

Bluegrass Brings Crowds, Controversy to Va. Inn

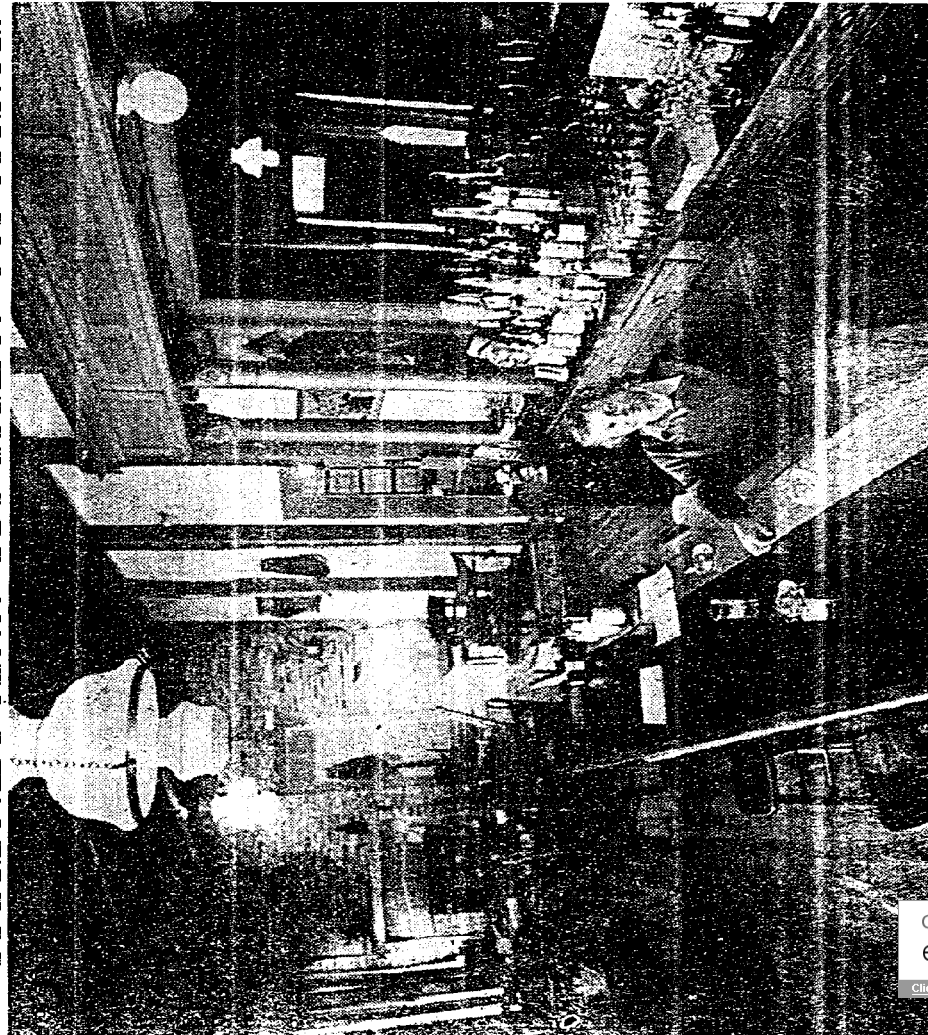
By Thomas Grubitsch/Washington Post Staff Writer

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Bluegrass Brings Crowds, Controversy to Va. Inn



Priscilla Wells stands behind counter in Berkeley's Inn, subject of a civic uproar in Clifton, Va.

By Thomas Grubitsch
Washington Post Staff Writer

The tiny, cloistered town of Clifton (pop. 178) in southwestern Fairfax County has been thrown into an uproar by a restaurant serving up a popular, foot-stomping program of live bluegrass music that is attracting hundreds of people from as far as Baltimore.

At the center of the uproar is a law-
r turned restaurateur, David H. N.
Some residents, including a
neighbor who lives two doors from
an and his family, have asked the
Town Council to declare Bean's res-
aurant, Buckley's Inn, a public nu-
isance.

Bean has had 17 suits filed against
him in Fairfax Circuit Court over the
past year, most of them for alleged
violation of zoning and building
regulations.

Litigation has become so interminable
that Bean actually managed to sue
himself, charging in Fairfax Circuit
Court on Nov. 2 that he owed himself
\$2,500 for materials and labor in the
restoration of the 100-year-old
Berkeley's Store and its conversion to
a restaurant.

The restaurant attracts predomi-
nantly young people, many of whom
gather around the bar, whose ornate
oak backdrop came from a Colonial
saloon. The rustic, whitewashed
quiet room has attracted different
groups, including Little League teams
and garden clubs.

To Bean, who is fending off credi-
tors, including the owner of the build-
ing, all the business is good news. But
many of the townspeople, most of
whom are trying to promote Clifton's
developing reputation as a well-pre-
served vestige of Victorian charm, it
is very bad news.

"He's betrayed the trust of the com-
munity," said Dr. Lloyd Glover, who
lives 100 yards outside the town lim-
its.

"He's turned on the people and

created a monster that's going to de-
stroy our community. . . . He has turned
the restaurant into a total, festering
blight."

Barry A. Schneiderman, quelling
original restaurant literature that re-
fers to the inn "nested in quiet, his-
toric Clifton," said the town has been
overwhelmed. "I believe Bean is act-
ing like a desperate man," Schneider-
man said, "and what he's doing threat-
ens to drag the town down with him."

Bean's landlord, Sheldon C. Hoffer-
man, who has sued to evict him, said:

**... a monster that's
going to devour
the community.**

"This project was presented to the
town as the restoration of a historic
building which would be a country
restaurant featuring genteel dining.
Instead of genteel dining, they've got
live bands and young people coming
in, parking in front of driveways, on
lawns, in front of gates, getting drunk
and causing property damage."

Bean and his wife, Donna, have
sued Hofferman, seeking to recover
\$20,500, the amount of money they say
they are owed for repairs made at the
inn.

Moreover, Bean disputes any claim
that his restaurant is having a harm-
ful effect on Clifton. In the bar, he
points to an elderly man sitting on a
stool and says, "He's a town resident,
and he's a graduate of MIT." Later he
points out two lively young men—
homeowners—whom he jokingly calls the
"maitre d's in the bar."

The main problem, Bean said, has
been lack of parking, and he is hoping
that a new agreement worked out at
last week's Town Council meeting to

allow parking at a nearby store will
lead to a solution. He also says he is
negotiating with the Southern Rail-
road to use space alongside the
nearby tracks.

On some nights, according to resi-
dents, as many as 170 out-of-town cars
have been counted on the nine streets
of the town. Though Clifton is in the
middle of nowhere and has only 50
houses, it is laid out on 10 compact
blocks, leaving little room for park-
ing.

But the new parking agreement has
had little effect in quieting the con-
troversy surrounding Bean and his
restaurant. Four residents have asked
the Town Council to declare the inn a
public nuisance, but the Council has
not acted on the requests. The town
ordinance governing nuisances deals
mainly with maintaining farm animals
in homes, but one of the petitioners,
James Hitecko, says, "It's all we've got
to do with."

In the litigious climate that has de-
veloped the town, few people are will-
ing to be quoted by name. They say
they are afraid of being sued by Bean,
who hired a court reporter to make a
verbatim record of the proceedings of
the last two Town Council meetings.

Some town residents have been cir-
culating a pamphlet charging that
there have been "public urination in
the alleys and streets" and "rude, of-
fensive and lewd remarks" to towns-
people upset by the nightly influx of
visitors.

Most of Bean's financial affairs are
tangled in the 20 suits in which he is
involved, 17 as a defendant. He has
been or is being sued individually or
as a trustee for Historic Clifton Assn.,
created by his landlord, electrician,
roofer, banker and former partners.
All of them are claiming Bean owes
them money. Historic Clifton Assn.

See CLIFTON, B6, Col. 2



Cardboard signs warning patrons of Buckleley's Inn have been put by Clifton residents unhappy with congestion.

Bluegrass Has Va. Folks Really Mad

CLIFTON, From B1
is a partnership that bought
Buckleley's Store and other buildings in
town.

one of the suits, Bean sued him-
as trustee for Historic Clifton As-
sociates, which owned Buckleley's Inn.
was in effect suing himself be-
cause he was the only associate. The
apparently was aimed at Hoffer-
man, who succeeded Historic Clifton
Associates as owner of the inn, on the
theory that Hofferiman could be held
liable for any judgment against the
inn. Nothing is too clear—both
inn and his adversaries agree.

The litigation has sent reverbera-
tions throughout Clifton. One of the
defendants in a suit filed by Hoffer-
iman is 8-year-old Jennifer Lee, who
lives along with her 18-year-old
sister, Anna, and her father, Earl. He
owns the general store in Clifton
across the street from Buckleley's and
is a partner in Bean's Historic Clif-
ton Associates.

Hofferiman said that Lee's children

were named as defendants in the suit
because they owned stock in Historic
Clifton Associates, from which Hoffer-
iman is seeking money he claims is
owed him. "It was a technicality,"
Hofferiman said of the children's in-
volvement.

Bean, a tall, bearded man who
speaks in quiet tones, acknowledges
he has had financial problems. The
various suits seek more than \$50,000
from Bean, according to court records.
Bean said all of his financial problems
are caused by the extensive restora-
tion required to convert Buckleley's
store into an attractive restaurant,
Chateaubriand and a bar with a roar-
ing fireplace at one end.

Even Bean's critics acknowledge
that his energetic restoration efforts
have turned Buckleley's into a showcase
of country Victorian architecture.

Bean lost ownership of the building
last June when he was unable to pay
off loans from Hofferiman and others,
according to allegations in various
suits. But he was able to continue op-
erating the restaurant that occupies
most of the building because of a

lease held by Buckleley's Inn Ltd.
which rents from the landlord
(originally Bean and now Hofferiman).
Despite his financial problems,
Bean is plunging ahead on another
project—restoring the badly deterio-
rating Clifton Hotel, where President
Ulysses S. Grant, Chester Arthur
Rutherford B. Hayes and Theodor
Roosevelt reportedly stayed when
Clifton was a popular summer spa for
Washington residents. Bean plans to
convert the three-story hotel, which
has been occasionally vandalized, into
an office building.

Some town residents are wondering
what the impact of all the controversies
will have on Clifton. They remember
grandiose plans in the 1960s for trans-
forming the town into a mini-Victor-
ian Williamsburg. But the recession
did in that venture.

One former resident, who declines
to be named, suggests that the proj-
ect might fit with Clifton itself
rather than any specific individual.
"We've had it with this town," he said.
"It's too small to govern itself wisely."
Too many people know what ever;
body does every day."



Donna and Dave Bean in front of Clifton Hotel, which they plan to renovate.

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