book D-5, page 446.

12. Date of Property Transaction: January 1, 1855

Buyer: John Landstreet of Baltimore, Maryland, and his wife.

Seller: William Swink and his wife

Acreage at time of purchase: "98 acres 1 rod and 20 poles."

Purchase Price: \$1,700

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book W-3, page 127.

13. Date of Property Transaction: January 26, 1847

Buyer: William Swink and his wife.

Seller: George C. Alexander, executor of the estate of William B. Alexander.

Acreage at time of purchase: 150 Acres

Purchase Price: \$550

Reference: *Fairfax County Virginia Deeds*, Book L-3, page 121.

APPENDIX 2

**Genealogical Records
of the Evan Deskin Phillips Family**

Evan Deskin PHILLIPS (Nicknamed "Dump")⁶⁶

Birth:

Date: June 18, 1841
Place: Markham, Fauquier County, Virginia.
Father: Evan Peyton PHILLIPS, also a native of Virginia.
Mother: Lucinda STEPHENSON.

Marriage:

Date: 8 January 1868
Place: Probably in Fauquier County, Virginia
Spouse: Ida Jackson HARRELL

Death:

Date: 17 March 1919
Place: The Old Phillips House, Spring Hill Road, Fairfax County, Virginia
Burial Place: McLean, Fairfax County, Virginia

⁶⁶Unless otherwise specified, the information in this genealogical appendix is taken from *Genealogical Records of the Evan Deskin Phillips Family* in the possession of Lois Grubb Ward. The data has been confirmed by research in *United States Census for 1880*, Rappahannock County, Virginia, Microfilm Reel No. 1386 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives); *United States Census for 1900*, Fairfax County, Virginia, Microfilm Reel No. 1707 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives); and *United States Census for 1910*, Fairfax County, Virginia, Microfilm Reel No. 1868 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives).

Ida Jackson HARRELL***Birth:***

Date: May 8, 1847

Place: Markham, Fauquier County, Virginia

Father: John HARRELL

Mother: Susan ADAMS

Death:

Date: 14 December 1919

Place: Washington, D.C.

Burial Place: McLean, Fairfax County, Virginia

THE CHILDREN OF EVAN DESKIN PHILLIPS AND IDA JACKSON HARRELL**1. William Edmund Phillips*****Birth:***

Date: 17 November 1868

Place: Markham, Fauquier County, Virginia

Marriage:

Date: 20 December 1894

Place:

Spouse: Marian EASTON

Death:

Date: 1 December 1926

Place: Maryland

Additional Information:

The last will and testament of William Edmund Phillips, dated September 16, 1925, was probated on January 8, 1927, in the courts of Fairfax County. It lists his eight children and gives their ages as follows:⁶⁷

- (1) Edmund Easton PHILLIPS, age 31. Resident of Washington, D.C.
- (2) George Francis PHILLIPS, age 29. Resident of Washington, D.C.
- (3) Lillina Jackson PHILLIPS, age 28. Resident of Washington, D.C.
- (4) Margaret Louise SWINK, age 25. Resident of McLean, Virginia.
- (5) Florence Elizabeth PHILLIPS, age 23. Resident of Washington, D.C.

⁶⁷ *Probate Records of Fairfax County*, Will Book 12, pp. 25-26, 29; Will Book 16, p. 72-73

- (6) William Ernest PHILLIPS, age 20. Resident of Washington, D.C.
- (7) Evan Daniel PHILLIPS, age 16. Resident of Washington, D.C.
- (8) John Curtiss Phillips, age 10. Resident of Washington, D.C.

2. Lura Virginia PHILLIPS

Birth:

Date: 12 September 1870

Place: Rappahannock County, Virginia

Marriage:

Date: 1 November 1888

Place: Fairfax County, Virginia

Spouse: Thomas Samuel CARPER

Death:

Date: 4 March 1945

Place: McLean, Fairfax County, Virginia

3. Lizzie Bernice PHILLIPS

Birth:

Date: 19 June 1873

Place: Rappahannock County, Virginia

Marriage:

Date: 4 July 1900

Place: Washington, D.C.

Spouse: Ernest Linwood JOHNSON

Death:

Date: 9 October 1944

Place: Washington, D.C.

Additional Information:

Ernest Linwood JOHNSON, the husband of Lizzie Bernice PHILLIPS, built the Old Phillips House in 1907. Ernest L. and L. Bernice JOHNSON were executors of the will of her brother William E. Phillips.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *Probate Records of Fairfax County, Will Book 12, pp. 25-26.*

4. Ann Wallace PHILLIPS***Birth:***

Date: 14 June 1875

Place: Probably Rappahannock County, Virginia

Marriage:

Date: 15 January 1895

Place:

Spouse: Clyde Wallace RECTOR

Death:

Date: 14 May 1952

Place: Atoka, Fauquier County, Virginia

5. Mary Margaret PHILLIPS***Birth:***

Date: 6 July 1879

Place: Flint Hill, Rappahannock County, Virginia

Marriage:

Date: 30 December 1909
Place: Washington, D.C.
Spouse: Lewis Rector LOWE

Lewis R. LOWE was born 20 July 1877 in Leesburg, Loudoun County, Virginia, the son of Rector Lewis LOWE and Mary Ellen DONOHOE. He died on 4 September 1967 in Falls Church Virginia.

Death:

Date: 3 March 1958
Place: McLean, Fairfax County, Virginia

Additional Information:

Lewis R. and Mary M. [Phillips] LOWE had two children:

- (1) **Mary Audrey LOWE**, born 26 April 1911 in the Old Phillips House on Spring Hill Road. She married Walter Keller GRUBB on 9 April 1932 in Elkton, Maryland. They were subsequently divorced. She is still living in McLean and gave an interview to the authors at the Old Phillips House three days after her 79th birthday.
- (2) **Ethel Doris LOWE**, born 2 March 1917 in the Old Phillips House on Spring Hill Road. She died of measles on 10 April 1918 at the Old Phillips House on Spring Hill Road.

6. William Edmund Phillips***Birth:***

Date: 12 August 1881

Place: Rappahannock County, Virginia

Marriage: Not married.

Death:

Date: 12 September 1902

Place: Washington, D.C.

APPENDIX 3

**Photographs of the Old Phillips House
and the Evan Deskin Phillips Family
and Maps of the Property**



Photograph 1. The Old Phillips House taken before 1923. This is the oldest photograph of the house. It was taken about the time Lewis R. and Mary Margaret [Phillips] Lowe moved from the house to the center of McLean. This picture is taken from the location of the current driveway. Spring Hill Road is to the right of the photograph. The front door on the right side of the house is in the same location as it is currently.



Photograph 2. A photograph of members of the Phillips and Lowe families taken ca. 1911. The baby is Mary Audrey Lowe, and she is being held by her grandmother, Ida J. Phillips. E. D. Phillips is standing behind her, but he is not visible because of the quality of the photograph. The black woman in the center is Eliza Johnson (Aunt Lizzie), who was the family's domestic help. The woman on the right is Mary Margaret [Phillips] Lowe, whose head is shaved because she had suffered from Typhoid fever.



Photograph 3. Photograph of Mary Audrey Lowe and her Aunt L. Bernice Johnson taken ca. 1920. L. Bernice Johnson was the daughter of E. D. Phillips and the wife of Ernest L. Johnson, the builder of the Old Phillips House. When he could not manage to commute to and from Washington, D.C., he moved his family to the District of Columbia. The baby Mrs. Johnson is holding is unknown.



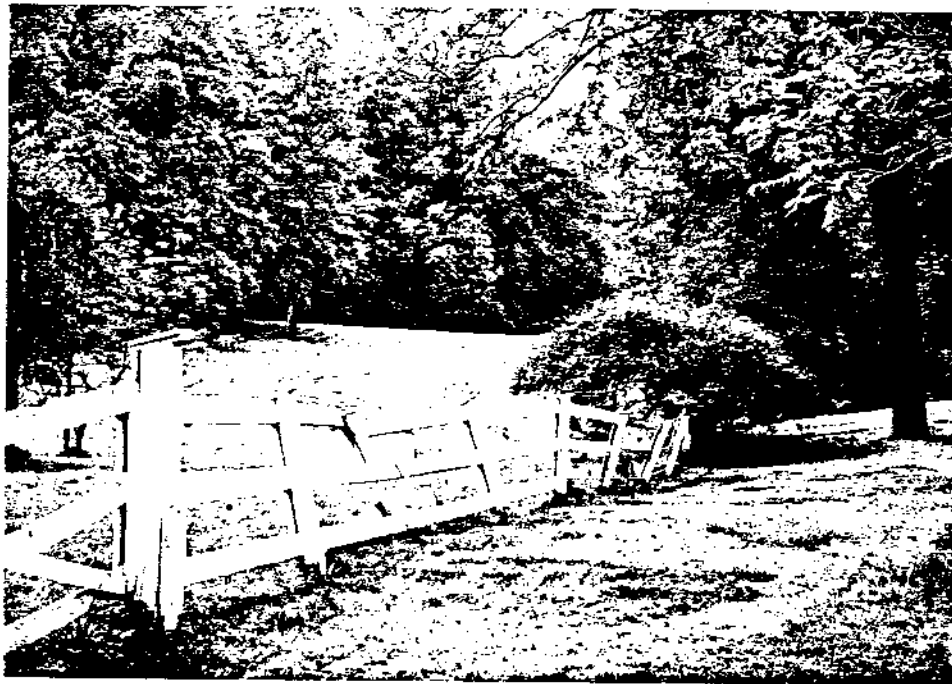
Photograph 4. (Top) This Photo of the Old Phillips House was taken ca. 1964. The view is from the rear of the house. Note that the driveway surrounds the house. The Suranyi-Ungers had just purchased the house and no modifications had yet been made.

Photograph 5. (Bottom) Photograph of the front of the house taken ca. 1964. The Suranyi-Ungers had just purchased the house and no modifications had yet been made.



Photograph 6. (Top) Photograph taken ca. 1966 during the Suranyi-Unger renovations of the house. This photograph shows the construction of the columns on the back of the house.

Photograph 7. (Bottom) Photograph taken in 1987 of the front of the house. The Suranyi-Unger renovations had been completed for 15 years and the Coltons are occupying the house at this time. Compare with Photograph 5 of the front of the house before the renovations.



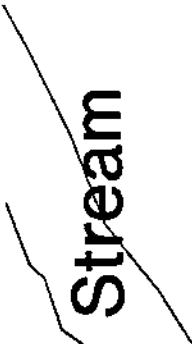
Photograph 8. (Top) Photograph taken in 1990 of the rear of the house. The columns can be seen. Compare with Photograph 4 of the rear of the house ca. 1964 before the renovations.

Photograph 9. (Bottom) Photograph taken in 1990 of the horse pasture and the fence around it. This is the pasture that the Suranyi-Ungers used for their horses.



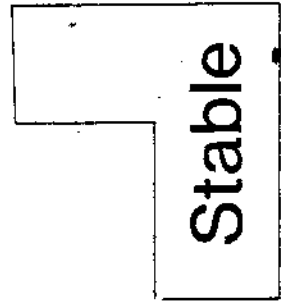
Photograph 10. (Top) Photograph taken in 1990 of the horse stable built by the Suranyi-Ungers during their ownership (1964-1974). The stable has running water and electricity.

Photograph 11. (Bottom) Photograph taken in 1990 of the house. The view is from the field near the stable.

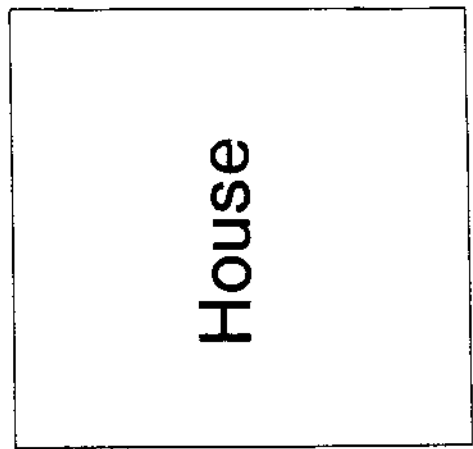


Stream

Old
Phillips
House

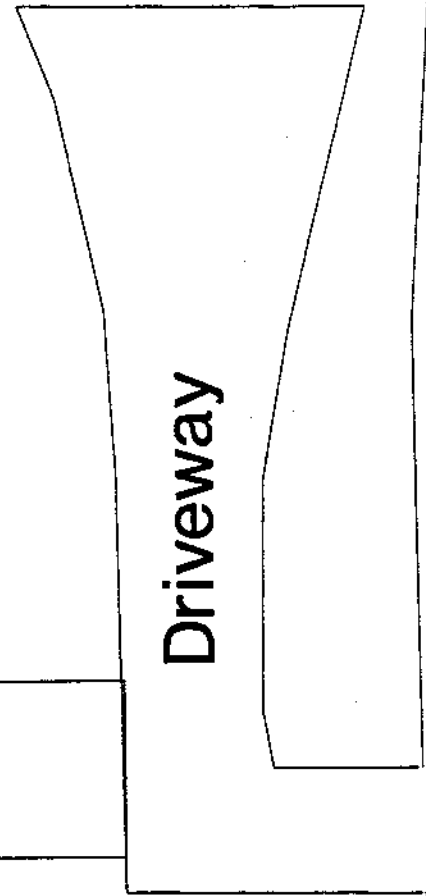
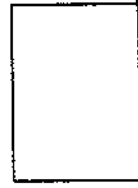


Stable



House

Garage



Driveway

Spring Hill Road

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