

### **Tiny Clifton Still Tries to Regain Lost Luster**

By Mabel Pelletier  
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After about a decade of unsuccessful efforts by real estate investor-developer A. Frank Krause Jr. to stimulate interest in restoring lit-

tle Clifton, Va., and bringing about agreement between residents and town and county governments, he began selling his properties in 1968.

Krause abandoned his plan to restore the Clifton

Hotel and make Clifton a dining-out place for Washingtonians and vacationers. But the survival of Clifton as a late-Victorian village still testifies to his long dedication to the task of reclamation. The buildings that

he restored form a nucleus around which other restorations are being accomplished by others.

A Krause-placed marker on the Clifton Hotel still informs the visitor that this

**See CLIFTON, E7, Col. 1**

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# Hope Stirs in Clifton For Return to Glory

CLIFTON, From Clifton, takes pride in the fact that a new official tour guide map of Fairfax County places Clifton on the 19th century, offering the tourists of land-healing mineral waters from the tour of land-its Paradise Spring and the parks and historical sites. The three initial considerations of the master plan are being met but there is still the need for small-scale commercial enterprises of the type envisaged by Krause to bring in revenue from the tourists who are

Finally, a modern sewer system is hooked up and in use. A citizen's association has been formed, with a goal to develop Clifton as a residential community while preserving its history and unique appearance. An ordinance in effect prevents destruction of old buildings and regulates new building. Residential buildings are being sold only to individuals interested in restoring them as private residences.

Members of the citizens' association have purchased the Clifton Hotel, and have plans for restoration. At the moment, however, enthusiasm and determination exceed the necessary capital.

Harrison G. Otis, another real estate developer, opened the Clifton Hotel in 1877. Health resorts or spas were a fad in the 1800s, and plush trains were popular with vacationers of the day.

Clifton, only 23 miles by train from Washington, boasted Paradise Spring (of healing waters) to assure the success of the venture. Work of the lovely, convenient weekend retreat spread rapidly. Shops sprang up and Clifton became the shopping center for Fairfax County. Lumber and soapstone mining contributed further to the economic growth of the town.

The downturn in Clifton's fortunes began after the turn of the century. Virginia's spas declined in popularity as the preference for beach resorts increased. The horseless carriage arrived and train travel declined. Timber forests in the area of Clifton were exhausted. By 1930, Clifton was a ghost town; business establishments were forced to close. Young people went to Washington, where jobs were available in the Government. Modern roads bypassed Clifton and the town lay sleeping in seclusion for 30 years.

Then Krause, impressed with the town's natural beauty and with an interest in preserving America's past, envisioned Clifton's restoration in the 1800 to 1930 mode. He hoped that shops would make Clifton self-sustaining. However, there were many initial needs to be filled before much progress could be made, among them the necessity for a modern sewer system, an over-all plan for development of the town and financial backing. In 1964, a master plan was drawn up by the Fairfax County Planning Division. The first considerations of the plan were: encouragement of individual efforts toward restoration of individual elements, installation of a modern sewer system and recognition of encroaching development of the area.

Fairfax County laid the trunk lines of the sewer but decision on a site for the treatment plant was not forthcoming. For years the lack of proper sewer facilities deterred the rebuilding program. Almost a decade passed in which investors, potential investors, mayors, town council, county agencies and Clifton residents did not see eye-to-eye on several aspects of the rehabilitation program. A few of Clifton's buildings were restored with loving dedication.

Clifton, now about 30 miles from Washington by car, is nestled in a Virginia valley of remarkable scenic beauty, on the fringe of the historical area of the Civil War battles of Bull Run. The town is on Route 645 between Chain Bridge Road and Route 29-211. Modern building has progressed to the north and west of Clifton. But so far the town's growth has consisted almost exclusively of restoration and rehabilitation of existing structures, which number around 75.

The History Commission of Fairfax County has completed a historic landmarks survey of the Clifton Presbyterian and Baptist Churches and a preliminary survey of the Clifton Hotel.

Newcomers to Clifton consider the history of their properties an extra dividend in home ownership. To the John Stones, their restored house on Chapel Road is not only attractive but is the Green House, with a history of having served since 1884 as a general merchandise store, saloon, pool hall and residence.

Earl Lee, proprietor of the Clifton Supercette, is happy to forego the extra advertising that neon signs would bring, in the interest of preserving the town's 19th century quality.

David Smith, current president of the citizen's associa-